



B I R C H A M T I M E S



In and around the Birchams

news@thebirchams.uk

June 2024 Issue 8

Parish Council Matters

Residents will be aware of the proposal for 12 new houses at the South of Great Bircham. There has been a lot of back-and-forth between the developers and the Planning Department. The latest changes, though not entirely clear, seem to suggest that our concerns over safety issues have been listened to. Original plans required bins to be placed for collection on the main road, which clearly was not satisfactory, and we have also pushed to have the 30mph limit further south. We will keep you informed.

We have formally adopted the defibrillator at the Bircham Stores, and thank the donor for this.

A reminder to those voting in person at the General Election on 4th July that Photo ID is required.

We have two vacancies for Council members, and will be co-opting at the next meeting. All information is available on our website or on application to the Clerk.

Our July meeting is on the 24th at 7.30pm in the Social Club; as ever Members of the Public are welcome.

As ever, if you wish to raise any issues with Council, please contact the Clerk at: clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk or by post at 7, Glebe Avenue, Hunstanton, PE36 6BS. Our website is <https://bircham-pc.gov.uk/>

Newsletter Thoughts

This issue changed direction, topically, around the time Rishi Sunak called a general election on May 22, and while we remain apolitical, non-political and every other political we can think of, we have devoted our History Corner to a period only 100 or so years ago when women didn't have the vote at all in the UK at general elections.

And to soothe us through this fevered period, we've turned our attention to biscuits and specifically the Bourbon biscuit. We might not all agree on politics but, as befits the biggest biscuit-eating nation on earth (GET IN!), we can all agree we like a little something to dip in our tea/coffee. Or have we just opened up another polarised debate: dunkers vs. non-dunkers?

Last month we trailed a piece on bombs in Bircham and bombs you shall have. We've reproduced some of the very many stories about explosive discoveries in the village.

New this month is our Words on Birds, courtesy of Richard Campey. Plus we have all our old regulars including Norfolk dialect, Bircham weather, and Book of the Month (biscuits again!). Ladies show up in news about Bircham Cricket Club. Meanwhile don't forget to attend some of the many events either in the village or closeby.

Do remember that the *Bircham Times* can be delivered to parishoners by email and is also available, thanks to the Parish Council, from its website at: <https://bircham-pc.gov.uk/2023/09/20/newsletter-archive/>

In addition, and to take advantage of the Diary of Dates, we post a Preview Edition on the 15th of each month at <http://www.thebirchams.uk/>



Foodie Fare

Popularised by Peek Freans in the 1930s, and a sister companion to the Custard Cream that was born in 1913, the Bourbon biscuit sees two rectangular chocolate-flavoured biscuits sandwiched with a chocolate fondant. No special mystery as to how it got its name: the branding was taken from the French royal family — the House of Bourbon. This recipe below to make your own comes from Lizzie Collingham's book *The Biscuit* (see also page 5). It's delicious with a mid-morning or afternoon tea or coffee, but unfortunately unless you are ridiculously methodical and dedicated, you won't have those tell-tale letters B O U R B O N emblazoned on the top.

BOURBON BISCUITS

For the dough:

100 g butter
100 g caster sugar
1 egg
150 g plain flour
50 g Bird's custard powder
25 g cocoa

For the filling:

100 g icing sugar
25 g butter
2 tbsp cocoa
a few drops of milk or water



Preheat oven to 175°C. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.

To make the dough: Cream butter and sugar. Stir in the egg. Sift in the flour, custard powder and cocoa, and mix to a dough. Roll out to ½cm thick and cut into fingers, or cut out biscuit shapes with a fluted cutter. Put on the baking tray. Bake for 12-15 minutes, turning them over halfway through.

To make the filling: mix all the ingredients together to form a stiff buttercream, adding a drop more liquid if necessary, but don't make too sloppy.

Cool the biscuits thoroughly on a rack and then sandwich together with the filling.

