



## Arise - Spring Is Coming

And so is Arise Women's Conference - Home Church Watton Join us on 16th May for a powerful day of encouragement, connection, and truth as we embrace this year's theme: "I Am Enough."

We're delighted to welcome guest speakers Rachel Mawston and Sarah Smith.

To book your place, please email Ali at [ali@homechurchwatton.com](mailto:ali@homechurchwatton.com) or call 07876 617154.

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## Watton Twinning Association

Our year started with a New Year Get-together in January we had a lovely evening hosted by Keith Gilbert. In February we had our Anniversary Meal at the Waggon and Horses (pictured) a very well attended evening with as usual excellent food. March 29th we shall be having our AGM followed by a lovely Cream Tea at the Carbrooke Hub. In May we are having a special visit to our twin town Weeze in Germany as they are celebrating their 800 year Anniversary. Sunday July 5th we shall have our annual Cream Tea/Quiz and Raffle afternoon at Lovell Gardens. Sunday 9th August a Beetle Drive/Raffle with nibbles. With more events later in the year. If you are interested to know more about Watton Twinning please contact me on [magsdevine44@gmail.com](mailto:magsdevine44@gmail.com) or 07450793916 I'll be very happy to chat about it. Margaret Devine (Chair)

## Release The Hare!!

The chase is on! Somewhere in this issue, Harry the Hare is hiding, tucked away in plain sight, just waiting to be found. This marks the official launch of **Hare & Seek**, the brand-new, fun competition from the Watton & Wayland Times. Each month, Harry's mission is to hide inside the paper. Your mission? Spot him, report him, and earn your place in the prize draw. There may be clues. There may be misdirection. There will definitely be fun. When you find Harry, send an email to [wattontimes@gmail.com](mailto:wattontimes@gmail.com) with the subject "I Found Him", or a note to Julian, C/O Adcocks, 32 High Street, Watton, detailing which page, and where on that page (which quarter is enough) you see him, i.e. top left, top right, bottom right or bottom left. The winner will be chosen in the same way as Codeword. So sharpen your eyes, gather your wits, get the magnifying glass if you need to, and let the first hunt begin...

## Norfolk Wildlife Trust Breckland Local Group

We will have had our last talk of the season by the time you're reading this. We now go into walks for April, May and June. **PLEASE NOTE AFTER JUNE THE GROUP IS TAKING A BREAK DUE TO HEALTH PROBLEMS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE.** We expect to be back with a season of talks in the Autumn. Anyway, we start with a walk at Wayland Wood on Sunday 26th April from 10am-12 noon. This is guided by Rachel Street the warden, so come and find out why this is a gem to be preserved. Cost is £2 members, £3 non-members. Booking is required at: [breckland@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:breckland@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk) or 07788217651

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# The Wayland Songbirds

I am Louise and singing has changed my life! I've always been a singer (privately) but since I came to realise the profound effect it has on those living with dementia it's been a powerful driving force in my life. To be able to assist another in accessing their deepest, most heartfelt memories was satisfying in a way I'd never experienced before.

I started my public singing journey at Dorrington House care home where I quickly became known as the singing lady, I'd sing at the residents' bedsides, I'd get groups together regularly for joyful singalongs combined with exercise. It never failed to lift the participants... nor myself!

One day I had the idea to take this passion a step further. As I'd gotten so familiar with the songs of yesteryear I'd already acquired an hour's setlist and so I reached out to as many care homes and dementia cafes as I could find to offer a free hour of entertainment (currently way over 100!). Within days the bookings started rolling in, it was quite the surprise!

So although sadly I had to leave behind my previous role, for the last 18 months now, I find myself to be absorbed in the most rewarding work of my life. It honestly doesn't even feel like work!

Again I wish to expand on my offerings and am excited to have launched a brand new harmony choir in Watton. The aim is to learn a setlist of our own unique versions of uplifting songs and to share them amongst the community at local care homes and events. In my opinion nothing compares to a room full of people all singing along to beautiful songs, tapping into precious memories and sharing the experience together. It is undoubtedly one of the most powerful ways to connect as humans.

The Wayland Songbirds meet Friday 27th March (This Friday is one off) and then every Wednesday evening at the Methodist centre, Watton, 6.30-8.30pm. First visit is free then is only £5 per session there after.

We are a very relaxed, friendly group which sees all members choosing the songs, sharing creative ideas and above all having fun!

So if you'd like to be a part of this, we'd love to welcome you along this Wednesday!

Louise, founder of The Wayland Songbirds, is pictured during one of her sets at Grenville Court Care Home



## Claire Bowes

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# Wayland Men's Shed

Another successful month for the Wayland Men's Shed. There is plenty of activity on Mondays and Wednesdays in the social room with over 40 in attendance at each session. Likewise in the workshops on a Monday and Thursday. Much enjoyment is had creating, refurbishing, game playing and just sitting round chatting.

This month I want to highlight the benefits to members of what we call, "the Music Appreciation Group". This regularly attracts 20 or more members, who all bring along a piece of music which is listened to by the group. This month the theme was, "The first record you bought." There was a real mixture of music as members were selecting music from different decades according to their age and personal taste. Each member casts a vote from 1 to 10 as well as giving a comment. Top scorers were: - First - Let's Dance by Chris Montez, second - When you were sweet sixteen by The Fureys & Davey Arthur, third - Only Sixteen by Craig Douglas I cannot possibly reveal here some of those comments as we have a rule that what is said in the shed stays in the shed. But just to say that much banter and hilarity is had on these mornings.

The Shanty group (Wayland Shanty Men) continues to meet up and rehearse 3 times a



month to enjoy singing together and widen our portfolio of shanties in readiness for future Gigs.

The photo group (The "Shutterists") visited the Shuttleworth collection on 25th February and got some great pictures as well as viewing a vast collection of planes and vehicles. Another good day out.

Fifteen members attended Strikes bowling alley on 12th February and enjoyed a very entertaining afternoon. I think most of us

were very skilful at avoiding the skittles, sending many balls along the side gulleys. However, it was much fun with great company.

We are always looking at ways we can enhance the well-being of our members and are engaging with a fully qualified and experienced Meditation teacher to hold sessions beginning at the end of March. Several members have already expressed their interest.

That is all for this edition but I hope to report further in the next one.

If you want any further information on Wayland Men's Shed please visit our Website [www.waylandmensshed.co.uk](http://www.waylandmensshed.co.uk) or contact :

Malcolm Trayhorn, Chairman & Social Secretary Tel: 07729993163

Wayland Men's Shed Charity No.1213606



## Mother's Union 150th Birthday

2026 sees 150th anniversary of Mothers' Union, a worldwide Christian movement comprising millions of grassroots members in 84 countries.

To commemorate this special year, Mothers' Union in Norfolk and Waveney has planned a range of initiatives and events, the first of which took place on 7th February when a specially compiled book entitled "Grassroots" was launched at a shared lunch in Attleborough and attended by members from across the diocese and beyond, as well as by representatives of some of the groups they partner with. These groups include Wayland

Prison Chaplaincy, The People From Abroad Team, The Highcroft Trust and Leeway.

"Grassroots" is a collection of the personal thoughts, poems, prayers and experiences of just some of the members and friends of Mothers' Union across the diocese, illustrating what it is to be one of those largely invisible people working with love and faithfulness within our communities.

Gathered and arranged into sections, with human lives reflected in the natural world and its seasons, this book takes the reader through the ups and downs of love and service in a changing world and leads Mothers' Union from its humble beginnings to a new season.

