



Parish Council Matters

The news this week was full of a new Pope, a new German Chancellor, and the VE Day commemorations, but hidden in there as well was the not-altogether-unsurprising news that we have just experienced the driest spring since 1961. And it does seem a long, long time since we had anything like a deluge. Our gardens are starting to show signs of fatigue and the farmland we are surrounded by is noticeably tinderbox dry. At May's Parish Meeting we were given a reminder by our friends at Sandringham that every day we see no rain increases the fire risk in the fields and woodland. It is our duty as villagers to protect the land and not to take any chances with it because the results of negligence are potentially catastrophic. One of the joys of living in the countryside is its remoteness but with that comes the realisation that we are further from "rescue" than the townies. And should you need to ring 999 the fire service needs first to get here and then locate a source of water, and the water table is currently low. Most fires on land are down to human intervention: barbecues, bonfires, the use of welding tools, blowlamps, matches, cigarettes; then the discarding of glass bottles, cans, vapes... that can ignite grasses and crops.

We should all be disabused of the notion that a handy bucket of water will put out a fire in such circumstance because it is patently untrue. It takes literally seconds for a fire to take hold and for amateur fire-fighting to become untenable. One further news item this week saw the 40th anniversary of the oft-forgotten Bradford City stadium fire in which 56 people died because of a suspected discarded match or cigarette. For those not aware of the incident, an entire wooden grandstand burnt down in just **four** minutes. If you have the stomach for it then take a look at the video taken that day... the fire was so powerful and fast-moving that it continues to form valuable training for fire services in the UK. And we're already seeing news bulletins of heath and upland areas experiencing fires that take days to combat. Remember also that even when surface fires are put out that the fire is potentially still raging underground and it doesn't take a lot to re-ignite above ground. Please be alert this summer and avoid any risky behaviour.

Another issue that is currently of concern is that of dog fouling, which is still going on despite the "dog poo" bins in the vicinity. We're afraid that some dog-owners need a constant reminder of their responsibility not just to the community and environment but to the health of villagers. A single gram of dog poop contains up to 23 million bacteria, which is especially dangerous for children and immuno-compromised individuals. When it isn't removed it can leach into soil, attach to shoes, be picked up by other pets, walkers... and on the playing field there are children, cricketers and so on. It also potentially attracts vermin. We're sure that you clean up and remove any mess should your doggies have an accident at home... you don't expect your visitors to sit among poop, so please be likewise considerate to other villagers who have to come across the fouling outside for which you are ultimately responsible. And if all of that fails to convince, then remember that if you are convicted of letting your dog foul the environment you can face a potential fine of up to £1,000!

In much happier news, at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on May 14th, Hugh Rayner was re-elected as chair, with Lisa Palmer as his deputy, for the forthcoming year. The next **Parish Council Meeting** will be held on June 18, at 7.30pm, at the Social Club.

Email: clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk

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

Website: bircham-pc.gov.uk

Do remember that the *Bircham Times* can be delivered to parishioners by email. You can email us at news@thebirchams.uk to request that (or for any other matter).

In addition, we publish, in advance of the paper copy, on the 15th of every month on our website: www.thebirchams.uk



Bathtub Gin

Times are hard, and we're all looking to economise, but have you thought about making your own alcoholic drinks? We are probably all familiar with the home-brew kits image of the 1970s and 1980s (think bearded men in brown/orange jumpers proudly holding up a glass of ale to the light in triumph) where if you had the space for plastic barrels and demi-johns galore, plus tubing paraphernalia etc., you could make pints of ale or lager (or if unlucky the lino would be covered in waves of sticky water when they leaked or spectacularly exploded)...

Gin, however, couldn't be simpler to pull together. Essentially it is made from white spirit (not the d-i-y stuff, but most usually vodka). What makes gin "the real thing" is that you need to add "botanicals" to it and then Bob's your uncle you've got gin. Purists would maintain that you need to add juniper for it to qualify as gin, but that's just the preliminaries and from here you can be as adventurous as your tastebuds desire. Combinations of anything that appears in the garden or the supermarket shelves can be added to taste. Be careful in the garden though, not everything is edible; in fact a lot of it is toxic. Don't add rhubarb leaves, for instance.

