

February 2026

# Box River News

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# Babergh Bin Overhaul

*The way in which your bins are collected is changing*

Bin collections across Babergh will change from **1st June 2026** as the district introduces a new system to meet national recycling rules. Almost all households will notice a difference in how often bins are collected and how many containers they use.

## The new collection pattern

The biggest change is a move to a three-week rotation for most bins:

- **Week 1:** Refuse (non-recyclable waste)
- **Week 2:** Mixed recycling (plastics, tins and now also glass, tetrapaks and soft plastics e.g. wrappings and film)
- **Week 3:** Paper and card

Alongside this, there will be a **weekly food waste collection**, every week, regardless of the rota. Each week, residents will put out their food waste plus whichever main bin is due.

Collection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Refuse general rubbish			
Recycling glass, plastics, metal & cartons			
Paper & Card			
Food Waste			

## New bins and containers

Households will receive extra bins between **February and May 2026**, including:

- A new bin (green lid) for paper and card
- A small kitchen food caddy
- A larger outdoor food caddy

These should *only* be used from the 1st June 2026 and not before.

## Why food waste is collected weekly

Food waste makes up a large proportion (35%) of what currently goes into black non-recycling bins and is the main cause of smells and pests. Removing it weekly should mean:

- Refuse bins fill more slowly
- Less odour and mess
- Fewer problems with pests

The council estimates that around 60% of current non-recycling bin contents *could* be recycled, so separating food waste, paper, card and other recyclables should leave much less rubbish overall.

Collected food waste will be taken to an anaerobic digestion facility in Suffolk, where it will be turned into renewable energy and fertiliser rather than being incinerated or sent to landfill.

## Paper and card collected separately

Paper and card will no longer be mixed with plastics. Keeping them separate improves recycling quality and reduces contamination from damp or broken glass.

## New items collected

For the first time in Babergh, glass items such as drinks bottles, soft



plastics (e.g. food wrappings and cling film) and cartons such as tetrapaks can now be put in your recycling bin.

## What isn't changing?

The garden waste (brown bin) subscription service stays exactly the same, with fortnightly collections.

## Support for households who need it

The council says it will help households with limited space, larger families, medical needs or other challenges with the new system. Alternative containers or extra capacity may be available where justified.

Most collection days are expected to stay the same, but any changes will be communicated in advance.

## In short:

The new system means:

- Food waste: **every week**
- Other bins: **one different bin each week on a three-week cycle**
- Clearer recycling rules and less waste in refuse bins

Babergh is introducing the changes ahead of the national deadline to allow time for a smoother transition.

More details are available on the Babergh District Council website at <https://tinyurl.com/bin-changes>

## Box River News

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**The copy deadline for the March issue is Sunday 15th February at midday.**



# Newton Village Hall Matters

**Decorating:** As part of our ongoing maintenance schedule, the back corridor and gents toilet was decorated between Christmas and New Year and looks much fresher.

**Coffee Morning:** Our first coffee morning of the year is on the **21st FEBRUARY from 10am**. Donations of cakes, bric-a-brac and items for the raffle would be gratefully accepted. Look forward to seeing you there.

**Bookings:** The number for bookings is **07955 199 000**. Please visit [www.yourhall.co.uk/hall/newton-green](http://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.



**Newton  
Open Gardens**  
SUNDAY 14th JUNE 2026

**Planning for next year's Open Gardens has now commenced.**

After last year's success we are really looking forward to it.

Once again, we would like to appeal for volunteers to:

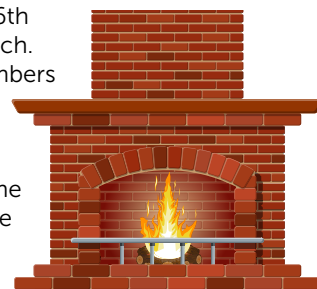
- \* Open their gardens on the day
- \* Help with organising and setting up
- \* Help on the day
- \* Have an advertising board in their garden

Everyone who opened their gardens said they had a really lovely day and all the hard work had been worth it, however, a few are unable to open again this year. We are looking for another 4 or 5 gardens to be opened.

If you feel able to help, please contact Sue & Paul on **07881 383 998** or at [sue\\_presland@hotmail.com](mailto:sue_presland@hotmail.com)

# Newton Fireside Club

Our first session of the year on 6th January was a Bring & Share lunch. Unfortunately, a few of our members had been struck down by the various bugs that were going around and the bitterly cold weather made it difficult for some to get out. Despite this, we lit the fire to make it cosy and still had 16 people there. There was a wonderful array and variety of food, washed down by a few glasses of wine or juice. Alan brought one of his famous quizzes to finish off the afternoon. Thank you to everyone for bringing food and to those who stayed to help clear up.



Our planned activity for the 3rd February isn't now possible. Instead, we plan to sit around the fire and have a good old natter with some music, beverages and snacks. There will also be a raffle.

## SPRING 2026 PROGRAMME

Tuesday 20th January	Games or Bingo
Tuesday 3rd February	Chat 'n' Snack with Raffle
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.



# Boxford Primary School

Finally, we are emerging from the darkest depths of winter! This is a short half-term, but a productive one nonetheless. Children have enjoyed their learning across the curriculum: Year 5 have begun their swimming sessions at Hadleigh Pool and pupils in KS2 have attended a cross country event which they all thoroughly enjoyed.

## Boxford and Groton United Charities

(School Value: Kindness)

On behalf of everyone at Boxford Primary School, we would like to express our sincere thanks for the generous grant of £1,000 from Boxford and Groton United Charities to support the purchase of new IT equipment.

This funding will make a significant difference to our pupils' learning experiences. Access to reliable and up-to-date technology is essential in today's education, enabling children to develop vital digital skills, enhance their creativity, and engage more confidently with their learning across the curriculum. IT plays an important role in supporting reading, writing, mathematics, research, and communication, as well as preparing pupils for the increasingly digital world beyond primary school.

The grant will help support and ensure that our pupils continue to benefit from high-quality resources that enrich teaching and learning and allow all children to reach their full potential.

Thank you once again for your generosity and for your continued support of the local community and its young people.

## 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](mailto: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

[www.boxfordprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.boxfordprimaryschool.co.uk)

# BOXFORD BOUNTY

## Final call for 2026

There is only a short time left to join or renew the Boxford Bounty for 2026. Membership costs £20 per year and gives one ticket entry into six draws during the year. **The closing date to join is 31 January** - after this date no new entries can be accepted. To take part, contact Mark Miller on 07534 953 843, email [boxfordbounty@gmail.com](mailto:boxfordbounty@gmail.com), or complete the online form at [www.boxford.me.uk/boxford-bounty](http://www.boxford.me.uk/boxford-bounty).

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*February*

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Regular opening/food service hours will resume from the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Burnt Mill Tap Takeover**  
Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Featuring a full list of Burnt Mill beers, including our own collaboration - Between Fields!

**Acoustic Night - From 7pm**  
Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Wednesday, Feb 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

**Cottages & Campsite Bookings**  
Bookings open through Summer 2026 via our website!

**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)**

**Street Food**  
Follow us on Facebook/Instagram for weekly updates!  
Wagyu Burgers - Fri, Jan 30<sup>th</sup>. All Fridays in Feb!  
Taqueria La Gringa - Sat Feb 7th

   @edwardstonewh [www.edwardstonewhitehorse.co.uk](http://www.edwardstonewhitehorse.co.uk)

## Young Boxford Carol Singers

A group of young girls enjoyed a fun evening of carol singing on Daking Avenue on 22 December, visiting neighbours they knew to share some early Christmas cheer.

The group included Paige, Esmae, Sienna, Florence, Harley and Rosie, all Year 6 pupils at Boxford Primary School, along with Esmae's three-year-old sister Lysea, who happily joined in.

The girls had a great time singing together, with neighbours stopping to listen, chat and support them as they went from door to door.

By the end of the evening, they had raised almost £50 for the mental health charity Mind.



# The Butcher's Wife

## *The Cold Wars*

You may remember the Butcher's obsession with having the temperature of our house on par with that of the Equator. Well, things escalated over the last few months, let me explain.

As usual, as soon as it was a bit chilly outside, the heating went on. At full pelt. Only this time, it wasn't as hot as the centre of the sun in our house. I was perfectly happy with this. I have lots of winter jumpers so I would put one of those on. Problem solved. On a side note, I don't own a dressing gown, they stress me out. The straps never stay done up, the sleeves are always too baggy and how often are you supposed to actually wash them? I'd much rather put on a jumper, less hassle all round.

Anyway, I digress, I felt cosy, my winter knits, fluffy socks and slippers took the chill off. Now I say 'chill' but it still wasn't cold in the house by anyone normal's standards. The Butcher, on the other hand, started making daily comments about how he didn't think the heating was working properly. A check of the oil tank determined we had plenty of heating oil and the boiler was working properly, so the daily ritual of bleeding the radiators started. Now you might think I'm exaggerating when I say he became obsessed with this – I'm not. Every single day for about a month he would come home, bleed every single radiator in the house and then give me a status update. The

status updates were really detailed and super dull. *"The living room radiator was warm on the bottom right but cold at the top left", "the one in the office wasn't on at all"* etc. Bless him, he thought I was interested. To clarify, I wasn't. I couldn't give a rat's backside about whether the radiators were working or not. I did briefly think that maybe my body temperature was dropping as I was getting older, which is why I could 'feel the cold' a bit more. I quickly decided it didn't matter, the temperature in our house was exactly what it should be.

When he had a few days off between Christmas and New Year, he decided to spend some time trying to figure it out. I was nervous, I didn't want him to 'fix' the heating. I liked having the temperature low and not getting a sweat on loading the dishwasher, but he was like a man possessed. After much investigation, he thought he had found the 'problem'.

Now this is the part of the story where I'm going to show my lack of knowledge in heating systems, bear with me. There is a tank thing in our airing cupboard that has something to do with the heating (it's not the boiler, that's outside, I know that much!). There is some kind of part on this tank that the Butcher thought might need replacing. All I've remembered is that the name of this part sounds a bit like a 'flux capacitor'. So, he orders a new

flux capacitor and decides to fit it. As I sat reading my book on the couch, I vaguely heard him explaining to me that he needs to turn

the electricity off to that section of the house because he might electrocute himself (electricians, look away). His life insurance briefly flashed in my mind but I continued reading my book and left him to play in the airing cupboard. He comes back downstairs twenty minutes later, not electrocuted, smiling like a Cheshire cat and makes me do a tour of the house touching all the now, very hot, radiators. In the nearly 30 years that I've known him, I don't remember ever seeing him so pleased with himself.

In summary, normality has resumed. The house is hotter than the sun and the fluffy socks and winter knits are now redundant. The daily thermostat war has started, he turns it up, I turn it down again when he's not looking. The only good thing to come out of all of this is that he has thankfully stopped giving me updates on the status of each radiator so I'll take that as a win!



## *Root vegetable & lentil soup*

### Ingredients (serves 4)

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 onion, chopped  
400g root vegetables – any combination of carrot, parsnips, swede, sweet potato or butternut squash, chopped into 2cm pieces  
3 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 tsp chilli flakes (add less if you're like the Butcher and can't eat spicy things!)  
1 tsp ground cumin  
150g red lentils, washed, rinsed and drained well  
1 litre vegetable stock  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Finely grated Parmesan cheese

### Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the chopped onion and a pinch of salt. Cover and fry for 5 minutes until softened but not browned.
2. Add the vegetables and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, for another 2 minutes.
3. Stir in the chilli flakes and ground cumin. Cook for 1–2 minutes.
4. Add the red lentils to the pan and stir well to coat them with the spices.
5. Add the vegetable stock, increase the heat and bring the mixture to a gentle boil. Lower the heat and let it simmer for 20–25 minutes, or until the vegetables and lentils are tender.
6. Blend the soup until smooth. If it's too thick, add more vegetable stock. Season as per your taste.
7. Serve with the Parmesan cheese.





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## Reflections from the Ministry Team

Dear Friends,

February can be one of those months when sunshine seems in short supply. This year we have 28 days of it as 2026 is not a leap year, but even though it's really a



short month, still it sometimes seems to go on forever. We long for warmth and light and colour and we can't wait for spring to appear.

And yet, if you look closely, you will find small signs of new life and growth everywhere. Today, (and I write this on a wet, January day) I saw a small patch of snowdrops shining in the gloom. They made me stop and think that no matter how we feel, there are always bright spots to be seen if only we open our eyes and take note. Those moments of delight give us hope of spring to come and new energy to face the realities of day to day life. We all need our moments of joy.

We live in a world where there is so much suffering and darkness. So many people around the world are caught up in warfare, oppression, corruption and poverty and every time we watch the news on our TVs or read a newspaper, we see the darkness of pain and evil before our eyes. It's easy to get depressed and give up on hope for the human race.

But our Christian faith always calls us to go on hoping whatever the situation we are in. We hope because we have God's promise that He will be with us in all our suffering and dark places. Jesus walks by our side wherever we are and shines the light of His risen love and life into our darkness. Jesus is our true light, our hope for a new world of justice, peace and joy. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer and say "Thy Kingdom come" we express our hope and faith that God will bring in His glorious Kingdom of love in all the earth.

Yet, if we open our eyes and hearts we can see those shafts of light where God's Kingdom is already a reality in our lives. In our churches and in our communities are so many people who work for that Kingdom daily in acts of service and love for friends and neighbours. How fortunate we are in

our villages to have all these wonderful people who refuse to let the darkness win and reach out in love to those around them. We are so grateful for all of them.

In church this month we move from the Christmas and Epiphany season towards Lent and Easter. February 2nd is the Feast of Candlemas when we remember the Presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph bring their child to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to God for him, and Jesus is recognised by the elderly prophets Simeon and Anna, as the fulfilment of God's promise of forgiveness and hope for his people. Simeon speaks those wonderful words of faith as he acknowledges the Son of God before him. The Nunc Dimittis from the old Evensong....

Now, Lord, let your servant go in peace, your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people.

A light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Jesus is the Light of the World and the ancient tradition of Candlemas celebrates that light by blessing all the church's candles for the year ahead. A truly bright spot in February!

Then on 17th February we have Shrove Tuesday – that day which traditionally marked the confession and forgiveness of sin before Lent and is now mainly marked by the cooking and eating of pancakes! Put it on your calendar so that you don't forget it.

Ash Wednesday follows on February 18th marking the beginning of the season of Lent. There will be a service in St Mary's Boxford in the evening at 7pm and an informal service in Mary's House at 10am for those who wish to worship that day and receive a cross of ash on their forehead as a symbol of their faith in our loving, forgiving God. All are of course welcome.

Lent gives us an opportunity to refresh our faith and come closer to Jesus as we prepare to walk the way of the cross with Him in Holy Week and rejoice with Him on Easter morning. We look forward to seeing many of you in church for these important festivals.

I finish with this prayer for Candlemas and wish you all the light of Christ in your lives every day this month.

Lord God, the springing source of everlasting light,

Pour into the hearts of your faithful people

The brilliance of your eternal splendour,

That we, who by these kindling flames

Light up this temple to your glory, May have the darkness of our souls dispelled,

and so be counted worthy to stand before you

in that eternal city where you live and reign. Amen

With love in Christ,  
Revd Diana

## February

### Dates for your diary

#### Tuesday 3rd 10am

Drop in for Coffee  
Mary's House

#### Friday 6th 10:30am

Coffee Morning  
St Lawrence's, Lt Waldingfield

#### Tuesday 10th 10am

Drop in for Coffee  
Mary's House

#### Tuesday 17th 10am

Drop in for Coffee  
Mary's House

#### Wednesday 18th 10am

Coffee Morning  
All Saints', Newton Green

#### Saturday 21st 10am

Coffee Morning  
St Mary's, Boxford

#### Tuesday 24th 10am

Drop in for Coffee  
Mary's House

# Spring Nails



Step into  
Spring with  
freshly painted  
nails...

There's something about looking down and seeing pretty nails that lifts the spirits - and, let's face it, we all need a bit of that at this time of year! But Spring is on the way and to celebrate, we're offering a free cuticle oil or hand cream with every gel manicure PLUS a £5 voucher for a fresh set of gels in March.



## Spring Special

*This month, receive a free NAF! cuticle oil or hand cream with every gel manicure (from £30) PLUS a £5 voucher if you book to have them redone in March\**

*Call 01787 211 000 to book.*

\* Offer valid once per person, until 28/02/26. Soak-off is an extra £5, if needed. The £5 voucher can be redeemed against any gel manicure during March 2026.

