



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



In and around the Birchams

March 2024 Issue 5

Parish Council Matters

Council has been saddened to receive the resignation of Cllr Malcolm Sargent. Malcolm has been a dedicated councillor for very many years, including a long period as Vice-Chairman. Council passed a formal Vote of Thanks at its recent meeting, and we wish him and Sheila well. As a result, there is a vacancy on Council, and there is currently a **Call for Election** as advertised (<https://bircham-pc.gov.uk/category/news/>). If there is no such call, we will move to Co-option – please contact the Clerk for further details.

At our March meeting, we were fortunate to have the attendance of Robert Timmins from the **Sandringham Estate**. He was able to introduce himself, and spoke on the recent flooding issues in Church Lane. This is a difficult problem, and Council is continuing to work with other bodies to see what can be done. We thank Robert for this visit, and one on-site earlier.

Council has received permission for the **Bircham In Bloom** team to plant on the Fring Rd Triangle, which will extend the reach of their efforts to make Bircham more attractive. Council is organising a **litter-pick** in early May – please look out for more details next month.

Various projects are ongoing, including a new Interpretation Board/Map for the Spinney, possible playground equipment improvement, and **allotments**. This last requires much more research, but it is clear that there will be a large up-front cost; Council is required to consider this but has to balance the numbers requesting allotments and the financial cost to the rest of the Parish.

As we approach year-end, it is clear that our **financial position** is healthy, and projects completed in the last year were mainly funded with grant and other income, rather than a precept rise as previously noted. Unfortunately, the bulk of your Council Tax goes to Borough (including the IDB), Police and County – all of these look to be rising at close to the maximum amounts allowed. The Borough has agreed to change Council Tax arrangements for unoccupied and second homes, which will bring some income back to the area.

You may have heard of the **digital switch-over**, which means the end of the landline phone as we know it. In the next year or so, all current phones will be moving to internet-based systems. This is not going to be easy in some circumstances, and affects those with careline arrangements for emergency calls. These are being dealt with, but please note it will be done at no charge by your providers – if you receive requests for payments, these are scams. Do not agree to this and contact your careline team separately.

Finally, the **D-Day 80th Anniversary** approaches. Although Council has no plans to commemorate this itself, we have set aside a generous sum to fund events, as with the Jubilee and Coronation. If you are organising an event during the year, whether connected to D-Day or not, and to which the whole Parish would be welcome, you can apply for funding to help with this – contact the Clerk for more information.

Our next meeting is on April 10, and the Annual Parish meeting will take place on May 15, prior to the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

As ever, if you wish to raise any issues with Council, please contact the Clerk on clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk or by post at 7, Glebe Avenue, Hunstanton, PE36 6BS.

Newsletter Thoughts

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

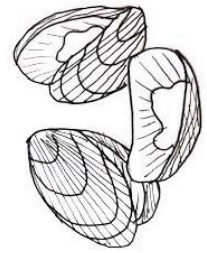


Foodie Fare

Alongside the recipes you've gotten used to we also wanted to focus on local fare, seasonal foods and anything else foodie that catches our eye. Here is March's contribution with thoughts on mussels, Irish food treats for St Patrick's Day and a Mrs Beeton rarebit recipe that's parsimonious (by our standards!) on the cheese.

BRANCASTER MUSSELS

We are so lucky to live in this beautiful part of England with glossy Brancaster mussels on our doorstep. These succulent morsels used to be known as 'the poor man's shellfish'. This delicious seafood is traditionally enjoyed during months with an -r in them, when they are likely to be at their best. They are pretty healthy fare too, rich in vitamins and minerals. The local mussels are Norfolk blue or Common Mussels, which are found at Brancaster. The mussels are laid down in water channels as seeds and are usually harvested after two years. Most mussels are rope-grown but Norfolk mussels are raked from the shallow waters. When preparing them, discard open or broken ones and tug out the beards. I just cook mine in wine and parsley the French way, but some prefer cream sauces. Mussels are so versatile. They can be cooked on their own, or added to soups, salads or with pasta.



