

Parish Council Matters

The first meeting of the Parish Council for 2026 was a very busy one!

A follow-up presentation from the Houghton Estate answered many points raised by councillors about the proposal to install luxury cabins in the Eleven Acre Wood and the proposal was passed unanimously.

You may recall that complaints and a petition were submitted about plans to move the outdoor gym. At the meeting in September it was agreed that the relocation work would be paused while these matters were addressed. This has now been completed. It is more than six months since the decision to move the equipment was taken and, as allowed under the Parish Council's standing orders, the matter was reconsidered at the January meeting.

Following detailed discussion of three motions, Council voted by a majority of five votes to two (no abstentions) to completely remove the 'combi pull and press' (two seater) apparatus and to relocate the 'cardio combo' (four-person walker) apparatus to the north side of the existing gym equipment. The other two items and signage will not be altered. The work will be done at the same time as the installation of the new swings.

On highways matters, chevrons are being installed on the west side of Docking Road during February. We hope these will encourage drivers entering the village from the north to slow down.

Concerns have been raised about cars being parked on pavements and footpaths around the village, notably outside St Mary's Church and on the trod in Bircham Tofts. This is a hazard for pedestrians and not appropriate.

Finally, the village map on the Spinney has been cleaned and renovated so the routes of the lovely footpaths around the villages can be seen again.

The next meeting of the Council is on March 25. If you wish to discuss a Parish matter, please attend the meeting or write to the Clerk.

Email: clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk

Post: Hall Farm, Sedgeford Road, Docking, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 8LJ

Website: bircham-pc.gov.uk



Do remember that the *Bircham Times* can be delivered to parishioners by email. You can email us at news@thebirchams.uk to request that (or for any other matter). In addition, we publish, in advance of the paper copy, on the 15th of every month on our website: www.thebirchams.uk



Power Cuts and Avian Impacts

Another year, another power cut for the Birchams. On Friday, January 16, just as I finished work for the week, there was an ominous flicker in the supply. A little while later (17:23 to be precise), the power went off fully. The news from UK Power Networks trickles through drip by drip:

17:26 We are aware of an unexpected power cut.

17:30 Power has been turned off due to a safety issue; 922 properties are affected.

17:34 Engineers are on their way to a grounded cable.

18:09 Engineers have arrived on site; diversion of power taking place, so now down to 163 affected properties; power estimated to be back on between 19:00 and 20:00.

At this point we think: "Ok... if it's going to be back on in an hour or two, we'll just eat late and won't bother going to find somewhere with heating."

18:48 More power diverted; 79 properties now left without power.

19:39 Engineers need assistance [so do we!]; we are sending a specialist team to make repairs; estimated time to restore power now 23:30 to 00:30.

OMG... time for emergency measures: having not yet eaten all day, we break out the emergency cheese and wine rations [bang goes dry January only two weeks in!].

20:19 The specialist engineers are on site.

21:09 We are sorry for the disruption, etc.

21:10 Now down to 47 properties without power [including ours, of course].

22:03 All power now back on [following a few flickers, ours came back at 21:35].

Meanwhile, the Bircham jungle drums had been talking: "An overhead cable has come down in a field on Docking Road"; "There are geese in the area"; "The field briefly caught fire. Imagine if it happened in the summer"; "Anyone for roast goose?"; "Power not coming back on till half past midnight?! Might as well stay in the pub."

Was it geese that brought down the overhead cable? The timing fits: it happened about the time of day they come back from feeding and it wouldn't be the first time. And they've been flying low in the area recently (lower than 10ft in altitude is not acceptable... sort it out goose control tower). Apparently big birds like geese and swans don't have great forward vision and are not too nimble at avoiding obstacles at the last minute, especially when coming in to land or taking off.

