



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



In and around the Birchams

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March 2025 Issue 17

## *Parish Council Matters*

A topic that concerns many Bircham residents is **speeding**. At the PC meeting on March 5, Speedwatch Coordinator Hugh Kemsley presented a detailed report showing how speeding has changed over the past year and how we compare with other Norfolk villages. In 2024 there was an average of 12.3 speeding offences recorded per hour during speedwatch sessions. This compares with 15.7 in 2023 — an encouraging downward trend. Of the 64 speedwatch teams that operate in Norfolk, Docking has recorded the highest total number of offences but Bircham has more offences recorded per hour. So, our area is certainly a speeding hotspot.

Thanks to our dedicated speedwatch team's efforts, the local police have been conducting more sessions recently and on one occasion local MP James Wild attended. The police suggest that a survey would need to be carried out before traffic-calming measures, such as a chicane, could be considered. A chicane has recently been installed in Bawburgh and we will be making contact to learn from their experience. We are also requesting a meeting with the police and highways department to discuss traffic-calming measures.

**VE Day** is fast approaching. The PC has funds to support appropriate events to celebrate the day. We will also make some bunting available if you would like to decorate the front of your property.

On May 14, the **Annual Parish Council Meeting** takes place, during which the chair is elected for the coming year. This meeting follows the **Annual Parish Meeting**, which starts at 7.30pm. This is a meeting for parish residents to speak about any matters that concern them. If you would like an item to be added to the agenda, please contact the Clerk: Email: [clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk) Post: Hall Farm, Sedgford Road, Docking, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 8LJ

Our next regular meeting is at 7.30pm on April 9.

## *Newsletter Thoughts*

### **DID YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?**

With Microsoft's impending withdrawal of support for version 10 of Windows and the more demanding hardware requirements of version 11, last month we decided to ditch Windows in favour of Linux, the open-source and **free** operating system and moved from Windows Office Suite to LibreOffice — also **free**.

The **free** (yes, that word again), open-source desktop publishing software that we were already using (Scribus) also has a Linux version, so we continue to use that. All elements are built and maintained by volunteers around the globe for the greater good rather than for profit, much like the contributors, editors and distributors of the *Bircham Times*, who also all give their time and skills for free.

There was a fairly sharp learning curve for us in adapting to the new set-up but, hopefully, you did not notice any difference in the edition of the *Bircham Times* produced using it. The next challenge we have set ourselves is to run our webserver (which has to run 24 hours a day) purely on solar+battery power. We never know when this "nice-to-have" alternative might prove to be the only option.

So once more, thanks to the many volunteers who give their time for free (we've yet to find a workaround for that). And meanwhile all typos, inaccuracies, etc remain our own....

Do remember that the *Bircham Times* can be delivered to parishioners by email. You can email us at [news@thebirchams.uk](mailto: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](http://www.thebirchams.uk)



## Chocolate and Alternative Easter Eggs

As you know we love an anniversary and this Easter sees the 150th anniversary of the first Cadbury Easter Egg. It was made from dark chocolate that encased sugar dragees. However, Cadbury didn't quite get there first: they were beaten to the off by Fry's of York in 1873. Fry's, a Quaker family, was also the first to go from producing soluble chocolate as a drink to adding fats and sugar to create a moulded bar in 1847, before enterprisingly moulding their chocolate into an Easter egg.

Cadbury Creme Eggs, somewhat infamously on sale from New Year's Day every year, first saw the light of day in 1971 but again their predecessor was the Fry's Creme Egg, first hatched in 1963.

Once upon a time the most that you could expect at Easter in the form of an egg was a hard-boiled or blown egg that was dyed and decorated in spring colours. So thank you Mr Fry for linkings eggs with choocolate!!

### COLOURING EGGS

Actually, dyeing eggs was big business: boiling eggs in powdered cochineal turned them a delightful magenta colour; turmeric resulted in orange eggs; and powdered logwood created purple eggs. You can use onion skins to turn eggs brownish-yellow and beetroot for pinky-purple.