IRISH RECIPES

Thoughts turn to Guinness to celebrate St Patrick's Day, but there's also the humble potato to consider. So many Irish recipes turn to it. Off the top of our heads we have Colcannon (potato, cream and cabbage), Boxyty (potato, flour and egg), Champ (potato, milk, spring onions), Farls (potato and flour)... also potato bread, Irish stew, potato soup, coddle, bubble and squeak, and even apple pie made with a potato base instead of pastry.

IRISH RABBIT OR RAREBIT

According to Mrs Beeton there is an Irish version to rival the Welsh "cheese on toast".

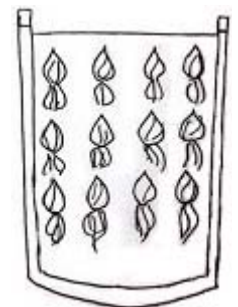
INGREDIENTS.-- 4 oz of Cheshire or Cheddar cheese, ½ an oz. of butter, 2 or 3 tablespoonfuls of milk, 1 dessertspoonful of coarsely chopped pickled gherkin, vinegar, mustard, pepper, buttered toast

METHOD.-- Put the butter, milk and cheese, cut into small pieces, into a saucepan, stir by the side of the fire until the ingredients become creamy, then add vinegar, made mustard and pepper to taste, and lastly the gherkin. Have ready some squares of hot well-buttered toast, pour on the preparation, and serve quickly.

In the Garden

This month we are looking at how to make a bulb lasagne, which was invented by the Dutch, and involves layering bulbs one on top of another. The largest and latest flowering bulbs go in deepest, moving to the smallest and earliest in the top layer. I usually do three layers, but two is also fine. The growing shoots of the lower layer(s) just bend around the other bulbs quite happily. The first layer can go as deep as 11 to 12 inches then cover them over with a couple of inches of potting compost before you place the next layer of bulbs.

Bulbs ideally suited to pot growth include snowdrops, crocuses, irises, or tulips. Drainage is key with bulbs, so all pots need a couple of holes at the base. The bulbs shouldn't touch each other or the sides of the pot. They can tolerate a certain amount of freezing weather. Cover them with branches or wrap the pots with bubble wrap to insulate. A typical recipe layer could be tulips, hyacinths or alliums as the ideal base, with the second layer growing narcissi or muscari, and the final top layer being crocuses or irises.



Anna



From the Annals

Honestly, it is safer to stay at home (or is it?). Tread carefully, for the forces of Nature are out to get you!

1871

From the *Norwich Mercury* -- Saturday 25 February

BIRCHAM

"A SINGULAR ACCIDENT occurred to a horse engaged in ploughing upon some land in the occupation of Mr. John Cutter, of the Heath House Farm, during last week. It came suddenly upon "a gault," and suddenly disappeared beneath the surface. These "gaults" are often found near the surface on a chalk strata. Although horses have often sunk in them, we believe they have never been known wholly to disappear before."

1876

Also from the *Norwich Mercury* -- Saturday 1 July

GREAT BIRCHAM

"STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.—Thunder had been heard at intervals all Wednesday afternoon, gradually becoming more and more violent till between 5 and 6 p.m., when rain fell heavily for about half an hour. A cottage was struck by lightning, a corner of the outside chimney being cut away, a hole made through the roof, and the frames of two windows smashed, with many panes of glass. Inside, a looking glass was smashed in the very room in which were the inmates—a man, woman, and child, and almost everything in the house was disturbed. The occupier is John Sheldrake. Mrs. Sheldrake believes her feet to have been struck, for they have lost all sensation."