Worryingly during this power cut (and the previous one) we noticed that mobile phone signals were either poor or non-existent. We presumed that this was because more people use them during an outage to find out what's happening and the local cells get swamped. Even more worryingly, in UK Power Networks' post-incident report it states that "some of the mobile phone masts in the area were also affected due to the loss of power". It is our understanding that such infrastructure is supposed to have back-up power so mobiles can function for several hours. The analogue landlines that can continue to work during a power cut have almost disappeared, leaving mobiles as the only lifeline. Imagine a freak incident or other catastrophe knocks out the power while causing damage and injuries and the only means of contacting emergency services is also knocked out.

Also in the post-incident report, UKPN states: "One of our high voltage overhead power lines in the Dorking [sic] Road area had fallen to ground level due to accidental third-party interference with the overhead equipment." Was the third party in question human or avian? The report also states "Our team have also installed additional safety equipment to this area of the network to reduce the chance of this happening again". But they don't say what this is exactly. If the cause was big birds, might it be bird deflectors?

In some areas with a large presence of such birds, UK Power Networks has installed deflectors in an effort to make the powerlines more visible to the beasts. Here is a story from 2022, describing how a King's Lynn based team was installing the devices in parts of Cambridgeshire:
<https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/news/swans-and-geese-are-safer-thanks-to-power-company>



Shovel Race at King's Lynn Regatta

July 16, 1864

An annual event, the King's Lynn regatta was famous throughout the land and was a prized racing course since the straightness of the Ouse just above the Free Bridge made for ideal rowing (and viewing) conditions. The commentary that year ran as follows:

"Among the races, two were peculiar to this district. One was for 'gun-boats', which are small low canoes, used for duck-shooting, and are paddled by one man standing up in the boat. The other race was for ship's boats, each paddled by six men, with corn-shovels or scoops. The men sit facing the bows, two on each seat, and use the shovels in the same way that savages paddle their canoes. Each boat carries a coxswain; and it was an amusing sight to see the great burly corn-porters driving the boats through the water in the most energetic manner."



Tulips at Houghton

Tapping House doesn't have the monopoly on massive vistas of tulips it seems. This spring, when Houghton re-opens to the public, it will announce a new venture of 25,000 tulips that have been planted in the Walled Garden there. It's anticipated that the Walled Garden's opening will be on April 11 and visitors will have a few weeks to admire the colourful arrays, subject to the spring weather, of course.

Tickets will be priced at £14 (£12 if booked online).

Sign up for further updates here:

<https://www.houghtonhall.com/whats-on/tulips-at-houghton>



Dates for the Diary

Bircham Windmill Reopens
Mar 28

RAF Bircham Newton

Closed Nov 9

RAF Sculthorpe Reopens
Apr 5 (Easter Sun)

Anmer Social Club Coffee,
cake and chat, Mondays 10-
12, 07947 580555

Snettisham Park Open daily

Houghton Hall & Gardens

Reopens Spring (tba)

Sandringham House and
gardens reopen Mar 28

Feb 14-28 819th King's Lynn
Mart, Tuesday Market Place,
KL, see [https://
lovenorfolk.co.uk/events/
kings-lynn-mart/](https://lovenorfolk.co.uk/events/kings-lynn-mart/)

Feb 15 Snowdrop Days at
Stow Hall Gardens, Stow
Bardolph, 10am-4pm, £8

Feb 16-20 NORFOLK
SCHOOLS HALF-TERM

Feb 21 Snettisham Flea
Market, Memorial Hall, 9-
3pm, 50p

Feb 22 Bagthorpe Hall
Snowdrop Festival, 11-4pm,
£6

Feb 23 *The Man Who Knew
Infinity*, Stanhoe Village
Screen, 7.30pm

Feb 26 National Theatre
Live, *The Audience*, with
Helen Mirren, Majestic
Cinema, KL, 7pm

Feb 27 Sign-Writing Coffee
Morning, Lynn Museum,
10.30-11.30am

Afternoon Talk – Rise and Fall
of Steam Power and the
Savage Bros Ltd, Lynn
Museum, 2-3pm, £2

Feb 27-Mar 2 Searles Skank'
and Skoot' Ska & Mod
Weekend, Searles Leisure
Resort, Hunstanton, weekend
pass £70