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

Tel: 01787 211 000 [www.suffolkmedicalclinic.co.uk](http://www.suffolkmedicalclinic.co.uk)



## Service Schedule for February 2026

<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February</b> <i>Epiphany 4 The Presentation</i>	09:30	Sunday Eucharist	St Lawrence's, Lt Waldingfield
	11:00	Sunday Eucharist	St Mary's, Boxford
<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February</b>	10:00	Communion & Coffee	Mary's House, Boxford
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>2 before Lent</i>	09:30	Sunday Eucharist	St Bartholomew's, Groton
	11:00	Sunday Eucharist	St Mary's, Boxford
	16:00	BCP Evensong	St Mary's, Boxford
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February</b>	10:00	Communion & Coffee	Mary's House, Boxford
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>Sunday before Lent</i>	09:30	Sunday Eucharist	St Mary the Virgin, Edwardstone
	11:00	Sunday Eucharist	St Mary's, Boxford
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February</b> <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	10:00	Ash Wednesday Communion & Coffee	Mary's House, Boxford
	19:00	Ash Wednesday Eucharist	St Mary's, Boxford
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February</b> <i>Lent 1</i>	11:00	Morning Prayer	All Saints', Newton Green
	11:00	Family Eucharist	St Mary's, Boxford
<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	10:00	Communion & Coffee	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 EVERY TUESDAY**

**FRIDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**10.30 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ST LAWRENCE'S, LT WALDINGFIELD**

**WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**10.00 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ALL SAINTS', NEWTON**

**SATURDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**10.00 AM - COFFEE MORNING AT ST MARY'S, BOXFORD**





## St Mary's, Boxford Food Bank: Here for You

St Mary's Church Food Bank has sadly declined in recent months due to misuse, vandalism, persistent pigeon problems, and a reduction in volunteer numbers. Despite these challenges, our commitment to supporting those in need remains unwavering, and we have food available. We are now looking at how best to revitalise the service so it can continue with dignity and purpose.

To move forward, we are exploring two possible models: relocating the Food Bank into a coded cabinet located in a secure and accessible place, so people can help themselves, or offering a weekly/fortnightly drop-in session where individuals can collect a bag of shopping and household goods, perhaps for a small donation. Either option would require a small team of volunteers - just an hour a week would make a meaningful difference.

We would really value your thoughts on what would work best for our community. We want to ensure the Food Bank reaches those who genuinely need support while reducing opportunities for misuse. If you would like to share your views, volunteer, or be part of the relaunch, please contact Liz Potter at the Benefice Office. Together, we can ensure this vital service continues to serve our community with care and integrity.

If in the meantime, 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.

## 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.

## Contact Information

### **Benefice Office:**

Mary's House  
5 Swan Street  
Boxford  
CO10 5NZ

**01787 828046**

email:

[boxriverbenefice@gmail.com](mailto:boxriverbenefice@gmail.com)



## St Mary's Church Boxford Community Foodbank

### We need your help

Our food bank is facing several challenges - misuse, vandalism, pigeons, and fewer volunteers - but we remain committed to supporting those who need us most.

We are planning a relaunch and are exploring new ways to run the service.

Current ideas include either a coded cabinet for self-service or a weekly or fortnightly drop-in session for the collection of food and household goods, perhaps for a small donation.

We want to hear your views.

We need new volunteers - just one hour a week.

To share your thoughts or to join the team, please contact:  
Liz Potter at the Benefice Office.

**01787 828046**

[boxriverbenefice@gmail.com](mailto:boxriverbenefice@gmail.com)

*Let us keep this vital service alive for our community.*

## Gardeners!

Spring WILL come...

**Please open your garden  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Boxford Open Gardens 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Contact Audrey Zuck

[audrey@a2zriskservices.com](mailto:audrey@a2zriskservices.com)

or

**07852 102 455**

## 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: £50 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.

## Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pubs

Our next 'Pop-Up Pub' nights will be on **Friday 30th January** and **Friday 27th February**.

These relaxed and friendly events run from 6:30 - 10:30pm 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) watching the sun set over the countryside.

## Brent Eleigh Spring Quiz Night

The Brent Eleigh Spring Quiz is on **Saturday 28th March**, 7pm for 7:30pm start.

There will be donations bar, a raffle, and of course the famous Brent Eleigh meal of chilli and baked potato (vegetarian option available), served in the interval.

Quiz master Kevin will have the usual mix of questions. Please get your teams together and join in a good fun evening. Even if you don't have your own table please just let me know and I am sure there will be a table you can join.

Tickets are £12 per person with between six to eight people per table.

Please ring Karen on 07946 209103 to let us know in advance for catering reasons, but we would really love to see you!

## Polstead Films

### *A Real Pain*

**Friday 20th February, Doors open 7pm**

POLSTEAD VILLAGE HALL

"Perfectly weighted between bleak and warm, poignant and irreverent"

*A Real Pain* is a whip-sharp comedy driven by the rattling verbal sparring between uptight, neurotic David (Jesse Eisenberg) and his outgoing, unpredictable cousin Benji (Kieran Culkin). A very welcome throwback to a type of comedy-drama that had all but disappeared. It manages to be ruefully perceptive and laugh-out-loud funny, often at the same time.

Tickets £5. Email: [polsteadfilms@gmail.com](mailto:polsteadfilms@gmail.com) to reserve or buy in Polstead Community Shop.

The film starts at 7:30pm.

All proceeds in aid of Polstead Village Hall Charity No. 304933



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 Gardening Club

Our first two meetings in 2026 are:

**Tuesday 24th February at 7:30pm:** A talk about *Night Scented Flowers and Pollinators* by Lisa Matthews, Nature Citizen

**Tuesday 17th March at 7:30pm:** A talk about *Cutting Gardens and Flower Arranging* by Helen Hillier, Helen Herbaceous

All meetings are held at Polstead Village Hall on The Green in Polstead (CO6 5AL). Free to members.

Non-members are welcome £5 (cash or cheque please). Entrance includes a drink and nibbles. Membership Subscriptions are due in February - Single Membership £20 Joint Membership £35 and we very much welcome new Members. Queries: [gardeningclubpolstead@yahoo.com](mailto:gardeningclubpolstead@yahoo.com).

We look forward to seeing you soon.



BOXFORD  
GARDENING SOCIETY

Deb Hart

## WILLOW IN THE LANDSCAPE

Deb will demonstrate weaving a garden structure for donation as a raffle prize



**Tuesday 3rd February 7.30pm**  
at Boxford Village Hall



**Fleece Jazz** at  
Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel presents

---

**The Steve Fishwick/Leon Greening Quartet:**  
**Soultime**

Wednesday 11th February 2026 8pm - Tickets: £20



A stellar quartet playing the music of Jazz Messenger and Cannonball Adderley pianist Bobby Timmons.

**Steve Fishwick – Trumpet**  
**Leon Greening – Piano**  
**Matyas Hofecker – Bass**  
**Matt Home – Drums**

---

**Chris Coull's Blue Note Sextet**

Wednesday 25th February 2026 8pm - Tickets: £20



Epousing the golden era of the Blue Note label artists and recordings from the 1950s and 1960s.

**Chris Coull – Trumpet**  
**Alan Barnes – Saxes**  
**Terry Seabrook – Piano**  
**Mark Bassey – Trombone**  
**Dominic Howles – Bass**  
**Peter Cater – Drums**

---

**Stoke by Nayland Hotel, Keepers Lane, Leavenheath CO6 4PZ**  
Ample parking; fully accessible. Directions: [www.fleecejazz.org.uk](http://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**

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

## NEWTON VILLAGE HALL

**COFFEE MORNING**  
SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2026  
10am – 11.30am

**REFRESHMENTS**  
**CAKES**  
**RAFFLE**  
**BRIC – A – BRAC**

DONATIONS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME

## Boxford Society & Natural Boxford

present a talk

### A brief (un)natural history of rivers

**Darren Tansley**

Wilder Rivers and  
Protected Species Manager  
Essex Wildlife Trust



**Thurs Feb 26th**  
**7 for 7:30pm start**  
**Refreshments**

**The Pavilion,**  
**Boxford**  
**Playing Fields**  
**£5**

Free for Boxford Society members





**Newton Green Golf Club**

# Tea & Cake Afternoon



**TUESDAY 24th MARCH**  
2pm to 4pm

**EVERYONE WELCOME!**

**Stalls to include:**  
Homemade cakes & bakes  
Crafts  
Preloved clothes rail  
Bottle stall  
Raffle (1st prize - luxury hamper)



**We look forward to seeing you!**



# Ladies

## GET INTO GOLF

### FREE TASTER LESSON

WEDNESDAY 18TH MARCH 2 P.M. TO 3 P.M.  
SATURDAY 21ST MARCH 11 A.M. TO 12 NOON



ALL EQUIPMENT PROVIDED, NO DRESS CODE, JUST TRAINERS REQUIRED.

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE OR FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT  
NEWTON GREEN GOLF CLUB  
01787 377217  
timcoopergolf@aol.com

## HAVE FUN!



To celebrate 100 years of Boxford Village Hall, Boxford Drama Group presents:



# The Ghostlight Club

A new comedy/drama by Mike Keith

In 1926 an abandoned theatre stirs into life as the long silent troupe of The Ghostlight Club, gather for the play they were never able to perform due to a mysterious fire...

**Thursday April 23rd, Friday 24th and Saturday April 25th at 7.30.**

Tickets £10.00 (available from 16th March)  
at Boxford Post Office or [boxforddramagroup.com](http://boxforddramagroup.com)






## GROTON HISTORY SOCIETY

FEB  
**26**



## 'Our Greatest Monarchs?'

### Open Discussion

People will put, to you, cases for their nominated Monarch. " ? The Great?"

@ **Groton Village Hall: 19:30 - 21:30**

**£5 entry, includes Glass of Wine**  
( Students free )

## Art Classes and Textile Workshops

Our classes are a great way to learn new skills in a wonderful relaxing environment.

For more information on all our workshops and to book, simply go to...  
[www.milltyegallery.co.uk/book-online](http://www.milltyegallery.co.uk/book-online)

**Mill Tye Gallery**  
3 Cornard Mills, Mill Tye,  
Great Cornard, Sudbury  
Suffolk CO10 0GW

### Spring at the gallery begins soon

Bookings are open online for workshops starting March 2026. The gallery is **closed in February**, reopening on **Saturday 14 March 2026** with our Spring Exhibitions.



Mill Tye is sign posted off the Bures Road in Great Cornard, approximately a mile out of Sudbury Town Centre. The turning is opposite the King's Head Pub. Car park before the level crossing. Find us opposite the Mill Pond.

**MILL TYE**

**MILL TYE GALLERY  
@ ARTS CENTRE**  
[milltyegallery.co.uk](http://milltyegallery.co.uk)



For 24 years, this award-winning seaside spectacle has been the only full season end of the pier show in the world, blending cheeky British humour, dazzling performances, and West End production values that rival the best theatres in London.

You can be sure of laughs by the bucket load, thrilling specialty acts, traditional seaside innuendo, powerhouse vocals, music, and spellbinding dance routines.

**SAT 04 JULY**

Departing: Boxford & Hadleigh

Price: £60 per person

Includes

Return Coach Travel

Show Ticket - Matinee 14:30

Email - [tracey@boxrivertravelboutique.co.uk](mailto:tracey@boxrivertravelboutique.co.uk)

Call - 07747 608509



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**18 JULY 26 | 15:00**

DEPARTING: BOXFORD & HADLEIGH  
PRICE: £106.00 PER PERSON

INCLUDES  
RETURN COACH TRAVEL  
SEATS IN BLOCK F ROWS C - J

EMAIL - [TRACEY@BOXRIVERTRAVELBOUTIQUE.CO.UK](mailto:TRACEY@BOXRIVERTRAVELBOUTIQUE.CO.UK) OR  
CALL - 07747 608509 FOR TICKETS



## THE FIRST OUTING OF THE YEAR!



**11th February 2026 at 11am**  
**Little Waldingfield**

**£8 per person including refreshments**

Further details available from  
[jen.eastwood8@gmail.com](mailto:jen.eastwood8@gmail.com) or 211853

## Half Term Fun at Hollow Trees

Spend your February half term on the Farm Trail at Hollow Trees Farm for only £5 per person – children 2 years and under go free. The trail winds through the farm, offering plenty to spot, climb on and explore along the way.

As a half term special, our Cresta Run Sledges will be open in the Activity Field. Whether you want to race your friends or simply whizz downhill again and again, it is all included and ready for action.

Meet our farmyard animals as you go. From the pigs keeping an eye on passers-by to the goats who never turn down a friendly hello, there is always something happening in the barnyard. Children can burn off even more energy in the soft play inside the marquee, a cosy stop that keeps fun going whatever the weather.

When you have finished exploring, pop into the farm shop or café to warm up, refuel and take home a taste of the farm.

The Farm Trail is a relaxed, hassle-free day out for all ages – just remember your coat and wellies and enjoy a half term packed with fresh air, mud and smiles.

## The Kersey Village Art Group

A small band of amateur artists regularly spend a couple of enjoyable hours each Thursday morning sketching and painting with like-minded people. The Kersey Art Group helps members improve their artistic skills - they can simply paint or sketch, and escape the day-to-day distractions of life.

Art tuition is not provided, but members have a range of skills across a variety of media and are happy to share knowledge and techniques with each other.

The group currently has room for new members and meets at 10am on most Thursdays throughout the year at Kersey Village Hall. Fees are paid in advance and work out at about £2.50-£3 per person each week.

So, if you're interested, don't delay - treat yourself to trying your local art group. As a special offer, you can have a free taster session to see if it is for you.

If interested, please contact Richard Fletcher, Kersey Art Group Organiser, email [djzfletcher@googlemail.com](mailto:djzfletcher@googlemail.com) or phone **07856 899367**.

## Boxford WI Update

Happy new year from us all at WI.

We thoroughly enjoyed a very competitive Beetle Drive at our first meeting of 2026, followed by a good catch up with friends over tea and cake.

Our guest speaker on March 4th will be Andy Strange on WW2 Women at war.

If you are interested in joining the WI why not 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](mailto:lyn@the-brook.net).

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN

## THE FLEECE HOTEL

# Charity Quiz

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

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





## THE CROWN

BILDESTON

### MIDWEEK LUNCH MENU

*2 courses £25, 3 courses £30*

*Monday - Friday 12 - 2pm*

### POP IN FOR BREAKFAST

**Monday - Friday 7-10am**

**Weekends 8 - 10am**

**Book a table and join us...**

### VALENTINES MENU

**Book a table for a *romantic meal***

Bildeston, Suffolk IP7 7EB

01449 740510 | [www.thebildestoncrown.com](http://www.thebildestoncrown.com)



THE LINDSEY ROSE  
Est. 1478

### BURGER WEDNESDAY

Burger & a selected drink for £18



### HAVE YOU BOOKED YET?

01449 741424 | [thelindseyrose.co.uk](http://thelindseyrose.co.uk)

The Tye, Lindsey, Ipswich IP7 6PP



HOLLOW  
TREES  
FARM

AVAILABLE FROM SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> TO SUNDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

## ENJOY FEBRUARY HALF TERM FOR ONLY A FIVER

Looking for a 'Great Day Out' this February Half Term?  
Our Farm Trail is here to help for only £5 per person.

ONLY £5 PER PERSON  
ONLINE & ON THE DAY

2 YEARS & UNDER FREE

Race on the Cresta Run Sledges  
Meet our animals and explore the Farm Trail  
Visit the soft play in the marquee  
...and don't forget to bring your  
coats and wellies!

SCAN TO BOOK  
YOUR TICKETS



01449 741 247

[www.hollowtrees.co.uk](http://www.hollowtrees.co.uk)

[shop@hollowtrees.co.uk](mailto:shop@hollowtrees.co.uk)

Hollow Trees Farm, Semer, IP7 6HX

**BOXFORD**  
1926-2026  
**CENTENARY**  
**VILLAGE HALL**

**1926 - 2026**  
Celebrating 100 years  
**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Boxford Village Hall present:**  
**Celebrations to commemorate 100 years**

**APRIL**  
  
**The Ghostlight Club**  
23/24/25 April  
Original comedy/drama with music set in 1926

**JULY**  
  
**AN AFTERNOON TEA DANCE**  
4 July Music and a Cream Tea

**AUGUST**  
  
On Bank Holiday Afternoon 29 August  
**A FAMILY VILLAGE PARTY**

**OCTOBER**  
  
**PRINCE & PRINCESS PARTY**  
20 October (4 till 6) Children with parents

**DECEMBER 31**  
  
**NEW YEARS EVE**  
Professional DJ - Buffet & Bar

**LOOK OUT FOR DETAILS IN THE BOX RIVER NEWS!**

## Book Review: Red Water by Jurica Pavičić

This outstanding and gripping novel, by award-winning Croatian writer Jurica Pavičić, is set against the backdrop of the Balkan conflict as Yugoslavia breaks up into its various republics.