As a starter we refer you back to the *Bircham Times* of January 2024 (what do you mean you've already thrown it away!). Well to quickly recap, we sourced some cheap vodka (bottom shelf of the supermarket) and filled three Kilner jars with it and a bowlful of washed bullaces (they're like sloes, as in sloe gin) from the tree in the garden. They are tough little b****ers and probably largely inedible but we lobbed them in with copious amounts of sugar. These things need sweetening and the sugar helps break the fruit down too... those of you who bake know we're not talking a couple of teaspoons here... probably more like 2 teacupfuls over three jars. Give it all a shake and place in a cool pantry or similar. Do the shake on a weekly basis and before long you'll have some gorgeous pink liquid. Test it (yes imbibe some) and when you have achieved a decent flavour, strain off the fruit. Use it if you will. Then you can drink your gin or keep it to mature. Ours is about 18 months old now and is a cross between that Delrosa rosehip syrup for infants' tickly coughs and decent cherryade. Very moreish!



We ought to try the same with pears from the pear trees but the fruit may degrade faster than tough berries so it'll take less time to come to perfection. This is alchemy, remember, with no guarantees. You just need to keep taking a sip. Most times you will need to add some sugar. We've made cider for a number of years and the first lesson we learned was that even if you like dry cider you still need to add more sugar than you think good for you (looks scary when you don't take it in tea/coffee). If you don't then the cider will still be beautifully appley but you'll lose your voice because of its astringency. A good raucous party was had with competing squeaky and husky chattering voices!

Anyway back to the gin: botanicals include any of cardamon, cinnamon, citrus peel, salt, peppers (including Szechuan and sansho), cassia, cloves, yuzu, cacao, licorice root, fennel, orris, angelica, lavender, watercress, grass, seaweed, samphire, nutmeg, tea, cubeb berry. Filter them out when your vodka/gin concoction has reached its desired flavour. Or try something new. We've thought about jelly babies and having them slowly float around in a Kilner jar as surreal evening viewing. Remember, times is hard and the streaming subscriptions have ended.

Remember, too, that you are only infusing gin (legally a "compound gin"), not distilling. If you were distilling you would require a licence and some more paraphernalia like stills and thermometers.

And no, you don't have to make it in the bathtub. We're yet to reach Prohibition regulations and we're not sure you should be making such gargantuan quantities in any case.



Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie

Scots-born US capitalist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie left his mark on King's Lynn, but you might not be aware of quite where and how. As a pre-teen Carnegie moved from Dunfermline to the US with his family. There, the assiduous and rapacious learner made his fortune with his steel-making company, which benefited from the growth of industry and especially the advancement of the railways. As a philanthropist he is believed to have donated billions (in today's money) to good causes, but mostly was concerned with educational institutions, and especially the creation of libraries, providing more than 3,000 public libraries for the English-speaking world, including the one in King's Lynn, opened in 1905 by the man himself.

Carnegie was a passionate reader and the embodiment of self-improvement. The library in London Road was built thanks to public donations but the biggest contribution by far (£5,000) was made by Carnegie. King Edward VII sent a cheque for 20 guineas. Herbert John Green was appointed as the architect and the building was completed in 1904.

The beautiful building, opposite The Walks on London Road, was described as "Late Gothic or Tudor in appearance with Arts & Crafts influence". The red carrstone was brought in from Heacham; the terracotta dressings from Costessey; and it was topped with red "Brosely" tiles. A square, three-storey tower stands at the centre with crenellated wings at either side. Tablets on the building's ramparts contain the names of famous authors. The entrance was adorned with heavy oak doors with wrought-iron fittings by Dodson of Lynn. A stained-glass skylight illuminates the mosaic floors in the Venetian-styled entrance hall. Electric light and hot water radiators added to the comfort. Mr Maw became the head librarian.

The library was opened on May 18, 1905. After a grand luncheon with many fine dignitaries and even finer speeches the party moved to the library for the official opening. Locals thronged the area. Carnegie was presented with a gold-plated silver key for the actual door opening in front of a huge crowd.

"He pronounced this library a people's university, free to all the people of Lynn. He did this firm in the faith that whatever changes might come, and whatever might pass away, this Library must not pass away nor cease to be, for generation after generation, an increasing fountain from which only waters of good could flow for all people."

Following a Zeppelin raid over the town in 1915, the Berkshire Yeomanry (who were stationed in King's Lynn at the time) received orders to use the library's distinctive tower as an observation point to detect enemy aircraft activity.

The Carnegie Library was created a listed building in 1982 but as of 2025 it was decided that the building was to be taken over by The Garage Trust, a local cultural charity dedicated to transforming lives through the arts... with a new library and information hub being created close to the Majestic Cinema and due to open in the autumn.