The book, selling at £12, includes contributions from all twenty-three MU branches across the diocese and was compiled by Katherine Gray,

a member of High Oak branch, with illustrations by Amanda Hart from the Fakenham branch. It is available directly from Katherine Gray and at 150th events throughout the year.

All proceeds from the book and from sales of Amanda's original drawings will be used to further the work of Mothers' Union amongst us. Other events planned for the year include an Anniversary Festival Service in Norwich Cathedral on May 7th, led by our Patron Bishop Graham (who also wrote the foreword to the grassroots book), a Quiet Day in Walsingham in June and a summer picnic in the Cathedral Close in August.

Individual branches are arranging their own events and there are plans for commemorative tree planting across the diocese and the gift of

books to children being baptised during the anniversary year.

For further information and to purchase copies of the book please contact Katherine Gray Tel: 01953 604954

Email: [johngrayotc@gmail.com](mailto:johngrayotc@gmail.com)



# Councillor's Chat

With Councillor Claire Bowes

Readers will no doubt be aware that the 2026 local elections are 'back on'. After cancelling them at the end of 2025, the Prime Minister capitulated in February and announced they would now take place. I had been appalled at the Government's second postponement of elections in the space of a year. I was one of only a small number of Norfolk County Councillors to vote against the Council's devolution proposal in January 2025 when it became clear that voting for it would lead to the cancellation of the 2025 local elections. I have continued to vocally maintain that no matter what, be the excuse the delivery of local government reform or devolution, democracy should never be compromised and residents should be able to exercise their democratic right as dictated by the legal 4 year election cycle.

The County Council elections will take place on Thursday 7th May and I will be standing as the Local Conservative Candidate in Watton Division. Polling stations (as shown on your poll card) will be open from 7am to 10pm. Breckland

Council, as the electoral authority has advised that most postal voters should receive their packs between about the 10th April and late April. The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 21st April.

### Spring!

As April heralds the Spring and everything is bursting into bloom I am very pleased to report that my project to plant flowering trees in and around Watton on Highway's land has been completed. The trees consist of a mix of native cherries, ornamental cherries and pink horse chestnuts. In all 20 can be seen in spots ranging from the Norwich Road in Carbrooke through the High street to outside Threxton Industrial Estate. The project was funded from my County Council Member's Highways and Environment budget and I would like to thank both Watton Town Council and Carbrooke Parish Council for their support in agreeing to take on the regular watering of the trees as they grow.

These flowering trees will complement cherry trees planted in the last few years along the high street, and on Merton Road and George Trollope Road green spaces, which I was able to secure grant funding for through Breckland Council's Market Town Initiative and the King's Coronation Orchard schemes.

All in all I am proud to have been able to see over 35 of these trees planted in the Town on highway verges, the high street and residential green spaces.

Spring flowering trees not only put on a beautiful display but importantly produce nectar and pollen that feed pollinators in the season. This is crucial to the successful fertilisation of both wild and garden plants and also to our surrounding crops. Not only do they harbour and support thousands of insect species they also create habitats for birds and small mammals.

Trees act as natural carbon storage systems and even small planting schemes like community orchards, roadside trees and field edges contribute to reducing greenhouse gases. At the same time as making our high street and town more attractive urban trees can contribute to the improvement of air quality in communities.

### Business Grants for the Hospitality Sector

I recently attended the County Council's Market Town Conference at Thursford at which a £250,000 support campaign aimed at pubs, cafes, restaurants, hotels and other hospitality business in and around our market towns was launched. I have lobbied for this support following the recent tax hikes on the sector. The campaign forms part of a wider £1 million High Streets Matter support package from Norfolk County Council to strengthen local high streets. Businesses in the hospitality sector can access specialist training workshops and apply for business grants up to £1,000 with a High Growth Programme for selected businesses of grants up to £2,500. For more information email [nhsm@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nhsm@norfolk.gov.uk)

### Pride in Breckland

As part of Breckland Council's annual budget agreed at it's



February Council meeting, a new £100,000 Pride in Breckland grant scheme has been established to support projects that enhance the district and respond to the needs of local communities. This new grant scheme is about investing directly into the district's market towns and supporting projects that make a real difference to residents, businesses, and visitors.

Through the scheme, a share of the fund will be allocated to the town councils in Dereham, Swaffham, Watton, Thetford and Attleborough. The town councils will then be able to use the one-off grants to support projects that benefit their towns.

Projects that could potentially be supported through the scheme include those that:

- Enhance public spaces
- Support cultural, arts or heritage initiatives
- Enable environmental improvements such as tree planting or community clean-up schemes

Claire Bowes, County Councillor, Watton Division (Including Carbrooke, Caston, Griston and Ovington)

[claire.bowes@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:claire.bowes@norfolk.gov.uk)

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# Watton Evening WI

The March meeting had members decorating a mystery article. Sandra Wood brought all that was needed for us to learn this new craft. Some good results although some tried hard!!!

The Lunch Club visited Watton Sports Centre this month, at the Games Afternoon there were lots of laughter and fun and the Book Club discussed, The Case of the Missing Servant by Tarquin Hall, next month's reading will be The Last Pilot by Benjamin Johncock.

The members of the Craft Group met and made craft eggs, lots of lovely materials just ready for Easter.

March has been a busy month with a Group Meeting where Watton Evening and Saham WI members met together. The speaker was Wally Webb who told us of his adventures on the Norfolk Broads.

Our April meeting at the Methodist Centre, High Street, Watton will be on Thursday April 9th at 7.30pm when Fay Jones will celebrate the Wonderful World of Stinging Nettles!!!!

New members and visitors are always welcome just come along or if you would like a little more information contact Margaret Herbert on 01953 882269.

## In Your Garden With Lotta Potts

Notable dates for gardeners (I have omitted Easter as I stick to immovables):

1st – All Fools Day. If you must, make sure and trick before noon as after that the joke's on you.

14th – St Tiberius' Day. Traditionally the first day the cuckoo begins to sing. How many years is it since we heard one?

14th – National Gardening Day. Celebrate growing things and encourage others to join in.

23rd – St George's Day. England's patron saint.

23rd – start of the asparagus season.

**April.** Already!!! The zingiest spring month. Although flowering started in mid-March it always looks a bit tentative until April arrives. There are a few cherry trees around where I live and now, overnight it seems, have the lower branches clad in pink buds and opening flowers. I know that in the couple of weeks between now and early April they will look like clouds of pink. The magnolias are showing their furry buds and April will see them in amazing shades of white, pink and purple. Then we will have pouring rain and high winds. Happens every year. On a more serious note one thing that can happen is a late frost so if it's a nice sunny day please don't be tempted to buy and plant bedding plants or tender perennials. Keep your money under the mattress until next month. A spring frost can ruin early fruit blossom such as peach so it's best to cover these if at all possible. In fact peach trees grown fan-shaped or espalier should be covered all winter to keep off the rain that bears the spores of peach-leaf curl. I am beginning to think the best way to grow peaches, nectarines and apricots is in containers. These can be covered or brought indoors. The latest varieties developed are ideal for this method of growing.

I am checking my not-so-new RHS what to do book and lo! Snow! Still even they are losing their enthusiasm for the stuff, saying that heavy snowfalls are rare now but (always a but) there can be exceptions. Even they have to go back to the mid-1980s when Ayrshire had six inches. This is an area that rarely gets any. The authors have now shifted their emphasis to rain. A brief mention of April showers gives way to a whole list of places that have lots of it. A lot of really heavy rain can be a nuisance as the soil becomes waterlogged and can't be worked. There shouldn't be a great deal of digging to be done but we all have an area or two that needs going over. Just think, there might be good, dry days and with a little gentle rain overnight. Dream on.