[To the best of our knowledge the property was in Lynn Rd]

Fireball Goings-On

It's not just the past, however, that sees unexplained (or at least unfathomable) events. News reaches us of a fireball event near Bircham. The driver that witnessed it on Wednesday Feb 28 reported that he was driving from Fritcham towards the Birchams in the dark when he was suddenly aware of a presence, tearing alongside beside him, 50m to his right and at the same height for several seconds as he drove, before it plunged behind a hedge and into a farmer's field. He described the core of the object "as about the size of a 30 mph road sign with a vivid blue ball and a long fiery tail".

Thanks to the wet weather and soil, the object probably now lies deep underground. Now if only pig shelters had doorbell cams attached...

This incident, alongside the gault horse-swallowing one mentioned above, has set us wondering as to whether the district near Heath House Farm is the Birchams' equivalent of the Bermuda Triangle.

Dates for the Diary

Mar 17 West Norfolk Seasonal Food and Drink Festival@ Hunstanton High Street 10-3pm

Mar 19 Bircham in Bloom meeting, Bircham Stores 9.30am

Mar 21 Water Aid Spring Lunch, St Mary's 12-1.45pm

Mar 21 Singing Your Heart Out 'Tutors on Tour' concert, Methodist Church, London Road, King's Lynn 6.30-9pm
Tickets from

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/syhotutorsontour>.

Pay what you can £5-15

Mar 21 *One Life* showing at Reading Room, Stanhoe 7.30pm. £5

Mar 22 Crafty Burger Van at Social Club 5.30-8pm

Mar 23 *The Miracle Club* (12A) 7.30pm at Amy Robsart Hall, Syderstone £4

Mar 24 Houghton Hall visit at 2.30pm

Mar 24 Open Gardens at Gayton Hall, Gayton, 12-5pm £6

Mar 26 Coffee Morning, Covey Cottage, Church Lane, Great Bircham 10-12 noon

Mar 28 Bircham Windmill summer reopening. Tearooms open daily 9-4pm, Bakery and attractions open daily 10-4pm

Mar 28 KL Stars speedway season opens, Adrian Flux Arena 01553 771 111

<http://www.kingslynn-speedway.com/>



Websites (and Podcasts) of the Month

For would-be archaeologists and detectorists

Check out whether archaeological finds have been discovered in your garden. We found the easiest-to-use base map was OpenStreetMap (select that), then zoom in to where you live. Ensure the i icon on the mini menu is selected, then if you click on the red dots/yellow triangles it will give you a summary of the find. Click on the number hyperlink on the left to give a fuller description.

<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/map-search>

For a summary of Bircham finds/archaeological records, use this url
<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?TNF149>

It behoves us to say that you can't go digging around fields and gardens without the landowner's permission!!

For garden inspiration

A complete site for planning day trips or holidays around the country to visit gardens. Or maybe browse nurseries and track down your favourite plants. Never be lost for garden inspiration again. Linked to this, see also details about the upcoming Open Gardens Scheme on page 6

<https://www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk/>

For local crime statistics

You can use maps, filters (month by month), etc from the police to track recorded crime. While initially slightly concerning, other indices have the Birchams as one of the ten safest villages in Norfolk!

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/norfolk-constabulary/hunstanton-and-burnham/?yourlocalpolicingteam=about-us&tab=crimemap>



Conscious of the fact that we review books and websites, we thought we should add another string to our bow and include podcasts. The two that follow caught our eye recently.

Food for Life: Your Guide to the New Science of Eating Well by Tim Spector. Available on BBC Sounds and Radio 4.

This podcast is highly informative as to what we should all know about the food we eat. It is based on the latest scientific research, formed over the past decade. Tim Spector analyses everyday foods as well as environmental issues and ultra-processed foods. We were surprised to learn that most of the crisps in the world are eaten by, jointly, the USA (perhaps no surprise there) but also France, birthplace of the Michelin star. The podcast has a very interesting approach to nutrition and is thoroughly enjoyable.

In Our Time

Also available on BBC Sounds and Radio 4.