A-Z OF BISCUITS

Over a cuppa and a cantucci (get us!), we've put on our thinking caps and come up with some of our favourite biscuits, alphabetically speaking. Can you come up with alternatives or help us out with U, X, Y, Z? One final thing: does anyone know the name of the lemon sandwich biscuit that was made of flaky-type pastry and had a glazed and sticky surface. Were they lemon puffs?

A = Abernethy
B = Bourbon
C = Custard Cream
D = Digestive
E = Empire
F = Fig Roll
G = Gingernut
H = Hobnob
I = Iced Gems

J = Jammie Dodger
K = KitKat
L = Leibniz
M = Morning Coffee
N = Nice
O = Oreo
P = Petit Beurre
Q = Quadratini
R = Rich Tea

S = Shortbread Finger
T = Tunnock's Caramel Wafer
U = ???
V = Viscount
W = Wagon Wheel
X = ???
Y = ???
Z = ???

How to tell a biscuit from cake: Exposed to the air, a biscuit will go soft whereas a cake will go dry and brittle,



From the Annals

It'll come as no surprise that living so close to a military airfield we might have been subjected to the odd bomb scare over the years, but not so many... Here's a selection.

1975

Lynn Advertiser – March 11, 1975 **TRAINEES DIG UP BOMBS AT OLD AIRFIELD**

Two practice bombs, each about 13 inches long, have been unearthed by 18-year-old trainees as they were removing the topsoil from the former RAF airfield at Bircham Newton Training Centre while training on giant earthmoving machinery...

Hugh Potter, their training manager, said: "Although they were only practice bombs, we stopped work at once and called in the RAF bomb disposal people. They have begun a full-scale bomb-detection search of the rest of the airfield. The bombs themselves, they assured us, were ones used in the Second World War ... for bomb-aiming practice and would not have exploded, merely let off smoke."

1976

Lynn Advertiser – February 10, 1976

A bomb disposal unit was called in to deal with 13 phosphorus bombs which were found at Docking Road, Great Bircham on Friday. Sandringham fire brigade stood by while the bombs were exploded. They were found while a bank was being flattened on farm land belonging to Mr Harry Bennion.

1977

Lynn Advertiser – March 11, 1977 **BOMB FRIGHT AT SCHOOL**

"Primary school teacher Miss Christine Wakefield had a touch of shell shock when one of her pupils presented her with what looked like a part of a bomb. Miss Wakefield, a teacher at Great Bircham, had asked the children to bring in old things as part of a project they were doing. But when one little boy walked in with the shell-like object as his contribution he caused quite a stir. The shell was kept at the back of the school, away from the public, until the police arrived with bomb disposal experts on Wednesday and removed it."

1993

Lynn Advertiser – January 5, 1993 **DUMPED CAR PART SPARKS BOMB SCARE IN VILLAGE**

"Great Bircham was sealed off on New Year's Day as police officers dealt with a bomb scare. But although villagers speculated that animal rights activists may have been behind the hoax, police said yesterday the "device" was just part of a car engine that had been dumped. The village was sealed off by police with sniffer dogs when the object was found. Local residents were warned to stay in their houses. But a closer inspection revealed just a cardboard box containing an alternator and after half-an-hour the main road through the village was re-opened."

Dates for the Diary

Bircham Windmill summer season. Tearooms open daily 9-4pm, Bakery and attractions open daily 10-4pm

KL Stars speedway season, Adrian Flux Arena 01553 771 111 for events
<http://www.kingslynn-speedway.com/>

King's Lynn Guided Walks Tues to Sat @2pm from Saturday Market Place. £5

Thursford Collection Summer Season, Sun-Wed, 11-4pm 01328 878477

Houghton Hall and Gardens (Suns, Weds, Thurs). Antony Gormley *Time Horizon* exhibition runs Apr 21-Oct 31

Sandringham House and Gardens Mar 23-Oct 11 (exc July 19-Aug 4)

RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre Sundays fortnightly from June 23. 10-4

* * * * *

June 15 Rudham Fete — Fun Dog Show. From 12.30pm

June 15-16 East of England Flower Arranging Show, The Green, Hunstanton. From 9.30am

