



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



In and around the Birchams

news@thebirchams.uk

June 2025 Issue 20

Parish Council Matters

Local democracy is a precious thing. The Annual Parish Meeting, which was held in May, is a good example of how it works. In routine Parish Council meetings, the public are allowed limited time to participate in the meeting and share their concerns with councillors. The Annual Parish Meeting is different. Everyone in the meeting, including the councillors, is there as a member of the public. There is no time limit on how long people may speak or the topic they may speak about. As a result, it is a very useful way of gathering views and sensing the mood in the village about things that concern people.

Concerns were raised by members of the public in both the Annual Parish and May Parish Council meetings about plans for the playing field, including whether the outdoor gym equipment should be relocated. This issue continues to be debated at length by the Council and we hope to make a decision in the meeting on Wednesday July 23rd.

It would be impractical, and in many ways undesirable, for decisions in the village to be made by referendum. Instead, councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of the village, particularly about how money is spent. This is public money raised in tax, known as the parish precept, so councillors must take villagers' opinions into account when making these decisions.

However, it can be tricky for the Parish Council to get a balanced view of public opinion. Being a good councillor is not an easy task. Please help by sharing your ideas and opinions, both in writing to the Clerk and in person at Parish Council meetings.

Thank you.

If you would like an item to be added to the agenda, please contact 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

Newsletter Thoughts

We've just about reached the mid-point of the year as we write this and we're sweltering and losing focus. It won't last, since yesterday was storms, rain and wind. But we are bringing you many events to occupy your time come rain or shine. We are very fortunate that there are plenty of things to do in this part of the county in the summer, thanks to "our" stately homes, beautiful gardens, lovely coastline and interesting towns and villages.

We've also a Spanish recipe to whet your appetite, a book to entrance, reminiscences galore and the latest we have on such things as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital rebuild and changes to recycling. We're in the middle of the sporting summer and give pointers of things to do, and ways to entertain the kids/grandkids now the break-up is almost upon us. If you feel we are missing something close to your heart, do let us know.

We're back for our 21st issue next month... worth a small glass of bubbly at Bircham Towers. Sadly, we're not planning on scooting off to the Caymans, since we failed to win the mega lottery rollover this month!!

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



Spanish Paella

I present for you here my UK take on the famous Spanish dish paella. Like many other foods, such as casserole, balti, etc., the name of the dish is derived from the vessel it is cooked in. In this case, a shallow metal pan, usually with handles on two sides. My version will no doubt send Spanish paella purists running for the hills. What was originally a peasants' dish — made by farm labourers using whatever ingredients came to hand while working in the fields — has been elevated to iconic cultural status for Valencians and they take the preservation of its integrity seriously. My version would also probably be considered too spicy by the purists.

Paella's peasant roots mean that it is ideal for cooking outdoors, requiring only one pan and a single burner: hence its popularity at music festivals, etc. There are companies that will sell you a specific paella burner (on legs) for outdoor use, but any old burner or stove will do. Also, after you've set it cooking, it requires minimal intervention — just ensure it does not dry out — so does not interfere with socialising and is thus ideal for parties.

Many restaurant menus in Spain avoid the use of the word "paella" when listing such dishes, preferring instead arroz con whatever [rice with whatever], where the whatever is seafood, chicken, etc, thus avoiding controversy. When we think of rice, we usually think of Asia. But, due to Arab influence, rice has been cultivated in S Europe for over 1,000 years, hence its presence in this previously peasant food is no surprise. Rice used for paella is usually of the variety bomba, but essentially any short-grain variety will do. Long grain rice will not work, as it cooks too quickly.

Fish stock — considering we live on an island, there does not seem to be much choice of fish stock in the shops: just the ubiquitous Knorr. The best I have used is imported from Spain <https://thetapaslunchcompany.co.uk/product/fish-stock-1litre>. A tub of this lasts forever.

Spices — you can cheat using a paella spice mix <https://thetapaslunchcompany.co.uk/product/paella-mix-catering-size-635-g> or mix your own (saffron/turmeric, smoked paprika, dried oregano).