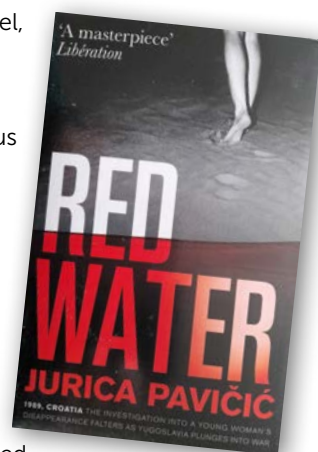
The story begins on 23rd September 1989, a Saturday, and Silva, the beautiful 17-year-old daughter of Jakov and Vesna Vela, dressed in "a floral dress that's too short and red All Star high-tops" fails to return after a night out at a fair in her small Croatian village on the Dalmatian coast near the city of Split. Has she been kidnapped – possibly murdered – or just run away without telling her family her intentions? Her parents and her twin brother, Mate, are distraught, and the novel relates the impact of Silva's disappearance over the following years on both her family and others who knew her.

Her ex-boyfriend, Adrijan (who later joins the Croatian army – one chapter gives a dramatic insight into the Bosnian war) is interviewed by the police but released from custody after three days, and thereafter an inadequate investigation, during which we learn that, unbeknown to her family, Silva dabbled in drugs and dealt in heroin, peters out as Yugoslavia descends into war.

Silva's parents grow apart as her mother insists that Jakov and Mate distribute posters and follow up possible sightings. Convinced, stubbornly, that Silva is still alive following a report of her leaving Split on a bus, they continue to search for her – a desperate search which includes Mate driving around Europe for years and following would-be leads to places as far away as Barcelona and Sweden. The course of all their lives is changed as much by Silva's absence and the stories they tell themselves to account for it as it is by the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Ethnic tension, drugs, greed for land, and police rivalries all play a role.

This book has been brilliantly translated into English (by Matt Robinson) and fully deserves its many awards in both Croatia and France. First published in Croatia in 2017, the English translation is published in the UK by Bitter Lemon Press, price £9.99.

David Lamming



## Madrigalia News

December was a very busy month for the choir. The Christmas Tree Festival at Boxford Church was a stunning start to the Christmas season with many of the village societies represented by their beautiful & imaginatively decorated trees, and it was a joy for us to sing in such a lovely setting.



Despite the cold & wet weather, the Christmas Concerts at Kersey Church & Borley Church on 18th & 20th Dec were both well attended. A wonderfully festive atmosphere was created thanks to many people involved in the meticulous organisation making both occasions memorable in their celebration of the Spirit of Christmas & a joy for us to be involved in.

Sue Price  
[www.madrigalia.uk](http://www.madrigalia.uk)

## Bates Wells & Braithwaite



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### Bates Wells & Braithwaite Solicitors

27 Friars Street Sudbury CO10 2AD  
T: 01787 880440 E: [solicitors@bwblegal.com](mailto:solicitors@bwblegal.com)



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## Elaine Carpenter

N.R.H.P., C.H.P., Dip Psychology

### HYPNOTHERAPY

Negative emotions such as anxiety and depression can overwhelm us by rippling out and affecting our whole lives

Hypnotherapy can help you discover how to use the power of your mind to free yourself from fear and gain control back of your life.

I have over 30 years of experience as a hypnotherapist, helping people to overcome a wide range of emotional, mental & physical problems.

Call me for an informal chat to see how Hypnotherapy can help you.

Now available at KERSEY MILL & BOXFORD

**Phone: 01787 210 601**

**Mobile: 07929 744 072**



Stoke by Nayland  
RESORT

## TURN TUESDAYS INTO A TREAT WITH OUR MIDWEEK CARVERY

OUR CLASSIC CARVERY EVERY TUESDAY, 12:00PM - 3:00PM

Introducing our new midweek carvery, served every week in our welcoming Lakes Restaurant.

Enjoy a mouth-watering selection of perfectly roasted meats, all the traditional trimmings, and delicious desserts, prepared using the finest local and seasonal ingredients. Choose from one, two or three courses and settle in for a relaxed midweek treat.



Scan the QR code to book your table online now







# Natural Boxford

## *Finding some joy in February*

February can be a challenging time of year, often wet and cold. The buzz of the winter festive season has passed, and the full uplift of spring is still some way off. And yet, if we look, there are plenty of gifts from nature to lift the spirits, especially if we wrap up warm, get out to breathe some fresh air, and observe what is happening around us.

Even as I write in mid-January, snowdrops are already showing, bright green daffodil spears are through, the odd aconite is shining its cheerful yellow, and there is a carpet of flowering cyclamen in the garden. Winter honeysuckle is full of flower and its heady aroma entices the bees, particularly bumblebees, who are still around.

### **What do our wildlife friends do in winter?**

#### **Hibernation**

For hedgehogs, bats, and dormice this is much more than sleeping. Breathing is shallow and infrequent, body

temperature drops, and their heart rate slows dramatically. Less scent is given off, they make no sound and hardly move, making them less vulnerable to predation.

If there is a warm spell they might briefly wake, have a quick toilet and snack break, and possibly move to a safer location. They can also wake if there is a significant drop in temperature that puts them at risk of freezing.

These animals hibernate because there is not enough food in winter to carry on as usual. They eat more in summer and autumn when food is plentiful, building up reserves to sustain a much lower metabolic rate through winter.

Bats hibernate after mating in autumn, and females only become pregnant after waking in spring. Their breathing slows dramatically,

in some cases to as little as once an hour.

Hedgehogs feed frantically before hibernation, as they need to weigh at least 500 g to survive the winter. Their heart rate drops from around 190 beats per minute to just 20. They often choose compost heaps, piles of leaves and twigs, or spaces under decking as hibernation sites, making themselves





### **Pictured opposite from top:**

*A welcome splash of colour in the winter garden. Flowering cyclamen provide visual cheer even in the coldest months, reminding us that spring is already quietly on its way.*

*A hedgehog tucked safely into its winter nest. Leaf piles, compost heaps, and spaces under decking are vital hibernation sites and should be left undisturbed until spring.*

### **This page from top:**

*Small garden birds gather together in winter to conserve warmth and reduce energy loss. Fluffing up their feathers traps insulating air, helping them cope with cold conditions while they focus on finding enough food to survive.*

*Ladybirds overwinter by clustering together in sheltered spots such as curled leaves, bark crevices, and garden structures, helping them conserve warmth until spring.*

*A hibernating queen bumblebee uncovered during winter garden work. If you find a hibernating bee, gently replace the soil, leaves, or material you disturbed and leave it in place. Moving or warming it can do more harm than good.*

a cosy nest of leaves. Try to avoid disturbing these areas in your garden until temperatures rise in spring.

The rare dormouse, which we are lucky to have several populations of here in Suffolk, doubles in size before hibernation and can lose up to half its body weight before waking.

### **Insects and winter survival**

In the insect world, queen bumblebees hibernate once the rest of the colony has died off at the end of summer. They find a niche underground in loose soil, or sometimes in sheds, and wait to emerge when spring blooms provide nectar to rebuild their energy.

We have over 250 species of bee in the British Isles, around 90 per cent of which are solitary bees, alongside 24 species of bumblebee and one



honeybee. Many solitary bee females lay eggs in nest cells at the end of spring, leaving pollen stores inside. When the grubs hatch, they have food throughout the summer. They then pupate, become adult bees by autumn, and hibernate in their cocoons through winter before emerging to feed on early flowers. Insect hotels and hollow plant stems provide ideal winter refuges for this process.



### **Diapause**

Diapause is unique to some insects as a method of surviving cold winter temperatures. Whereas hibernation is a slowing down, diapause is effectively a stop, a state of suspended animation. It is often the larval stage that overwinters in this way, but some butterflies do too. Last winter we had two Red Admirals in diapause on the ceiling of the cloakroom. Before entering this state, they release anti-freeze chemicals into their bodies which protect them from freezing.

### **Torpor**

Torpor occurs when winter weather becomes particularly harsh. Some animals, such as squirrels and badgers, stay in their burrows or nests and enter a short, shallow hibernation. This is

much briefer than true hibernation, and they can wake more quickly if conditions improve.

Other mammals, including foxes and deer, grow extra thick winter coats to help them cope with the cold.

### **Birds in winter**

Birds have a wide range of winter survival strategies. Some migrate south to warmer climates, such as swifts which overwinter in central Africa. Others, including pink-footed geese and fieldfares, arrive from further north to spend their comparatively warmer winter here.

Many garden birds fluff up their feathers to trap insulating air, while species such as long-tailed tits and wrens huddle together for warmth. All are focused on finding enough food to survive, so it is vital we keep key food sources in our gardens. Holly and ivy berries are especially rich in fats and nutrients.

Some parallels with us humans, perhaps?

### **A brief reminder**

If you would like to receive another thermal imaging visit, please contact [heatenergy@gmx.co.uk](mailto:heatenergy@gmx.co.uk) or send a message to Lisa on 07821 776270.

### **Last month's quiz**

Could you identify our river creature? It was a water scorpion, an aquatic insect that catches prey with its pincers and uses its tail as a snorkel.



We hope to see you on February 26 for A brief un(natural) history of rivers. See poster on page 15.

Much love,

Louise, on behalf of Natural Boxford





# Readers' Letters

Dear Editor,

My husband Jacques and I celebrated our Golden Wedding at the Fleece Hotel on Saturday 20th December. The Fleece did us proud with a delicious buffet lunch and very attentive service.



It was extra special because the party took place in the same room where we celebrated our wedding in 1975. From the accounts my mum wrote down at the time, back then the party cost £100!

Many thanks,  
Angela Forrest (nee Grimwood)

---

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed reading your recent article about the Boxford POW camp and as I read I was remembering an old work colleague who had told me about his former life as a local POW.

So I was delighted when I turned the page and saw the piece about George Schneider. I worked with him at Woods of Colchester in the 1980s.

He was a lovely, kind, man with a soft gentle voice who was very fond of his adopted country.



I attach a picture of him (in the foreground) which was used by Woods for many years as a publicity shot.

Best regards  
Viv Marsh (Kersey)

Dear Editor,

I wonder if readers of the BRN were aware of the new ski jump installed up at Boxford Playing Fields?



Many thanks  
Peter Norris

---

Dear Editor,

I thought readers might enjoy a photograph taken recently on the footpath from Cox Hill to Fen Street, beside the stream that eventually flows into the River Box, possibly known as the Holbrook, from which Holbrook Barn Road takes its name.

The picture shows a natural 'bridge' formed by a fallen tree lying across the brook. This is what remains of one of several tall trees that were blown down in a storm a few years ago.



What caught my eye was a small primrose growing directly from the fallen trunk, a welcome and early sign of spring. It is a simple but striking reminder of the benefits of leaving fallen trees undisturbed, allowing nature to reclaim and repurpose them in its own time, a good example of what might be called Natural Boxford.

David Lamming



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# Life at the Shelley Centre

## *Celebrating riders, volunteers and community support*

Forget the Oscars, the BAFTAs and any other awards you care to think of – we've had our own 'awards season' at the Shelley Centre for Therapeutic Riding in the last couple of months.

First up were two of our Friday riders Skye and Poppy. They have both recently been presented with RDA Achievement Awards. Poppy who usually rides one of our newer ponies, Tiny Tim, was recognised for all the work she has done to learn about horses and their tack as well as improvements in her riding. Skye who rides the ever-popular Thomas has grown in confidence since starting at Shelley and now no longer needs her mum in the arena with her when riding – although mum does of course proudly watch from our viewing area.

We've also presented a 35-year long service award to one of our coaches, Patricia Bazley White. Patricia was given her award just before Christmas. She is one of only a small number of helpers at Shelley to achieve this milestone.

This time our Chair of Trustees presented the certificate but when

Patricia was given her certificate for 30 years of volunteering it was from Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal who is President of Riding for the Disabled Association UK.

Having trained as a coach around 25 years ago, Patricia is now also a coach mentor for new volunteer coaches as they undergo the full RDA training. As well as her weekly Wednesday sessions at The Shelley Centre, Patricia was a member of our Fundraising Committee for 25 years – ten of them as its Chair. She commented: "One of the most important parts of that role was to encourage people who weren't directly connected to the centre to come to our events or perhaps even host an event to raise money themselves."

The same is true today. While the Shelley team still organise a number of fundraising activities, those put on by other members of our local communities are always appreciated. It doesn't have to be a huge event, but choosing The Shelley Centre as the charity to benefit from a bake sale at work or school, a quiz night at the local pub or as the charity to support

**Above from left:** Poppy receiving her Achievement Award.

Skye receiving her Achievement Award

Patricia Bazley White celebrating her remarkable 35 years of volunteering as she receives her Long Service Award from Debs Bennett, Chair of Trustees

when taking part in a marathon or other sporting event can really make a difference to our work. To make a donation as an individual, or from your event, also couldn't be easier – just visit [www.justgiving.com/charity/shelleyrda](http://www.justgiving.com/charity/shelleyrda). You can also find out more about our work by visiting our website or find us on Facebook – 'Shelley RDA Centre'.

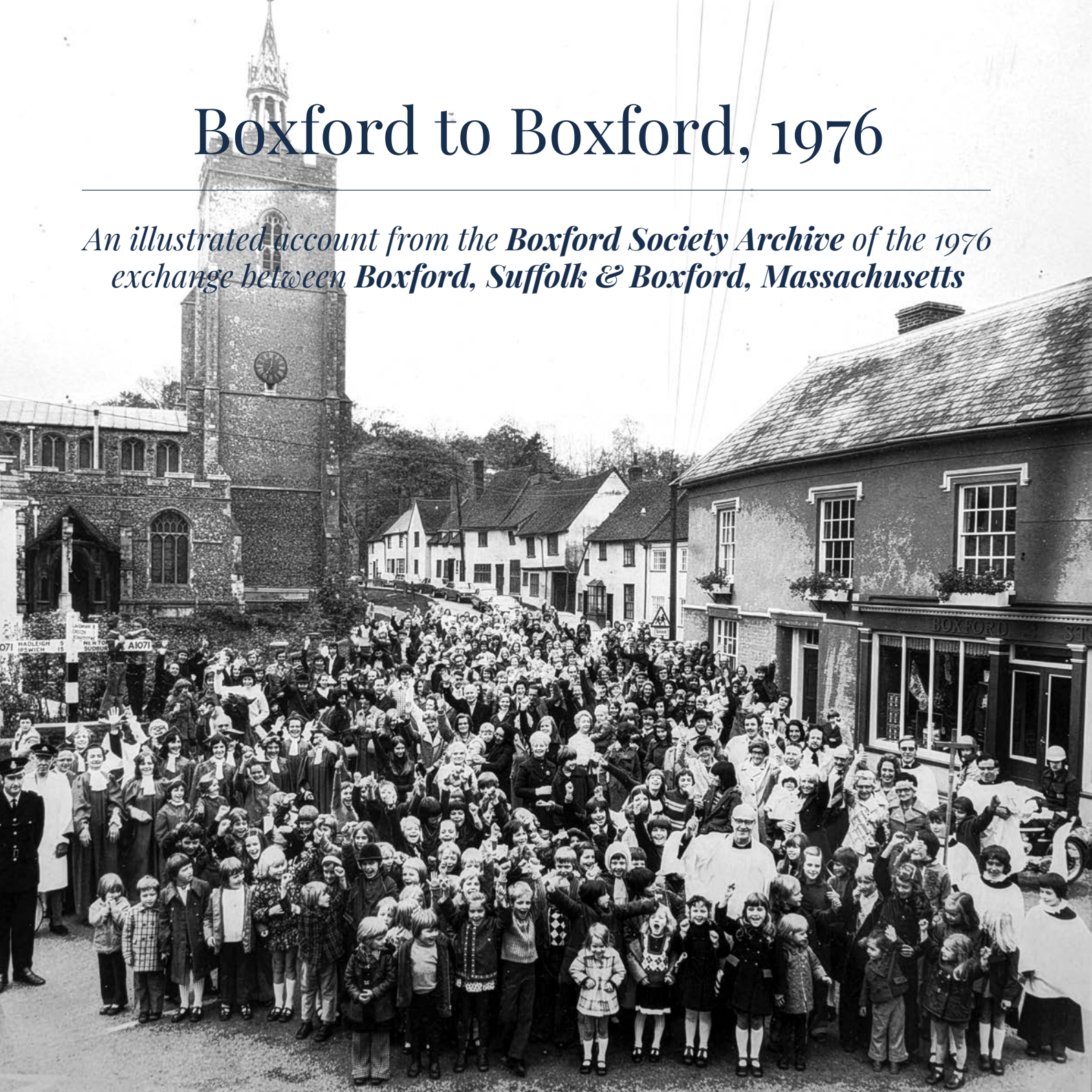
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# Boxford to Boxford, 1976

*An illustrated account from the **Boxford Society Archive** of the 1976 exchange between **Boxford, Suffolk & Boxford, Massachusetts***



Fifty years ago a highly memorable event took place for the people of Boxford. The idea started in June 1975 when Dr John and Mrs Dorothy Truman of Boxford Massachusetts were visiting Boxford Suffolk doing historical research about their connections with England. They had decided on Boxford, Suffolk rather than Boxford in Berkshire based on some family evidence and the Massachusetts link with the Winthrops of Groton. They also knew that many New England towns would be inviting representatives from their English 'twins' to join in the bicentennial celebrations in 1976. The Trumans thought "*Why shouldn't*

*Boxford, Mass. be a bit different? Why invite just a few people? Why not everybody?!"*

The residents of Boxford, Mass. actually invited the whole population of Boxford, Suffolk (then about 1,300) to join them for the celebrations. The numbers involved were rather larger than were really practical, so in the end, a representative group of 76 folk of all ages took up the offer. People of Boxford between the ages of 1 and 80 assembled outside The Fleece on 23rd July 1976 to be given a good 'send-off' in coaches to Heathrow airport, to take their flight to Boston USA. They were amazed to see at check-in the board

showing "*Boxford Suffolk To Boxford Massachusetts!*" This made them feel rather special as they boarded their own chartered aircraft.