Bulbs feature rather a lot at ground level. There are bulbs for all seasons so now is the time to dig some up and plant others. Snowdrops are best planted 'in the green' that is with their leaves still on and maybe even some flowers. This does work much better than planting dry bulbs in autumn. Narcissi/daffs just need dead-heading until six weeks after they finish flowering. Please leave the foliage alone to die back naturally as the sun on the leaves makes the sugars for the flowers next year. It won't work if you tie the foliage up or horror of horrors fold it up and tie it. There's no chance the sun will do its stuff and there will be fewer flowers next spring. If you naturalise daffs in grass mow round the clumps (yes we are mowing again) so you have little wildlife patches. This looks good

on large areas of grass but in small lawns try miniature bulbs and the miniature leaves won't show so much.

There are many summer-flowering bulbs and corms and now's the time to plant. There are too many to name but they are freely available in sheds and garden centres. The online specialists have an even greater variety and not many bulbs are very fussy about conditions, just the depth of planting. Finally on bulbs, now is a good time to give them a feed. Use high potash tomato food or organic general-purpose feed sprinkled around. I find pelleted chicken manure works a treat. If you have hens you know how beneficial the cleanings-up are in the compost heap. The pelleted stuff has already been composted and treated so it's safe. I wouldn't eat it but plants love it.

There are several shrubs that should be pruned and/or tied in this month. Roses to begin with. This is absolutely the last chance to prune modern bush roses and trim patio and ground-cover ones and should be completed by the middle of the month. Climbing and rambling roses should be tied in and trained horizontal if possible. This results in more and better flowers and there is a complicated explanation of this to do with hormones. Chris Beardshaw explained it in great detail once and lost me halfway through. It's out there somewhere.

Other climbers such as clematis and ivy will get their new growth to hold on to their supports once they've got going properly. Hydrangeas should be pruned lightly now, more of a late dead-heading. Look the shrub over before you start. There are two lots of shoots – the ones that flowered last year and may still have the dead flowers attached and the unflowered ones, which will have a growth bud at the tip. Follow the flowered shoots down to a healthy side-shoot and cut just above it. Don't cut off the other shoots as they will bear this year's flowers. Hydrangeas do have an unfortunate tendency to outgrow their allowed space. If yours is like this look at the congested woody stems in the middle and remove the thickest ones completely. If it's still too big do the same next year. And the year after. This three-year rejuvenation plan works for other shrubs as well but don't remove more than a third at a time.

Winter jasmine will become straggly if left to its own devices. If it's trained over a porch or tied tightly to a wall just clip it back with shears – enough to take off the dead flowers and the tips of the shoots. That's all they need to keep them neat. If it's more informal such as a shrub or climbing a tree it's better to use secateurs. Take each flowered shoot, follow it back to a non-flowered shoot and cut just above it. Even if you seem to be removing long stems don't worry as you are making room for the new. If you have an old shrub take the same route as for the hydrangeas, rejuvenating over three years or so. Let's not forget the wonderful forsythia that needs pruning exactly the same way – flowered stems back to a non-flowered shoot and cut. Depending on when it flowered do wait to prune until the flowers are over but it's much easier if you do it while the dead flowers are still on; takes a lot of guess-work out. Once you've finished the pruning a good feed is in order. The plants will be hungry too.

Now to the real production line, the veg plot. If you planted onion, shallot and garlic sets in the autumn there will be good growth now. This never ceases to amaze me

as I always expect them to be frozen or drowned but they come good and regularly come up 100%. If you grow this way you will already have netted the beds as the birds become very interested in pulling the sets up. Obviously it's the leaves that attract then disappointment sets in and they are left. It's boring having to re-plant but they won't grow otherwise. If you have spring-planted onions they will be making a start as sets have been on offer for ages. I don't know if the birds will come for their entertainment but if they do get netting. Potatoes can be planted this month. Seed potatoes are still available and can be planted straight out avoiding the chitting period on the windowsill. Pity as this is good fun. Plant asparagus crowns if you like asparagus and have a bit of spare ground. Choose this carefully as once in there's no need to move the crowns, no rotation there. Choose the variety carefully as well. It's now recommended to plant the all-male varieties. Their shoots are better but additionally they don't produce seeds that will produce inferior crops. Traditionally you dig a trench about a foot deep and make a ridge in the middle. Drape the crowns over the top about 30 inches apart and cover so that the top of the crown is near the surface. It's best to leave them for two years and take a crop the third (I believe there are new varieties that will crop the second year). The crowns can be planted in individual holes with a mound in the middle. Same thing. Once they are mature enough to take a crop every year the only attention is that you stop cutting in the middle of June to let the fern grow to feed the crowns, cut this down once the colour has changed to beige and mulch. The only other thing is to anxiously watch the bed each spring for the first signs. Towards the end of the season you might find a small, brightly coloured insect. Asparagus beetle. Just pick them off and squish or stamp on them. Otherwise the labour required amounts to about half an hour a year for one of the best veg in the world. Forget the weedy stuff from Peru. It just doesn't compete. Eat seasonal.

There's a whole lot of veg seed that can be started now. Some, like tomatoes need a bit of TLC and warmth to get going and others can be direct sown. Peas and beans can be direct sown but you need to add a few extras for the mice. I prefer to start them in a cold greenhouse in pots or clever 'Rootrainers' that are for growing seed like these that need a long root run and don't get too disturbed on planting out. Of course, many of you will have been studying catalogues all winter, have your order sitting ready to start or already on the go and a firm plot plan. The rest of us shouldn't despair but do try and keep up. Madness sets in round about the end of April/beginning of May when you think you are late. Don't worry. Plants have a lovely habit of catching up provided you aren't too far adrift.

There's so long a list of sowings and plantings and moving things about that can be done this month it would take up rather more of the paper than the ever-patient Boy Julian would put up with so I'll say for all the 'do's' follow what seems to be obvious and the shorter list of 'don'ts' is:

Don't buy or plant out summer bedding plants unless you can protect them from frost. Better wait until the end of the month or early May.

Don't spray insecticides. Let nature's predators deal with them.

Don't sow edibles nobody likes to eat.

Importantly: keep weeding.

## Get Your Spring Covid Booster and Stay Protected

Spring has sprung in the NHS and once again we are offering a Covid booster to those most at risk of becoming seriously unwell. Protection from previous vaccinations fade over time, so topping up your immunity helps keep people safer as the year goes on.

The spring booster programme starts on 13th April and focuses on protecting those who are most vulnerable to severe illness. Eligible patients will be those who are:

- Aged 75 or over
- A resident in a care home for older adults
- Aged 6 months or over and have a weakened immune system

While no vaccine can offer complete protection, having the booster significantly reduces the risk of serious illness. Many people who catch Covid after vaccination experience milder symptoms and recover more quickly.

Locally, vaccination clinics will be held at Watton Medical Practice throughout April and May. We will be making sure that as many eligible patients as possible are vaccinated as quickly as possible.

For now, there is nothing you need to do. Patients who are eligible will be contacted and offered an appointment. Care home residents and housebound patients will be contacted as well to arrange a suitable date.

Please note that we will not be vaccinating any patient aged under 18 years old. Details for where to get eligible children vaccinated is available on the surgery's websites.

Getting vaccinated not only helps protect you, but it also helps reduce the spread of infection within the community, helping to protect friends, family and neighbours who may be more vulnerable.

We know that it can seem that these vaccine clinics never end, but if you are eligible, please consider taking up the offer when your invitation arrives. Let's have a happy and healthy Spring! **Watton Medical Practice**

## Discover the Friday Craft Market

If you haven't visited the Friday Craft Market yet, you might be surprised by just how much talent is tucked inside. A friendly group of around ten local crafters come together regularly, offering a lovely mix of handmade and pre-loved items — well worth a look.