Chorizo — Lidl does a fairly decent piccante chorizo for a low price (brand: La Gloria Riojana). Or, if you want to splash out on some very high-quality chorizo, head to the monthly farmers' market at Creake Abbey (first Saturday of each month). There you can buy a British chorizo (Hot Chorizo) from Marsh Pig that will rival the best Spain can produce — not cheap but very good.

Makes 2 very large portions (or 4 small)

3 tbs olive oil

6 large cloves of garlic, finely chopped

1 red chilli, finely chopped, seeds included

1 tin chopped tomatoes (or equivalent fresh chopped tomatoes)

black pepper and salt to taste

450 ml fish stock

125 g paella rice (short grain rice)

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp paella spice mix (or saffron/turmeric, smoked paprika, dried oregano)

200 g raw seafood

1 red pepper, cut into thin strips

approx a cup of frozen peas or green beans or asparagus

65 g sliced chorizo

In a frying pan 26cm diameter (or paella pan) heat the olive oil, add the garlic and chilli, cook for a few minutes, then add the tomatoes, pepper and salt. Simmer until a lot of the water from the tomatoes has evaporated (maybe 7mins).

Add the rice and stir well to amalgamate. Add approx half the stock and stir well.

Add the rest of the ingredients, and most of the remainder of the stock but retain a little. Stir well.

Simmer for approx 25-30 mins. Do not disturb during that time, but add a little more stock if it appears to be drying out. After 25 mins, check if the rice is cooked. If not, simmer for a few more minutes.



Having mastered the basic recipe, you can experiment. I have cooked it weekly for the past 15 years. Sometimes I use chicken instead of seafood. If asparagus is available, I stick that in. Or broccoli. Whatever you have that needs using up. I haven't yet resorted to water vole, though, which was apparently once the favoured meat for paella (in the 18th century, I believe).

The authentic Valencian version must have rabbit as its main ingredient and usually features snails too. Though not a big fan of rabbit, even I have to admit that when I tasted this, it was fantastic, and even better eaten cold the next day from the doggy bag I took away. Snails did not seem to add much, being quite tasteless. However, my paella is usually seafood-based, like the version eaten by the Valencian fishermen rather than their landlubber rabbit-eater countrymen.

East Anglian Film Archive

There is such a thing as an East Anglian Film Archive and it is housed at the Archive Centre in Norwich. Hidden among the films that tell of life in Norfolk is a lovely little film from Docking, showing us a slice of life there in the 1920s, when water was scarce and you couldn't turn on a tap to solve your watery needs.

WATER SUPPLIES IN DOCKING, 1927

This film shows the measures taken to overcome problems with the water supply in the village of Docking. A horse-drawn water cart, driven by Mr. Chesnet, is filmed filling up from the village well (at a depth of 212 ft). The water carrier used appears to be made of lead. The cart is filmed driving back into the village and encountering a herd of sheep that are being driven through the streets. The villagers, mainly women, are seen collecting their water by pail and one woman is seen handing over her halfpenny payment. The flint cottages of Docking are visible in the background. In a separate sequence a man is filmed reversing his car into the village pond for a wash.

The excerpt is more easily available from Pathé News, under the title: Salesman Delivering Water (1927)
<https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/168706/>

BRITAIN'S HARDEST WORKER

Mr Stan Walduck of Heacham. This film dates from 1961. Commentator says Stan set up his own business as 'odd job man supreme' in order to feed and clothe his nine children. We then see Stan at work in several jobs; he delivers letters as the village postman, digs in the graveyard as the parish gravedigger (and stops for a hot drink from a thermos), cleans windows with Hedy [his wife], polishes a fire engine as the village fireman, and arrives at a house to sweep the chimney. Finally, we see Stan working in a fish and chip shop.
<https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/36397/>

HARVESTING AND DISTILLING LAVENDER

A third film concentrates on the harvesting of lavender in the fields of Heacham, followed by a trip to a shed in Fring where the lavender was distilled into lavender oil, back again in 1961 but looking for all the world at least 20 years previous to that.
<https://eafa.org.uk/work/?id=790721>

Dates for the Diary

Bircham Windmill

Reopened Apr 1

RAF Bircham Newton Open Days 10-4pm (see below)

RAF Sculthorpe Open Day from 10am (see below)