Feb 28 Barsham Brewery
Tours, West Barsham £20
(also every Friday 3pm)



Foodie Fare

PARIS SIEGE of 1870-1

A little history recap to begin. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 the armies of Prussia encircled Paris and a siege threatened starvation of the populace from mid-September until the following January. The tactics nearly worked since the Parisians started eating horses, cats and dogs, and even rats to survive. I remember very little from being taught about the Franco-Prussian War at school but the next bit *has* lingered. The desperate Parisians finally turned their attention to the city's zoo, ironically called the *Jardin des Plantes*, a veritable Noah's Ark of species. The French cordon bleu chefs of the day, not to be underestimated, created a pretty fabulous Christmas Day lunch, as reproduced below, at the Café Voisin. It is enough to make vegetarians of us all.



On the menu as a starter was *tête d'âne farcie* (or stuffed donkey's head); maybe you fancy soup instead? – the *consommé d'éléphant* (requires no translation) perhaps... you'd get a lot of consommé out of an elephant; for the main courses we go even more exotic with *le chameau roti à la anglaise* (roast camel with an English sauce... the swines), or *civet de kangourou* (kangaroo stew) and *terrinerie d'antilope* (yes, you've guessed it, antelope terrine). If you've still got the stomach for this revolting fare then what about *côtes d'ours* (bear ribs disguised with a pepper sauce), or *loup, sauce chevreuil* (wolf in a venison sauce)? The pièce de résistance was no doubt *Le chat flanqué de rats* (cat alongside rats). Think we'll stick to the plainer stuff... a rice cake with preserves and a bit of gruyère. Victor Hugo turned his nose up at such fare, complaining that it was giving him stomach aches. Journalist Thomas Gibson Bowles, soon to be the MP for Lynn (see p 9), wrote that he had eaten camel, antelope, dog, donkey, mule and elephant and of those he liked elephant the least in his book of the siege *The Defence of Paris*.

As a side note, an enterprising English butcher decided to buy the entire contents (some 100,000 animals) of the *Jardin d'Acclimation* in the Bois du Boulogne and sold meat at the rate of 25 francs a pound... which made him very wealthy indeed.

VICHYSOISE

Thank you France for vichyssoise, the leek and potato soup, served cold. We thought we would bring you a recipe in order to celebrate St David's Day, the Welsh national day on March 1, and their veggie emblem of the leek. However, after a bit of research we found out that vichyssoise is in fact an American invention, albeit one created by a French chef... a monsieur Louis Diat. The French term adds a little bit of *je ne sais quoi*, don't you think? Better anyhow than cold leek and potato soup...

50 g (2 oz) butter
 250 g (9 oz) chopped leeks (traditionally just the white part of the stems)
 250 g (9 oz) quartered potato
 salt and pepper
 bouquet garni (typically bay leaf, thyme, marjoram)
 1.7 litres (3 pints) water or chicken broth
 200 ml (7 fl oz) double cream or crème fraîche
 chopped chives for garnish

Soften the chopped leeks in the butter in a large pan or stockpot. Next add the potatoes, water or stock, bouquet garni, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil before simmering for around 35 minutes. Next, puree the soup in a blender or food processor (remove the bouquet garni). Then blend in the cream or crème fraîche (the latter has about a third fewer calories).

Chill the soup, and add the chopped chives; however, we won't tell if you prefer a bowl of warming soup instead... just omit the chilling stage!



Words on Birds

SNOW BUNTING

Every winter, the United Kingdom plays host to a variety of birds fleeing the harsh weather that invades their breeding grounds and of these one of the most striking is the snow bunting.

Although there is a small population breeding in the Highlands of Scotland, they are essentially birds of the high tundra. During the winter, snow buntings are found in small flocks mainly restricted to our coastal areas.

On their Arctic breeding grounds, the males have a pure white head and body, contrasting with a black back and wing tips.