Of course today you can achieve the same effect with food colourings. Just hard-boil your eggs, allow them to cool and then dip them in a boiling water bath with some white vinegar and the colour(s) of your choice. Leave until the colour develops (longer for a more saturated colour, a shorter time for pastel hues). Then when satisfied with the colour, allow the eggs to air dry. Balance them on cocktail sticks or similar if you can so as to avoid smudges. Finally gift, or eat yourselves. They won't last long...

### CHOCOLATE EGGS

It is relatively easy to make your own Easter eggs using just chocolate and two halves of an egg-shaped mould and you can fill them with anything you fancy from smaller eggs, Smarties, Italian biscuits, Haribo, almonds, whatever you like.

You can buy easter egg moulds from such places as Lakeland [[www.lakeland.co.uk](http://www.lakeland.co.uk)] and Hobbycraft [[www.hobbycraft.co.uk](http://www.hobbycraft.co.uk)] as well as many other cookery stores and arts/crafts shops. And you needn't stop at eggs of course. If insatiable for chocolate you can make anything with a food-grade mould: think bunnies, chicks, or even dinosaurs if you want to stretch the theme a little.

First melt your chocolate pieces by putting them in a metal or Pyrex glass bowl in a saucepan of simmering water. Once the chocolate has melted, plunge the bowl into another of ice-cold water to bring down the temperature of the chocolate. Continue to mix it and when it appears to be solidifying at the edges place it once more over the simmering water.

You need to use a sugar thermometer at this point to judge the correct temperature of your chocolate mixture: 32°C for dark chocolate and 30°C for milk. Once the temperature is reached you can pour the mixture into your mould. Tidy the edges of the mould and place the half-egg in the fridge upon a tray or plate lined with greaseproof paper or baking parchment for up to 20 mins to harden.

Next take the mould from the fridge and allow to return to room temperature. Resist the urge to remove the chocolate for another 20 minutes but then release the mould, leaving it covering the eggs for a few more minutes. Fill your egg if you wish and then seal your two egg halves with melted chocolate to create a join or run a hot knife around the join.

Hopefully you've achieved all that without getting more chocolate on yourself than on the egg. Happy Easter one and all!!!



## History Corner: RAF Sculthorpe 2

RAF Sculthorpe was open from the Second World War to 1992. It was home to various USAF squadrons and was a nuclear strike base at the forefront of the Cold War ... despite many denials at the time.

Last month we promised to continue the story of "important episodes" that took place at the base that imperiled Norfolk, if not the entire country.

1958 was not a good year for the base, as we discovered last month. Additionally, in April 1958 a plane from the base crashed near Fakenham, killing all three personnel aboard: pilot, navigator and gunner. In August, 10 further airmen were killed when their refuelling aircraft crashed while flying over Belgium.

Finally, October saw 41-year-old US Master Sergeant Leander Cunningham threaten to commit suicide by firing a loaded pistol into a nuclear weapon and he also expressed his willingness to take senior officers with him. His wife was summoned to help in the "hostage" negotiations and eventually after eight hours the senior technician was talked down, thus potentially averting nuclear catastrophe. Cunningham was taken back to the US to undergo three years of medical treatment.

The incident was largely covered up at the time but some details were published the same month in the *Daily Herald*. A fellow US airman explained: "The Thing, as we call the bomb, is in three different parts. Each is in a different part of the base."

In 1962 it was reported more widely that Cunningham had threatened to blow up an atomic bomb with his revolver. The USAF denied the incident and it was also denied that atomic bombs were even held at Sculthorpe. In parliament the PM, Harold Macmillan, denied there was an atomic bomb there, but future Labour leader Michael Foot said that Macmillan's statement contradicted that given at the same time by the US authorities.

A greater understanding as to what happened that day was brought to light in a Thames TV *This Week* programme in February 1988. In that year the USAF denied the reports made in the show. Graphically, Cunningham was described as being "strapped to a stretcher... and flown to the US under an armed guard". His family followed.