June 16 Hanse Festival, King's Staithe Sq., KL. From 11am

June 16 Fakenham Duck and Raft Races, Goggs Mill Lane. Teas, hog roast, music. Racing from 10am

June 16 West Norfolk Seasonal Food & Drink Festival, Hunstanton 10-3pm

June 16 Sandringham Half-Marathon and Community Mile, 9.30am/12.30pm

June 18 Bircham in Bloom meeting, Bircham Stores, 9.30am

June 21-23 Music Festival, The Green, Hunstanton



Digital Digest

For reporting notifiable pest and diseases

Colorado beetles, sunflower maggots, plum pox and Siberian silk moths are among some of the pests and diseases that should be reported to DEFRA. Use this site and the main DEFRA one to let the authorities know so they can track the danger. There are descriptions and images to help you. You can also report sightings of new invasive species from the much-heralded Asian hornet to the sea myrtle and even raccoons (maybe Disney was correct after all!).

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/pest-and-disease-factsheets/>

For time and calendar obsessives

Want to discover the day of the week on which you were born? Or maybe find a century-old calendar for 1924? Or establish the day of the week mankind first walked on the Moon (A: a Monday in the UK). Use this website to work out perpetual calendars as well as finding out about time zones, weather reporting, eclipses, moon phases, leap years and general "timely" titbits.

www.timeanddate.com



Glastonbury Festival BBC 1, 2 and 3, BBC Radio, Red Button, iPlayer, Sounds, YouTube etc. Getting too old to bounce around with youngsters, or embrace jostling and sweaty armpits? And frankly you can't get your legs into wellies and shorts and not look an idiot? Well you can get almost the same festival experience at home over the long weekend slumped on a sofa. Instead paint your face, don your "Peace on Earth" T-shirt, fill the fridge and slob in front of the inexhaustible output from the BBC, or follow using the Glastonbury Festival webcam (there already seems to be a Pyramid Stage there). And contemplate why "modern" band names sound more like What3Words [Psychedelic Porn Crumpets and Fat White Family anybody?]
Starts June 27

Pets (ostensibly dogs) at polling stations

With the cut and thrust of politicking over on July 4, don't twiddle your thumbs waiting for the results. Instead we suggest you embrace the creeping social media trend of "dogs at polling stations". Tie your pooch up outside and take his or her picture and post online. The national news outlets (newspapers, TV, online, X etc) also do their bit. Remember no pets inside and definitely no selfies insideit's against electoral law!

#dogsatpollingstations

History Corner

CAT AND MOUSE ACT

Otherwise known as the 1913 Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act, this emergency draconian legislation was taken against Suffragette hunger-strikers where they would be released from jail to avoid certain death and when their health was sufficiently recovered they would be recalled to prison and the cycle would start over. Emmeline Pankhurst was jailed 11 times in succession during 1913-14. The nickname for the act came from a WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union) poster of the time (see right). Prior to this there had been the unedifying and frankly alarming process of force-feeding women in prison, via tubes in the throat, nose and even through incisions in the stomach. True, the Suffragettes are remembered for their extreme behaviour in pursuit of the vote. Not just chaining themselves to railings, arson and window-breaking — and the incident at the Derby with the king's racehorse — but also a rudimentary bombing campaign.





WOMEN'S GREAT PILGRIMAGE

Most have heard of the celebrated Jarrow March of 1936 by 200 unemployed men from the North-East to London, but far less famous is the Women's Pilgrimage of June-July 1913 by members of the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies. Distancing themselves from their more militant WSPU sisters, the Suffragists marched upon London for up to six weeks from all reaches of the country: from Cornwall, Carlisle, Newcastle, Hunstanton, Cromer and all points on the route. They wore modest uniform (not the purple and green of the WPSU) and held meetings en route. However, their peaceful march was disrupted by male agitators who conflated their mission with that of the WPSU and pelted the marchers with cat-calls, eggs, stones and bodily violence. Those police in attendance had the habit of looking the other way! A riot ensued in, of all places, East Grinstead where 10 women were jostled by a crowd of 1500. An estimated **50,000** marchers gathered at Hyde Park on July 26. Noting the peaceful demeanour of the march and the women's message, even a reluctant PM Asquith grudgingly applauded them.