By the time they reach our shores they are a more subtle mixture of white and rusty brown, which beautifully camouflages them as they shuffle through the tidewrack, or among the marram grass, searching for seeds. In fact they are very easy to overlook as you walk along a beach, until they erupt in front of you like a small snow flurry, often making a series of soft whistling notes. In fact the collective noun for them is a "drift" of snow buntings, but perhaps a "flurry" or a "blizzard" would be more apt.



Although the numbers visiting our shores vary from year to year, the Norfolk coast is always a reliable place to see them. Good places to look for them include the beaches at Snettisham, Heacham, Holme, Titchwell and Holkham, although almost any open coastal area can be suitable, especially if it is not too disturbed.

Steve Rooke

King's Lynn's New Library Opens

Definitely overbudget and visually we might say a bit of a modern clash, sitting as it does next door to the Art Deco Majestic Cinema, but we are promised great things from inside the new King's Lynn library, which opens its doors on March 16.

The interior has a Scandi vibe and lots of architecturally interesting touches. The proof of the pudding will be in the number of users who go through its doors over the coming months. It benefits from being very central and is designed to be a home for societies and groups to meet up at, as well as all the traditional library functions, many of which we mentioned in December's issue of the *Bircham Times*.

The Andrew Carnegie inspired and funded existing library on London Road closed its doors for the last time as a functioning library on February 14.

Dates for the Diary

Mar 3 Royal Ballet: *Giselle*, Majestic Cinema, KL 7.15pm

Mar 4 *Othello*, Majestic Cinema, KL, 7pm

Mar 4 Ross Noble at the KL Corn Exchange, 8pm, £33

Mar 5 Bircham Banter, 2.30-4pm, Social Club

Mar 5 Nigel Morter: The Control Tower Bed and Breakfast, Stanhoe & Barwick WI, 2pm, £5

Mar 7 Farmers' Market Creake Abbey, from 9.30am

Mar 7 Lynn Museum Guided Tour, "Introduction to Seahenge", 11-noon

Mar 7 Half-Day "Floragami" Workshop, Holkham Hall, Snowdrops 9-12 noon; Crocuses 1-4pm, £85 or £150 for both

Mar 10 Iron Road Ramble Guided Walk, Norfolk Wildlife Trust Cley Marshes Visitor Centre, 10-1pm, from £6.80

Mar 15 Sponsored Skydive on behalf of Tapping House at Beccles Airfield. Call 01485 601701 for details

Mar 16 KL Library Opens

Mar 19 Mini Museum Under-5s Club, "The Farmyard", Lynn Museum, 10.30-11.30am, 50p

Mar 20 *The Choral*, Stanhoe Village Screen, 7.30pm, £6

Mar 20-21 Fakenham Gin & Beer Festival, Fakenham Community Centre, Oak St, www.fakenhambeerfest.co.uk

Mar 21 Snettisham Flea Market, Memorial Hall, 9-3pm, 50p

Mar 27 Rag Rugging Coffee Morning, Lynn Museum 10.30-11.30am

Afternoon Talk – Growing Up in the 50s and 60s in Rural Norfolk, Lynn Museum, 2-3pm, £2

Mar 30-Apr 13 NORFOLK SCHOOLS EASTER BREAK

Mar 31 Royal Opera: *Siegfried*, Majestic Cinema, 5.15pm



Tapping House Charity Shop

A new Tapping House charity shop opened in January in King's Lynn. It's based at Dagentine House, Coburg Street, opposite Morrisons filling station. The place is stocked with furniture, electrical goods, clothing, household items and so on. Do drop in for some bargains and help towards such a good cause.

Open Mon-Sat 9-5.30pm; Sun 10-4pm

St Mary's 100 Club Draw

FEBRUARY RESULTS: Here are the latest results for 2026: 1st prize no. **78**; 2nd prize no. **75** (1st prize wins £25; 2nd prize £10).

Thanks to everyone who has taken part, and good luck to all in the coming year.

Sally

Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is on Thursday March 5 from 2.30 to 4pm in the Social Club. Do come along and join with the regulars for chat, tea/coffee and cake, especially if you are new to the village. You'll be made very welcome!!

Pauline

Stanhoe & Barwick WI

Forthcoming events to be held at the Stanhoe Reading Room, Cross Lane, PE31 8PS at 2pm.