At the time Boxford, Mass. was a town of about 4,000 inhabitants widely spread over about 20 square miles. It lies 20 miles (32 km) north of Boston. In the past 50 years that population has more than doubled to 8,600. Boxford was then, and still is, a very spread out community, largely peopled by professional men and women, with few central features. It had wide streets and well-separated detached houses surrounded by trees. Little has changed today and it is currently described as



a quiet affluent town, known for its rural feel, parks and high income. It has received the prestigious *Tree City Award* for 12 consecutive years, which indicates just how forested it is.

Plans were made on both sides of the Atlantic during 1975 and early 1976. In Suffolk there were questions like: Who was to go? Who could pay the £150 for the return flights? What about passports and visas? In Massachusetts, the questions were: Where will they stay? What can we arrange for them to do and see over the two weeks? There were endless details to be sorted out and endless trans-Atlantic exchanges of information, all without email!

Our village formed a working committee: Miss Eileen Johnson, Mr Peter & Mrs Rita Blewitt from Edwardstone and Mr Christopher

Kingsbury to answer these questions. It was agreed that everyone should pay their own fare, but in order to widen the opportunity for villagers, certain individuals were sponsored. The Boxford Community Council (BCC) decided to sponsor two residents to represent the community. Villagers were asked to submit nominations for these two awards. The BCC set up a flight fund which received donations from many businesses and individuals. Mrs. Olive Tarbet, village post woman and Mr. Cecil Hughes, a bricklayer and builder, both active volunteers in Boxford, were selected from the nominations by the independent Mr T.R. McGeorge, Justice of the Peace of Mildenhall. Five students were also chosen by the English Speaking Union of Colchester for sponsorship. They were Christine Baldwin, cousins Marion

and Robin Jarmin, Nicholas Kingsbury and Juliana Swan. Mr Sykes (Jack) Tricker was sponsored by the BBC which wanted to make a documentary film of the visit, while his wife Flo was sponsored by a Travel Agent. The question for most mainly centred on who could afford the fare.

A few residents of Groton and Edwardstone also chose to go, acknowledging the strong ties there are between the villages, and also acknowledging that John Winthrop took with him a number of families from the Boxford area. For example, Kingsbury families sailed with him in 1630 and then settled elsewhere in Massachusetts. A particular



#### Opposite:

*The Evening Standard published this picture of villagers gathering on Sunday 2nd November 1975 to tell the world of their great 'Boxford to Boxford' project planned for July 1976.*

#### Right:

*Olive Tarbet and Cecil Hughes hear they have Community Council sponsorship. Mr T.R. McGeorge Justice of the Peace (centre) announces the news.*

*Mrs. Olive Tarbet, our post woman, was sponsored by the Community Council for the 1976 trip. She retired in 1986 after more than 25 years service. Olive was also a great contributor to Boxford life. She served on various committees including the Parish Council, and committees for the Flower Show, the Village Hall and the Playing Field. She captained the Woman's Institutes Dart Team for the previous six years.*

*Mr. Cecil Hughes, a bricklayer and builder was sponsored by the Community Council for the 1976 trip. Cecil was a great contributor to Boxford life serving on many committees and at the time had served on the Parish Council for 25 years. He went on to more than double that record. A lifetime's service! His son Robert later went to Boxford Mass. as part of the 1979 football team.*





was held in the Holyoke-French House and a painting of Boxford (Suffolk) was given by Mr Roger Kingsbury to Chairman of the Board of Selectman, Charles Billam. Representatives from both Boxfords made speeches.

A series of visits to interesting places took place. Plymouth, Mass., a 45 minute drive south of Boston is an important tourist and historical centre with many exhibits and relics of the early days in the founding of America. *Mayflower II* was on view, a replica built in 1957 of the original *Mayflower* which made the historic 66 day voyage in 1620, 10 years before the Winthrop party sailed. It is the site of the first settlement and has many relics from the 17th Century, including the original houses from 1636, 1640 and 1647. People remember Cecil Hughes, the builder, was greatly taken with these timber structures that were so similar to the old houses of his native

notable was John Kingsbury, born in Boxford, who then lived in Dedham, England from where he emigrated to Massachusetts and became a representative of the Great and General Court of Massachusetts.

In Boxford, Mass. the first question was easily answered. The visitors would stay in people's homes for the whole of the two weeks. It was agreed that the hosts would be responsible for looking after the guests most of the time and provide transport and meals. It was understood that the guests would do all the things that the American families would do, except when special group trips were arranged to visit places of interest. Prior to their arrival the visitors sent over their 'CVs' indicating their jobs and what they enjoyed doing. This allowed guests to be matched to hosts as far as possible.

There was a lot of interest from the media in this imaginative invitation. The first seems to have been the *London Daily Mail* of 31st October 1975 which ran a centre page spread on the two Boxfords, with stories from both sides of the Atlantic. Numerous newspapers took up the story. The East Anglian Daily Times reporter interviewed the oldest visitor, Mrs. Dora Sore (a Boxford resident for 30 years and widow of a former headmaster at the school) and the youngest, 21-month-old James Kingsbury who held tight to his father's hand. The story continued onto the back page with interviews with Mrs Olive Tarbet and Mr Cecil Hughes, the two chosen to represent the village. The BBC made a documentary about the visit, to be shown later in America and England. This can still be viewed online: <https://tinyurl.com/1976trip>

On the other side of the Atlantic

many local newspapers including *The Boston Sunday Globe* welcomed the news of the visitors from England, reporting the visit on the front page of the paper. A wide range of activities and sight-seeing took place during the visit and it was much enjoyed by both guests and hosts.

The day after the group arrived, Saturday the 24th, there was a reception and concert to welcome the guests, but after that the activities were up to the hosts with whom they stayed. *The Concert of Music* by Samuel Holyoke (1762-1820), an important composer in colonial Boxford, was held on Sunday 25th July at the First Church Congregational, Boxford. Following this an informal reception

#### Above:

*July 1976. Villagers gather in Boxford to wave farewell as the Boxford to Boxford group boards two Rules coaches for the journey to the airport, in a still from the BBC's Nationwide programme.*

#### Below:

*A lead organiser, Eileen Johnson (left) of the Boxford to Boxford Organising Committee renewing a friendship that began in England three months earlier. She is seen greeting her host in July 1976 in Massachusetts, Dorothy Adams.*







Boxford. There was a trip to Boston, the highlights of which were a visit to the Massachusetts State House and watching the famous Boston Red Sox play baseball. Another visit was to Topsfield nearby to see the 'Parson' Capen House built in 1683. At the Proctor School, the guests went to a rehearsal of the Pebblestone Players production of "Of Thee I Sing". Mr Roger Kingsbury took his golf clubs and free golf was offered at the Andover Country Club nearby to all the visitors. "The First Boxford International Golf Tournament" was held at the Far Corners Golf Club in West Boxford. A farewell game of cricket, croquet and softball was organised and the British Vice-consul in Boston, Mr John A Scholefield, turned out to play. Finally an old fashioned picnic in the backyard of the Hildebrand home was enjoyed by all. It was a pick and mix of visits, living life as the locals did.

The link continued over the following years with visits back and forth between the two Boxfords.

Some villagers fondly remember the Boxford Youth Football Club's visit of 15 members and coaches in 1979 for a tournament with a Massapequa team on Long Island. They also went on to Boxford Mass. and played a further football match with them. The



#### Left from top:

*The Massachusetts State House in Boston, Boxford guests and their hosts visited in 1976 and 2003.*

*Holyoke-French House built 1760, for Boxford Mass. third minister, Elizur Holyoke. It is owned by the Boxford Historical Society and recognised as one of New England's premier Greek revival style colonial houses in the US National Register. There are several similar houses from that period.*

#### Below:

*Before the game on 7th April 1979: Boxford Youth footballers right side and American Massapequa, Long Island footballers left. The Suffolk boys later played a game in Boxford Mass.*

*Boxford's Youth Team in red and black stripes:*

*Back Row: UK coaches (l-r) Brian Havis, (US coach Mike Graziano beard), Peter Haining (sunglasses), Brian Porter and John Kent.*

*Boys back row: Iain Laird, Paul Collins, Mark Saberton, Simón Havis, Michael Kent*

*Middle row: Andrew Porter, Jake Mead, Marc Gasson, Colín Bullen, Richard Haining*

*Front row: Barry Mattock (blue top), Daryl Gasson, Richard Stirling, Karl McDermott, Robert Hughes (Cecil's son)*

American Massapequa youths came to Boxford Suffolk in 1980.

Many villagers will remember the Boxford to Boxford exchange visit here of our American friends for the Queen's Jubilee in 2002. They were hosted at homes in our village and it





## Early Boxford connections

Extensive research suggests that it may have been residents from Boxford who helped establish 'Rowley Village' (the previous name of Boxford, Massachusetts) alongside a large group of Yorkshire folk who were amongst the first settlers. An important figure in their community was Robert Andrews, a native of Boxford in England. Emigrating to New England, he settled in Boxford about 1656, his family then consisting of his wife and 6 children. He purchased 200 acres of land from John Lambert of Rowley in July 1661 on which he erected a house. He also purchased other tracts of land in Rowley Village and in Topsfield nearby (both now a part of Boxford). He became a highly regarded farmer and his long line of descendants have been respected and honoured citizens. His daughters married locally to residents of Rowley/Boxford and have continued the line under different surnames.

Most surnames recorded in the American village archives do not appear to be folk from Boxford, Suffolk. However, a second person appearing to originate from Boxford, Suffolk is Robert Eames (Ames), also an early inhabitant. Maybe these Eames were related to Boxford through William Ames, educated here in Boxford before our Queen Elizabeth Grammar School was established. He was a religious preacher and scholar who fled to Holland to escape persecution because of his writing and religious views. Although he did not in the end emigrate to America his children did. His teaching was highly regarded by scholars and other folk in Massachusetts and underpinned much about their beliefs and faith.



was a very successful week. As part of the exchange there then followed a return group visit from Boxford to Massachusetts in September 2003, ably organised by the late Eddie Kench, former editor and publisher of the Box River News. Other small scale visits followed and some friendships resulted in more family visits back and forth, with the most recent being here in August 2025.

There were recently suggestions from the Americans that they might like to introduce a new generation to Boxford Suffolk, but it remains to be seen if organisers both sides of the water can be found! Boxford here would need a new generation to lead and manage it, and practically, current political conditions are sadly hardly conducive to such an exchange.

This article has relied on newspaper articles and 2 documents focusing on the event. Neither carried the author's

name, but grateful thanks to them anyway.

*Tina & Roger Loose*

### Above from top left:

*The Seal of Boxford Massachusetts recalls the work of the early settlers.*

*The Boxford Youth football team photographed beside their plane in 1979, before flying to the United States for their exchange visit.*

*The 2003 Boxford guests and their hosts at a reception by an elected State Representative inside the State House. You may well recognise several people still living in our village today.*





# *Suffolk's Winter Soundscape*

---

## *Why February sounds different in the countryside*

February has a sound of its own in the rural villages of Suffolk. Not silence exactly, and not winter drama either, but something clearer and more exposed. People notice it without always naming it. A car seems closer than expected. The sound of a door closing carries across the yard. A distant noise arrives with less warning than it did in autumn. This is Suffolk's winter soundscape, and it is shaped as much by physics as by habit.

Cold air carries sound more efficiently than warm air. In February, temperatures are low but relatively stable, and the air is often dense and still. Sound waves travel further and lose less energy. That is why distant roads hum more insistently, why bells feel sharper, and why everyday noises seem to reach places they usually do not. The source has not changed. The conditions around it have.

The landscape matters too. By February, the countryside is stripped back. Trees are bare. Hedges are cut. Low growth beneath trees and hedges – brambles, nettles and long grass – has collapsed into mud and leaf litter. The soft materials that normally absorb sound are absent. Fields are open and hard-edged. Sound has fewer obstacles and fewer places to settle.

In rural Suffolk, this openness is particularly noticeable. A motorbike on a B-road can be heard long before it

appears - its sound carried across fields and along cut hedges. Tyres on damp tarmac have a distinct hiss in cold air, sharper than in summer, and engines seem to arrive ahead of the vehicle itself. Late at night, a lone journey can feel oddly public, announced well beyond the road it travels.

Birdsong sits in an in-between phase. February is not yet spring, despite the occasional bright morning. Robins and wrens sing sporadically, marking territory rather than performing. Great Tits begin short, repeated calls that act as early signals. The dawn chorus exists, but it is patchy and easily missed, especially on overcast days. With fewer birds vocalising at once, individual calls stand out more clearly against the background.

Human noise shifts too. February is a practical month. Hedge cutting, tree work, ditch clearing, and road repairs all happen now, before nesting season and before growth returns. These are functional sounds: engines idling, metal against metal, the rhythm of work rather than display. There is less social noise outdoors. Fewer voices drift from gardens. Fewer doors are left open. The sound of movement replaces the sound of gathering.

Heating systems add their own layer. Boilers cycle more frequently in sustained cold. Pipes click and expand. Fans hum. These domestic sounds are

always there, but in February, with less competing noise and better sound travel, they are easier to hear.

Nights have a particular quality. February nights are still long, but the sounds of distant traffic and barking dogs travel clearly across sleeping villages.

With no leaves on the trees, little birdsong, and few open windows, single sounds travel unchallenged.

One curious effect of winter is that the difference between town and countryside narrows. In summer, rural and urban places sound very different. In February, both are stripped back. Villages feel more exposed. Built-up areas feel less buffered. The contrast softens.

As winter loosens its grip, most attention goes to what can be seen: buds, light, colour returning at the edges. What is easier to miss is how quickly what we hear also begins to change.

It is the result of air density, bare vegetation, and seasonal patterns of work and wildlife. Suffolk does not just look different in winter. It sounds different too.

As spring approaches, leaves will return, birds will fill the gaps, and warmer air will blunt the edges. For now, February offers clarity. Sound travels. Details carry. The countryside is briefly easier to hear.



# Ageing Gracefully

---

## *Caring for our senior pets*

There is a particular kind of joy that comes from sharing life with an older pet. Their faces become grey, their routines become familiar, and their companionship settles into something wonderfully steady. As a veterinary practice, we are privileged to support families through every stage of that journey, and one of the questions we are asked most often is how best to care for pets as they enter their senior years.

Ageing is a natural process, but it brings changes that can be surprisingly subtle. Cats and dogs are remarkably good at masking discomfort, so owners often tell us their pet is “just slowing down.” Small shifts in behaviour, such as a dog hesitating before jumping into the car, or a cat sleeping in a different spot, can be early clues that their needs are changing. Not every change signals illness, but noticing them early gives us the best chance to keep pets comfortable and thriving.

Nutrition plays a significant role in supporting older pets. Senior diets are carefully formulated to meet the changing needs of ageing bodies. These foods often contain joint supporting supplements, controlled levels of protein and phosphorus

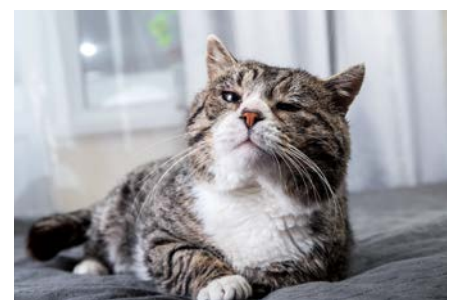
to promote kidney health, and antioxidants to support cognitive function. Maintaining a healthy weight becomes increasingly important, as even a small amount of excess weight can put additional strain on joints and organs.