You'll find cards, pre-loved jewellery, books, vases, crochet pieces, baby knitwear, stone art, diamond art, knitted animals, wax melts, gel air fresheners, candles and plants. There's always something different on the tables, and often something you didn't know you needed.

Visitors can also enjoy a cup of tea for 50p or a coffee for £1, with biscuits available to help yourself. It's a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere — no pressure to buy, just a chance to browse, chat, and maybe find the perfect gift or card for any occasion.

The Craft Market will be open on the following dates: March: 6th, 20th; April: 4th (Easter Saturday), 17th; May: 1st, 15th, 29th; June: 12th, 26th; July: 10th, 24th; August: 7th, 21st; September: 4th, 18th; October: 2nd, 16th, 30th; November: 13th, 27th; December: 11th

Everyone is warmly welcome to drop in.

# Swaffham & District u3a

At our March meeting, Marta Stec from the Snetterton Dogs Trust Centre introduced us to the work of the Trust. Marta was accompanied by her own dog, Bruce, a Goldendoodle, who was very gentle and well-mannered and enjoyed the fuss from members.

Marta took us through the different aspects that the Trust offer. These included arranging foster homes for dogs while their forever home was found, which frees up space in the centre enabling them to take extra dogs; training and advice for those with behavioural problems, and much more. The dogs are well looked after and the Trust ensures that all get the veterinary care they need. Without donations and the many volunteers, the work in their 22 UK sites would not be able to function.

### Looking further ahead.

In April we have a speaker from the Phoenix Birds of Prey Rescue who will be bringing along 3 or 4 birds. Jo Daffin will give an overview on the work of the rescue and an insight into these hunters and their habitats.

Anyone is welcome to join the u3a. The only criterion to join is that you are no longer in full-time employment and have the time to take part in the activities on offer.

We meet at Holme Hale Village Hall on the first Thursday of each month. Doors open at 9.45am for socialising and the meeting starts promptly at 10.30am finishing by 12 noon. Further details on all the activities covered by Swaffham & District u3a are available on our website: <https://swaffham.u3asite.uk/>

# What's On at Watton Library

First of all we'd like to thank everyone who came to our 'Toasty Toes' event back in February, we had a great turn out and were able to give away over half our stock of slippers! Many thanks also to Faye from Health watch UK, Emma from Tech Skills for Life and development worker Deborah Lawrence-Bell who all provided lots of useful information to many who attended. We had some lovely feedback that it was an informative and friendly morning, and that the slippers turned out to be very comfortable and warm (and did we mention actually quite stylish?). We do have spare slippers left over and we would love for as many people as possible to get their hands on these so if you didn't make it in for the event, please feel free to pop in and get some while it's still a bit chilly.

### For the rest of March and April so far, events are as follows:

SENDIASS Drop-In session: Wednesday 18th March 1-3pm.

SENDIASS is a free service offering advice, information and support to young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and to parents and carers. They can provide help with SEN support, Health and Care Plans, exclusions and suspensions, and many other SEND processes. Naomi will be here to answer any questions you might have and can help signpost to further support.

'Navigating Menopause: What you really need to know' Author talk: Thursday 26th

March 7-8.30pm.

Join us for a friendly, open and insightful discussion about all things menopause and get your questions answered by the author of 'Making Menopause Matter' Diane Danzebrink, founder of Menopause Support and #MakeMenopauseMatter campaign. Diane has been to a couple of Norfolk Libraries now so we're looking forward to having her speak at ours!

To book spaces for this free event and submit questions for Diane ahead of time, email [libraries.iconnect@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:libraries.iconnect@norfolk.gov.uk).

Neurodivergent Youth Group: Thursday 9th April 5.30-6.30pm.

This is a regular event on the 2nd Thursday of each month for neurodivergent young people (11-17) to chat, play boardgames and/or craft together, run by our lovely volunteer Beth. We're bringing it to the forefront of our events for April as we'd really like to get it rolling again! We lost the momentum with this group a little last year due to previous volunteer inconsistencies, but we would love to get it back to its earlier success and continue to provide a safe space for neurodivergent teens to relax and socialise. If you yourself fit the criteria or know someone who might enjoy this group then please do come along or recommend it to another.

Children's Easter crafts: Wednesday 1st April and Thursday 9th April.

Come and get crafty with us during both weeks of the Easter holidays. Times and specifics will be on our Facebook page closer to the time.

Easter Treasure hunt: During half term there'll be a treasure hunt around the library for children to take part in. Find letters around the library to help spell out an Easter word!

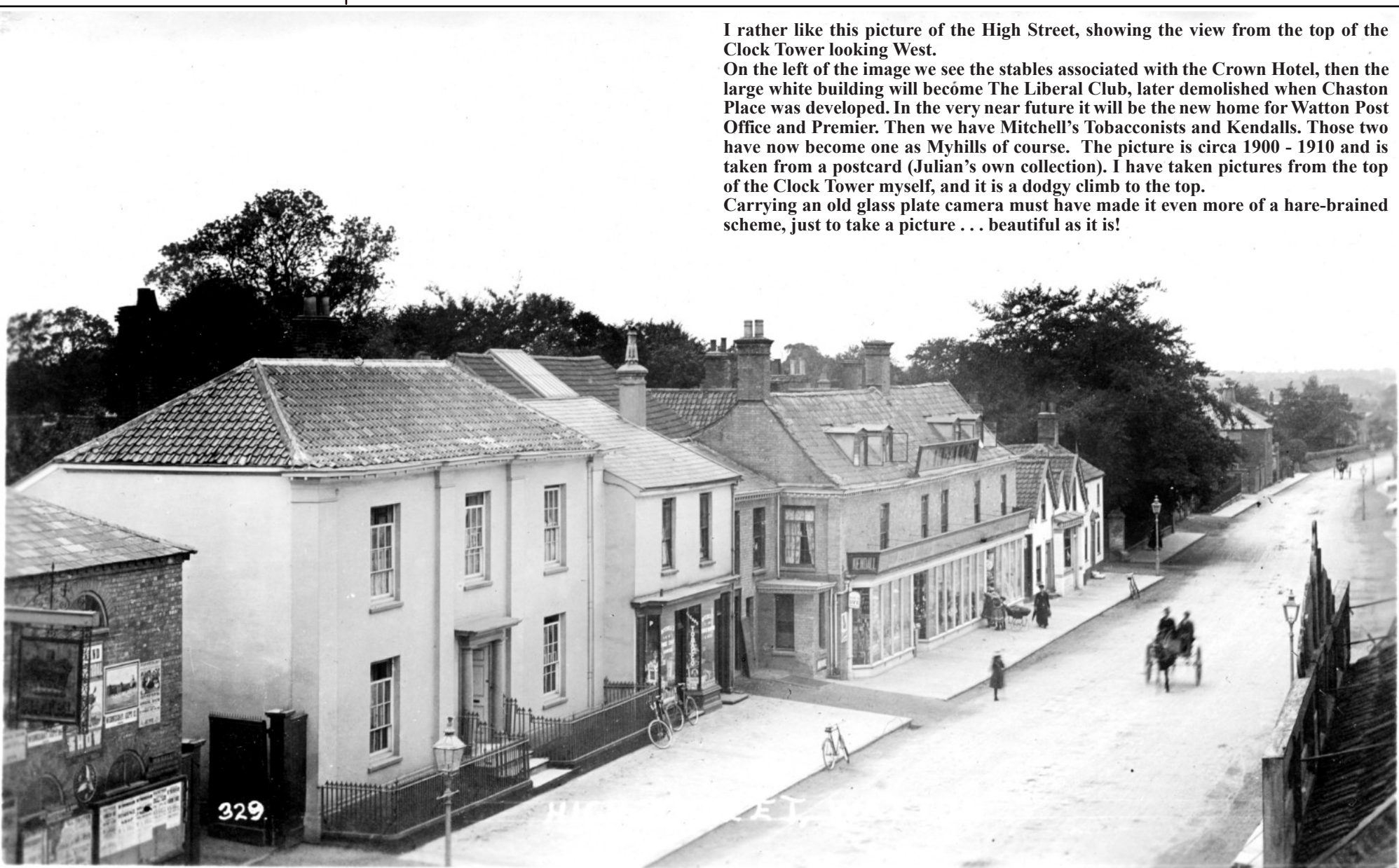
Pets As Therapy visit: In the Easter holidays