March 5 Nigel Morter: The Control Tower Bed and Breakfast

April 2 James Chung: Barclays Scam and Fraud

May 7 Simon Smith: Owl Rescue

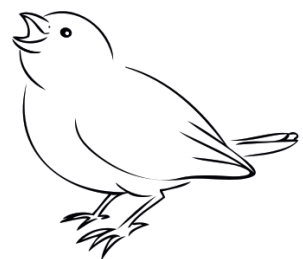
Visitors are always welcome. Our charge is £5, which includes refreshments.

Contact stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com for more details.

Big Garden Birdwatch Recap

Thanks to everyone who took part in the Big Garden birdwatch again this year. If you haven't already submitted your observations to the RSPB, please do so before February 22.

Meanwhile, the early results are in. As of the second week of February the presence of more than 8.9 million birds had been recorded over the long weekend of January 23-25. The "top" birds across the nation as a whole was the house sparrow, followed by the blue tit and the starling. Here in Norfolk, where more than 7,000 contributions have been received, the "top" birds were the blue tit, the woodpigeon and the house sparrow.





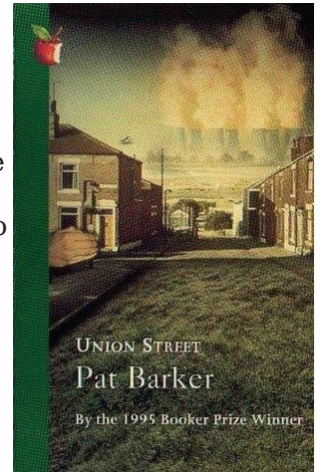
Curl Up With a Good Book

Union Street (1982) by Pat Barker

Pat Barker has become one of the most celebrated British writers over the past 50 years and her Regeneration trilogy – about class, trauma and the mental experiences of warfare set during the First World War – mirrors that in achievement of the other great female writer: Hilary Mantel and her Wolf Hall trilogy.

Barker's beginnings in the north of England were highly impoverished and she used what she observed there in her very first novel, *Union Street*, which focuses on the poverty of the female inhabitants of a single street. There are seven chapters, each one focusing on a particular character, from 11-year-old Kelly Brown, dealing with a stranger rape, to Iris King, the indomitable pillar of the community dealing with her past and her 16-year-old daughter's unexpected pregnancy. All the women are loosely connected as are their stories.

This book isn't an easy read, indeed it is terribly depressing, but it is always engaging and the girls and women show tremendous spirit in spite of their unfortunate seamy circumstances. The voices are real and genuine. The language is earthy, tawdry and uncomfortable; the women's experiences brutal, challenging and heartbreaking. For all of that it is must-read, as is Barker's Regeneration trilogy and her latest three-book series on the Trojan Wars, where events are seen through women's eyes.



If you can't make the March 5 talk at the Stanhoe and Barwick WI about the Control Tower at North Creake (see opposite), then you might consider buying the crowd-funded book written by owner Nigel Morter. Entitled *Control Tower Calling*, it tells the story of the RAF station at North Creake, especially its role during the Second World War.

Clothing Banks at Fire Stations

The major supermarkets seem to have dispensed with their clothing banks but one place where you can drop off your unwanted (but clean!) clothing is at our local fire stations, courtesy of the Fire Fighters Charity <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/get-involved/recycle-your-clothing>. They have raised more than £600,000 for charity over the past 12 months alone.

Same rules apply as per other drop-off points in that clothes should be bagged, footwear paired, and if the hopper is full you are not allowed to leave clothes outside it.

Local fire stations include:

Fakenham, Norwich Road, NR21 8BB

Heacham, Station Road, PE31 7EX

Hunstanton, King's Lynn Road, PE36 5HP

Sandringham/Dersingham, Doddshill Road, PE31 6LP

and while it isn't on the organisation's map, we have spotted a yellow bank in the grounds of the fire station at Great Massingham.