Mobility is another area where small adjustments can make a big difference. Stiffness, reluctance to exercise, or difficulty rising after rest can be signs of arthritis, a condition we can manage very effectively with the right support. Gentle, regular exercise helps keep joints supple, while ramps, nonslip mats, and orthopaedic beds can make everyday life more comfortable. For dogs, shorter but more frequent walks are often ideal. For cats, providing low level climbing options and easily accessible resting places can help them stay active without strain. Many pets need anti-inflammatory support or medication in their older years. This can hugely improve their day-to-day comfort and quality of life.

One of the most important things we can do for senior pets is maintain regular health checks. As animals age, their bodies work a little harder, and conditions such as kidney disease, arthritis, diabetes, and thyroid disorders become more common. These

illnesses often develop gradually with subtle changes in their thirst, appetite or toileting habits. Routine check-ups allows us to spot early signs, monitor weight and mobility, and tailor advice to each pet's individual needs. And, if any of these changes are seen sooner, get in touch with your local veterinary team. Simple tests, such as a blood sample or urine check, can give us the opportunity to intervene early and improve quality of life.

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical health. Older pets may not have the same energy they once did, but they still benefit enormously from enrichment and engagement. Puzzle feeders, scent games, and gentle training sessions can keep dogs mentally stimulated, while cats often enjoy interactive toys, cosy hiding





spots, and opportunities to watch the world go by from a warm window sill. Maintaining a predictable routine can also help reduce anxiety, particularly for pets experiencing age related cognitive changes.

Comfort at home becomes increasingly important as pets age. Something as simple as raising food and water bowls to a comfortable height can ease strain on the neck and back. Cats may appreciate litter trays with lower sides, especially if they have arthritis. Ensuring pets have warm, draught free sleeping areas can help soothe stiff joints, and keeping essentials (beds, bowls, litter trays) on one level of the house can make life easier for those who struggle with stairs.

Perhaps the most meaningful part of caring for a senior pet is the time we spend with them. Older animals often become more affectionate, more attuned to our routines, and more appreciative of quiet companionship. A slow wander around the garden, a gentle grooming session, or simply sitting together on the sofa can be deeply comforting for both pet and owner. These shared moments remind us why we cherish them so much.

Caring for an ageing pet can sometimes feel emotional or uncertain, but you are never alone in it. Your veterinary team is here to offer support, reassurance, and practical advice tailored to your pet's unique needs. Whether you are noticing subtle changes or simply want to make sure you are doing everything you can to keep your companion comfortable, we are always happy to help. With attentive care, early intervention, and plenty of love, our senior cats and dogs can enjoy their golden years with dignity, comfort, and joy.

*Dr. Jessica Hudson BVMedSci (Hons) BVM BVS (Hons)*  
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# Marketing Today

## *Making sense of what matters in marketing (& what doesn't)*



Marketing is everywhere. We see it on our phones, on billboards, in shop windows, and increasingly woven into everyday conversations. And yet, despite how familiar it feels, marketing often gets misunderstood. Not because people

aren't capable of understanding it, but because it's rarely explained in plain terms. Working in marketing for over a decade, one thing I've noticed time and time again is a quiet gap between what businesses think people want to see, and what audiences actually respond to. Good intentions are there. Effort is there. But the connection doesn't always land in the way it's hoped.

Many businesses, from solo founders to well-established organisations, spend a lot of time trying to second-guess their audience. What should we say? How should we say it? What are other people doing? The result is often marketing that looks polished, professional, and technically 'correct', but feels strangely distant. What tends to matter most in marketing today is not perfection, but recognition. People want to recognise themselves in the businesses they support. They want to

understand who they're buying from, what makes them different, and why they do what they do. That applies whether you're a local café, a growing consultancy, or a company operating at scale.

Humanising marketing isn't about sharing everything or being informal for the sake of it. It's about clarity. Letting people see the thinking behind the business, the people behind the decisions, and the values behind the brand. When marketing feels human, it becomes easier to trust. Trust is what drives long-term success. Another thing that genuinely matters is restraint. There's a temptation to fill every gap with content, to be present everywhere, all the time. But more activity doesn't automatically mean better marketing. Often, it's the businesses that choose their moments carefully, speak clearly, and stay consistent over time that stand out most.

On the other side of the conversation, there are things that don't matter quite as much as people are led to believe. Over-polishing, for one. In an age where automation and artificial intelligence are becoming part of everyday work, audiences are increasingly sensitive to content that feels too perfect. When everything is overly curated, it can raise questions rather than build confidence.

The same applies to buzzwords and

rigid rules. Marketing is often discussed in absolutes, quality versus quantity, organic versus paid, new platforms versus old ones. In reality, there is no single formula that works for everyone. Every business is different, and good marketing adapts to that reality rather than forcing itself into a one-size-fits-all approach.

What I'd like readers to take away from this is reassurance. Marketing doesn't have to be loud, complicated, or exhausting to be effective. At its best, it's thoughtful, intentional, and understandable. It should support a business rather than overwhelm it. Based in Suffolk, I work with businesses locally and further afield, and the most successful ones all share this in common. They focus less on what they think they should be doing, and more on what actually makes sense for them and their audience.

Over the coming months, this column will explore some of those ideas. What's worth paying attention to. What's worth letting go of. And how marketing can feel more grounded and more useful for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Because when marketing is clear, it becomes far more powerful.

Xandrina Allday  
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[www.alldaymarketing.co.uk](http://www.alldaymarketing.co.uk)



# *The History Behind the News*

*A Groton History Society look at how America's past shapes its politics and foreign policy today*

The news is coming thick and fast out of America, quoting historical precedent, manifest rights and comparisons to previous times in different places. The Administration wants this or wants that, declaring it's right and using its might to get it. "What do they want? Why do they want it?". Good questions. Does history have the answers? Lets take a look at the following recent 'wants'...

Canada must become the 51st state? To be fair they wanted it to be the 14th, way back in 1776, when independence from Britain was declared. Britain had secured Canada from a defeated France after the Seven Years War - General Wolfe and the Abraham Heights of Quebec and all that. After the Treaty of Paris in 1783 that ended the Revolutionary War, Britain decided to keep Canada along with its Caribbean colonies.

The nascent United States, free from Britain's tight rein on colonial

expansion, unleashed their wagons in search of new land to exploit, westward towards the Pacific. At the same time they wanted to 'go North' too. Britain continued to support Native Americans, much to the United States' annoyance. This all came to blows in the War of 1812-15.



The United States could not deliver a knockout blow so the status quo remained. Canada was part of Britain's Empire and that was that, for now. They had not given up and would come back again.

But for now, "Go West young man! Forge the great American Empire, the plains are American." Still a young and nervous nation, the ever-present threat of European Great Power intervention in their imperialist quest continued to bother them. They deemed this continental empire building their *manifest destiny*.

So in 1823 President Monroe mused such worries in only three paragraphs contained in his State of the Union address. His message, for that is all it was, was effectively a statement that in his view, Europe should "stay out" of our space. If they stayed out of our space, America would stay out of Europe's.

Actually, this was first proposed by





the British as a bilateral agreement, legal with binds. Monroe preferred a unilateral, informal, off-the-cuff statement, with no legal basis, nor any congressional agreement. On closer inspection, it was really simply an acceptance that existing European colonies were fine and dandy, but *"please, no more! We want them!"*

This *Monroe Doctrine*, as it is referred to, has been quoted as the historical 'right' for the current 'backyard' intervention in Venezuela. Ergo the 'Donroe Doctrine'.

For the next 80 years American expansion focused on squaring the continent, with its expanding immigrant-led white settlers taking all the land between the Atlantic and Pacific on its continent, except Canada and Mexico. It is not until the end of the 19th century that American territorial expansion tentacled outwith into neighbouring areas, eg Puerto Rico, Panama, Cuba.



Ever more yearning to be a big boy at the big boys' table (the bigger boys were still European!), they looked around them for a wider sphere of influence, a 'backyard playground' for them only. So, following a 1902-3 Venezuela Debt Crisis, in which European blockading of Venezuela to

force debt repayments, America took this as a perceived threat to American national security with dastardly Europeans bullying the small boys in the 'backyard'.

In 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt added a forceful Corollary to the *Monroe Doctrine* of 1823. This formalised the position of the Western Hemisphere, America's 'backyard', focusing on Latin and Central America. It justified 'international policing power' and the use of military force was a tool the Policeman threatened to use. This was a clear *"This is our space, stay out, full stop. Or else!"*

*"Eighty years of fighting for freedom and leading the Free World appears to occupy a rear seat."*

It is Roosevelt's *Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine* that has been the justification for numerous American interventions in their 'backyard'. Since 1958, America has exerted its 'right' and intervened in Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, Grenada, Nicaragua and currently Venezuela.



#### Opposite page from top:

1904 cartoon Theodore Roosevelt and his Big Stick in the Caribbean  
James Monroe White House portrait painting circa 1819

#### This page from top:

Greenland's place in America's strategic 'backyard' – owned by Denmark, eyed by Washington.

Photograph of Theodore Roosevelt in 1904

1896 political cartoon Uncle Sam stands with rifle between the outrageously dressed European figures and the native dress wearing representatives of Nicaragua and Venezuela



Following the end of WW2, the perceived threats were anti-communism and instability. Today it is China, Russia and instability, as well as a thirst for others' resources required to *Make America Great Again*. This local hemispherical focus is front and centre in the recently published 2025 *National Security Strategy*.

Ironically, almost a position of wanting to stay out of European affairs, a la 1823? Venezuela as the 51st state? Absolutely not. America has historically chosen not to incorporate any non-white land into its United States. It chose not to do so with Mexico, when it clearly could have done, after its defeat by them. Roosevelt was clear about this in 1904.

Eighty years of fighting for freedom and leading the Free World appears to occupy a rear seat. *America First*, in foreign policy terms, is less predictable than it has been over that period, less certain too. Transactional rather than doctrinal, deals to be made in American self-interest rather than for peace, prosperity and democracy. This is a fundamental change to recent history. Should really be called the 'Doncorollary'! But I guess that might sound too much like a nasty old man's medical procedure?! (Must improve my grammar.)

So, is Greenland now in the 'backyard'? It depends from where one looks. From a Greenlander and a Danish perspective...no.

Erik the Red first settled on Greenland in 986. Not an official expedition, more

akin to a freebooting escape from Iceland to make a fresh start. Land settlement did not survive throughout the next 700 years, though 'ownership' was settled.

Norway laid claim, establishing a Protectorate in 1261, followed by Danish co-ownership in the 1397 unification of Denmark and Norway. A recolonisation by Denmark started in 1721. It wasn't until 1814 that Denmark took sole ownership, after having to cede Norway to Sweden during the Napoleonic Wars.

*“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”*

*– Mark Twain*

Constitutionally Greenland was formally incorporated into the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953, achieving Home Rule in 1979 and then Self Rule in 2009. This effectively gave Greenland its own sovereignty, albeit not its independence yet. No obstruction to this other than sustainability and a referendum.

That is not to say that America has only just become interested in Greenland. Oh no. They have wanted Greenland for its resources since the mid 19th century, trying to obtain both Greenland and Canada in 1867, failing on both counts.

They came back again in 1916, again Denmark stated Greenland was not for sale, but America could buy the Danish West Indies instead! So became the US Virgin Islands.

They even offered \$100m in 1946, having occupied Greenland during WW2 to protect the North Atlantic convoy routes. Same answer but defence agreements were reached and US military presence was established, that became part of NATO defence after 1949. Denmark was a co-founder of the Alliance. Recently American military presence has significantly reduced, down to just one base.

Maybe climate-changing ice erosion is causing a total rethink on American national security dependency on Greenland, or is it the minerals? The US eye has seen a 'backyard' for many years, though that 'yard' is owned by an ally!

One could argue that President Reagan viewed Argentina as a 'backyarder' in 1982, given his initial reluctance to support Britain. Then, unlike now, Europe and the Cold War were the primary focus and the alliance top-trumped the 'backyard', with Reagan effectively stepping aside to let Margaret Thatcher's armada sort the Falklands out. Different times, different threats to America First then.

Domestic news emerging daily from America is increasingly causing historians to look back in time for clues. Many historians, observers and leading players fear the erosion of the Founding Fathers' guardrails, established to vehemently not enable kingship or 'Mad Man' syndrome.

They are contained in the US Constitution and its three equal pillars of governance, each one serving to check and balance the other two. Ratified by the newly independent

#### **Above:**

*United States Capitol building, which is the meeting place of the U.S. Congress.*



states in 1789, it has had amendments added over time to strengthen it and broaden the rights contained within.

There is worrying fear in America that the Executive is overreaching, the Legislative is subservient and under-checking, whilst the Judiciary is letting it all happen. The US Constitution has been hailed, by some, as the best democratic model for governance in the free world.

Indeed, the Weimar Republic looked more in the American and French direction than to the British model. Hugo Preuss' resulting Weimar Constitution gained praise internationally. However, that praised constitutional model was dismantled within less than a year in 1933.

Circumstances are very different, but the process of constitutional dismantling has been learned by recent authoritarian leaders like Erdogan in Turkey and Orban in Hungary. They have adopted elements of the process but have changed the outcome, to look like democracy and not totalitarianism.

Political scientists call this Competitive Authoritarianism.

So why is this a fear to some people in America? Simplistically, if a leader does not lose power, critics must be silenced, the single message has to be delivered by controlled media,

the opposition must be vilified, the judiciary pliant, a dehumanised bogeyman must fan the nationalist flame to stir the people, a paramilitary force must generate fear and suppression and then an existential state of emergency has to be called to cease the democratic process.

That, simplistically, is the 1933 model.

Many historians though, like the excellent Heather Cox Richardson, think that Mark Twain's '*rhymes of history*' are getting too loud. JD Vance just stated "*ICE will start going door to door*", invoking Brown Shirt/Gestapo imagery, albeit in camo and masked faces. Not since the western outlaws and the KKK has masked terror been on the streets of America.

The Administration's defence of ICE's killing of Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis has Orwellian 1984 quotes being popularised - "*The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their most essential command.*"

A lot can happen or not happen over the coming months. We should look back in 12 months' time and see if history is 'rhyming' or not. If then November midterms happen and are fair...?

Nigel Chapman  
nigeljchap@gmail.com

## Upcoming Events

### Who Were The Great Monarchs of England / United Kingdom

Thursday 26th February

Open to all to nominate candidates and or participate in the discussion. Who do you think?

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

Friday 27th March

Dr Michael Reynolds is ex SIS/MI6 of 29yrs, former Head of MI6 anti Terrorism and Head of Berlin Station, spanning the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

### Reggie and the RAF: the Air Force's Part in WW1 and a Pilot's Short Story

Thursday 23rd April

This is brought to us by David Hearn, former head teacher, military and aviation history researcher and enthusiast.

### A History Tour of Harwich, with Andy Schooler

Friday 21st May:

Andy Schooler is chair of Harwich Society. Harwich has a fascinating history. Andy is also keen to host a tour of historic Harwich later in the year.

### Victoria and Abdul, by Shrabani Basu

End June ( date tbd )

Shrabani Basu is a journalist and author of the book that was adapted to produce the 2017 feature film of the same name.

## Recommended Reading, Listening & Viewing

### '1984' by George Orwell.

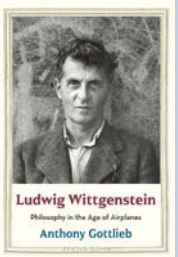
Timeless and still very relevant. See above!



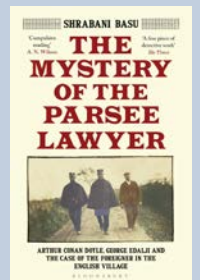
George Orwell  
Nineteen Eighty-Four

### 'Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophy in the Age of Airplanes' by Anthony Gottlieb.

A brisk, human-scale portrait showing how a famously difficult thinker lived, argued, and worried his way through the modern world.

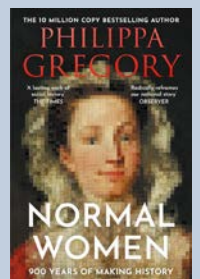


### 'The Mystery of the Parsee Lawyer: Arthur Conan Doyle, George Edalji and the Case of the Foreigner in the English Village' by Shrabani Basu.



### Normal Women: Nine Hundred Years of Making History by Philippa Gregory

A landmark work that radically redefines our understanding of the extraordinary roles ordinary women played throughout British history



### 'The Beatles: When fame and genius collide' from The Rest Is History Podcast with Conan O'Brien



### 'The Bomb - Kennedy and Khrushchev' on BBC Sounds.

Analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis.



### Digging for Britain on BBC iPlayer.

Digs continue to uncover major Iron Age and Roman archaeological finds.