It was also reported in the newspapers that Cunningham was a manic depressive formerly treated with electro-convulsive therapy. "Had the full truth come out at the time — that mentally unstable people could be put to work on intricate work in A-bomb assembly — how many more thousands would have joined in those Aldermaston marches?" they reasoned.



## Dates for the Diary

**Bircham Windmill** Reopens Apr 1  
**RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre** Open 10-4pm. First & third Sundays of the month  
**RAF Sculthorpe Heritage Centre** Open 10am-4pm. First Sunday every month from April 6  
**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  
**Mar 20** WaterAid Spring Lunch, Social Club, 12-1.45pm, £5  
**Mar 22** Gayton Hall Open Gardens, 11-4pm, £6  
**Mar 28** Discover Bird Watching at Pensthorpe, £25  
**Mar 29** *The Critic* at Village Screen Cinema, Amy Robsart Hall, Syderstone, 7pm, £4  
**Mar 29** Spring Coastal Guided Trail Run, Holme to Wells, 9am, £25 <https://findarace.com/events/spring-coastal-guided-trail-run>  
**Mar 29** Mother's Day Spring Bouquet Workshop, Pensthorpe, 10-1, £60  
**Mar 29** Deepdale Barn Dance, Deepdale Courtyard, 6.30pm, £12  
**Mar 30** CLOCKS GO FORWARD  
**Apr 1** Bircham in Bloom, Bircham Stores, 9.30am  
**Apr 3** Bircham Banter, St Mary's Church, 2.30-4pm  
**Apr 3** Stanhoe & Barwick WI Talk: Robert Smith – Wells Harbourmaster @ Stanhoe Reading Room, 2pm  
**Apr 4** Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve Talk: Norfolk Otters by Josh Jaggard, 2-4pm, £12

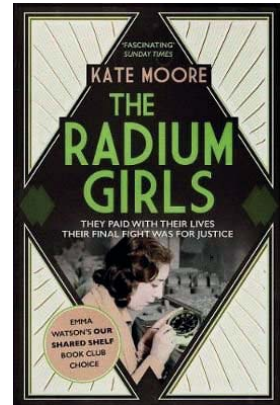


## Curl Up With a Good Book

**The Radium Girls** (2016) by Kate Moore

They paid with their lives; their final fight was for justice.

In the 1910s, just a decade on from its discovery by Marie and Pierre Curie, radium — a highly radioactive luminescent white element — was regarded as the wonder element, with its ability to cure cancers, hay fever, gout etc. and was the most valuable substance on Earth (\$120K for 1 gram). No wonder that young girls flocked to work at the US factories where it was used for painting the faces on clocks, watches and military dials. And where they were paid fabulous amounts for factory workers, believing that this was because of the prestige of such work. And on the factory floor there drifted a haze of radium powder that created a wondrous halo of brilliance, a very radiance indeed. It was a glamorous, well-paid job and the girls glowed... literally from radium dust. They licked their paintbrushes in a manner they had been shown to achieve accuracy in their delicate work and took home their paint to do their nails. It was safe according to their employers... except it wasn't and their employers knew that it wasn't.



This is a true story of a fight for justice — based upon the letters, interviews and diaries of the young women who were being poisoned by the paint and their working environment. They lost their teeth, had mysterious illnesses that doctors could not get to the bottom of, they died of cancers, sepsis, facial deformities... Medical bills soared and compensation was denied them. They died young and in pain.

Their employers denied responsibility and went to great lengths to cover up the knowledge that the paint was poisonous. Finally, in 1938, the courts found in the workers' favour and the outcome gave rise to changes in industrial law and protection for employees. As late as 2015 land upon which the factories had been built was still being decontaminated.

This is a harrowing but important exploration of the lengths to which the women and their advocates fought for justice and the equally strenuous cover-up attempts by the authorities.

Clemency

## Radium Postscript

Britain's main radium factory was built in Limehouse, London, in 1910 but was quickly decommissioned in 1918. The source of the radium used there was pitchblende and it was mined in Cornwall.