Jenny will be coming to the library with her PAT dog Toby. Toby is a lovely, calm greyhound who regularly visits a local Primary school to listen to children read aloud to help them gain confidence with their reading. The opportunity to read to a dog can be a great way to encourage children to keep up their reading throughout the holidays, so we're very happy we get to host him in the children's library again! These reading sessions will be 15 minutes each and bookable so keep an eye on our Facebook page or ask staff for exact dates and times.

Please let us know if there are any new events you'd like to see at your local library, feedback is always appreciated to help us deliver a well-rounded offer for the community.

For any enquiries please speak to a member of staff in branch, email us on [watton.lib@libraries.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:watton.lib@libraries.norfolk.gov.uk), call 01953 881671 or you can visit our Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/WattonLibraryNorfolk](http://www.facebook.com/WattonLibraryNorfolk) Jessica Annison, Library and Information Assistant



I rather like this picture of the High Street, showing the view from the top of the Clock Tower looking West.

On the left of the image we see the stables associated with the Crown Hotel, then the large white building will become The Liberal Club, later demolished when Chaston Place was developed. In the very near future it will be the new home for Watton Post Office and Premier. Then we have Mitchell's Tobacconists and Kendalls. Those two have now become one as Myhills of course. The picture is circa 1900 - 1910 and is taken from a postcard (Julian's own collection). I have taken pictures from the top of the Clock Tower myself, and it is a dodgy climb to the top. Carrying an old glass plate camera must have made it even more of a hare-brained scheme, just to take a picture . . . beautiful as it is!

# The View From Westminster

By Terry Jermy MP (South West Norfolk)

In the weeks since my last column, I have received the amazing confirmation that a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school will be opening at Ryston End in Downham Market using £20 million in Labour Government funding. Through my work as a youth worker prior to becoming an MP, and my experience in local government, I was acutely aware of how urgently more SEND provision was needed in West Norfolk. It was for this reason I set out to hire a SEND Specialist Caseworker to form part of my team – one of only two MPs in the country to do so. Since the election, I have been lobbying the Government to fund a new SEND school and was thrilled when they announced £20 million in funding to do so in December. However, the choice for how to spend that money – be it on building a new SEND school or on creating more places in mainstream settings – was left with Norfolk County Council to decide. In January, I launched a community campaign, calling on the Council to commit to the new SEND school. For too long, West

Norfolk has suffered from a lack of SEND provision, which has resulted in children being forced to travel many hours for their education every single day. In many cases, children are stuck in entirely unsuitable settings or receiving no education at all. Almost 800 residents joined my campaign, resulting in the Council approving the decision. Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign. This is a victory for West Norfolk families, and most importantly, a victory for our children. Also, over the last couple of weeks, the Government has set out its proposals regarding wider changes to education in the Schools White Paper. I was particularly keen that the impact of rurality was considered by the Government whilst they were exploring changes to policy, and to help guide their decisions, I held several SEND roundtables for families and schools and conducted two SEND surveys over the autumn. Through this work, we collected the views of more than 100 South West Norfolk families, and from there, compiled a list of key observations and recommendations which I then presented to the Government earlier this year. One of the recommendations I called for was mandatory SEND training for all education, health and care professionals, and was delighted to see the Government announce a landmark £200 million SEND teacher

training programme. I also called for better provision locally, which is why the launch of the Government's 10-year plan to revitalise school buildings is so welcome. Children with additional needs and disabilities can thrive at our local schools, but schools need the support and funding to make sure they are inclusive and able to meet the needs of all children. For years under the previous government, our education system was underfunded, resulting in a lack of suitable and accessible settings, and I am pleased our Labour Government is working to address this. Separately, another consideration I called for included a push to have farming in the curriculum. As MP for a rural area, farming and the environment are of particular importance to me, and I want to ensure our children are taught about these crucial topics. I regularly visit schools in the constituency and am always so proud



of the great work undertaken by our teachers and other educators. I am determined to get them the support needed to allow all of South West Norfolk's children to achieve and thrive.

# The Wayland Partnership

**SWAPSHOP.** We are opening Swapshop on WEDNESDAY mornings 10-1 as we used to in the early days, while we build up the arts and crafts stock ready to open the gallery properly. Once the gallery is equipped and looking smart once more we will open daily as usual. The lack of heating has slowed progress because we really couldn't ask volunteers to work in there to stock take, set up, or sit and man the space. As spring and warmer weather approaches that will not be an issue. We apologise for the inconvenience.

**WORKSHOP MARCH 26th** Just in case this reaches you on time we have another in our series of workshops by Wendy of CollinsCrafts. On Thursday March 26th 10.30-12.30 she will be teaching Chicken Scratch, which is a type of stitching, a little like cross stitch, onto gingham. £12 a head, all materials supplied. Further workshops are being planned for April and May, dates and topics to be confirmed.

**THANK YOU.** A big thank you to Julian for his extremely interesting talk and film show on the wartime airman, Bill McGrath, from RAF Watton. An amazing account of survival against the odds. It was very much enjoyed by all who came. Thank you all for attending and supporting the Partnership. Julian is planning more talks by popular demand, including taking the story of Watton forward from where Andy Reid left off at the start of WWI. Date is still to be confirmed. We are always open to suggestions from the community as to what would be of interest. The Partnership has a long track record of local history research so there are many possibilities.

**JUSTGIVING CAMPAIGN.** We have set up a JustGiving site and are appealing for your support. Even a tiny amount of a pound or two each from people across Wayland will help us meet rising costs and

focus on working for the community, and most especially working towards creating the Digital and Creative Media and Community Hub. Please think about donating. To donate go to our website [www.wayland.org.uk](http://www.wayland.org.uk) or use the link <https://checkout.justgiving.com/c/3580680> Thank you so much if you decide to support this local charity which is there to serve Watton and Wayland and help give the people of our community a brighter future. As we make progress towards opening Dragonfly and holding more events we will post our dates and times on facebook and on our website as well as have flyers available. If you need more information on any of our services please contact us. **CONTACT DETAILS FOR WAYLAND HOUSE:** email; [officewaylandpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:officewaylandpartnership@gmail.com) or phone 01953 880204 or 07736731115