Accessories company Elvis & Kresse repurpose items such as retired fire hoses to create a range of goods from handbags, overnight bags, wallets, belts and cufflinks. It's not what you would call cheap but it is unique and ethical and their wares are worth a look if you would like to treat someone on a birthday... or even yourself. Have a look at: <https://www.elvisandkresse.com/collections/fire-hose>



MOBILE POST OFFICE

Scheduled stop at Bircham Social Club, Church Lane is as follows.

Monday	10:45-11:30
Tuesday	10:45-11:30
Thursday	10:45-11:30
Friday	12:10-12:55

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

Fridays Feb 27/Mar 27
Stops at:

Monks Close	15:15-15:35
Village Shop	15:45-16:00
Social Club	16:05-16:15
Windmill Hill	16:20-16:35

BUS 33/33A

To Hunstanton (from King's Head): Mon-Fri 07:36 10:36 13:36 17:16 (to Heacham); Sat 8:21 10:36 13:36 15:41
Return from Stand A Bus Station

To Lynn (from Bircham Stores): Mon-Fri 07:17 09:23 12:23 15:43; Sat 09:23 12:23 17:08
Return from Stand E Bus Station

GREAT MASSINGHAM AREA COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

Offering a reliable door-to-door car service, 7 days a week for anyone without personal transport. Book on 01485 520823
Please give at least 2 days' notice

RECYCLING CENTRE

For pre-booking your visit at **any** Norfolk centre:
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/62632/Norfolk-Recycling-Centre-bookings>
Or phone 0344 800 8020

Bircham Weather

Dry January, a somewhat suspect illusion when perpetuated by the media in another context, was certainly not reflected in the weather as the rainfall totalled 89 mm, some 1.6 times the monthly average. Temperatures were also below par with an average maximum of 6.1°C, some 1.1°C beneath the norm, with only one day in the month exceeding 10°C.

The year began with fresh north-westerly winds which, combined with the low temperatures, gave conditions a distinctly raw feel. Despite a reasonable amount of sunshine, the period from the 2nd to the 6th was notably cold with a highest daytime temperature of just 2.2°C. The lowest temperature of the month also occurred on the night of the 6th when -6.9°C was recorded following a snowfall during the previous night but it marked the end of this particular cold spell as Atlantic fronts began to make an impact. This westerly airflow then dominated our weather for the remainder of the month which included Storm Goretti on the 8th although the system tracked to the south, sparing our area the worst of the winds, but it still delivered 26 mm of rain over a period of two days. In fact, rain fell on every day from the 6th to the 15th, apart from the 12th, with the 15th proving to be the wettest day of the month when 21mm was recorded.

In addition to being one of the few dry days, the 12th was also the warmest day, reaching a maximum of 10.4°C. The continued Atlantic flow ensured that no air frost was recorded after the 14th but it was also responsible for generating Storm Chandra, which brought further gale-force winds on the 27th along with an additional 10 mm of rain. The remainder of the month saw a weakening of the Atlantic influence, allowing quieter conditions to prevail which even included some wintry sunshine on the final day.

Bryan



STANHOE VILLAGE SCREEN

Stanhoe Reading Room/Village Hall



The Man Who Knew Infinity (12A)

The film stars Dev Patel as Srinivasa Ramanujan, a real-life mathematician who, after growing up poor in Madras, India, earns admittance to Cambridge University during the First World War, where he becomes a pioneer in mathematical theories with the guidance of English mathematician and fellow collaborator, G. H. Hardy, portrayed by Jeremy Irons.

Monday February 23 at 7.30pm (doors open 7pm). £6 per ticket includes a complimentary drink.

The Choral (15)

Ramsden, Yorkshire, 1916. The chorus-master and most of the men of the ambitious local choral society have volunteered for the front, so under the direction of the demanding, driven Dr Guthrie (Ralph Fiennes), the Choral recruits a crop of teenage boys and girls. Together they discover the joys of singing and the urgency of desire as the new boys come to terms with their imminent conscription into the army.