One of the proponents of wellness radium therapy, in particular "radium water", was the celebrated physician Sir Frederick Treves (he of the Elephant Man fame). It was said to provide relief in cases of rheumatism and arthritis. If you are so inclined, you can nowadays go on a radon water spa treatment at the beautifully named Radium Palace spa at Jáchymov Lázně in the Czech Republic.

A couple of films worth looking out for include the documentary *Radium City* (1987), which has interviews with survivors, and the feature film *Radium Girls* (2018).



## Bircham in Bloom

The Bircham in Bloom gang met again on March 4. We were delighted to welcome a new member to swell the ranks. If you would like to join us but cannot come to a daytime meeting, we will have some meetings in the evenings as the days get lighter.

We have started getting things ready for Spring; for example, pruning roses and planting snowdrops. The Lynn Road Playing Field entrance will be freshened up soon. We will be walking round the village to take stock and plan future work. Do let us know if you would like to join in.

Our next meeting is at 9:30am on Tuesday April 1 at Bircham Stores. You'd be a fool to miss it!

Please contact Alison on 07725 497368 if you would like to know more about Bircham in Bloom.



## What's in a Name?

We've cornered the market in this part of Norfolk with the name Bircham (considered by many to mean "settlement of the birches"\*), with Bircham Magna (now Great Bircham) and its satellites Bircham Tofts (Tofts being a homestead) and Bircham Newton (self-explanatory... the new settlement)... collectively known as the Birchams — as we can tell from the roadsigns at the entry points to the villages.

There are a few other places on the planet with the name though, most notably in Canada where a small settlement exists in Kneehill County, Alberta. It's that tiny it had a population of only 5 at the last census... but don't dismiss the place out of hand since it has a Canadian National Railways line, maybe splitting the settlement of a couple of houses in two. Who knows? Canada also has a Bircham Lake in Ontario, west of Ottawa.

Closer to home there is a Bircham Wood in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, near to the Welsh border. Otherwise it's a trip back across the pond, this time to the US where there is a Bircham Creek in northern Texas, Bircham Bend and Bircham Bend Ponds in Massachusetts on the Chicopee River, and Bircham Springs (complete with picnic area!) close to Death Valley, California... a place devoid of birches!

\* Our tame linguist tells us the name is unlikely to have anything to do with birch trees. It is much more likely derived from an old Anglian word "brec", meaning land newly broken up for cultivation, just like Breckland. Indeed, Domesday Book spells the place "Brecham".

## Dates for the Diary

**Apr 5** RSPCA East Winch Spring Market 9.30-3pm

**Apr 7-22** NORFOLK SCHOOLS EASTER HOLIDAYS

**Apr 9** Bircham Parish Council Meeting, Social Club, 7.30pm

**Apr 10** WaterAid Spring Lunch, Social Club, 12-1.45pm, £5

**Apr 11-13** Burnham Market International Horse Trials

**Apr 14** Fossil Hunt Hunstanton. Meet at cliff-top car park, 12-2pm, £15/£10

**Apr 19**, Easter Egg Hunt, Bircham Villages, From 10am. Meet at social club car park.

**Apr 25** Discover Bird Songs and Calls at Pensthorpe, £25

**Apr 26** British Veterans Classic Car Club Creepy Crawly Tour, RAF Sculthorpe Heritage Centre, 9.30-1.30pm

**Apr 26** *Paddington in Peru* @ Village Screen Cinema, Amy Robsart Hall, Syderstone, 7pm, £4

**Apr 26** Wilswood Buoys folk group @ Deepdale Camping, 7pm, £12

**Apr 29** Sunrise Walk & Breakfast, RSPB Titchwell, 6-8am, £33



## *From the Annals*

In the confusion of royal titles and families and succession to the throne, we consider how it was, on July 2, 1903, that a child born on the Sandringham Estate as Alexander Edward Christian Frederik, as the 12th in line to the British throne (he was a grandchild of King Edward VII) and 6th in line to the Danish throne (through his father), actually became king of *Norway* in 1957.