There's more than 1000 episodes here, with host Melvyn Bragg in discussion with an array of guests and experts on... well just about anything you care to think of. Of local interest recently was an episode from February on The Hanseatic League. Other recent episodes have considered Alice in Wonderland, The Sack of Rome 1527 and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. There's a lot going on here.



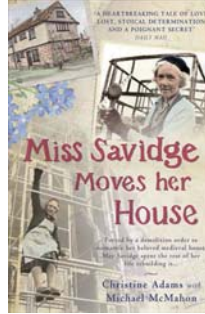
History Corner

The indefatigable May Savidge

We look at another indomitable character this month, who not only moved from the Home Counties to Norfolk, but did so brick by brick when her medieval home, No 1 Monkey Row, Ware, was threatened with demolition.

It became a 23-year-long labour of love to move her home and then rebuild it rafter by rafter, window by window and brick by brick, and May undertook the work while in her 60s and 70s, living in the building as her painstaking work continued around her.

Read the full story in *Miss Savidge Moves Her House*, co-written by her niece Christine Adams, who now owns the house in Wells.



Countryside Lore

There are certain signs that Spring is arriving. We have the vernal (or spring) equinox on March 21 and the clocks go forward for British Summer Time on March 31 (also Easter Sunday, so it is all go that day).

According to folklore the cuckoo makes his first appearance on April 6, traditionally a foreteller of spring. It is unlucky to hear its distinctive call before this day. Other sources suggest the cuckoo first sings on St Tiburtius Day (April 14). Whenever it arrives, it does so in fewer and fewer numbers nowadays and departs the country in June.

The first Sunday in April is Daffodil Sunday, though with our shifting seasons it all seems to be a bit late. We spotted some growing in the village in January!

Curl Up With a Good Book

Atonement by Ian McEwan (2001). I have just re-read this book, my favourite McEwan novel and an exceptional Booker prize nominee (which only lost out that year to Peter Carey's *True History of the Kelly Gang*). It is divided into three parts, beginning in 1935, a very hot summer with all the portents of a war to come, Briony, a 13-year-old girl, has a vivid yet childlike imagination and elicits attention from her family with attempts at writing fiction. Her misinterpretation of various incidents leads to awful consequences for other characters.

The war continues to provide a backdrop to the novel, with the second part describing the evacuation of Dunkirk; in the third part we find Briony training to be a nurse and caring for some of the casualties. The epilogue has 70-year-old Briony as a successful novelist. I have been a little vague regarding the plot in this novel as I don't want to give too much away,

Lynda

Dates for the Diary

Mar 29-Apr 1 New Vintage release at Burn Valley Vineyard 10-4pm
https://burnvalleyvineyard.co.uk/events.html

Mar 29 Discover Birdwatching (for beginners) with lunch 10.30-4pm at Pensthorpe £20.95

March 31 EASTER DAY/CLOCKS GO FORWARD

Mar 31 Letterbox Crafts stall at Bircham Windmill

Mar 31 RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre 10-4pm

Mar 31 Easter Egg Trail at Sandringham in aid of the East Anglian Air Ambulance 10.30-2.30pm

Easter onwards KL Guided Walks Tues to Sat @2pm from Saturday Market Place. £5

Apr 4 Holistic Therapies & Neal's Yard Products talk @ Stanhoe & Barwick WI, 2pm

Apr 5 Crafty Burger Van at Social Club 5.30-8pm

Apr 6 Bircham Cricket Club Race Night 7pm @ Social Club

Apr 7 West Norfolk RSPCA Sponsored Dog Walk at Sandringham

Apr 12-14 Burnham Market Horse Trials

Apr 15 Bingo at the Social Club

April 19 Crafty Burger Van at the Social Club 5.30-8pm

Apr 20 Jams and Pickles Stall at Bircham Windmill

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

Apr 27 *The Great Escaper* (12A) 7.30pm at Amy Robsart Hall, Syderstone £4

Apr 28 Dawn Chorus at Pensthorpe 5-8am £19.95 (£29.95 to inc breakfast)