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)

May 15-June 15 National Smile Month

May 18 Fighter 5K Great Massingham supporting East Anglia Air Ambulance

May 18 Dawn Chorus @ Pensthorpe 5-8am £19.95

May 18 RAF Bircham Newton Heritage Centre Open Day

May 24-June 1 Nature Detectives @ Pensthorpe, from £16.95

May 24 Beer and Cider Festival, Le Strange Arms, Hunstanton

May 24-25 "Flights of Fancy" Textiles Exhibition, Thornham Village Hall 10-4pm

May 25 Pageant of Motoring @ Sandringham, £18 in advance

May 26-31 NORFOLK SCHOOLS HALF-TERM

May 26-June 1 National BBQ Week

May 29 National Biscuit Day

May 30 Dusk Chorus @ Pensthorpe 7-8.30pm, £16.95

Jun 1 RAF Sculthorpe Open Day, 10am

Jun 1 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day, 10-4pm

Jun 1 Ladies Day at Fakenham Racecourse

Jun 1 Norwich 100/60/30 Bike Ride register @ www.bike-events.co.uk



Curl Up With a Good Book

Butter (2017) by Asako Yuzuki (2024 translated by Polly Barton)

It's many years since I have read a book on the current *Sunday Times* Best Seller list. It is my respect for Japanese author Haruki Murakami that encouraged me to give *Butter*, by Asako Yuzuki, a try. Was it worth it? Well, it is compelling, complex, exhilarating but also at times a little tedious.

Many years ago my wife gave me the complete recording sessions that led to the eventual jazz masterpiece *Bitches Brew* by Miles Davis. Reading this book was a similar experience in that out of the sometimes chaotic, sometimes repetitive, sometimes brilliant there comes a worthwhile central theme that eventually captivates the reader.

The story revolves around Rika, a 33-year-old journalist who becomes totally absorbed and slowly obsessed by the character she is investigating. Kajii, a charismatic, voluptuous woman on trial for seducing, then murdering her recent lovers — men of a certain age and vulnerability who are besotted both by her culinary skills and her magnetic attraction. Throughout this central theme there is a detailed tour of: Japanese food, places, transport systems, cafe culture, life, friendship, loyalty, betrayal, death and of course butter.

It is long, at 452 pages, and while certainly not a thriller, nevertheless it is gripping. I am still undecided whether *Butter* is the masterpiece that many reviewers and publicity would have us believe it is but it certainly warrants its place as one of the most-read books of recent years. Would I recommend it? If you like margarine probably not, if you prefer butter, then it's a definite yes!

Terry

In The Garden

Not so much personal gardens but local producers where summer's bounty is coming into season. Much of it a lot earlier than was once the tradition. It's that blinking global warming again.

SHARRINGTON STRAWBERRIES

Sharrington, on the A148 between Fakenham and Holt (NR24 2PH), has long been synonymous with strawberries, which is somewhat surprising since the name Sharrington actually means Dung Farm! There are not just strawberries for sale and for picking here, but also other soft fruit, including blackberries, tayberries, gooseberries and currants such as redcurrants and blackcurrants.

PORTWOOD ASPARAGUS

A little further afield at Great Ellingham (nr Attleborough) is Portwood Farm (NR17 1AH), where they grow acres of asparagus. You can pick up the stuff as well as recipe ideas from their farmshop until June 21. Did you know that you need to wait three years from planting before harvesting. A real labour of love!

SAMPHIRE

A true Norfolk delicacy, also known as sea asparagus, can be bought or personally gathered from June onwards. It grows on the tidal sea marshes from Thornham to Blakeney. All you need to do is pull it up by the roots (avoiding any incoming tide of course!). You can also get it at coastal restaurants, shops and roadside stands.



Houghton Season

Open now is 2025's seasonal exhibition at Houghton Hall — Stephen Cox:Myth — a marble and stone sculptural exhibition where the attractions can be found in the gardens, in the parkland and within the hall itself.

Examples of Cox's work appear around Britain as well as in Italy and Cairo, Egypt and New Delhi, India.

Book tickets here <https://www.houghtonhall.com/>

Open Garden Weekends

Summer seems finally to have arrived and with it the chance to gain some inspiration this "blooming June" from some local gardens open to the public.