We're talking here about a monarch more commonly known as King Olav V of Norway (1903-1991). His mother was Princess Maud of Wales (also known as Princess Charles [Carl] of Denmark after her marriage to the Danish royal), which in part explains why he was born in Britain, since she desired to live in her home nation and as part of her marriage settlement she was required to revisit the country once a year.

Alexander was born at the 20-room Appleton House, not far from Sandringham House. His parents honeymooned there in 1896 and then divided their time between Copenhagen — with the Prince an officer in the Danish Navy — and Appleton House.

**Port Glasgow Express** July 17, 1903

"The baby son which was born this week at Sandringham is, of course, a Prince of Denmark, and in all matters concerning his future the head of his father's family will have to be officially consulted ; but as a goodly number of Danish Royal boys are in existence the little newcomer can be well spared to England for the best part of his time."

The **Newcastle Daily Chronicle** of July 4 said of the birth: "It is hardly likely, however, that he will ever be called upon to reign either over Britons or Danes. Fortunately for them, there are careers open to Princes in which they may obtain distinction and render services to their country."

Back in 1896 we had a vivid description of Appleton House from **The Graphic** July 29, 1896. "Appleton House, where Prince and Princess Charles are spending their honeymoon, is a modern building, having been built by the Prince of Wales for Mr Gerard A Cresswell of King's Lynn, who was then tenant of Appleton Farm. Great changes have been made in the interior during the past few months ; many of the rooms have been entirely rearranged, and most of them have had new floors and ceilings, and the house has been filled with hot water pipes for heating it throughout. In the grounds the gardeners have been busy and have made the spot one of rare beauty... Appleton House, new as it is, is not without its associations, for within 100 yards of it, are the ruins of old Appleton Hall... It was burned to the ground in 1707 and has never been rebuilt."

It was at this point though that all their lives changed. Alexander's father became King Haakon VII of Norway in 1905, the first monarch of the newly independent Norwegian state. Norway had previously been part of the two Crowns of Sweden and Norway. In the same way that Charles/Carl adopted the name Haakon... his son was renamed Olaf in the Norwegian tradition. A child initially brought up in Norfolk now had to fully embrace the new Norwegian nation, especially since he was heir to the Norwegian throne and hence the family largely decamped to Oslo but still retained their Appleton presence.

Maud died in 1938 in the UK after one of her frequent visits to Appleton and shortly afterwards the "wedding present" was returned to the British Crown.

After Norway was invaded by Nazi Germany in April 1940, the royal family and government moved to the UK in June. The government-in-exile was based in London but the royals were meant to decamp to a place they knew well... Appleton House. The house was once again modified: this time with an air-raid shelter and instead of the Norwegian royals the monarch himself (George VI) stayed there. After the war the house quickly became derelict and was finally demolished in 1984 with precious little sign today that it ever existed.



## Stanhoe & Barwick WI

Here at Stanhoe and Barwick W.I., if you are into crafts, cookery or even campaigning, whether you're looking for friendship, fun or fascinating speakers, we have all that and so much more. Do join us!

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

Thursday April 3: Robert Smith – Wells Harbourmaster

Thursday May 8: VE Day celebrations featuring The Castaway Crew shanty singers

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

Contact [stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com](mailto:stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com) for more details.

## WaterAid Spring Lunches 2025

A reminder that the 2nd of these soup lunches will take place in the Social Club on April 10, 12 noon to 1.45pm.

Anyone in Bircham unable to get to the Social Club but who would like to attend, please ring 01485 779669 the day before and leave a message with your name and telephone number so that we can arrange a lift for you.

It costs £5 a head with all proceeds going to WaterAid, a charity that helps a million people every year in underdeveloped countries to access a safe water supply and sanitation.

Sally



**VILLAGE SCREEN CINEMA**  
at Amy Robsart Village Hall, Syderstone  
Saturdays March 29/April 26 at 7.30pm



### **The Critic** (15)

Set in 1930s London, *The Critic* revolves around a feared theatre critic named Jimmy Erskine, his loyal assistant, a newspaper owner who wants to get rid of the critic, and an actress who has been devastated by his excoriating theatrical reviews. The critic's determination to survive ensures that the other characters are caught in a web of blackmail, deceit and murder. Starring Gemma Arterton, Lesley Manville, Ian McKellen and Mark Strong.