# West Norfolk Aviation Society

Our latest talk was presented by Charles Howard-Vyse on the subject of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its relevance in the modern world. Charles was a RAF Navigator and spent most of his flying career on the Panavia Tornado, indeed he reckons he has 'Tornado' imprinted through him like a stick of rock. He made certain to empathise that he was aircrew on the mud moving version (Strike/Attack), and not what I gathered from his tone the not overly impressive, in his view, 'Fighter' version. Other viewpoints are available! In order to continue his career progression he opted to move over to NATO in 2012 and served at various locations throughout Europe. He made clear that NATO is a political organisation, not a military one and as such suffers from all the issues that politics suffer from in various countries,

including a bloated bureaucracy, the ability to boot significant issues so far down the road they disappear into the long grass or just talk around a problem in language so pretentious and elongated that the meaning is lost aka the BBC comedy 'Yes Minister'\* He was also pretty scathing about the ability of MoD to mess up our defence procurement, and that fact the young inexperienced advisors are asking either the wrong questions, or massaging their questions in such a way they get the answer they want. Worrying but very relevant in light of recent events especially as it seems to take over a fortnight to dispatch a destroyer to the Mediterranean, when in 1982 we put together a complete Task Force inside a week, and they were worried about cutbacks then. I reckon they'd be spinning in their graves now! Notwithstanding all of the issues Charles reckoned that NATO was a worthwhile organisation and despite everything it does actually work, indeed at the moment it is the only viable show in town. Discuss? Next month we have guest speaker Simon



Gladas from the Bentwaters Aviation Society please feel free to join us on Tuesday 07 April 2026 at Mundford Bowls Club, Doors Open 1915 for 1930 start. Further details [www.westnorfolkaviationsociety.com](http://www.westnorfolkaviationsociety.com). Please note from April there will be an Entrance charge to non members of £5pp for guest speakers and £2pp if its a club speaker. Price includes a light Buffet Supper. \* Available on BBC Iplayer and Highly Recommended by your scribe! Mark Burch WNAS Scribe

# Four Years of Local Magic

## The Norfolk Gift Company Turns Four

On April 30th, 2026, The Norfolk Gift Company officially celebrates its fourth birthday—a milestone that feels both hard-earned and a little surreal. What began as a vision to bring the best of Norfolk’s talent to the high street has blossomed into a vibrant community hub, currently home to over 60 incredible local crafters, makers, and artists.

### From Market Stalls to High Street Walls

The idea for the shop was born somewhere between early-morning market set-ups and long drives home. Since 2012, I have run Appleyard Candles, and anyone who has worked a market knows the reality: the heavy lifting, the unpredictable British weather, and the exhaustion of hauling boxes. I dreamed of a permanent base - not just for my candles, but for the wealth of talent I saw at those markets every weekend. I wanted to create a professional stage where small businesses could have a high street presence without the unsustainable cost or time pressure of running a physical shop alone.

### A Passion for the Handmade

Today, I manage the shop, the admin, and the accounts single-handedly, while also running Appleyard Candles and Thruppence Designs. Being a maker myself gives me a unique perspective; I know the nerves of that first sale and the pride of seeing a handmade product in a window display. Our shelves represent the heartbeat of Norfolk’s creative scene. When you walk through our doors, you aren't just "shopping." You are supporting a neighbour who spends their evenings sewing, a parent hand-pouring candles at a kitchen table, or an artist capturing our local landscapes. Our focus remains strictly on handmade, high-quality products that you won't find in big-box retailers.

### Award-Winning Local Spirit

Our commitment to quality hasn't gone unnoticed. Over the last four years, the shop has grown from a passion project into a multi-award-winning business:

Winner: Best Gift Shop in Norfolk (England’s Business Awards, 2022)

Finalist: Small Retail Business (Norfolk Small Business Awards, 2023/24)

Finalist: Best High Street Business (UK Small Business Awards, 2025)

These accolades belong to our makers and our customers as much as they do to me. They prove that the high street can thrive when it offers something unique, heartfelt, and rooted in the community.

### A Heartfelt Thank You

The last four years have flown by, and we couldn't have done it without our wonderful customers. Your support keeps the lights on, the shelves full, and the makers inspired.

As we look toward the future, our mission remains the same: to be the home of Norfolk creativity. Whether you've been with us since day one or haven't stepped inside yet, we invite you to come and discover the amazing talent our county has to offer.

Here's to many more years of making, creating, and celebrating local!



# Chaos and Confusion with The Wayland Players - and not just on stage!

As the Government has had its mind changed regarding the May Local Elections (on/off/on again), the Wayland Players production of Alan Ayckbourn’s ‘How the Other Half Loves’ cannot commence on Thursday May 7th as advertised in last month’s paper.

The dates are now Friday and Saturday May 8th and 9th at 7.45 pm with a matinee on Saturday 9th at 2.30pm all, as usual, in the Queens Hall.

On stage, there will be chaos and confusion and catastrophically crossed wires as three couples, two dinner parties and one disastrous affair come crashing together in a fast paced farce.

Tickets, priced £10 will be available from Adcocks immediately after the Easter weekend.

**Please note that we are The Wayland Players, the Amateur Dramatic group which has been mounting plays in Watton and the surrounding area since 1949 and not the newly formed “Watton Players”.**

Jenny Mann, Chairman, The Wayland Players.

**The Norfolk Gift Company**

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Closed Sun & Mon

Facebook Instagram @thenorfolkgiftcompany www.thenorfolkgiftcompany

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# 200 Years Of Search And Rescue Condensed Into One Evening At Rotary Lecture



Our audience had to hang on tightly as Rotary Club member Keith Thomas took them on a roller coaster of a tour of 'Search and Rescue Through the Ages'. As a retired RAF Squadron Leader who spent many years as a helicopter pilot engaged in Search and Rescue, Keith was certainly well qualified to talk on this subject.

We were fortunate to once again hold our lecture in the beautiful surroundings of St Mary's Church in Watton, where pre-lecture drinks were available, tea and coffee during the interval, and a tombola organised by Christina Weatherill and Rebecca Yeoman.

During his wide-ranging talk, Keith gave us a detailed history of Search and Rescue in all its forms, including the RNLI, Air Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance Service, Mountain Rescue and St John Ambulance. He was also able to draw on his own experiences as a search and rescue pilot.

Keith began with the famous story of Grace Darling, a Northumberland lighthouse keeper's daughter, who courageously participated in the

rescue of the crew of The Forfarshire, wrecked during a terrible storm on the Farne Islands in 1838. He told us how the lifeboat crews of the 19th and early 20th Century were particularly courageous, as their lifeboats were propelled through stormy seas using oars. In fact shortened oars were used, so as to enable the lifeboat to get in close to distressed vessels.

We also heard about the work of our Mountain Rescue teams, and how as a Royal Air Force pilot Keith would co-ordinate rescues with them in cases where, for example, somebody was trapped on a cliff face and the use of a helicopter could endanger them.

Keith served around the world as a helicopter pilot, including in Cyprus, Hong Kong and Oman, and he had many interesting tales to tell of his experiences, including when he had to ditch his helicopter in shark-infested seas off Hong Kong, and had to be rescued himself.

At the end of the evening Keith was joined on stage by representatives of East Anglia Air Ambulance and the RNLI. A lively question and answer

session followed in which the audience participated, some of whom had themselves had been rescued, or had family members who had been rescued.

Finally Rotary Club President Andrew Barwood thanked Keith for his excellent talk, and everyone else who had worked so hard to make the event a success, with a special mention for sound engineer Ray Rogers and also Jackie Gee and Janet Selvey, who did such a good job in organising teas and coffees. Andrew wanted to give particular thanks to the audience for supporting the event so generously. The evening earned over £1,000, all of which will be used for charitable purposes, including donations to East Anglia Air Ambulance and the RNLI.