June 7 Stanhoe 2-5.30pm. Some eight gardens are open. Also included is a cake stand and book fair. Plants are also on sale. £5 cash on admittance; tickets are available at Cross Lane car park and at All Saints' Church. Tel: 07733 001 144

June 8 Open Gardens at Pockthorpe, East and West Rudham from 11 to 5pm (The White Cottage, Dragonfly Cottage, Wensum Farmhouse, and Wensum House). Advance booking of £10 provides admission to all four properties. <https://bookings.ngs.org.uk/book/2d672782-c68b-ef11-8133-00155d9dea00/> or phone 01483 211535

June 8 Ringstead. Some 15 gardens are open 11-5pm. £6 Teas and lunches are available, plants are for sale and there's live music Email: bonallack@sky.com to book lunch There's also a flower festival in St Andrew's from June 7-9

June 22 Old Hunstanton Open Gardens 10-4pm. In the region of 12 will be open including the secret garden at Hunstanton Hall. 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.

June 22 Syderstone Secret Garden, 11-5pm. Admission £5. Refreshments available. Full feature next month on this fabulous award-winning garden, home to Tom and Jane White.

July 6 Holme-next-the-Sea 11-5pm. Approximately 10 gardens are open. £5 admittance. Event includes a plant sale. Email opengardens@holme-next-the-sea.co.uk <http://www.holme-next-the-sea.co.uk/opengard.php>

Also a reminder that there are plenty of other gardens in the vicinity open throughout the summer, including those at Sandringham and Houghton as well as Pensthorpe, Holkham, West Acre, and further afield at East Ruston, Hindringham, as well as the water gardens at Gooderstone and Fairhaven.

Dates for the Diary

Jun 5 Bircham Banter, St Mary's 2.30-4pm

Jun 5 The Big Lunch

June 5 Stanhoe & Barwick WI, Stanhoe Reading Rooms, "Life as a Monastery Maid"

Jun 6 National Fish & Chip Day

Jun 7-15 A Thousand Birds of Hope, St Lawrence Church, Harpley 10-4pm

Jun 7 RAFA Rides 25/50/75/100 mile rides at RAF Marham

Jun 8 Open Gardens at Pockthorpe, East and West Rudham (see panel, left)

Jun 10 Bircham in Bloom, Bircham Stores 6pm

Jun 11 Butterfly & Dragonfly Walk, Pensthorpe 10-1pm, £13.95

Jun 14 Stanhoe Gardens Open Day

Jun 14 World Gin Day

Jun 14 Norfolk Superhero Challenge, Burnham Overy Staithe

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 20-22 Hunstanton Carnival Weekend noon-10pm

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

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

Jun 25-26 Royal Norfolk Show

Jun 28-Jul 12 Festival Too, King's Lynn

Jun 29 RSPCA East Winch Open Day

Jun 29 Tapping House Open Garden, 10-2pm

Jun 29 RAF Bircham Newton Open Day



A Thousand Birds of Hope

This community project is the brainchild of talented Harpley artist Patricia Stewart, who had the idea of hanging a thousand birds within the church as a sign of hope in such a troubled world and has had collaborative help from the community, including local schoolchildren.

Workshops have been held in the village with origami, papier-mâché, textiles, and many different techniques ... all going to create wonderful birds. Support has been received from CTM, a local business, and also from the Diocese of Norwich.

From June 7-15 (10-4pm) the display will be in the large and beautiful village church, open daily with refreshments available throughout the day. The organisers hope you feel inspired to pay them a visit.

Gina Wagg, Harpley PCC secretary and TBOH committee member

Email: ginawagg@yahoo.com telephone 07821 622381

There is a full programme of events and speakers, details of which appear below.

June 6 Launch (invitation only), 6pm

June 7 Grand Opening

June 8 Harpley Community Choir, 6pm

June 10 Molly Brown "Wash Wader Research", 6.30pm (£5)

June 11 Malcolm Tibble "History of Birds and Flight", 6pm (£5)

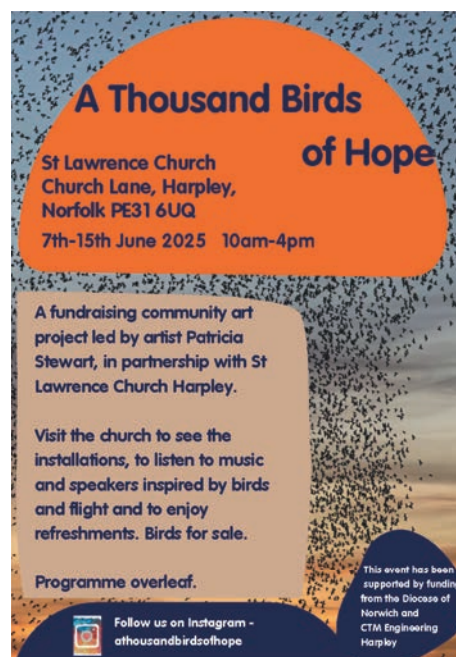
June 13 "Look at the Birds of the Air" — Quiet morning of meditation with Rev Catherine Williamson, 10-1pm