The campaigning was nobly set aside in 1914 at the outbreak of the Great War. Thanks to their war effort, in 1918 certain women over 30 first received the vote but it was not until 1928 that women gained electoral parity with men. Even then, the 1929 general election was somewhat dismissively dubbed the "Flapper Election"!

For more: try <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkpmFmljk3o> and Jane Robinson's 2018 book *Hearts And Minds: The Untold Story of the Great Pilgrimage and How Women Won the Vote*

<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-1913-suffrage-pilgrimage-peaceful-protest-and-local-disorder/>

Curl Up With a Good Book

The Biscuit — The History of a Very British Indulgence by Lizzie Collingham (2020).

"Biscuits and a cup of tea are a universal comfort food," so writes the author of this fascinating book. Find out how hardtack biscuits kept armies and navies fed for millennia. Trace the biccie's development from the ashes of Pompeii to the present, the influence of Europe and the Middle East. Discover the social history, how industrialisation enabled famous brands to produce biscuits in great quantities and fed the world. Learn about biscuit tins and find out why an African king ran off with the biscuits, and why a Japanese soldier took a tin back to Japan. Have a go at one of the many recipes scattered throughout the pages. And next time you sit down with a cuppa and a biscuit take a browse at this enlightening book. You won't be disappointed.

Clemency

Dates for the Diary

- June 23** Carnival Day, The Green, Hunstanton
- June 26-27** Royal Norfolk Show, Norfolk Showground royalnorfolkshow.co.uk
- June 28-30** 3-Day Event Horse Driving Trials, Sandringham sandringhamdrivingtrials.co.uk
- June 29** *Next Goal Wins* @ Village Screen Cinema, Syderstone, 7.30pm
- June 29-30** Festival Too, King's Staithe Sq., King's Lynn
- July 4** GENERAL ELECTION
- July 4** Bircham Banter at St Mary's 2.30-4pm
- July 5-6, 12-13** Festival Too, Tuesday Market Pl., King's Lynn
- July 6** World Snail Racing Champs @ Grimston CC
- July 6** Farmers' Market, Creake Abbey, 9.30-1pm
- July 6-Sept 15** Sandringham 18-hole crazy golf £7
- July 11** "The Return of the Beetle Drive", Stanhoe & Barwick WI, 2pm
- July 13** Burnhams Flower Show, Fete & Carnival
- July 14-27** King's Lynn Festival, various venues, box office 01553 764864
- July 19** NORFOLK SCHOOLS BREAK-UP
- July 20-21** Folk in the Town, Tuesday Market Place, KL 10.30-5pm
- July 27** *Wonka* @ Village Screen Cinema, Syderstone, 7.30pm
- July 31** Sandringham Flower Show 9-6pm £19
- August 4** U11 girls' cricket Norfolk v Suffolk @ Bircham CC
- August 16** ECB Vitality Girls' U18 League Norfolk v Lincs @ Bircham CC

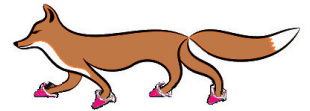


In the Garden

FOXGLOVES

Foxgloves, also known as *digitalis purpurea*, are tall showy flowers that reach as high as 6ft tall and come in various pastel colours: blues, mauves, pinks and white. They grace any cottage garden and are beloved by bees, who diligently search out nectar in each and every one of the plants cupped pockets. They self-seed and can turn up just about anywhere. Ours seem to pop up unannounced under our apple trees. Since they are *digitalis* they are toxic — causing the heart to race if accidentally ingested, or even kill. They also dissuade garden pests (rabbits and deer) from nibbling your other young plants.