Our next big event is our Jazz Night on March 20th at Queens Hall Watton, featuring the legendary Dixie Mix band. Tickets are available from Adcocks in the High Street or, subject to availability, can be purchased on the door. The price of £16.50 includes a ham or a cheese roll.

footpaths of varying lengths, and we have been welcoming an increasing number on a Tuesday, which is great. CLASSIC CARS AND COFFEE Sunday 5th April 10am-1pm. Free entry. Enjoy sausage or bacon baps, hot drinks, cakes and ice cream while showing or viewing some beautiful and much-loved old vehicles. Come and share your interest with other enthusiasts. No need to book in. FILM NIGHT These are always on the first Friday of the month. On April 3rd we have The Choral starring Ralph Fiennes. Tickets £5 with free popcorn. Ice Cream sales. No need to book. BOOK FAIR. This copy deadline is too soon to report on the March Book Fair, so that will feature next month.

A reminder for your diaries that our next one in July 18th. There will be an event on the Green at the same time to mark the National Year of Reading with some fun activities, especially for families and children. More details nearer the date. If you are clearing out your shelves, we take in books all the time. Either deliver them to us on Tuesdays or Wednesdays between 10 am and 12noon or contact us to arrange an alternative. If you are unable to drive to Thompson we can arrange collection.

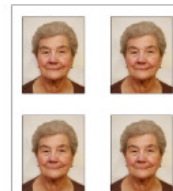
To contact the Hall email info@thompsoncommunityhall.co.uk or phone 01953 488508 and leave a message. We will reply quickly.

## Thompson Community Hall

We have a number of events for you to enjoy in April. Our weekly coffee mornings are on Tuesdays from 10am -12. Enjoy delicious home made cheese scone and cake. The Green is looking increasingly pretty with the daffodils the first to bloom, soon to be followed by the blossom and new leaves on the trees making it a beautiful view to enjoy from the hall while you relax and enjoy your coffee. Thompson is always popular with walkers, with an array of

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# We've been and gone and done it!

**The Wayland Partnership Development Trust Memory Café has changed its name! We are now: The Watton & Wayland Memory Café**

For those with dementia and their carers We have registered with the Charity Commission and we are a fully registered charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) The decision to grant us Charity status came from the Charity Commission on the very same date that we began our journey 11 years ago! Needless to say we are very excited about this new step as we enter our 12th year. Our name may have changed, but our aims remain the same; to provide a regular Memory Café and to bring laughter, support, friendship, advice and planned activities and events for those with dementia and their carers. It's always nice to see old friends that you haven't seen for a while and it was lovely to see Terri and Gerry from the Saham Toney WI. Even more of a surprise was the donation which they gifted. A big thank you to all members of the Saham Toney WI. So kind of you to think of us. It's always fun to receive

visitors, but to receive two sets in one week is amazing! This week we also received a visitor from the Residents' Association in Redhill Park, Watton. Janice came with a donation from the Residents' Association who were, sadly, disbanding, and had decided to divide and donate their remaining money between several local charities. Such generous people we have in our locality! Thank you all so much. It was lovely to meet Janice and we hope that she may become a regular visitor. We still meet at the same place and at the same time – Every FIRST and THIRD TUESDAY of the month from 09:45-12 noon in The Methodist Centre in the High Street (opposite the dentist!) in Watton. And, if you like talking to people and can spare a few hours twice a month, perhaps you would like to think about becoming a volunteer. Pop in to see us or call Katie on 01953 882225 for more information. We look forward to meeting you.



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# Watton Town Council Updates, News, and Events

**Watton Community Centre**  
**EASTER FUN DAYS**  
 MARCH 31ST AND APRIL 7TH  
 10AM-1PM

JOIN US FOR A MIXTURE OF EASTER CRAFTS, ACTIVITIES, REFRESHMENTS AND AN EASTER TRAIL WITH PRIZES! ALL ACTIVITIES ARE FREE

WE WILL BE JOINED BY LOVE WATTON, ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WALK WHEEL CYCLE, AND MORE!

Egg Hunt

## The Great British Spring Clean

The Great British Spring Clean is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. Each year, more than 400,000 volunteers clear litter from our streets, parks and beaches. Now into its eighth year, the Great British Spring Clean is Keep Britain Tidy's annual national clean-up campaign.

During the campaign, members of the great British public join forces with a range of partners – from big business and trusts to community groups and councils – to get rubbish off the ground, safely collected and recycled. The Great British Spring Clean returns from 17 March – 2 April 2026.

The Town Council has a litter picking kit that is available to hire for community groups or individuals to get involved and do their own litter pick. Litter picking equipment can be booked through the Breckland District Council website, or directly from the Watton Town Council team. To hire the equipment directly, pop into the office or email [admin@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk) ! If booking directly with Breckland, you will need to liaise with them directly for rubbish collection.



## The Annual Parish Meeting for Watton

The Annual Parish Meeting for Watton is a meeting of the local government electors, along with their elected representatives, for the civil parish of Watton. At the meeting, matters relating to the parish of Watton can be raised and discussed. Although the Parish Meeting is not a Town Council meeting, Town Councillors - along with District and County Councillors are often best placed to take any issues raised to the relevant authority. The Parish Meeting cannot compel any other authority to deal with a particular issue but it helps the elected representatives understand what issues are important.

At a normal Town Council meeting, there is limited opportunity for electors to speak and they don't have any automatic right to speak at a Council meeting, but at the Parish meeting if you are registered to vote in the parish of Watton, you have a right to speak.

The Mayor of Watton will be the Chairman, and the Chairman may exercise all the power of the Chairman in relation to the conduct of the meeting. The Chairman's decision is final on any matter, the Chairman also has sole discretion regarding whether an item put forward for discussion relates sufficiently to Watton to be included on the agenda.

## WATTON FOOD HUB CALENDAR APRIL 2026

Monday	Tue.Satdy	Wedne.Satdy	Thur.Satdy	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

TUESDAYS - Food Hub Open 12:30-14:30  
 THURSDAYS - Food Hub Open 09:30-12:00  
 1 APRIL - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30  
 15 APRIL - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30

## Town Council Updates

Three new Councillors were co-opted onto the Council. Catherine Halfacre was co-opted to fill the first vacancy, Gavin Bulmer was co-opted to fill the second vacancy, and Jacqueline White was co-opted to fill the third vacancy.

The extension of the ashes area at the Cemetery has been completed. A suggestion has been made that more slate should be purchased to keep the stone topped up.

Reclaim the Rain is working with Blue Green Urban to design and cost new drainage features such as tree pits, rain gardens, SuDS Planters and a water tank to help manage flooding within Watton High Street. Reclaim the Rain is planning to undertake public consultation and give a presentation to the Full Council possibly in May.

Notification was received that Norfolk County Council has made a 20mph Speed Limit Zone Order for various roads in Watton.

Notification received that contractors are currently on site at land at Mallard Road to undertake an archaeological investigation prior to development.

Heads of Terms relating to the transfer of the town car parks from Breckland Council to Watton Town Council has been received and passed to the solicitor acting for the Town Council. These have now been accepted. The extent of CCTV coverage of the car parks is being investigated but this should not be of concern to delay the transfer. Both the Heads of Terms and CCTV coverage will be agenda items for a future Town Council meeting.

Road markings in and around Watton High Street are scheduled for renewal during the spring/summer months.

The Vice-Chairman notes future plans for the Wednesday Market with suggestions including possible re-location of the market to Kittel Close car park once the Town Council has ownership.

Notification of Pride in Breckland grant award - email shared with Cllrs. The award will be accepted and will be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Full Council when suggestions as to how the grant could be spent will be considered. Cllr Kiddell spoke of the need for the Council to have projects ready "on the shelf" for when such funding opportunities arise.

**WATTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HARE TRAIL**  
 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL - 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY

COME AND FIND ME!