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

Snettisham Park: Open daily from February 1

Houghton Hall & Gardens Selected dates between May 4 and Sept 28

Sandringham Until Oct 10 (exc July 20-29 & Aug 14-17)

Jun 15 West Norfolk Seasonal Food & Drink Festival, Hunstanton

Jun 15 Run Sandringham 10K

Jun 15 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day

Jun 15 National Beer Day

Jun 18 Intl Picnic Day

Jun 18 Intl Sushi Day

Jun 19 Clean Air Day

Jun 20 Glowworm Hunt @ Pensthorpe 10pm-midnight, £16.95

Jun 21-22 Hanseatic Festival of Watersports, South Quay, King's Lynn 10.30am

Jun 22 Open Garden, Old Rectory, Syderstone, 11-5pm

Jun 25-26 Norfolk Show

Jun 27 National Bingo Day

Jun 28-29 Festival Too, King Staithe's Sq, KL

Jun 28 Merchants Market, Tuesday Mkt Place, KL, 9-3pm

Jun 29 RSPCA at East Winch Open Day

Jun 29 Tapping House Open Garden, 10-2pm

Jun 29 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day

Jul 3 Bircham Banter, St Mary's, 2.30-4pm

Jul 3-6 Folk in a Field Festival, Bradmoor Woods, West Acre

Jul 4-5 Festival Too, Tuesday Market Place, King's Lynn



Curl Up With a Good Book

Something Wicked This Way Comes (1962) by Ray Bradbury — "All the fun of the fair"

I was a precocious reader, and long before I was a pre-teen I had exhausted the local library's children's books department. It was a fabulous library, a former Georgian manor house that was all 60s-70s inside with open-tread staircases, bright lights and mini-skirted librarians. Best of all, the children's department, with its tall windows, was bathed in sunlight (good for reading but bad for the longevity of books) and you could bask there, sitting on the floor, reading while cocooned by all those stories. But I'd exhausted the didactic texts, the moral fairy tales, the bonnets, petticoats, the swooning and the Edwardian secret gardens. I was born at a certain time — pre-Dahl and post-Blyton.

Then I rebelliously broke the rules. After what seemed like many protracted arguments I was issued with an adult reading card (a library first!) and could wander the aisles of books on the ground floor. Tobacco-begrimed books that were sheathed in plastic covers to prolong their lives. My every move was watched intently... the librarians fearful I would pick up the wrong item and that they'd have to snatch it from my hands. But, dear reader, this was the 60s space age — we were all would-be astronauts or scientists at the very least — we wanted flashy neon covers depicting rockets, aliens and outer space... not the early 20th century nonsense I had abandoned upstairs. And thus I alighted on a book with a garish jacket and an odd title *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (the jumble of words all seemed back to front... I didn't associate the quote with the witches in *Macbeth*, since this was many years before the enforced school reading syllabus).

Well, Bradbury was near the start of the alphabet and the shelf was close to hand... I would work my way through to authors with a surname starting "Z" in time... I'll show 'em. I approached the frankly scary librarian who had attempted so scornfully to forbid my joining of the adult library — a harriidan in a mini-shirt. She saw the cover and blanched and then saw the title had "wicked" in it... but obviously she didn't know the book. She fervently sought out my parents for their approval but they'd gone missing! She flicked through it a bit, saw nothing, guessed "Ray Bradbury" was a safe-sounding name and stamped the book ferociously as she reminded me I'd only have a week to read it. She did the same with the second book without a look... also by Bradbury... since I was childishly determined to knock on the head every single book in the library in defiance at her attempts to ban me and B was as good a start as any, since A would have alerted her to my plan and Austen was definitely not in any plans (all those bonnets, grr!). I wonder if she even noticed that the second book was *Fahrenheit 451*... I didn't realise then that it told of a dystopian future where books are burned, but then neither did she, otherwise I would have been frisked for matches on the way out of the library.