Foxgloves feature in English folklore. And their association with foxes is not an accident. Tales describe how sly foxes creep through gardens unnoticed, since they cover their paws with foxglove blooms to deaden their passage. and also keep the dew off their paws. They are also associated with midwifery, the foxgloves not the foxes, presumably because in Roman mythology Juno was touched with a foxglove and then miraculously conceived.



Norfolk Dialect

Pay attention, class. This month we will be discussing verbs — that's those doing words — and sometimes we may use some grammatical terms, but don't glaze over. It is only a brief lesson, so there's a limit to what we'll cover.

Past tense — regular vs. irregular

In Standard English we say 'throw' for the present tense and 'threw' for the past (we won't overcomplicate with 'thrown' for now). So, it is perfectly logical that in Norfolk dialect the same principle applies to 'snow' and 'mow':

Standard English: It snowed yesterday. (regular)

Norfolk dialect: That snew yesterday. (irregular)

Standard English: I mowed the lawn yesterday. (regular)

Norfolk dialect: I mew the lawn yesterday. (irregular)

Standard English: I showed them the new house. (regular)

Norfolk dialect: I shew them the new house. (irregular)

But, just when you were getting the hang of it, you come across another example that is the complete opposite:

Standard English: Last year we grew potatoes. (irregular)

Norfolk dialect: Yesteryear we growed taters. (regular)

Damn! The only rule is there are no rules.

Imperatives

For the non-grammarians that's when you use a verb to tell someone what to do. Norfolk dialect still uses the second-person pronoun in imperatives (oh no not more technical terms!) Simply put, that means, instead of saying 'Sit down!' or 'Shut up!', you would say 'Sit you down!' or 'Shut you up!'. Hence the famous Norfolk road signs urging you to 'Slow you down!' — the last example I saw was on the way to Weybourne beach. Also, when you add extra emphasis, to a standard English speaker it sounds more like a question than an instruction:

Standard English: Do shut up!

Norfolk dialect: Do you shut up!

LR

Bircham in Bloom

The next meeting is at 9:30am on Tuesday June 18 at Bircham Stores. All are welcome.



Vote! Vote! Vote!

A general election was held 100 years ago, on October 29. The winning candidate for King's Lynn was the Lord Fermoy. He held the seat for 14 years over two spells. Today, he may be better known as the grandfather of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Royal Norfolk Show

Where: Norfolk Showground, Dereham Road, New Costessey, NR5 0TT

When: June 26: 8am-8pm, June 27: 8am-7pm

Price: Adults (17-64): £29.50 (two-day pass: £50), children (5-16) and carers: £14, ages 65+, students and accessible tickets (ages 17+): £25, family ticket: £75, royalnorfolkshow.co.uk

The Royal Norfolk Show returns for a two-day agricultural extravaganza. Expect 700 trade stands, more than 3,000 animals, a packed Grand Ring programme, Norfolk's biggest food and drink experience and hundreds of attractions.

New Bircham Business Ventures

A new business venture has recently launched in the village. Portfolio businesswoman Marney Forest has added a further string to her bow: Marney's Pet Transport Service. This luxury yet affordable service is for those needing to transport their pets when they have no vehicle of their own available, whether to the vets, to kennels, to the groomers, to the airport for a transfer of in fact anywhere the furry member of your family needs or wants to go!. Fully insured and accredited and WIT (Welfare in Transport) licensed (including First Aid). Pets are transported in their own dedicated vehicle and their every whim is catered for en route.



For further information and bookings Marney can be contacted on 07900 259271 email marneyspettransport@yahoo.com



My name is Julie and I am a registered paramedic now performing ear wax removal by both microsuction and irrigation (syringing). My clinic is based in Bircham Tofts, where I have been practising for just over a year now. I am fully insured. Most people will be aware that GPs no longer offer this service.

A little about the service I provide. During your appointment I will ask some questions about your ears/hearing, then I will examine you, taking a photo before any treatment. If there is any wax to remove, I can do this either by microsuction or irrigation and then take another photo so you see the results of the treatment. Afterwards, I will test your hearing to see if you have any problems. The charge is £55 for one or both ears. I am also able to offer the treatment for children if they are able to understand the procedure.