### **Paddington in Peru** (PG)

Paddington has been living with the Brown family in London for many years now, but he still feels the tug of his Peruvian roots. Hearing that his Aunt Lucy, now living in the Home for Retired Bears, has been missing him terribly, Paddington and the Browns set off for Darkest Peru, only to discover on arrival that Aunt Lucy has disappeared. So off they head to the Amazon to find her, accompanied by boat captain Hunter Cabot and his daughter Gina. What could possibly go wrong?

Starring Hugh Bonneville, Emily Mortimer, Antonio Banderas, and, of course, Ben Whishaw as the voice of Paddington.

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](mailto:syderstonecinema_arvh@outlook.com) or call 01485 578270.

Caz Appleby,  
on behalf of the Syderstone Cinema Team 07817 803221



### **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 March 28/April 25  
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

## *Bircham Weather*

February's rainfall returned to the normal 41mm after last year's figure of 140mm, which resulted in that month being the wettest of 2024 and will be remembered for the local flooding. The temperature was considerably lower than last year too, with an average high of 7.3°C against 10.6°C, which was symptomatic of high pressure that was dominant this time. In fact, at the start of the month an intense anticyclone became slow moving over the UK which provided some good sunny periods and also resulted in a pressure reading of 30.85 inches (1044.7 mb) at 9am on the 6th, this being at the top end of the scale on most barometers. As it moved away into Scandinavia, though, an easterly airflow was set up that introduced mainly overcast skies and low temperatures such that, from the 7th to the 18th, the maximum temperature recorded was just 6.8°C. Outbreaks of rain and drizzle were also introduced into the mix along with some wet snow during the evening and night of the 15th/16th and we had to wait until the 17th for the next sunny day and, even then, the temperature reached only 3.3°C.

Although there were six nights when an air frost was noted, they were not particularly severe, the lowest being -1.2°C on the 28th. The Atlantic breezes finally broke through on the 20th and pushed the temperature up to 13.3°C, this being the first day of the month when the 10°C mark had been exceeded. The following day proved to be even warmer with a maximum of 16.5°C but this spell also brought some rain at times and the wettest day of the month was recorded on the 26th when 15mm fell. It was a brief interlude though as high pressure then returned, along with cooler temperatures, but at least it brought a return of the sun on the last day.

Bryan

## *St Mary's 100 Club Draw*

**MARCH RESULTS:** 1st prize no. **13**; 2nd prize no. **65** (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](mailto:sliliweb10@gmail.com) and I will send you an application form.

Sally





## Words on Birds

### **GOLDCREST — EUROPE'S SMALLEST BIRD**

We're fortunate to have a thriving population of goldcrests here in the village, and they're already building nests in preparation for breeding. In fact a pair can often be spotted in the conifers by the war memorial and I'm sure many gardens in Bircham will be visited by these delightful pocket rockets.

The goldcrest is a tiny bird, olive grey-brown above, buff white below, with a double white wing bar. However, it's the vibrant crest that truly sets it apart and gives the bird its name. A black and yellow stripe on the head with an orange centre is distinctive, the males having a bright orange centre. Their slender bills are ideal for prising out insects from in between pine needles, and they are often seen hanging upside down or hovering. They also have a high pitched song which some people cannot actually hear.



In winter our resident population on the east coast is boosted by an influx of birds from Scandinavia. It's remarkable to think that these smallest of birds, weighing little more than 5 grams (roughly the same as a 20p coin), are capable of migrating some 850 miles from countries round the North Sea and the Baltic. Ringing records show one all the way from Russia! There are reports of goldcrests resting on boats in the North Sea during storms. Early ornithologists thought these tiny birds were just too small to migrate and believed they arrived in the UK by hitching a ride on the backs of woodcocks and short-eared owls. This led to the old name of woodcock pilot based on that belief.