Anyhow, that's the preamble. I didn't remember much of *Something Wicked This Way Comes* when I came to re-read it recently. What I have always carried with me, though, was the nightmarish atmosphere created and the sense of foreboding on every page. Well this tale is about two boys on the cusp of manhood, Will Halloway and Jim Nightshade: one born a minute before midnight on October 30 and the other a minute after the witching hour on Halloween — they're the best of friends but one quiet and reflective and the other a gung-ho daredevil. They are excited and mesmerised when a fair (Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show) comes to town — heralded by the threat of a storm and a lightning-conductor salesman — with a coterie of sinister characters, including Dr Dark. There's the most beautiful woman in the world encased in ice, a character with black hairy hands (the precursor of the "hairy-handed gent who ran amok in Kent"?), a Dust Witch who foresees your death, an age-defying carousel, a hall of mirrors...

Chock-full of Bradbury's fine descriptions, poetical metaphors and whooping highs and lows that have you all calm one minute and with mounting apprehension the next. It may be set in mid-century prairie USA but you come to know the place well and the plot engages... and leaves us all re-engaging with our youthful selves and our fears as adults (like those of Will's Dad), regretting older age and the passing of time. Do read it! The rebel in you would approve.



Bircham in Bloom in June

The Bircham in Bloom group is a sub-committee of the Parish Council. This arrangement allows more people to get involved in Parish Council activities and, in turn, the PC can delegate appropriate responsibilities to BiB.

One example of this arrangement is that BiB has agreed to organise the planting of native hedging around boundaries of the playing field. A budget of up to £1,000 has been allocated for this work. However, the BiB group are practised at getting good value for money!

Did you know that there is now a dedicated Bircham in Bloom Facebook page?

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61575785367752>.

There you will find pictures of hard-working Bloomers and the results of their efforts to keep our lovely villages looking good.

You will also find details of BiB meetings. They are open to all, not just active gardeners. Do join in!



Queen Elizabeth Hospital Consultation

You'll no doubt be aware that the QEH is a Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) structure and as such it is crumbling and has been prioritised for a rebuild by the New Hospital Programme. The building works commence with a new multi-storey car park. The initial plans for the estate have been drawn up and are now available for public comment at a range of meetings. Apologies that there was little advance warning of this but we have the following dates below.

Monday June 16 virtual event
 Wednesday June 18 Swaffham Assembly Rooms
 Wednesday June 25 South Wootton Village Hall
 Wednesday July 16 Marshland St James Village Hall
 Monday July 21 Downham Town Hall

To register, book online at www.newqeh.org.uk
 Email: newhospital@qehkl.nhs
 Phone: 01553 613051

Dates for the Diary

Jul 4 Glowworm Hunt @ Pensthorpe 10pm-midnight, £16.95
Jul 5 Wild West Festival Norfolk, Glee House School, Cromer Rd, Hunstanton
Jul 6 King's Lynn Brass Band @ Sandringham 2-4pm
Jul 6 RAF Sculthorpe Open Day from 10am
Jul 7 World Chocolate Day
Jul 9 Dereham Blues Festival
Jul 11-12 Festival Too, Tuesday Market Place, KL
Jul 13 Hunstanton Concert Band @ Sandringham 1-3pm
Jul 13 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day 10-4pm
Jul 13-26 King's Lynn Festival with Jools Holland
Jul 15 Gummi Worm Day
Jul 18 Norfolk Motorhome & Caravan Show
Jul 18 Discover King's Lynn Free Film Night, Tuesday Market Place, KL
Jul 19 World Snail-racing Championships/Summer Big Bash, Gayton Cricket Ground
Jul 20 World Ice Cream Day
Jul 23 NORFOLK SCHOOLS SUMMER BREAK-UP
Jul 23 Sandringham Flower Show
Jul 23-Sept 2 Poo Trail at Pensthorpe from £17.95
Jul 23 Butterfly & Dragonfly Walk @ Pensthorpe 10-1pm, £13.95
Jul 25 National Wine & Cheese Day
Jul 25-27 Old Hunstanton Flower Festival, St Mary's
Jul 26 Hunstanton Sailing Club Open Day, 1pm
Jul 26 Worstead Festival
Jul 26 Merchants Market, Tuesday Mkt Place, KL, 9-3pm
Jul 27 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day
Jul 27 Norfolk Day



More Open Gardens

June 22: Syderstone's "Secret Garden". Have you ever wondered who lives behind that white gate in the tall red brick wall just down from the church in Syderstone? On Sunday June 22 you'll be able to find out! Tom and Jane White will be opening their garden as part of the National Gardens Scheme (NGS). Just like Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, Tom and Jane's is a charming old-style rectory garden. It was designed in 1999 by RHS-award-winning medallist Arne Maynard. Even for non-gardeners it's worth a visit but for gardeners who like a bit of detail – here it is! It has a parterre of English shrub roses, herbaceous beds, shrubbery and orchard as well as lawns, box, yew, beech and hornbeam hedging, pleached crab apple, wisteria, a vegetable garden and a riot of climbing roses.