June 14 Jerry Brown "20 Birds in Harpley: the usual and unusual", a churchyard walk

June 15 Festival Service by Rev Canon Karlene Kerr, followed by breakfast 9.30am

To book a place on the presentations, please contact Lucy on 07787 386448

Email stlawrencechurch@gmail.com



Stanhoe & Barwick WI

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

June 5th: Liz Scott — Life as a Monastery Maid

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.



Local Landmark Trust Properties

Just supposing you need to put up some visiting friends or relatives and don't have the space. What if you want them close but not under your feet? Well how about considering a local Landmark Trust property for a few days. We have one on the Houghton Estate, a whitewashed gatehouse on the way to Houghton Hall; a second is the iconic red-brick water tower at Appleby.

The Landmark Trust is a charity that cares for more than 200 remarkable buildings around the country and converts them for comfortable and authentic historical stays. You can view all their properties and book at <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk>

Houghton Festival

Houghton Music Festival returns this August and runs from 7-10th. As in recent years, there are special deals for local residents, though you need to provide evidence that you live locally to take advantage of the reduced prices. Tickets are already on sale, priced at £50 for day tickets and £130 for weekend tickets. <https://www.houghtonfestival.co.uk/residents/>

Minor road diversions around the Hall are again in effect for a number of days to accommodate visitors to the site. If you do go, we would be delighted to receive a review — from any would-be citizen music journalists -- of the experience you have there.

Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is on Thursday June 5 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 May 31/June 28 at 7.30pm



Juror #2 (12A) Justin Kemp (Nicholas Hoult), a magazine writer and recovering alcoholic living with his pregnant wife in Savannah, Georgia, is called to serve on the jury of a murder trial. A woman has been found dead in a ravine after fighting with her abusive boyfriend in a bar. But Justin was also at the bar that night, and he hit a deer on the way home in a rainstorm. Or at least he thought he did until he sees the evidence laid out before him and realises that he was the killer. Now he must try to persuade the other jurors to acquit the defendant without implicating himself in the process.

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. Timothée Chalamet as Bob Dylan in the electric true story behind the rise of one of the most iconic singer-songwriters in history. With Edward Norton as Pete Seeger, Elle Fanning as Sylvie Russo, Monica Barbaro as Joan Baez, Boyd Holbrook as Johnny Cash and Scoot McNairy as Woody Guthrie.

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 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 May 23/June 20

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

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

Bircham Weather

Despite there being only 3 days with measurable rain, April still managed to be wetter than March with a total rainfall of 19.6mm, this being due to 13mm falling on the 15th. High pressure dominated our weather throughout the month, though with almost unbroken sunshine until the 7th when cloudier conditions took over, but the clear skies also led to some cool nights and ground frosts, the coldest occurring on the 8th when a minimum of 0.7°C was noted. Aided by a north-easterly wind, there followed the coolest spell of the month with a maximum of just 10°C on the 9th but it was short-lived and the sun returned again by the 11th. This was also interrupted by the only really unsettled period when the first rainfall of the month occurred on the 13th, followed by the wettest day on the 15th, before further sunny periods and dry conditions were sustained until the Easter weekend.

Although beginning favourably on Good Friday, the NE wind returned on the Saturday and despite the dry days the temperature continued to fall to 12.4°C by the Monday when, accompanied by outbreaks of rain, it provided a particularly unpleasant day. However, this was to be the end of the rain for the month with increasing amounts of sunshine lifting temperatures in excess of 20°C for the last three days. A maximum of 24.1°C was recorded on the last day; not quite up to the 26.7°C noted at Wisley in Surrey but it did help to lift the average maximum to 16.2°C, which is 2.3°C above par.

Bryan

St Mary's 100 Club Draw

MAY RESULTS: 1st prize no. **18**; 2nd prize no. **79** (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



Words on Birds

WREN — Small, loud and feisty

The wren is one of our smallest birds but has one of the loudest of songs. Inhabiting most gardens in The Birchams, they are strongly territorial and will set up a song post from which they proclaim their patch whilst often flicking up their tail. They are small, plump birds with a warm chestnut-brown plumage.