## Are you looking to make a difference?

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

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**HOME  
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Suffolk

## Give a little time, make a big difference

Looking back to the beginning of the year, many of us will have made New Year's resolutions. But have you managed to stick with them, or have they gone out the window already?

Volunteering is something positive you can do that makes a big difference and you won't give up on easily. It can offer a rewarding experience where you learn new skills and meet new people, all while contributing to your local community.

At Home-Start Suffolk, volunteers play a crucial role in supporting families and helping to give children the best start in life. Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. We wouldn't be able to provide the family support services that we offer without them.



Family and volunteer in lounge - Credit Andrew Aitchison

You might be wondering why people give up their time to help others for free. Well, our volunteers often say they get as much out of it as they put in.

Our volunteers often tell us that volunteering with us benefits them in the following ways:

1. Improves mental wellbeing
2. Creates a sense of purpose
3. Builds meaningful connections
4. Learning new skills

If you're interested in making a difference in your local community, you can explore our volunteer opportunities at Home-Start Suffolk.

And if volunteering isn't for you, there are other ways to support local families, including taking part in the Home-Start Hike.

Find out more at [homestartinsuffolk.org](http://homestartinsuffolk.org).



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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:

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- Volunteers to become Reading Coaches
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Janet Weavers  
[suffolkpioneer@readeasy.org.uk](mailto:suffolkpioneer@readeasy.org.uk)

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# *The River Stour*

## *Your local natural wonder*

For generations the River Stour has occupied a central position in the working lives and leisure activities of people living on its banks. It is one of the most attractive rivers in the country, winding through a wide pastoral and wooded valley, past towns and villages of great beauty and with a rich history.

The River Stour Trust was set up to improve access and navigation and to encourage use of the river. Since its foundation in 1968, the trust has helped preserve the Stour which was at risk of falling into abandonment. We can now see large numbers of anglers, rowers, canoeists and paddle-boarders enjoying the river. The River Stour Trust also led the Clean Water Initiative which brought about the Bathing Water designation of the river at Friars Meadow in Sudbury in 2024.

Over the years the trust has been able to reinstate the locks at Flatford, Cornard, Stratford St Mary and, more recently, Dedham, allowing greater access to and use of the Stour Navigation. In recent years we have

also had a traditional 46-foot Stour Lighter restored - the 'John Constable' now regularly operates trips from Sudbury to Henny - definitely a unique experience and great way to enjoy the river and its history.

The trust runs regular boat trips from Flatford and Sudbury on our fleet of mostly electric launches that enable hundreds of visitors every year, including wheelchair passengers, to experience the beauty and wildlife of the River Stour. Iconic creatures such as kingfisher, grebe, water vole and otter have all been spotted on the river. If you would like to explore this amazing part of our countryside by taking a river trip on one of our boats, please get in touch by visiting [www.riverstourtrust.org](http://www.riverstourtrust.org) or calling the RST office on 01787 313199.

Apart from running and maintaining the trip boats at Flatford and Sudbury, our volunteers also operate a much-appreciated tea room at the Granary in Sudbury and help with numerous visits by local schools to our visitor education centre at Cornard Lock,

enabling children to learn about the river's history and ecology. Volunteers also help to maintain the numerous jetties and keep the river itself in good condition by clearing fallen trees, encroaching reeds and other obstacles to navigation to benefit both the wildlife and all river users.

*The River Stour Trust*

## *Volunteers Welcome!*

Perhaps you feel you could get involved in the work of the RST by training to join our boat crews, helping with the river maintenance group, joining the team in the tearoom or helping out with school visits and other events?

If so, we'd love to hear from you - please email our volunteer coordinators Jim Lunn and Duncan Howlett:

[jimlunn@live.co.uk](mailto:jimlunn@live.co.uk)  
[dhow921568@aol.com](mailto:dhow921568@aol.com)





# This Month in the Garden

## *Grecian style to inspire garden dreams*

Greece feels like the home of my soul, not only because of my maternal bloodline but because being there awakens my senses and reconnects me with treasured childhood memories. I remember my great Greek aunts dancing around us, full of



warmth and joy, and that same spirit runs through Greek gardens.

The sun-kissed plants of Greece, sweet and savoury, mingle with the salt air of the Aegean and create a landscape that feels alive with colour and scent. Powerful purples, oranges and pinks burst from flowering climbers such as bougainvillea, trumpet vine and honeysuckle, softening walls and drawing you down alleyways that might otherwise go unnoticed. It's a reminder of how climbers can be used effectively to add height, shade and drama in any garden.

If I had to describe my own style, I would call it Grecian. It's where everything I love about gardening comes together: Mediterranean plants, perennial wild herbs, seasonal edibles and natural finds like shells, stones and driftwood. This mix creates gardens that feel relaxed and abundant, rather than overly controlled.

Greek gardens are unapologetically bold. Colours clash and ooze,

contrasts are strong, and plants insist on being noticed. Yet this visual richness is balanced by practicality: many of the plants grown are tough, drought-tolerant and productive. The flavours of freshly grown food linger long after harvest, proving that beauty and usefulness can comfortably coexist.

At the heart of Grecian gardening is passion and pride. Gardening isn't about fashion or trends; it's simply part of everyday life, tied closely to food, family and entertaining. Plants are grown because they're useful, meaningful and well suited to the







environment, not because they're currently in vogue.

On the Greek islands, gardening is often about returning to life's simple pleasures. From an early morning walk through 'crazy-paved' streets scented with fresh bread and coffee, to evening strolls overwhelmed by jasmine, planting is everywhere. Balconies overflow with upcycled containers holding succulents, culinary herbs, pelargoniums and osteospermums. Where there is a window or a wall there's a way! Even the smallest spaces

#### Opposite clockwise from top:

*Traditional whitewashed house on Paros, where vivid bougainvillea softens stone and lime-washed walls - a classic expression of the Greek garden tradition, blending architecture, climate, and colour.*

*Callistemon citrinus 'Splendens' is a stunner with bottlebrush flowers and aromatic leaves*

*The passion flower (Passiflora caerulea) is named due to its intricate flower anatomy symbolising the Christian allegory of the 'passion of Christ'*

#### Above from top :

*Silver leafed Russian Sage (Salvia yangii, formerly Perovskia) flower loved by bees & butterflies*

*Every garden deserves a Salvia*

#### Right from top:

*My suitcase planter packed with sunloving succulents*

*No Greek garden is complete without cats - This is my Ambrose 'Alexander the Great' Woodgate insisting on that fact!*

*Photos © R V Woodgate*



are used creatively, proving that lack of land is never an excuse not to grow something.

Aromatic plants are a particular feature of Greek gardens. Herbs such as rosemary, oregano, thyme and salvias are grown close to living spaces, where they release scent when brushed past and help deter unwanted insects. These plants are resilient, wildlife-friendly and invaluable in the kitchen, making them ideal choices for low-maintenance gardens.

Greek gardeners are also comfortable with repetition. The same reliable plants are grown year after year, harvested regularly and respected for what they offer. There is little interest in chasing new trends or copying other styles, and that consistency gives Greek gardens their timeless quality.

After all, how could the flavour of sun-ripened tomatoes, the scent of citrus and pine, or the presence of an ancient olive tree ever go out of fashion? Gardening the Greek way is, at its core, classic: rooted, practical and deeply connected to place.

*Happy gardening all,  
Rachael (aka 'Red Squirrel')  
[redsquirrelgardensforwellbeing@  
gmail.com](mailto:redsquirrelgardensforwellbeing@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/  
redsquirrelgardens](https://www.facebook.com/redsquirrelgardens)*



# Plant ideas for a Grecian-inspired garden

## Climbers

*(for walls, fences and pergolas)*

- Bougainvillea (container-grown in the UK, overwinter frost-free)
- Honeysuckle (excellent hardy alternative)
- Trumpet vine (Campsis)
- Star jasmine (Trachelospermum, sheltered position)

## Aromatic herbs

*(low maintenance and drought tolerant)*

- Rosemary
- Oregano
- Thyme
- Sage
- Salvias (ornamental and culinary)

## Flowers for pots and small spaces

- Pelargoniums (geraniums)
- Osteospermums
- Lavender
- Succulents (Sedum, Echeveria, Sempervivum)

## Mediterranean Edibles

- Tomatoes (especially grown in pots or greenhouses)
- Citrus trees (container-grown)
- Bay (Laurus nobilis)
- Olive (best grown in pots in cooler climates)

## Design principle: let scent guide your layout

Rather than spreading fragrant plants evenly, Greek gardens concentrate scent where it will be most noticed. Herbs and jasmine are positioned beside doorways, paths and seating areas so they release aroma when brushed past. This simple design choice adds atmosphere without extra planting and makes small gardens feel richer and more immersive.

## Design tip

Group plants with similar water needs, use free-draining compost, and position scented plants near paths, doors and seating areas to maximise their impact.

# Hadleigh Patient Participation Group (PPG)

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

**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](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

## Reducing Medicine

**Waste:** A friendly reminder that changes to the arrangements for automatic repeat prescriptions means patients have to re-order their medicines according to their needs. 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](http://www.hadleighhealth.co.uk/news/changes-to-repeat-prescriptions) or ask your pharmacist for details.

**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.

**Clinical Pharmacist:** If you are referred to a 'clinical pharmacist' you may be unsure about their role in the practice. The following explanation may help. A clinical pharmacist is a fully trained healthcare professional who is a medicines expert. They work closely with the GP's practice team, advising them and patients of the safest and appropriate medicine for their needs. They monitor drugs taken for long term conditions e.g. asthma, diabetes, check dosage amounts and compatibility. Their appointments give patients an opportunity to discuss their concerns while freeing up GPs time for patients with more complex health needs. Having a clinical pharmacist in the practice means better access to professional advice and safer use of medicines. Should you have any questions about your medication the clinical pharmacist is there to help.



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 3rd February** from 10am to 12noon. Booking is essential as places are limited. Contact Tracey [info@communitiestogether-ea.org](mailto: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](http://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](http://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 we 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](mailto:jen.eastwood8@gmail.com)

**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.

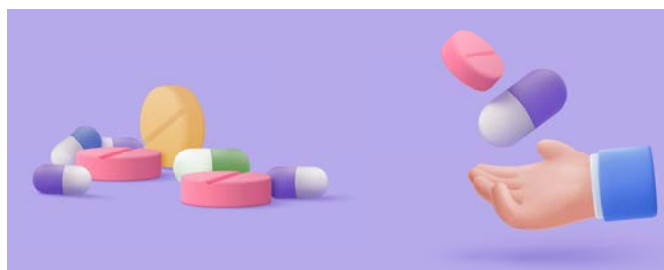


**Art Exhibition:** For the next few weeks patients will be able to enjoy the work of Nanette Ward. Her work is for sale with a percentage of the sale price going to the practice's charitable trust. Contact Jan Devey and not the receptionists if one of her pictures catches your eye.

**Website:** [www.hadleighhealth.co.uk](http://www.hadleighhealth.co.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/HadleighHealthCentre](https://www.facebook.com/HadleighHealthCentre)

**PPG Chair/ Art Work:** Jan Devey [deveys@btinternet.com](mailto:deveys@btinternet.com)  
**01473 827091 or 07881 798999**



**Anima:** Thanks to more patients making use of Anima, the 8am appointment rush is reducing but it could be even better. 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](http://www.hadleighhealth.co.uk/anima) or [www.nhs.uk/nhs-app](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app)

All applications for an appointment via Anima are checked by a doctor. He or she will decide the best course of action for you i.e. a telephone or a face to face appointment and then advise you.





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# Love Makes the World go Round

## *How different countries mark Valentine's Day*

Valentine's Day often presents itself as a universal celebration of romance, complete with red roses, chocolates and carefully timed dinner reservations. In reality, the way February 14th is marked around the world is far more varied, and in some places decidedly odd to us. Step beyond the familiar and it starts to look less like a single event and more like a collection of cultural misunderstandings loosely stitched together with heart-shaped motifs.

### **Japan: chocolate with conditions**

In Japan, Valentine's Day traditionally runs in reverse. On 14th February, it is women who give gifts (usually chocolate) to men. Not all chocolate is equal, however. There is *giri-choco* (obligation chocolate), given out of duty to colleagues and acquaintances, and *honmei-choco* (true feelings chocolate), reserved for genuine romantic interest. Exactly one month later, on *Howaito Dē* (White Day), men are expected to return the favour, often with gifts that are much more expensive than the originals. Romance here comes with a spreadsheet.

### **South Korea: a calendar of affection**

One Valentine's Day a year is not enough for South Korea. There's a love-themed day on the 14th of every month: Kiss Day, Rose Day, Hug Day, even Black Day, when single people gather to eat bowls of *jjajangmyeon* (black noodles) and commiserate together. It's hard to know whether it makes being single more bearable or simply more organised.



### **China: Love by Numbers**

In China they have the *Qixi Festival*, sometimes called *Chinese Valentine's Day*, which falls in late summer. Modern celebrations often revolve around numerology, with couples giving gifts or money in amounts whose numbers sound like romantic phrases when spoken aloud. For example, certain digit combinations translate phonetically to "I love you" or "forever together". It's all about the coded meaning.

### **Finland: friendship first**

Elsewhere, Valentine's Day takes a more communal turn. In parts of Finland, 14th February is known as '*Ystävänäpäivä*' (Friend's Day) rather than a strictly romantic occasion. Cards and small gifts are exchanged between friends, classmates and family members, and the emphasis is on connection rather than courtship. Couples still exist, of course, but they do not monopolise the day. It is a model that quietly avoids much of the pressure associated with Valentine's elsewhere.





#### Germany: lucky pigs

In parts of Germany, Valentine's Day symbolism has taken an unexpectedly porcine turn. Alongside hearts and flowers, pigs frequently appear as lucky charms associated with love and desire. Chocolates shaped like pigs, pig-themed cards and figurines are not uncommon. It is less *"my darling"* and more *"my lucky pork"*, but the sentiment is meant sincerely.

#### Scotland: humiliation breeds affection

In parts of Scotland Valentine's Day was once marked by ritualised mockery. Young men and women could be publicly paired off by drawing names, after which friends were permitted, encouraged even, to tease them mercilessly about their supposed match. Romance began with embarrassment, apparently, and survived only if it had a sense of humour.

#### Brazil: Carnival first, then love

Then there are places where Valentine's Day has been adapted, or resisted, entirely. In Brazil, the main celebration of love does not occur in February at all. Instead, *'Dia dos Namorados'* is held in June, avoiding competition with the national obsession with Carnival and placing romance firmly back on the calendar once the streets are clear.

#### The Philippines: marriage en masse

In the Philippines, Valentine's Day has become famous for mass weddings, where hundreds or even thousands of couples are married in a single ceremony on 14th February. These events are often organised by local governments or charities and held in public spaces such as sports halls or town squares. For some couples, the appeal is romantic, a shared declaration made memorable by scale. For others, it is a practical solution to legal fees and paperwork. Either way, the spectacle strips the day of intimacy and replaces it with logistics, reminding us that love can also be administrative.

#### France: shouting into the void

In some rural French traditions, unmarried people once gathered at night to shout the names of potential partners outside their houses. If the interest wasn't returned, the named person might simply stay silent or extinguish their lights. The rejected then regrouped to burn images of the spurners and complain loudly about them. Subtlety was not the goal.

Seen this way, Valentine's Day becomes less a rigid script and more a cultural canvas. Whether it involves chocolate accounting, lucky pigs, shared noodles or mass ceremonies, the day reveals as much about social habits as it does about love itself. And if nothing else, it should reassure us that however awkward Valentine's Day may feel locally, somewhere else in the world they are probably doing it in a way that seems even stranger.

Jessica Pembroke

## French's Care Haven

Hello to our readers, I hope as always you have been keeping well.

A date for your diary: **Sunday 29th March** for our dog walk which all have enjoyed when they have come along on previous walks with us.

Meet at French's base in Castling Heath at 11am, for our walk which people with or without dogs are invited. On return there will be drinks, tea and cakes and we kindly ask for £5 per person, you can

also meet our animals, Frankie one of our donkeys (in the photo) will be happy to say hello.

So far this year it has been a wet, soggy and very muddy time for us at the farm. While this brings its challenges, at least we are fortunate to have plenty of shelters for our animals to go into. These are dry, well stocked, and always filled with plenty of hay for our horses and donkeys to munch on while keeping out of the rain and wind. Being able to offer them that comfort makes a huge difference during prolonged spells of bad weather.

These shelters are also a blessing for them in the summer, when it is hot and the nuisances of flies are bugging them all through the day. Not only do the shelters provide a cool place to stand when hot, for some reason flies do not go inside the shelters. In the herds field when they are being harassed by flies you see them cantering down to their shelters and once inside they drop their heads in relaxation and breath with relief. To me the shelters are a must for all our animals, whether it is the winter or summer, they make such a difference to their daily life.