Friday March 20 at 7.30pm (doors open 7pm). £6 per ticket includes a complimentary drink. For further information visit the website: Stanhoe.org (or call 01485 518191)

Forgotten Local Notable

Thomas Gibson Bowles is long-forgotten but he seems to have been a local man of many talents. He was born illegitimately in 1841/2 to a Suffolk landowner but received an education in France and by all accounts he didn't lack for money and was a notable man about town. He worked for the Inland Revenue but his first love was journalism: he wrote for the *Morning Post* and in his role as foreign correspondent he reported on the siege of Paris (see page 4) – with his reports exiting the besieged city by balloon – and wrote a book *The Defence of Paris* seen as the best first-hand report of the war. He went on to be a correspondent in the Turkish War of 1878. In the meantime he founded the satirical magazine *Vanity Fair* "A Weekly Show of Political, Social and Literary Wares", a publication famed for its caricatures of eminent peoples, and *The Lady*, the first-ever periodical devoted to women.



He then (like his father before him) turned his attention to politics and was the Conservative member for Lynn (1892-1906), an election won by only 11 votes. He was reelected as a Liberal MP in 1910. In political terms he was a bit of a loose cannon and a vocal critic of taxation and public finances.

He was also director of the London & Provincial Turkish Bath Company; a master mariner and builder of sea-going yachts; victor in an action against the Bank of England in which he took legal control of the case; and for good measure he was the grandfather of the uniquely colourful Mitford sisters.

Sky at Night

The next full Moon on March 3 is termed the year's "Most Illuminated Full Moon". In further Moon news, *Artemis II* is currently expected to launch in early March and will be the first manned space flight to travel "to the dark side of the Moon" since Apollo 17 in 1972. You can follow the progress here <https://spaceinformer.com/artemis-2-live-tracker/> and on NASA's website of course <https://www.nasa.gov/humans-in-space/artemis/>



British Cycle Quest

If you don't want to break speed or long distance records but want to set yourself targets and challenges on a bike then you could do worse than embark on the British Cycle Quest. It could take you years to complete (or never complete) but you set your own goals.

The idea is that there are checkpoints all over England, Scotland and Wales and you pedal there, exploring the countryside on the way. When you reach the checkpoint, you answer a question... something you can only really establish by being there. There are no hard and fast rules as to where you start from: it could be from home, from a holiday cottage, say, or you can even take a train to within 10 miles of your destination and pedal the rest. In that sense you set your own rules, or change them up as you fancy depending on, say, your fitness at any point in time, the weather, or how much time you have at your disposal. As of the time of writing there were 402 checkpoints to collect.

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest>

Rebellion Way Cycling

This long cycling trail is named in honour of two of the most famous Norfolk inhabitants: the "rebels" Boudicca/Bodicea and Robert Kett, he of the famed Kett rebellion that protested against the enclosure of land in the 16th century.

Rebellion Way is a 232-mile/373-km looped cycling adventure using a mix of quiet, mostly flat back roads, byways, cycle paths and bridleways. Heading out of Norwich, the Rebellion Way passes by Venta Icenorum, the capital of Boudicca's Iceni tribe, where you can see remains of the settlement. It also takes in parts of the Boudicca Way walking route.

The Rebellion Way is broken down into a suggested five stages: 1) Norwich to Thetford; 2) Thetford to King's Lynn; 3) King's Lynn to Wells-next-the-Sea; 4) Wells to Sheringham; 5) Sheringham to Norfolk.



There are guides to buy and GPX files to download to make finding your way easier as well as suggestions for accommodation, places to visit, pitstops and so on.

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/routes/long-distance/rebellion-way>

<https://www.rebellionway.com/>

Winter Olympic Games



Just a reminder that the Winter Olympic Games from Milano-Cortina, Italy takes place from February 4-22, closely followed by the Winter Paralympic Games from March 6-15. It's that four-yearly cycle when we all become experts in the nuances of curling, or muse that in our youth we might have tackled a bit of snowboarding, or even start supporting nations like Jamaica and Australia (with no snow) in their gold-medal attempts. It beats going out and braving the cold here!