Bell-Ringing

Two of us from the village were lucky enough to turn up at St Mary's a few weeks ago, when the bells were about to be rung, and were kindly invited to watch. I remember that the bell-ringing used to take place each Thursday evening a few years ago but has rarely happened since. It was fascinating and quite daunting climbing up the 'very' narrow spiral stone staircase to the ringing room to watch the action. Interestingly, we were told to sit without crossing our legs and with our hands on our knees – I thought it was some rather odd injunction to get us all to be quiet and orderly... until it was pointed out that there was every chance one's leg could get hooked up by the rising bell rope and you would be whisked up into the air unceremoniously and painfully!!

We climbed up further into the tower where the bells were hung and watched them being rung...very loudly. We were told some of the history and it seems that the bells at Great Bircham are very ringable and also of particular note as, unusually, they go anti-clockwise whereas most rings are clockwise. It is such a shame for them not to be rung regularly.

One of the regular ringers of bells in the area has kindly sent us details of what could be done to kick-start bell-ringing in our lovely church... she writes: "Most towers with a regular band of ringers meet weekly for practice on an evening. At each tower there is person in charge: a Tower Captain or Ringing Master. Teaching new volunteers is normally held separately from normal practice." Our nearest towers with captains are at Dersingham, Gaywood and at the King's Lynn Minster. If you think this might be for you, and want to take it further, please contact the Newsletter in the first instance on news@thebirchams.uk

Pierre

Singing Your Heart Out

The singing group Sing Your Heart Out originally started at Hellesdon Hospital, when they found that music and singing greatly helped the patients. It is now a charitable organisation open to all. There are no auditions and no requirement to read music. We sing and learn our songs with the help of the words and by repetition. We sing in rounds and in harmony — and if you hit wrong notes nobody cares!! Attendance is free, but donations of £2 are welcome if you can afford it.

On a personal note, bereavement counselling did nothing to help me overcome my own grief but singing helped me enormously. Yes, I might cry over some of the lyrics, but mostly it lifts my spirits for the length of the session.

Check out the website www.syho.org for the dates. We meet at the Methodist Church Hall, London Road, King's Lynn PE30 5EZ from 2 to 3.30pm.

Jane

March 15 The date of the Ides of March, according to Shakespeare:
"Beware the ides of March", a warning linked to the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC

National Garden Scheme Open Gardens

Wensum Farmhouse and **The White Cottage** in Pockthorpe (£6 joint ticket) and **Wensum House** in East Rudham (£5.50) are all opening for the National Garden Scheme for the first time. Do come along and support us and bring your friends and family on Sunday June 9 (1-5 pm).

There will be homemade teas in Pockthorpe in aid of local charities with plenty of parking and a plant stall. Children free with an adult. Dogs welcome on leads. Importantly, support with scone & cake baking and plants to sell would be very much appreciated. Please contact Amanda McCallum (acmcc@me.com or on 07769 883537 with any offers or questions).



Norfolk Dialect

This month's topic is strictly for the birds. The Norfolk dialect contains quite a few alternative names for various bird species. Below are the ones we have discovered.

Norfolk English

Buttle
Caddow (or cadder)
Dow
Furrow-chuck
Greenulf
Harnser
Hedge Betty
Herring-spink
Hornpie
Jill-hooter
King Harry
Mavish
Oven-bird
Spink

Standard English

Bittern
Jackdaw
Pigeon
Whinchat
Greenfinch
Heron
Hedge sparrow or dunnoek
Goldcrest
Lapwing
Owl
Goldfinch
Song thrush
Blue tit or long-tailed tit
Chaffinch



As for the word "Harnser" (Heron), this may provide a solution to something that has often puzzled students of Shakespeare. Why does Hamlet say that he can tell the difference between "a hawk and a handsaw"? It doesn't seem to make a lot of sense... unless the word "handsaw" is actually a corruption or mishearing of "harnser". It would make much more sense to be able to tell the difference between a hawk and a heron. "Harnser" was previously used in other parts of the country, yet has long since disappeared -- but it survives in the Norfolk dialect.