If you would like any further information please call me on 07980 455776.



VILLAGE SCREEN CINEMA
at Amy Robsart Village Hall, Syderstone



Next Goal Wins (12A) showing June 29 at 7.30pm

From Taika Waititi comes this story of the American Samoa football team, who suffered the worst defeat in World Cup history, losing to Australia 31-0 in 2001. With the 2014 World Cup approaching, the team recruits a down-on-his-luck, maverick coach to help turn their fate around. Starring Michael Fassbender

Coming up: **Wonka** (PG) on July 27

Contact 01485 578171 or syderstonecinema_ARVH@outlook.com for further details.

£4 per film (advance booking/pay on door).



MOBILE POST OFFICE

The scheduled stop at Bircham Social Club, Church Lane are 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

Friday June 21/July 19

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; Sat 8:21 10:36
13:36 15:41

Return from Stand A Bus Station

To Lynn (from Bircham Stores): Mon-Fri
07:22 09:23 12:23 15:38 15:43; Sat 09:23
12:23 15:38 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

Bircham Weather

May turned out to be warmer than usual thanks mainly to the overnight minima temperatures averaging 10.6°C against a norm of 8°C with a daytime average maximum of 18.2°C, which is around 1°C over par. It was considerably wetter though — the total rainfall being 96mm, which is around twice the expected amount. However, apart from the 3rd when 13mm of rain was recorded, it was completely dry until the 14th with the period from the 8th to the 13th providing a good deal of sunshine and temperatures above 20°C every day, peaking at 25.0°C on the 12th. The clear nocturnal spells also offered some lucky folk a glimpse of the Aurora. Unfortunately, the magic figure of 20°C wasn't realised again until the 26th as more unsettled conditions became established and some notable wet days more than made up for the dry first half of the month. The 22nd saw the wettest day when 28mm was recorded but the 16th and 26th also chipped in with 10mm each, the latter aided by a thunderstorm during the afternoon. A further 12mm was recorded on the 28th, followed by another 12mm during the last two days of the month which were particularly unpleasant, these being accompanied by a strong northerly wind which touched gale force on the 31st and held the temperature to a chilling 12.6°C, so ne'er cast a clout till May be out!

Bryan

St Mary's 100 Club Draw

Please contact John or Sally on 01485 779669 or email lsallyjohn@gmail.com for details of how to enter each month's draw

JUNE RESULTS: 1st prize no. **24**; 2nd prize no. **67**.

Festival Too

There's not a lot you can get for free these days but the return of Festival Too music event to King's Lynn over three weekends this summer provides precisely that. The first weekend's events are at King's Staithe Square on June 29-30. Tuesday Market Place is the venue on July 5-6 and 12-13.

911, Ocean Colour Scene, The Boo Radleys, The Amy Winehouse Band, Sigala, and Sandi Thom are just some of the acts on offer. More details are available at <https://www.festivaltoo.co.uk/> and <https://www.facebook.com/FestivalToo>



Words on Birds

For many the sights and sounds of summer are hearing cuckoos and seeing the arrival of swallows, but for me it's the swift. The sound of high-pitched screaming parties of these birds wheeling around often very high up is a summer highlight. Their curved wings and forked tails makes them quite distinctive but while their return from wintering grounds in Africa is usually in April and May, they were late back this year to Bircham.

They have an extraordinary lifestyle, eating, sleeping, bathing, drinking and mating on the wing and spending ten months of the year airborne. Flying at speeds of up to 69 mph, they are the fastest bird in level flight. They pair for life, have an average lifespan of 9 years and return to the same site to breed each year; this is the only time they are not flying. Occupying small holes in roof spaces and old buildings to nest they are now finding suitable sites restricted due to modernisation of buildings. There are, however, schemes for developers to put swift nest boxes into new housing. There is much research ongoing as to how they actually sleep on the wing and it is believed their slow wave sleep allows them to shut off parts of the brain but keep the hemisphere open which allows the eyes to stay open.