Keen plantsman Tom is already working hard to get the garden into tip-top condition for visitors. He explains: "We've been opening the garden on and off since 2006, when we moved in. We count ourselves very lucky to live here in Syderstone and we're happy to share our garden for the benefit of the whole community as well as other NGS visitors who travel to see it. The refreshments team from St Mary's church will be here with teas, coffees, cakes and rolls so it will be a great opportunity to get together and meet friends, neighbours and other keen gardeners."

The money raised from admission fees will go towards NGS charities; refreshments proceeds will go to St Mary's church, Syderstone. Admission £5, children free. Open: 11-5pm

Parking: There is no car park at this property, other than for disabled visitors. The best place to park is on The Street (the main street through the village) near the church, then use pedestrian entrance through the white gate (opposite Rectory Gardens). Please park responsibly. Enquiries to Tom White on 07768 465746.

Also on **June 22: Old Hunstanton Open Gardens.** In the region of 11 gardens will be open. Refreshments in the village hall. Plant sales available. Also books, home-made goodies. £5 entrance fee, tickets at Old Hunstanton Village Hall and St Mary's church. Tel: 07763 466 325

July 6: Holme-next-the-Sea 11-5pm. Approximately 10 gardens open. £5 admittance. Plant sales.

Email opengardens@holme-next-the-sea.co.uk
<http://www.holme-next-the-sea.co.uk/opengard.php>

St Mary's 100 Club Draw

JUNE RESULTS: 1st prize no. **93**; 2nd prize no. **22** (1st prize wins £25; 2nd prize £10).

Thank you to all who supported the Club Draw last year. For further details on entering the draw, please email me on sliliweb10@gmail.com and I will send you an application form.

Sally

Stanhoe & Barwick WI

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

July 3rd: Summer Party

August 7th: Lyndsey Atkins — Tulips for Tapping House

Visitors are always welcome. Our charge is £5, which includes refreshments. Contact stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com for more details.



Heritage Live Concerts at Sandringham

There are four days of events at Sandringham this August to suit many tastes. You can also experience glamping at Sandringham for the first time, but maybe just cadge a lift from a friend, cycle or walk!! Maybe. If there are any generous volunteers who are happy to drop-off or pick-up, or event-goers who have room in their car, then do let us know and we can try to put you in touch with each other.

Thursday Aug 14 Pet Shop Boys and Scissor Sisters
Friday Aug 15 Mariah Carey, Nile Rodgers & Chic, and Eternal
Saturday Aug 16 Stereophonics, Blossoms, Jake Bugg
Sunday Aug 17 Michael Bublé, Beverley Knight, Gabrielle

You can get tickets here <https://www.axs.com/uk/series/24806/heritage-live-festivals-2025-tickets?skin=heritagelive>

Discover King's Lynn App

With it not being long until the kids (grandkids) break up for the summer you might find it challenging to keep them entertained. This new app from Discover King's Lynn, features tours, news, listings, events and even offers from Lynn businesses. Available for both IOS and Android. Search using "Discover King's Lynn". Forgot to mention: it's free to download.

Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is on Thursday July 3 from 2.30 to 4pm in St Mary's Church. 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!!

Sue



VILLAGE SCREEN CINEMA
at Amy Robsart Village Hall, Syderstone
Saturday July 26 at 7.30pm



A Complete Unknown (15).

New York, 1961. Against the backdrop of a vibrant music scene and tumultuous cultural upheaval, an enigmatic 19-year-old from Minnesota arrives with his guitar and revolutionary talent, destined to change the course of American music. He forges intimate relationships with music icons of Greenwich Village on his meteoric rise, culminating in a groundbreaking and controversial performance that reverberates worldwide. This is the true story of the rise of Bob Dylan, one of the most iconic singer-songwriters in history.
Starring Timothée Chalamet and Ed Norton.