Windmill Reopening

It's Easter so that must mean the Windmill and Bakery are reopening for all your jams, pickles, and obviously baked goods, including the mahoosive Bircham Buns.

Open from March 28 (tearooms 9-4pm and bakery/attractions 10-4pm). More details of events will be given throughout the summer but also please check out the Dates for the Diary listings on a monthly basis.

VILLAGE SCREEN CINEMA at Amy Robsart Village Hall, Syderstone



The Miracle Club (12A) showing Mar 23 at 7.30pm

The 1960s women of Ballygar, Ireland dream of escape, so thanks to winning tickets to the French pilgrimage site of Lourdes they do just that. Starring Maggie Smith, Kathy Bates and Laura Linney.

Coming soon: **The Great Escaper (12A) (Apr 27)**. £4 per film (advance booking/pay on door).

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



STANHOE VILLAGE SCREEN at Reading Room, Stanhoe

One Life (12A) showing Mar 21 at 7.30pm. £5 inc refreshments. Doors open 7pm.

The extraordinary true story of Nicholas Winton, the "British Schindler", who saved hundreds of Jewish children from Central Europe on the eve of the Nazi invasion, Stars Anthony Hopkins and Johnny Flynn as Winton in old age and as a young man respectively.

Contact 01485 518191 for further details.



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 April 26
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
Note: Different times may apply at Easter

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

Normally one of the driest months of the year, this time February brought 140mm of rain which represented 2.8 times the average in a month that saw just 8 dry days. Although without exceptionally wet days (ie over 25.4mm or 1 inch in "old" numbers), there were 7 days which provided over 10mm of rain during a month with an even distribution of rainfall.

It began reasonably enough with mild temperatures and sunny periods up to the 5th but then the wet conditions prevailed such that between the 8th and 23rd only the 12th provided some respite with a completely dry day. It was notably mild too with the temperature peaking above 10C on no fewer than 19 days with the 15th bearing a maximum of 16.5C along with an overnight minimum of 12.0C, bringing the overall average high for the month to 10.6C which is 2.4C above the norm.

A SW wind blew for 23 of the days which maintained these temperatures but, although fresh at times, we were spared the named storms/associated gale-force winds of the previous months and only one night (25th) gave an air frost of -1.0C. Maybe all the rain could be nature's tears of joy.

Bryan

D-Day Commemorations

Please contact the editors at news@thebirchams.uk if you wish to be part of a group looking to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day in the village on June 6th this year. With sufficient response we can set up a working group.

Many places over the country are lighting beacons on the day and there are those in this village that think that with its close ties to the armed forces, especially the RAF, it would be appropriate to join in. We could perhaps mark the occasion with a bonfire instead of a beacon and raise a glass in memory. All ideas and volunteers welcome!

Speedwatch

A quick call-out for 2-3 volunteers to join the Speedwatch team, who try to do four sessions in the village per month. If you are interested, please get in touch with the group's coordinator, Hugh Kelmsley, hughkemsleyuk@gmail.com 07770 742386

We've a much longer, illuminating article from Hugh about Speedwatch's activities that we'll run in full in the next issue. It's good stuff!



Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is at St Mary's, Great Bircham on April 4, 2-30-4pm.

We'd like to extend a very big thank you to the Social Club for letting us use the club facilities over the very cold winter period.

Sue

Water-Aid Spring Lunches

We will be holding this year's Spring Lunches at St. Mary's Church, 12 noon to 1.45pm, the second one on March 21. There will be a choice of two delicious soups and homemade bread, with a hot drink. If you haven't been before do come along, since it's a chance to have a chat with friends and meet new people, for just £5. All proceeds go to the Water-Aid charity.

If anyone living in Bircham has no transport but would like to attend, please ring 779669 the day before and leave a message, your name and phone number so that we can arrange a lift for you.