#### Help us secure a future for our animals

We are still desperately looking for 20-30 acres of grazing land up to approximately a 10 mile radius around this area and Hadleigh, Polstead, if possible.

Do you own land and can sell to us? Do you know someone who does and can help? Can you put feelers out for us please and contact me if you have any ideas or know of someone to approach, or if you are in a position to sell. Our animals are our priority and we want them to continue seeing their life out with us being the old and happy souls they are and at the moment we are looking to become homeless.

We have 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](mailto:jann.turner@hotmail.co.uk)

[www.frenchscarehaven.org.uk](http://www.frenchscarehaven.org.uk)





# The Blooming Garden

## *The Question of Colour*

By the time February comes along, winter seems to have been going on forever. In the bleak, colourless days, I am reminded of Reginald Farrer, the great gardener and explorer, who shared my dislike of the cold, dark months. He wrote: *"One begins to feel that one's optic nerves are wasting and withering for lack of daylight and that, in a little while, one will have dwindled into a white-eyed troglodyte"*. There isn't much bright colour in the garden right now to brighten up our retinas, winter blooms seem to be pastel and rely on fragrance rather than vivid hues to attract pollinators.

The whole question of colour and how we perceive it is fascinating. The Ancient Greeks seemed to describe saturation of hues rather than colours. They didn't even have a word for blue

and Homer famously wrote about the *"wine-dark sea"*. Elsewhere, he talked of a copper sky and green honey. During the nineteenth century, scientists travelled widely to study what they considered to be primitive societies and discovered many tribes whose language had no word for blue. Gladstone actually thought that this was because they hadn't evolved sufficiently to see colour, which is of course nonsense. Like other scientists of his day, he even had a word for it, *'acayanoblepsia'* or blue-blindness. This theory was finally abandoned when it was realised that non-recognition of blue was linguistic rather than perceptual. Today, blue is voted the favourite colour of everybody round the world.

Everybody's visual system is unique.

Apparently, 8% of men lack one or more fully functional cone type which reduces their perception of colour. A small number of women possess a fourth cone and experience an extra dimension of colour. Apart from differences in perception, how we describe colour influences how we see it. It seems that language trains our brains to see differently. If we have a name for a distinct hue then we notice it. But how much we like it is probably culturally influenced. The gorgeous and very rare ultramarine, lapis lazuli, so beloved by renaissance artists, was incredibly expensive and a wonderful way of showing off the wealth of donors. For instance, Titian's glorious *Bacchus and Ariadne* was a virtuoso performance of the most costly pigments. In Roman times, the



fabulous Tyrian purple was for the Emperor and it was treasonous for anyone else to wear it. It was made by crushing a type of shellfish and salting and boiling it in a complex process.

But it wasn't just Renaissance artists and Roman emperors who gloried in rich colours. One looks at sepia photographs of Victorians and one forgets how the in the nineteenth century people were crazy for rich colours in their clothes, their houses and their gardens. The Edwardians were probably reacting to this in their craze for white or pastel colour schemes. This distaste for vivid colours in the garden went on for a long time.



I have been gardening long enough to remember the tasteful gardens of the 1980s which had to be pastel. The idea of introducing yellow or orange flowers horrified any gardener with pretensions to good taste. Silver foliage was admired to set off all this pastel and there was even a nursery in Colchester which specialised in silver foliage. Nobody seemed to notice that all this silver was in fact grey. Gold foliage was also popular. In fact I made an enclosed, golden garden within my garden, with a small pond and beautiful benches. I remember sitting admiring it, after it had matured, and thinking how beautiful my golden garden was. Then, and only then, did it occur to me that I had created a totally yellow garden. By calling it golden I had fooled myself. It was pretty, but I would



never have set out to create a yellow garden. Somehow I couldn't love it quite so much when I no longer saw it as a golden garden. It had lost some of its magic.

And then there is the question of the hated colour, magenta. The Arts and Crafts movement harped back to a natural time and they loathed industrial colours and products so gardeners such as Gertrude Jekyll were naturally opposed to an artificial colour. Jekyll called it "*malignant magenta*" but she wasn't the only Edwardian gardener to loathe it. E.A. Bowles called it "*that awful form of floral original sin*". The colour had only been invented in 1895 after The Battle of Magenta. Previous to this there had been a mania for mauve, but this was new. When I googled it, I read that magenta is not part of the colour spectrum and our brains create magenta when they observe red and purple simultaneously. This is a really weird idea that there is no wavelength for magenta so our brains make it up. It was in this year of 1895 that Professor Auguste Wilhelm Hofmann was experimenting with aniline dyes and came up with a reddish purple one which he named after the battle. These new aniline dyes were cheap and bright and readily available so that is probably one reason that they were despised. Mrs. Alice Earle said magenta was "*more vulgar than malignant*". So it was partly a snobbish thing; mass produced, cheap, artificial dyes were common. I think that magenta dye had arsenic in it too but then this was nothing new. The Victorians had been poisoning themselves with arsenic in green dyes in clothing, wallpaper and everything else for years.

The wheels of fashion have turned at last and people gladly welcome bright colours into their gardens. But still you often read that magenta flowers "*need careful handling*" and



must be "*carefully placed*". If you like bright colours and are not frightened by the very word 'magenta' then try gorgeous *Geranium psilostemon* or its children, 'Patricia' or 'Ivan'. Magenta mixed up with reds, pinks and purples and lavenders makes a vibrant colour scheme. And why not throw in some orange and yellow too, that would really make Gertrude Jekyll turn in her grave.

*Chloris*

#### Opposite page:

*Bacchus and Ariadne*, by Titian, c.1520-1523.

#### This page, clockwise from top:

*Geranium Psilostemon*

*Primrose*

*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Septemberrubin'

*Paeonia 'Gansu Mudan'*





# Notes from a Beekeeper's Diary

## *Winter, Twelfth Night, and the quiet work before spring*

At the time of writing the first snowdrops are showing like beads of pearly white against the muddy ground. It's hard to believe that only a week ago Twelfth Night marked the last day of the Christmas festivities and the final deadline for taking down the holiday decorations. For us beekeepers January/February is the last chance to prepare for the year ahead.

Traditionally Twelfth Night was celebrated by what could only be described as a British bacchanalia of sanctioned excess and disorder—certainly for those who had the money or time. In other countries the 6 January, the day when the three wise men are said to have arrived at Bethlehem and perhaps the true founding day of Western Christianity, is still as much a day of celebration as Christmas itself.

In Spain the Three Wise Men or Los Reyes Magos take centre stage from Santa Claus. It is they who are celebrated by bringing Spanish children their presents the night before Three

Kings Day. However, Santa Claus is not forgotten and some lucky children are blessed with a gifting double whammy. Three Kings Day is still the most important festival and celebrated by street parades throughout the country. And these are parades of celebration and joy and not the sombre Holy Week processions of Semana Santa, with their slow marches and solemn ritual. The *Cabalgata de los Reyes Magos* are a sight to behold with dancers, musicians and puppeteers, with the kings riding on camels or elaborate floats. Sweets and goodies are thrown to the kids in abundance.

Back home, Twelfth Night celebrations reached their apogee in Tudor

times when the day was marked by masques and pageants among the aristocracy and nobility. At the court of Henry VIII 200 dishes were served and temporary kitchens erected in the gardens of Greenwich Palace in 1532.

Queen Elizabeth I's gingerbread maker created figures of the Queen and her guests, and Henry VII employed his own Lord of Misrule and an Abbot of Unreason, ceremonial







figures appointed to preside over festive chaos and licensed disorder, directing the court's revelry.

At the centre of the festivities was a large domed fruit cake hiding a dried bean and a pea, a slice of which was given to all members of the household, including servants. Whoever found the bean or pea was granted special privileges, not dissimilar to the Spanish *Rosco de Reyes*. (Interesting topic for further research, was this a cultural cross-over via the Spanish Armada?)

In later years Jane Austen is recorded as entering into Twelfth Night parlour games with "more than a little spirit", according to a family friend, Sir William Heathcote. Such games were a genteel survival of the earlier Lord of Misrule, in which guests were assigned characters to play for the evening. Austen drew the role of Mrs Candour, a gossiping figure from Sheridan's play *The School for Scandal*, and reportedly took full advantage of the licence it allowed to take people aside and speak her mind with enthusiasm. It was a reminder that even in respectable households Twelfth Night still carried an echo of sanctioned misrule before the routines of the year resumed. Given her published works, an experience perhaps better missed.

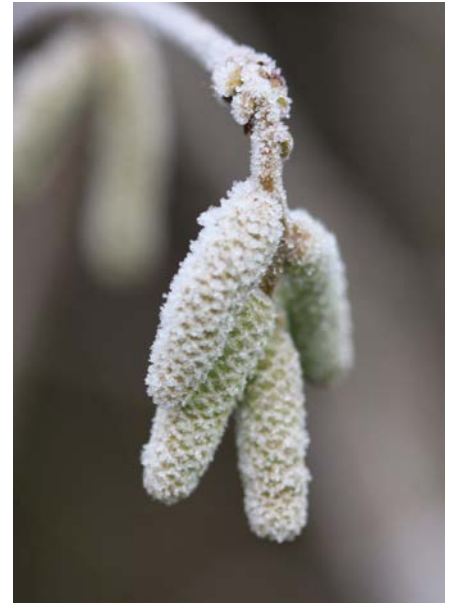
Such moments of licensed disorder marked a turning point in the winter, before normal rules resumed.

In spite of all the pleasures, early January marks yet another passage of the beekeeping year. It is a time when we keep our fingers crossed that all is well in the hives. Low air temperatures, high winds and heavy rain conspire to keep the bees firmly locked inside. We can check the hives from time to time to ensure they have adequate stores, but even then the bees can perish through starvation even when stores

are present elsewhere in the hive. This occurs in winter or during prolonged cold spells because the bees cluster together to stay warm and cannot move across frames to reach distant food reserves without freezing.

There is plenty to do to keep our minds off these hazards. In 8 or at most 10 weeks' time the fruit trees will be coming into blossom, and surviving bees sallying forth to gather pollen and nectar. By then we need to have frames ready with fresh wax foundation to replace worn out brood comb, and supers ready for the hoped for flow of honey.

All the time we keep an eye on the weather. Will we have a warm, early Spring, or a long cold extended Winter like last year? We look out for natural signs for a clue as to what may become. Along with the early snowdrops daffodils are already showing a trace of colour, the buds of ash and sycamore are starting to swell and catkins showing on the hazels. Could these be signs that winter will



soon be behind us and the bees out of danger – at least from the cold? No use fretting. What will be will be.

*Tony Rand*

#### **Opposite page from top:**

*Snowdrops pushing through winter ground, a quiet marker of the turning year.*

*The Three Kings, or Los Reyes Magos, during an Epiphany parade still widely celebrated across Spain.*

#### **This page, clockwise from top:**

*Twelfth Night feasting and misrule, with a mock king presiding over food and drink.*

*Frosty hazel catkins, among the earliest pollen sources and a first sign of change for beekeepers.*

*Beehives in midwinter, when survival depends on stores, weather, and patience.*



# Feedback From James Finch

## County Councillor For The Stour Valley

### **Suffolk secures more than £26.8 million bus funding over three years – 2026-2029**

Millions of pounds of investment is to take place in Suffolk's bus network over three years following allocation of Government funding. Services, ticketing, and infrastructure will all benefit under the package worth nearly £27 million between 2026 and 2029.

Suffolk County Council will receive a total of £26,813,760 under the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG). This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of new and improved services introduced over the past two years through LABG support and its predecessor, the Bus Services Improvement Grant (BSIP), many of which were shaped by community feedback.

The funding is split into two areas. – Revenue and Capital.

Revenue investment will focus on:

- Maintaining and growing enhanced services based on local suggestions.
- Increasing publicity and travel information to help residents make informed choices.

Capital funding will deliver:

- Renewal and expansion of Real Time Passenger Information across Suffolk.
- Improved ticketing options and accessibility in partnership with bus operators.
- Investigations into bus priority measures to reduce journey times and encourage modal shift.
- Upgraded bus stops with new shelters, better footway links, and accessibility enhancements—many suggested by local communities.

### **Firefighter applications surge as Suffolk boosts female representation**

Applications to join Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have surged by 32% compared to last year, highlighting a growing interest in a career that makes a real difference to local communities. This year's recruitment drive also saw a significant increase in female representation among successful candidates, with women making up 17.2% of the recruitment pool compared to 11.7% last year, which represents a 38% rise. Recruitment outcomes at a glance:

- Applications up 32% from 2024 (389 vs 280).
- Female representation in the

recruitment pool has increased from 11.7% to 17.2% – a 38% rise.

- 345 candidates progressed to the first stage of assessment.
- 203 advanced to the second stage and were assessed against the National Fire Chiefs Council Leadership Framework and the Code of Ethics - 116 passed.
- 88 were members of the public; 28 were existing on call firefighters.
- Following firefighter-specific aptitude and fitness tests, 100 candidates were then interviewed at SFRS Headquarters at Endeavour House, Ipswich.

### **SEND data shows improvement, but impact not felt by everyone, committee hears**

The progress of improvements to special educational needs and disabilities provision in Suffolk was discussed at Education Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 4th December.

The committee, made up of councillors from all parties and non-elected independent members, such as parent governors, quizzed health and county council leaders on the progress, plans and challenges within SEND reform. The last time SEND was discussed at Education Scrutiny was June 2024.

Progress reported to the committee included:

- Significant improvement in the timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). By January, timeliness will be well above the national average of plans issued within 20 weeks. (Approximately 50% compared to 3.8% November 2023)
- Issuing more Education, Health and Care Plans than ever before. In November, 364 plans completed, compared to 186 November 2024. An increase of 65%.
- The timeliness of Annual Reviews has also improved, with 892 completed in November - compared to 775 last November

The committee also heard how the Department for Education continues to monitor and track improvement. The results of a recent stocktake visit by officers from the Department for Education is due shortly.

Despite positive evidence, officers were clear that improvement is not yet being felt by all families and reiterated that a robust, detailed and deliverable plan remains in place to keep driving reform at pace.

Acknowledgement was given that work to improve SEND is complex and costly, working across many sectors and against a backdrop of a broken national SEND system. Suffolk also

faces rising demand with an increase of 22% more Education, Health and Care Plans over the year.

### **Leading think tank, Centre for Cities, endorses single unitary authority for Suffolk**

The Centre for Cities has welcomed proposals for a single unitary authority for Suffolk, highlighting the opportunity to support economic growth without fragmenting local governance. In its report *Priority Growth: How to reorganise local government in 2026*, Centre for Cities argues that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) should simplify governance and provide areas with the scale and capacity needed to drive growth.

Using Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs), a tool to indicate an area where the population might commute to a larger town or city, the report suggests that these areas should be aligned with new unitary boundaries.

A single unitary authority for Suffolk would strongly reflect this principle – both empowering Ipswich and enabling growth across the county.

The report says: *"The [High Skill Travel to Work Areas] for Norwich and Ipswich are very large and encompass almost all of authorities A and B respectively, such that the alternative proposals would seriously fragment local governance across each local economy."*

The report notes that a One Suffolk unitary authority would bring together strategic functions under one democratically accountable body, reducing fragmentation and duplication while improving coordination across housing, transport, skills and public services.

The report says: *"Decisive action in the DPP areas in 2026 will break the deadlock facing the Government in this area, and set the stage for devolution to underpin higher growth and public service reform across the country for the rest of this Parliament and decades to come."*

The report emphasises that successful local government reorganisation should be grounded in functional economic areas. Suffolk's economy lends itself to a single authority capable of taking a county-wide strategic view.

### **Statement on provisional local government finance settlement 2026 to 2027**

The finance team of Suffolk County Council are deeply disappointed by the government's provisional local government finance settlement. Our current understanding is that Suffolk



County Council now faces a £6million budget gap — £3.5 million worse than we had previously forecast.

This is despite government assumptions that councils will raise Council Tax by the maximum amount every year, and the introduction of a so-called 'fairer' funding model. In reality, the government has shifted resources towards metropolitan areas at the expense of rural counties like ours, while injecting very little new money into the system.

This settlement makes an already difficult financial position even more challenging. We will continue to press for a genuinely fair funding formula that properly reflects the needs and costs of delivering services to our rural communities in Suffolk.

#### **Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley**

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. If you want to find out more about what it's like to foster or adopt with us, please call a member of the team on **01473 264800**

James Finch

[james.finch@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:james.finch@suffolk.gov.uk)

Tel: 01206 262993

Mobile: 07545 423796

## Feedback From Bryn Hurren

### **Babergh District Councillor for Box Vale Ward.**

It has not escaped my notice that a couple of the more extreme, or maybe *desperate*, of the current political parties, have been flooding the Box Vale Ward with their own versions of the world as they see it. Just to put the record straight, Babergh DC is run very well by a coalition of Independent, Lib Dem and Green elected councillors currently led by my neighbouring friend and independent councillor John Ward.