Doors open 7pm; Price £4 – pay on the door; Hearing loop and ice creams available
Bookings can be made by email syderstonecinema_arvh@outlook.com or call 01485 578244.

On behalf of the Syderstone Cinema Team



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 June 20 / July 18

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

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

Recycling Update

Hopefully you've all got to grips with the recent changes in booking for a recycling slot at one of the county's recycling centres/dumps/tips (call them what you will). And we're sure that if you use the local Docking centre you don't need reminding that it is only open Friday to Monday (inclusive). As of June the latest news from Norfolk County Council is that ALL the recycling centres in the county are closed on Wednesdays... so you'll have to find yourself something else to do on that day. Maybe visit the cinema, taking advantage of a Meerkat film offer?

Bircham Weather

After a further 22 dry days it was surprising that May was actually the wettest month since January with a total of 43mm although, given that every month so far this year has seen values below the average, it wasn't a difficult target and was still well below last year's 97mm. Mayday itself was warm and sunny with a maximum temperature of 27.2°C which was to be the warmest day of the month as the north-easterly wind set in once again on the 2nd in time for the bank holiday weekend. Temperatures fell away quite markedly such that between the 4th and 8th a high of just 12.9°C was realised, but at least it was mainly dry. By the 9th the warmth had been restored though and summer-like conditions prevailed with a good deal of sunshine and temperatures in excess of 20°C every day until the 14th, when our old friend the north-east wind returned to maintain the roller-coaster. This latest cool spell was to last until the 23rd, the lowest "maximum" being 12.2°C on the 16th, before the breezes switched round to the south-west. The "normal" setup that ensued resulted in the only unsettled period of the month with fresh winds and, for some, much needed rainfall. On the evening of the 27th a period of very heavy rain brought the total for that day to 22mm, this being more than the measurement for the whole of April. Drier conditions were to return for the end of May, though, with the temperature rising to 25.5°C on the last day which helped the average high to 18.1°C, this being 1.0°C above the norm.

Bryan

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
07:17 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



Words on Birds

JACKDAW

This small member of the crow family is well known to most people, not least for its habit of nesting in chimneys. Although essentially possessing a 'crow-black' plumage, the jackdaws silvery shawl and bright, staring, pale eye set it apart from its darker Corvid cousins. Known to be intelligent creatures that can make good pets, they have not always been a liked bird. In the early 15th century they were considered to be a real pest to crops, leading Henry VIII to introduce an act to encourage the killing of all crows. Jackdaws were particularly targeted and, for some reason, more were killed in Norfolk than anywhere else.

Probably because of its habit of associating with man and man-made buildings, it has over the centuries, attracted a lot of myths and legend. They are considered sacred in some parts of Wales, possibly due to its fondness for nesting in church roofs, and one legend has it that the bird was once all silvery-white, the same colour as its neck, but turned black in mourning for the death of Christ. A highly social bird, they mate for life and a group of jackdaws is known as a train or a clattering, an apt description for such a noisy bird. It maybe that distinctive call that gives it its name, although the name 'Jack' was often used to denote a thief, and jackdaws, like magpies, are prone to pick up shiny objects like coins.

Steve Rooke

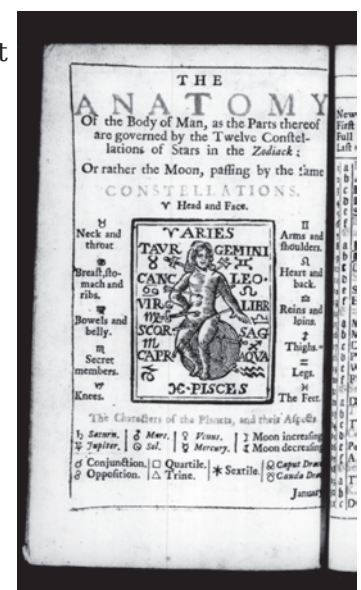
Fly: An Almanack for the Year 1722 for King's Lynn