Sally

Coffee Morning

I will be hosting a coffee morning at Covey Cottage, Church Lane, Great Bircham on Tuesday March 26, 10am-12 noon. Donations will be welcomed towards a project to restore the water supply to the Methodist school in Matjinge, Zimbabwe, which is where our local Methodist minister, Rev R. Ncube, was educated.

There will also be a musical event at London Road church in King's Lynn on Sunday May 12 from 3pm to celebrate our circuit twinning and our achievements so far. Please contact me, or speak to Hugh for further information, or if you would like to come to the musical event. No need to book for the coffee morning, just turn up please!

Rosie Rayner

Stanhoe & Barwick WI

Upcoming events at The Reading Room, Stanhoe include :

Thursday 4 April at 2pm Lois Capstick, holistic therapies and Neals Yard products

Visitors are most welcome. Our charge is £5, which includes refreshments. Our numbers have increased recently with three new members from the Birchams. If interested in joining them and us, please contact Valerie (01485 576261) for further details.

"April Fool's Day: This is the day upon which we are reminded of what we are on the other three-hundred and sixty-four." Mark Twain

Houghton Hall Visit

Final reminder that the visit to Houghton Hall to take a look at Bircham-related historical maps and documents has been arranged for Sunday March 24 at 2.30pm. For further details, please contact Hugh Rayner (07976 510134) or email hughrayner@gmail.com

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

MARCH RESULTS: 1st prize no. **79**; 2nd prize no. **11**.



Bircham Cricket Club

The tail end of winter is all about preparation – including trying to envisage warmer weather as we sit down to organise the summer's various fixture schedules – across the different age groups and – this year – for both ladies' and men's cricket.

The next few weeks see us focus on our Crowdfunder campaign, with which we're raising money to replace the old and dangerous nets, whose design and construction doesn't conform to national standards. The plan is for a total replacement, incorporating a specialist sports base and surface that will last for years to come.

None of this is cheap of course but the good news is that we've already made a great start in raising funds amongst ourselves – and the value of the project to the wider community has helped to secure substantial pledges from local government, the regional cricket board and the Privy Purse Charitable Trust/Sandringham Estate.

If you can help us out, please go to www.crowdfunder.co.uk/search/projects and search for 'great bircham' (there will also be a link on our Facebook page), where you'll also find more information about the project itself (and an explanatory video, expertly presented by a local personality).

We are also holding a race night on April 6 at the Social Club with a raffle and a chance of beating the bookies. Bring some pound coins!

If you are interested in making a larger financial donation, or to talk about sponsorship opportunities, please email our Development Officer, Hugh Rayner, in confidence, at hughrayner@gmail.com

Readers' Correspondence

From Jane K about February's recipe, Tarta de Santiago

"Just thought I'd say I made the Tarta de Santiago (recipe in most recent newsletter) for a supper party and everyone said it was delicious!

A wee tip – because of the ground almonds content, you can make this a day ahead and it is almost better consumed the following day!! Thank you to the contributor!!"

From Ian Watts about the Website of the Month, Flightradar24

"Hi, I read the article on Flightradar24 (which I already have on my phone) and would like to offer an alternative view (not a complaint – as I think the newsletter is very good).

Having lived on an RAF airfield in an 'active theatre' as a civilian contractor for just over 2 years, I find that the sound of jets overhead is very reassuring. Our US friends from Lakenheath and our RAF pilots from Marham and Coningsby are training for a potential event that both they and we hope will not occur. However, they could not protect us if they do not train.

There is a Facebook page for pictures of the Falkland Islands and, whenever they show a photo of an RAF Typhoon, the caption usually refers to 'the sound of freedom'. Our national freedom has come at a cost, as we know from the Commonwealth War Grave in our churchyard, and if the cost to us of our ongoing freedom at the moment is the occasional racket overhead, it's a small cost.

As I said – not a complaint, just a different way of looking at it."