We currently work very well together and although some of course have a misplaced ambition for their own future, it is certainly hoped that this coalition will see out the current elected term until 2027/28.

Such incursions into wards currently held by other colleagues have proven to be very confusing for constituents with some of the misleading and false

statements, as well as disrespectful for those who are currently working hard to achieve the very best they can for their residents. Why not wait for the election to be officially called and on what boundaries, then decide on what we can do to help all our residents even more than we do now and seek election on that basis at a public vote on a date to be decided.

Now that the mayoral elections have been postponed for two years, maybe to just precede the unitary elections in the following year, it is widely now presumed that we will revert back to County and Police and Crime Commissioner elections on the existing borders this coming May for County Council and May 2027 for PCC, however the current government has written to all councils affected offering them the option of deferment for two years.

This would be very undemocratic and would not be welcomed by the voting public, nor this elected councillor who values the democratic right of my constituents to pass judgement on what has gone and is yet to be delivered.

It is also worth noting that all elections in South Suffolk are run by our district council (Babergh) whether they be parliamentary, county, district or parish and we are ready to go. We have everything in place, including funding, ballot boxes, staff already contracted, polling clerks and a head of election services champing at the bit.

Bring them ON. Have no fear of democracy, it usually sorts the wheat from the chaff.

At the current district council, we are getting to the end of our budget setting process and do in fact have a little extra funding from the government to help offset the lack of funding we have received or indeed been able to raise ourselves during these past few years, I had hoped that we could use some of this to offset the wicked business rates that are levied on our car parks by the present and previous governments but it seems that this is unlikely to happen as the monies are needed for so many other things.

These car parks were set up by BDC as a means of helping businesses in our market towns and larger villages with easy stop offs to run into town for a local shop and business visits and I would have liked that to continue.

I have had good success this month by helping to champion and drag a little planning application for a self-build eco house through our dogmatic and cumbersome planning system. In a system that is dominated by large developers and housebuilders it is so nice to see a personal single application

for a single passive house with an environmental on-site business get permission for a local family who want this to be their forever home. Maybe something that can be repeated in my other villages. We have to now build 775 houses per year across Babergh, so why not some futuristic eco ones to teach us how we can live into the future for the next generation?

I have also managed to enact an extension on a current social house to enable an existing family to carry on living there into the future despite their changing needs. This seems to have taken over two years but it is well worth it to see the family's joy as it nears completion and they all get back to normality within their increased space.

With the other 774 houses, we are now allowed to ask for solar energy to be fitted from the outset and we must now make sure we do that. A fall back to fossil fuels should just not be contemplated - we now have heat pumps that actually work efficiently and superb double-glazing that will soon be capable of generating power cheaply to be stored.

Please don't be too concerned about the high numbers of houses needing to be built - these can be absorbed into our current local plan and will be spread across the area with an emphasis on larger towns and core villages where we have brownfield and edge of built-up area sites.

This could help growth for schools and businesses but must come with accommodating infrastructure, not crammed on greenfield sites without thought and consultation for existing residents.

If anyone has a strong view or wants to get involved or help in any way, then please get in touch, I am here to help and to listen to your views.

As widely promoted by BDC, we have to implement the new recycling demands of government in early summer and I will be discussing this in more detail in the coming months in the BRN to make all residents aware *[please see p3 of this issue for more info]*. I'm not sure it is wholly applicable for this rural area, but it seems we have no choice but to go with it.

If you need your councillor, please get in touch by usual methods, I will be happy to help.

Bryn

[bryn.hurren@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:bryn.hurren@babergh.gov.uk)

Tel: 01787 210854

Mobile: 07771 508348

## GROTON

### Summary of Council Meeting

7<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Present:** P Roberts, S McGrath, N Chapman, R Cheeseman, C Hearn, A Dixon-Smith, C Brittan R Jones (Clerk) **Guests:** J Finch (Suffolk County Council) B Hurren (Babergh District Council)

#### Financial Matters:

6.1 The Statement of Finances and Orders for Payment and Quarter 3 accounts were approved.

6.2 Adequacy of the Budget 2025/26: The budget was projected to be overspent by £1,700.00. This was mainly due to unanticipated backpay salary costs from previously unpaid National Pay Award increases. This was a 'one-off' cost and extremely unlikely to occur again.

6.3 Precept for 2026/27: It was agreed to set the precept at £5,840 with the estimated yearly cost of a Band D property being £42.66.

6.4 Budget 2026/27: The budget for the coming year was agreed based on the precept of £5,840.00.

**Village Hall Matters:** C Hearn reported that a grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to finance improvements to the hall had been turned down. The plan now was to apply for smaller grants from other sources.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 4th March 2025 at 7.00pm

Full minutes can be found at:  
<http://groton.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/documents/>

**Richard Jones**

01473 828246  
[grotonclerk@yahoo.com](mailto:grotonclerk@yahoo.com)

## NEWTON

### Summary of Council Meeting

14<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Newton Parish Council is looking for an applicant to fill a councillor vacancy. If you would like more information on the role, please contact Dave Crimmin on the details below.**

#### 26/006 Planning

a. The councillors reviewed the additional information added by the applicant's agent for Planning

Application DC/26/04864 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.

The councillors resolved to stand by their response sent to the LPA on the 12th December 2025 and unanimously objected to the application as it does not comply with the Newton Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 26/007 Saracens Head as an Asset of Community Value

Following the notice given that the owner of the Saracens Head was looking to sell the business, the council's interim moratorium had been evoked by Babergh District Council. This gives the council up until the 12th February 2026 in which to request an extension period (until the 1 July 2026) so that the community can consider a bid for the property. The owner does not have to accept any subsequent bid from the community. The councillors resolved to extend the moratorium period to the 1 July 2026, during which time it can be assessed if the council or a group in the community wish to make a bid for the pub.

#### 26/010 Finance

b. The councillors reviewed the agreed Expenditure Budget of £31,573.68 and the NPC Reserves policy before resolving to set a Precept of £30,381.54 for 2026/27. This will mean that a Council Tax Band D household will pay an increase of £13.47 per year or £1.12p per month. An increase of 13.52% will be shown on council tax bill.

#### 26/011 Walking Infrastructure Project

The councillors reviewed the indicative costs of the improvements to the walking infrastructure in Newton, which total £313,015 + VAT for the 3 elements of the project. The elements are:

- the widening of the existing footpath from Church Road eastwards for approximate 130 metres
- Signalised crossing
- New footpath on Green from School Lane to the Saracens Head as well as the relocation of the bus stop and shelter on the Green.

The councillors reviewed the organisations whom NPC should approach for grants towards the

project and requested the clerk to proceed with the applications. James Finch is pursuing funding from SCC's Active Travel programme towards the scheme, and he will review the overhead charge being applied to the scheme costs.

#### 26/012 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Presland updated councillors that the following programme has been agreed for the working party:

- Meeting on 27 January 26, with clerk producing copies of the Working Group Terms of Reference and the NNP ahead of meeting
- Meeting with consultants LUC in the week commencing 23 February 26
- Presentation to residents at the NPC coffee morning on the 28 March 26.

#### 26/019 Village Hall and Trust updates

Cllr Taylor informed councillors that funding for the pond works was still awaited, which will mean that the scheme will recommence in September 2026. In the meantime, the Trust is considering work on the pond by Pond Cottage.

Cllr Schwenk updated councillors that the corridor in the village hall was painted over Christmas, a dehumidifier is being purchased, and a radiator is to be repaired.

Full minutes can be found at:  
[www.newton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.newton-pc.gov.uk)

**Dave Crimmin CILCA, PIALC, PSLCC**

01787 375085  
[clerk@newton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@newton-pc.gov.uk)

## Parish Council Contacts

#### Boxford PC

Clerk: Zoe Rumsey  
**01787 739317**  
[clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@boxford-pc.gov.uk)  
<http://boxford-pc.gov.uk>

#### Edwardstone PC

Clerk: Richard Jones  
**01473 828246**  
[edwardstoneclerk@outlook.com](mailto:edwardstoneclerk@outlook.com)  
<http://edwardstonepc.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/minutes>

#### Little Waldingfield PC

Councillor & Clerk: Mark Freeman  
**07554 592425**  
[clerk.littlewalingfield@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerk.littlewalingfield@hotmail.co.uk)  
<https://bit.ly/LW-parish-minutes>



## Boxford & District Bowls Club

The Club had a great season in 2025 and must be congratulated on winning several competitions in our area. Well done everyone!



Boxford's trophies as pictured above were:

- The Glass Plate  
Winners of NECBF Outdoor League Division 2.
- The Green pennant  
Winners of the Durham Centenary Trophy Cup.
- The Shield  
Runners up in the Hadleigh Cup for our Ladies Team.
- Silver Cup  
Winners of NECBF Outdoor Mens 3 Bowl Triples - Graham Skillen, Kevin Colling & Graham Skillen.
- Silver Cup  
Winner of the NECBF Outdoor Ladies Secretaries Singles - Gillian Barnes.
- Silver Platter  
Winner of NECBF Indoor Ladies Pairs - Cynthia Hollingsworth with partner from Sudbury, Eileen Parker.
- Silver Platter  
Winner of NECBF Indoor Ladies Triples - Roz Mortlock, Gillian Barnes/Cynthia Hollingsworth and Eileen Parker from Sudbury.

We are now looking forward to the start of the outdoor season in April - and a great 2026.

Roz Mortlock

## Milden Cricket Club

Winter pre-season nets have started, held on Thursday evenings at either Wattisham Airfield (courtesy of one of our club members who works there) or Sprotts Farm Indoor Cricket Lane, Holt Road, Polstead. Suffolk CO6 5BT. If you are interested in attending, or just want to know more, please contact club captain, Alex Cunningham via [info@mildencrcc.com](mailto:info@mildencrcc.com).



A reminder that the club AGM and pre-season social is to be held at The Fleece Hotel, Boxford, on Friday evening, 6 March.

For the list of 2026 league fixtures, please see the January BRN, page 55. Hopefully, additional friendly fixtures will be announced in next month's issue.



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[www.neilluxton.co.uk](http://www.neilluxton.co.uk)

ROY GOT

JOSEPH HENRY CHARLES  
 1870-1947  
 (Nameplate, Laid on the Stone)

## 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@boxrivernews.com](mailto:editor@boxrivernews.com).

### Featured group

#### BOXFORD GARDENING SOCIETY

**Boxford Gardening Society** meet on the first Tuesday of every month from February to November from 7:30pm in Boxford Village Hall to enjoy talks and demonstrations on a wide range of topics from speakers who are all experts in their field.

In addition, outings to beautiful gardens in East Anglia are arranged for members during the year. Annual Membership is £18 which includes the cost of all the talks.

Non-members are always welcome to attend any talks at a cost of £5 per event. For membership enquiries please contact Elizabeth Wagener on **01787 210223** or email [elizabeth.wagener@btinternet.com](mailto:elizabeth.wagener@btinternet.com)

## Scouting

1st Boxford Beaver Scouts	John <b>07966 690317</b> <a href="mailto:johnaves@hotmail.co.uk">johnaves@hotmail.co.uk</a>
1st Boxford Cub Scouts	Susie <b>07843 280396</b>
1st Boxford Scouts	David Talbot-Clarke <b>07946 550519</b>
1st Boxford Explorer Scouts	Neil Barkham <b>07734 108257</b>
1st Boxford Rainbows	Janice Macmillan <b>07779 303690</b>
1st Boxford Brownies	Janice Macmillan <b>07779 303690</b> <a href="mailto:janice.macmillan@yahoo.co.uk">janice.macmillan@yahoo.co.uk</a>
1st Boxford Guides	Bethany Ireland <a href="mailto:bethanyireland11@gmail.com">bethanyireland11@gmail.com</a>

## Children Families & Learning

Boxford Primary School	<b>01787 210332</b> <a href="mailto:boxford-suffolk.secure-dbprimary.com">boxford-suffolk.secure-dbprimary.com</a> <a href="mailto:office@boxford.suffolk.sch.uk">office@boxford.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Friends of Boxford School (FoBS)	<a href="mailto:talktofobs@gmail.com">talktofobs@gmail.com</a>
Sunflowers Childcare	Moiria Grant <b>01787 211363</b> <a href="http://www.sunflowers-childcare.co.uk">www.sunflowers-childcare.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@sunflowers-childcare.co.uk">info@sunflowers-childcare.co.uk</a>
Boxford Baby & Toddler Group	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Boxfordbabyandtoddlergroup/">facebook.com/Boxfordbabyandtoddlergroup</a>

## Halls & Facilities to Hire

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



## Clubs & Groups

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

## Clubs & Groups

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

## Charities

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

## Community Groups

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

## JANUARY 2026

<b>26</b> MON	<b>Boxford Friendship Group</b> *Boxford Pavillion - <i>Note venue change</i>	2-4pm
<b>30</b> FRI	<b>Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pub</b> Little Waldingfield Pavilion	6:30pm

## FEBRUARY 2026

<b>3</b> TUE	<b>Fireside Club - Chat &amp; Snack</b> Newton Village Hall	2pm
<b>3</b> TUE	<b>Boxford Gardening Society</b> Boxford Village Hall	7:30pm
<b>4</b> WED	<b>Boxford WI - Ambulance Service Life</b> Boxford Village Hall	2pm
<b>11</b> WED	<b>Boxford Gardening Society Outing</b> Little Waldingfield	11am
<b>11</b> WED	<b>Charity Quiz Night</b> The Fleece, Boxford	8pm
<b>17</b> TUE	<b>Fireside Club - Pancakes</b> Newton Village Hall	2pm
<b>18</b> WED	<b>LWHS - US Military Aviation</b> Little Waldingfield Parish Room	7:30pm
<b>20</b> FRI	<b>Polstead Films 'A Real Pain'</b> Polstead Village Hall	7pm
<b>21</b> SAT	<b>Newton Village Hall Coffee Morning</b> Newton Village Hall	10am
<b>23</b> MON	<b>Boxford Study Centre Literature Group</b> Newton Village Hall	10am
<b>23</b> MON	<b>Boxford Friendship Group</b> Boxford Village Hall	2-4pm
<b>24</b> TUE	<b>PGC - Night Scented Flowers</b> Polstead Village Hall	7:30pm
<b>26</b> THU	<b>A Brief (un)Natural History of Rivers</b> Boxford Pavilion	7:30pm
<b>26</b> THU	<b>GHS Our Greatest Monarchs</b> Groton Village Hall	7:30pm
<b>27</b> FRI	<b>Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pub</b> Little Waldingfield Pavilion	6:30pm

## MARCH 2026

<b>3</b> TUE	<b>Fireside Club - Marks Hall</b> Newton Village Hall	2pm
<b>4</b> WED	<b>Boxford WI - WW2 Women at War</b> Boxford Village Hall	2pm
<b>11</b> WED	<b>LWHS - Women's Land Army in Suffolk</b> Little Waldingfield Parish Room	7:30pm
<b>11</b> WED	<b>Charity Quiz Night</b> The Fleece, Boxford	8pm

## MARCH 2026

<b>17</b> TUE	<b>Fireside Club - Easter Egg Painting</b> Newton Village Hall	2pm
<b>17</b> TUE	<b>PGC - Cutting Gardens</b> Polstead Village Hall	7:30pm
<b>18</b> WED	<b>Ladies Get Into Golf</b> Newton Green Golf Club	2-3pm
<b>21</b> SAT	<b>Coffee Morning</b> Newton Village Hall	10am
<b>21</b> SAT	<b>Ladies Get Into Golf</b> Newton Green Golf Club	11-Noon
<b>23</b> MON	<b>Boxford Friendship Group</b> Boxford Village Hall	2-4pm
<b>24</b> TUE	<b>NGGC Tea &amp; Cake Afternoon</b> Newton Green Golf Club	2-4pm
<b>27</b> FRI	<b>GHS - The Secret World of Spying</b> Groton Village Hall	7:30pm
<b>27</b> FRI	<b>Little Waldingfield Pop-Up Pub</b> Little Waldingfield Pavilion	6:30pm
<b>28</b> SAT	<b>Parish Council Coffee Morning</b> Newton Village Hall	10am
<b>28</b> SAT	<b>Brent Eleigh Spring Quiz</b> Brent Eleigh Village Hall	7pm
<b>29</b> SUN	<b>French's Dog Walk</b> Castling's Heath, CO10 5EU	TBC
<b>31</b> TUE	<b>Fireside Club - Medical Detection Dogs</b> Newton Village Hall	2pm

## Madrigalia



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[www.madrigalia.uk](http://www.madrigalia.uk)

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