We stumbled across this publication and a similar one for 1701 recently. It is full of all the traditional Almanack business such as tidal tables, calendars, tables for calculating interest on money, sunrises and sunsets, eclipses, copies of wills, weather and then a curious table of bodily parts assigned to particular days of the calendar (and I guess we are talking Julian here rather than Gregorian) aligned with weather forecasts. June 21 gives us Walburg and "legs", the 22nd Alban and "ancles", and 23rd Etheldred and "feet". These three days fall within the prediction range of "Fair and Pleasant Weather". Move along and July 20 reads Margaret, "toes" and "overcast and cloudy" and 21st reads Mary Magdalen with "head and face" and "sudden gusts of wind". And, yes, we childishly also spotted that June 9th's attributions (no saint mentioned) are "bowels" and "high wind".

Since our region, then as now, was a farming community there is much advice also on when to sow and reap crops, not always as you may think by month but frequently by zodiacal month. Prune trees when the Moon is in Taurus or Virgo or Capricorn; fell timber in the wane of the Moon in Aquarius or Pisces. There's also advice on blood-letting, but us oldies will be reassured to know that "Above the age of 56 it is not good to bleed at all". Laxatives should only be given during Gemini, Libra or Aquarius.

The anatomy of the body of man was governed by the constellations as follows:

- Aries: head and face
- Taurus: neck and throat
- Gemini: arms and shoulders
- Cancer: breast, stomach and ribs
- Leo: heart and back
- Virgo: bowels and belly
- Libra: reins and loins
- Scorpio: secret members (I reckon we can guess!)
- Sagittarius: thighs
- Capricorn: knees
- Aquarius: legs
- Pisces: the feet





Bircham Bowls Club

We are well into our 4th season now and are pleased to report that our numbers have swelled to 20 players. We have therefore had to introduce a system of two Divisions, which we have called ASH and OAK, and on completion of these games the top two players in each division will play each other to arrive at the top four overall.

We continue to play matches at the extremely pleasant surroundings of Houghton Hall and enjoy the kind hospitality of our hosts Houghton Bowls Club. All our players live in the village, some within a stone's throw of each other, but let's hope they confine their "throwing" to their bowls!!

The season will close during the 1st week of September with 108 games having been played by then. So far the weather has been very kind to us and long may it continue.

Anyone interested in joining us next season please contact me on 576154.

Chris Weldon

Cricket News

Two pieces of local cricket news this month. First, the club has applied to the Borough Council for a retail alcohol licence, with proposed hours running Mon to Sun 11-9pm. The application can be viewed by appointment with the Licensing team quoting reference 25/00628/LA_CPC at the Council's Office, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn (tel: 01553 616200).

Any objections to this application should be made in writing, by July 7, 2025, to Legal Services and Licensing, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1EX.

Secondly, the club has notified the parish council of its intention to install solar panels to the pavilion.

Further afield, Norfolk Country Cricket Club (NCCC) may be a Minor County side but they get to cut their teeth by playing a first-class county – Kent – at the Sprowston Cricket Club venue on Monday August 4. Sprowston play at the Barkers Lane ground to the north-east of Norwich NR7 8QZ. This "Showcase" fixture is just one of the matches held there this summer

Hunstanton Tennis

Entries close on July 1 at 9am, if you want to take part in the Hunstanton Lawn Tennis Tournament that runs this year August 17-23. Dubbed Britain's biggest tournament, with more than 50 events, it attracts entrants from all age groups. Fancy swishing your racket in Sunny Hunny this August, then apply here: <https://www.hunstantonltd.co.uk/enter/>

Hunstanton Soapbox Derby

July 25 is your latest possible date to enter a "racing machine" for the annual Soapbox Derby held on the streets of Hunstanton on September 21. The following video "rallies" all would-be, designers, engineers and drivers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHrbTCNdIi8> and registration documents can be downloaded here: https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20240/hunstanton_events_and_activities/571/hunstanton_soap_box_derby.

Surely with all the talent in our villages we can enter a Veterans' vehicle (that's for veterans aged 50+, not the age of the soapbox). And it needn't be the fastest: the Concours d'Elegance prize is for the most beautiful jalopy entered, regardless of where it finishes. Just focus on the kudos to the village if we were on the map. A Bircham Banger based on a sausage? Come on chaps and chapesses, channel your Wacky Races spirit!!