The average lifespan of a wren is just two years, with some living longer and the longest recorded at seven years. Unfortunately, their numbers dip during harsh winters, prompting them to engage in communal roosting. At times you might find up to 15 birds huddled together in a single nest box for warmth.

When it comes to feeding, wrens exhibit a charming behaviour of hopping and probing for insects, spiders with other invertebrates. When nesting, the males build several nests that the female has the choice of and then add a soft lining. These dome-shaped nests, built from small twigs, leaves, feathers and moss, feature a small entrance hole near the base which helps to deter predators. It can be the case that one male may have more than a single female! With nearly 9 million breeding territories in Britain, wrens are among our most common birds. On far-flung islands such as St Kilda and Fair Isle the birds are so isolated that new sub-species have evolved which are larger and darker.

Richard Campey,

owner of The One Stop Nature Shop
Burnham Deepdale

In 1936 an image of the beloved wren was chosen to replace that of Britannia on the old farthing coin.

WaterAid Thanks

Two lunches were held this year and we extend a big thank you to those who attended and also to those who sent in donations. In total, £260 was raised for WaterAid. We are most grateful to the Social Club for kindly allowing us to use their facilities.

Sally

Who Owns Norfolk?

We know that here in the Birchams we are sandwiched between land owned by the two estates of Houghton and Sandringham, but there are also other landowners in the vicinity, including gentry and "modern money". It has all been mapped by Who Owns Norfolk? and if you are more than a little curious, then take a look at the West Norfolk map via the link below, which includes the Le Strange lands of Hunstanton, the Ffolkes family of Hillington, the many farmer/landowners in the area as well as the MOD, the RSPB and the National Trust.

According to the researchers: "Since the 80s/90s, two Italian counts and the German heir to a cigarette fortune have gone on an astonishing land acquisition spree; these three individuals now own 1/20th of West Norfolk between them."

<https://www.whoownsnorfolk.org/the-map>



Back Page Sports

BIRCHAM CRICKET CLUB

Junior cricket training has moved to Wednesday nights at Church Lane, and the fine early-Spring weather has seen scores of children arrive from Bircham and the surrounding villages, including a welcome inundation from the local Brownie packs.

Charlie Figura has joined Ebony Palmer and Millie Marsh as a third female coach, and we've been able to put together a new under-11 girls' team to play in the soft-ball format in the West Norfolk region.

Our other junior teams play in the local U9 soft-ball, and U11, U13 and U15 hard-ball leagues. 6pm on the field on Wednesdays, £3 per session, no commitment and all welcome including temporary visitors to the village. Ice-creams available.

The Bircham Ladies train at the same time and all new players (whether casual or highly committed) are welcome. There's a wide age range from teens to forty-plus; the atmosphere is extremely good natured, both in training and in matches against other sides. Some of the ladies are also moving into traditional hard-ball cricket, but generally they play with a soft ball, batting in pairs without pads or helmets. Come along and say hello!

Finally, another very grateful thank-you to the local businesses who are supporting all this via their sponsorship: Burt Carter Decorators, Rudham Chimney Sweep, Colin Humphrey Builders, Bircham Social Club, Secobra Research and Farmer Fred's Adventure Play Barn.



SANDRINGHAM PARK RUN

Every Saturday there's a 5K run in Sandringham's royal park along trails and tarmacked pathways. The 5K (or just over 3 miles in oldie-speak) comprises two laps of the course and is free and open to all. Gather at 8.40am for a 9am start at the "vista" near the children's play area. There are refreshments and toilets available and the free car parking lasts until 11am.

Newbies to Park Run can register on: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/?section=form&eventName=sandringham&e=sandringham>

For further information and/or to put your name forward as a marshalling volunteer, ring Sandringham 07913 439222

HUNSTANTON PROMENADE PARK RUN

There is always an alternative and if you fancy filling your lungs with sea air at the same time, why not try the run in Hunstanton? Same time, same rules but meet at the Salad Bowl Cafe on Cliff Parade for a trot along the clifftops for 3.5 loops in what we hope is summer sunshine. Newbies again register via the Park Run link

KING'S LYNN — THE WALKS

And if you've got the running bug or are merely collecting different Park Runs, then think about trying the event held in The Walks. Gather at the north-east corner of the park.