In the 1950s David Lack wrote *Swifts in a Tower*, a book describing his research on swifts in Oxford. It has recently been republished and edited by his son.

Richard Campey

Clerihew Day

July 10 is Clerihew Day, named after writer Edmund Clerihew Bentley whose birthday it was. He is credited with inventing the 4-line verse form that was dubbed a "clerihew" in his honour. The simple rhyme scheme is AABB and the first line ends with the name of a famous personality to be lampooned in the next three lines.

Dante Alighieri
Seldom troubled a dairy.
He wrote the Inferno
On a bottle of Pernod.

So why not try to create one over that mid-morning coffee and biscuits, or during those early-hours insomniac moments.

Stanhoe & Barwick WI

Thursday July 11: "The Return of the Beetle Drive!" Come and join us for an afternoon of fun. @ The Reading Room, Stanhoe. 2pm. Visitors are always welcome. Our charge is £5, which includes refreshments. Please contact Valerie (01485 576261) for further details.

In the first half of this year we've held regular Book Club meetings; visited Houghton Hall; held a charity walk at Holkham Park; visited the theatre; attended craft workshops; 'Had a go' at Docking Angling Club; and, via the wider WI community, heard Janet Street-Porter talk at the Theatre Royal, Mel B & Victoria Derbyshire at The Royal Albert Hall, and been gliding!

Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is at St Mary's, Great Bircham on Thursday July 4 from 2.30 to 4pm. Come along for a relaxed chat among friends, with drinks and sweet stuff available.

Sue



Back Page Sports Report

BIRCHAM CRICKET CLUB

It's been a year since we set things in motion to start a Bircham Ladies' team, so we thought we'd use our slot this month for a progress report — which is very positive all round.



At the time of writing, we sit second in our league table, behind Snettisham. We're through to the next round of the Norfolk Cricket Board Cup, and have attended cricket festivals hosted by other clubs, where the atmosphere has been incredibly supportive. Thanks especially to Jim Wroth, our 1st team scorer, who has given his time to take on this role for the women, also.

Most importantly, we've a great bunch of ladies who've bonded amazingly, and who seem to be enjoying laughs aplenty. Some want to play every match; some want to just turn up on a Friday evening for fresh air and a knock-around — we try hard to cater for both ends of this spectrum, and want to be competitive as a club, whilst still a great place to come for those who are less serious, or who might just want to give it a go.

Holding ladies' training on Fridays makes it easier for mums with kids playing junior cricket; it spreads our volunteers a little thinner, but seems to work very well.

For those who think they might like to try it:

- The time and place is 6pm on a Friday, on the playing field.
- The format uses a softer rubber ball, rather than a hard cricket ball. You don't need any special equipment.
- Just £2 per session, with no commitment.
- Our Facebook page (@birchamcricket) is the place for news and weather updates.

If you're a little nervous, take a surreptitious walk around the field on a Friday evening to check things out.

Alex

SNAIL RACING

There's not many world championships held in our part of Norfolk (actually, can't think of another one) but July 6 sees the return of the World Snail Racing Championships to Congham. Held at Grimston Cricket Club (PE32 1AG) as part of their Summer Big Bash, the day also encompasses the Mark Redhead Memorial Cricket Match, a 100-stall craft fair, and evening music, as well as a full bar and food. The packed day runs from 10am until 10pm

Will any snail beat the world record set by Archie in 1995 over the 33cm tablecloth course? There should be dozens of eager entrants, enticed only by the essence of cucumber and with their paths smoothed by a judicious spraying of water. As the organisers say "Ready Steady Slow".



Election Reminder

On July 4 — unless you've already undertaken a postal vote or have a proxy lined up to vote on your behalf — you can swing by our local polling station at Bircham Social Club to pencil your X in the box between the hours of 7am and 10pm. REMEMBER this is the first GENERAL ELECTION where it has been compulsory to show the officials at the polling station some form of photo ID before casting your vote. You don't need to take your polling card.

Cutoff date for inclusion on the electoral register is EOD on June 18. To check your status or register for the first time go to <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>