Richard Campey  
owner of The One Stop Nature Shop  
Burnham Deepdale

## The Night (and Day) Sky

If you missed the total lunar eclipse on March 14 then your next chance won't be until the evening of September 7. However in the meantime there is a partial solar eclipse on March 29. Just over 30 per cent of the Sun will be covered... the maximum effect will be just after 11am, cloud cover willing. Remember that even though it is a partial eclipse you should still not view it with the naked eye. Instead follow the event via Time and Date on <https://www.timeanddate.com/live/eclipse-solar-2025-march-29>

March 29 is a busy astronomical 24 hours as it is also the date of the Super New Moon.

JBB

## Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is on Thursday April 3 from 2.30 to 4pm.

Special thanks are due to the Social Club for continuing to host our get-togethers over winter. We return to St Mary's for April, so woolly drawers on!!

Sue



## Bircham Easter Egg Hunt

We have an Easter competition for you — an **Easter egg hunt with a difference**. Around the villages we will hide six "plastic eggs" for you to track down. Return them to us and we'll exchange them for **Easter goodies\***. We suggest playing in small teams with responsible adults!

### HOW

We have used the **what3words** service to define their location (no, don't switch off now!) so you will be able to pinpoint the location of the eggs with great accuracy. And we will help with clues. In fact, you don't even need to use what3words but your sniffing out of the eggs will be a bit more random. Will great brains defeat modern technology?

If you don't already know, what3words divides the entire world into 3 metre squares and gives each square a unique combination of three words. Emergency services use it to locate people lost at sea, say, and we increasingly see it used by estate agents to locate difficult-to-find entrances for house-hunters.

As an example in the village, the entrance to the King's Head car park might be denoted by **///ultra.magnets.corded**

The three words are random combinations and have nothing at all to do with the location.

So, for each of the six hidden eggs we will give a 3-word clue. We'll provide 2 of the words but you need to solve a further clue to determine the third and then armed with three words you can find the eggs by entering them into the app.

For the ultra.magnets.corded clue above your entry form would read:

**ultra.[they have north and south poles and can pick up pins].corded**

You solve the clue in brackets with the answer "magnets", then enter ///ultra.magnets.corded into the what3words app and then head off, find the egg and claim the prize. Simple!

We'll also accompany each clue with a standard clue. In the case above it might read **"Take your vehicle here, for a well-deserved half-pint of beer!"**

### WHAT3WORDS

You can install the free app in advance at <https://what3words.com/products/what3words-app>

### WHEN

**Easter Saturday, April 19, at 10am** start promptly. Collect your entry sheet with the clues from us at the Great Bircham Social Club car park. We'll also help with any questions you have.

### T&Cs

- 1) All eggs will be hidden on public land, so it goes without saying that you mustn't go foraging on private property. We've tried to make it safe though, away from the roads where possible.
- 2) We'll try to have the eggs slightly off the ground to avoid pooches trying to swallow them but low enough for the youngest villagers to reach them. Dog walkers might want to avoid/be aware of these potentially lying around for a couple of hours. Dogs on leashes for a while we say.
- 3) Goes without saying, no aggro out there, no moving the eggs, no monopolising the search at the expense of other teams. Play nicely please!

### \* PRIZES

We've teamed up with our very lovely friends at **Simply Cake Co & Breakfast and Brownies cafe** in Heacham High Street and they will be generously donating boxes of fabulous Easter brownie goodies for each winning team. And if you can't wait until Easter (not sure we can), then take a look now at some of the stunning brownie offerings they produce: <https://simplycakeco.com/brownies-online-shop/>

You don't really need an excuse but we see Mothering Sunday this month, National Tea Day (April 21) and then May Day, International No Diet Day (May 6), Eat What You Want Day (May 11).. all legitimate reasons for sweet treats for family, friends or just yourself. In fact there are few better ways to have fun and celebrate than with brownies, we reckon. Or just drop in to the cafe. You'll be made wonderfully welcome.