CAN YOU FIND ALL OF THE HARES HIDDEN AROUND WATTON TOWN CENTRE? FIND ALL OF THE HARES AND SUBMIT A COMPLETED TRAIL FORM BY FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY AND BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING A PRIZE AT THE SPRING FAIR SUNDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY!

TRAIL FORM PICK UP LOCATIONS TBC - KEEP AN EYE OUT ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA!

## Watton Hare Trail

Are you ready for the Hares hopping into Watton? Keep an eye out for the Hares in the shops and businesses around town! Trail forms can be picked up from the Town Council office, Museum4Watton, Adcocks, and Bunning's Photography shop. Completed Hare trail forms can be handed into the Town Council office during opening hours or posted through the letter box!

## A word from the Mayor

Family fun days have started again with the first one of the year having taken place at half term in February at the Charlotte Harvey Community Centre. As it was Shrove Tuesday pancakes were enjoyed along with other refreshments, as always refreshments are free but donations are welcome. Everyone had the chance to help to hand paint one of the large hares that will be used for the Hare trail a little later in the year, it really was hand painting as hands were covered with paint and then placed on the model hare leaving a very colourful hand print painted hare. More fun days are planned for every Tuesday in the school holidays.

My husband and I were pleased to be invited to join the Watton Twinning Association for their anniversary meal and enjoyed a very pleasurable evening. Watton is twinned with Weeze in Germany and this year celebrate 39 years with a big celebration being planned for the 40th anniversary of the twinning next year when the twinning association from Weeze will visit Watton.

The town council are continuing with the process of taking over control of the car parks and open spaces presently controlled by Breckland and the handover will hopefully happen soon.



With spring in the air and lighter evenings it gives us the chance to get out and about, lots more dog walking and some much needed exercise and the opportunity to get working in the garden, maybe get some much-needed tidying up started.

Councillor Gillian Tarrant  
 Watton town Mayor

## Community Fun Days

February half-term saw the return of the community fun days, with a mix of crafts, treasure trail, and story telling - as well as refreshments and pancakes in honour of it being Shrove Tuesday. We had great fun creating our painted hand print masterpiece as part of the Hare Trail which will be running throughout April and May!

The fun days will continue throughout the year on Tuesdays in school holidays - so keep your eyes peeled for the next ones!



**WATTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**SPRING FAIR MARKET**  
 FOOD & DRINK | CRAFTS | MUSIC  
 24 MAY 2026 | 13:00 ~ 18:00

WATTON HIGHSTREET  
 WINNER OF THE HARE TRAIL TO BE ANNOUNCED!



# GREETINGS WATTON

CARDS | GIFTS | BALLOONS

*Celebrate for less*

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GIFTS, BAGS & WRAP  
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BADGES, BANNERS & CONFETTI  
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## New Gift Ranges at Greetings Watton

In the spirit of the upcoming season, we have had a 'Spring Clean' following our successful gift clearance and have introduced brand new gift ranges for baby, wedding/anniversary and milestone birthdays. We have a few more ideas about freshening up our shop and the products we offer which we hope will come to fruition in the coming months.

We are also working hard to meet the increased demand we have been experiencing and we are so grateful to each and every customer we serve, as your custom directly supports our little family. We thank you for your patience and kindness, and hope to serve you all for many years to come."

Thank you so much, Dan & Amber, Greetings Watton, 70 High Street, Watton, Norfolk, IP25 6AH [www.greetingswatton.co.uk](http://www.greetingswatton.co.uk)



## National Women's Register

Looking for a group of lively minded women? Consider joining the National Women's Register. The Dereham and Swaffham group meets fortnightly. We are a friendly, group of women of all ages and backgrounds, getting together for conversation, laughs, and fun. What we do: Lively discussions (on everything from travel to local issues), walks/ outings. A welcoming, relaxed atmosphere where you can share your views or just listen.

Try us out: Come along to a free taster session! Programme until the end of July 2026.

8th April 2 pm Should there be a Mobile free

area the same as there is a smoking free if so where? Do we spend too much time on our Phones, Tablets etc. if so, have we thought about why

23rd April Bluebell Walk Blickling. Plus, Picnic

11th May 10.30 am What 6 people would I invite to dinner and Why?

26th May 2 pm Sayings and their meaning Pick 2 and research

10th June 2pm Lynford Arboretum visit and Walk

25th June 2 pm Visit to Jean's garden

13th July 2pm Research a Village either you have visited or have lived in

28th July 2pm Favourite Childhood Game (bring it if you still have it)

If you fancy trying us out, send us a message or find us on the NWR website to join: [office@nwr.org.uk](mailto:office@nwr.org.uk) [Nwr.org.uk](http://Nwr.org.uk).



## Thinking Day 100 years!

On Sunday 22nd February Watton Rainbows, Brownies & Guides celebrated World Thinking Day 100 years since the WAGGGS movement was formed. World thinking day is a chance for us to connect with 10 million girl guides & scouts across the globe and this year's theme was friendship. We at Watton district decided to hold a party to celebrate the 100 years we all went to Ashill community centre and luckily one of our leaders has disco equipment and did us a disco! We all partied in the afternoon and played games even some of the leaders joined in with the Macarena! We had a quiet room where we had some crafts if the girls needed a break from partying. We ended the afternoon with some traditional camp fire songs and renewal of promises. All girls left with a party bag and big smiles!

We are on the lookout for some new leaders for all sections if you think this is you, please contact Becky Watton District commissioner on 07795233912 or click the volunteer with us link on the Girlguiding website.



# ADCOCKS

## For All Your Electricals!

We're a local, family business based in Watton and we're members of the Euronics Buying Group.

That means we can offer you a great range of electrical products at great prices and backed with our personal service.

Our spacious showroom offers a wide range of top brand electrical products from Bosch, Neff, Siemens, Hotpoint, Beko, Blomberg, Zanussi, Samsung, Panasonic and Sony .

So let us take the hassle out of your electricals shopping, with our experience, advice and renowned after sales service.

We offer prompt, FREE delivery of all major appliances to Watton and the Wayland area.



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[www.adcocks.co.uk](http://www.adcocks.co.uk)

32 High Street Watton 01953 881248

# Early Signs of Spring

By the Breckland Birder

The first day of March is the first day of meteorological spring, and although sometimes it seems we may still be in the grip of winter there are signs of the forthcoming better days ahead with lengthening days. Snowdrops are now mostly spent and are replaced by Crocuses and Daffodils, and hedgerows are showing signs of life with green shoots appearing. Birds are also indicators of spring with early signs of breeding behaviour, this includes are very familiar and most beautiful songster, the Blackbird, the male bird is often heard in our gardens long before sunrise, what a lovely greeting to the day. Nesting behaviour is also seen with Blackbirds collecting grasses for nest-building. Changes in birds appearance is also seen, for example, the familiar House Sparrow sees changes in their appearance from winter into spring, or breeding plumage. The male House Sparrow in winter has a small black bib, as the breeding season approaches the black bib becomes larger and more solid and the bill turns from pale in winter to black in spring. Another very familiar bird in our gardens is the Blue Tit, this species is a hole nester and they can be seen prospecting for nest sites, including garden nest boxes as early as January and February.

Beyond our gardens in the local Breckland countryside, Skylarks will be delivering their beautiful song high above farmland and grassland, also, a scarce species, the Woodlark (pictured top right), is a Breckland speciality, this species has a wonderful song (find on you tube) which is delivered both high in the sky and on the ground, or in a tree. Breckland is one of the strongholds of Woodlarks in Britain, this species requires short cropped grassland on which to feed and tussocky grassland, heathland, forest clearings, and recently felled woodlands, for example regenerating areas of Pine woodland with young sapling trees, for breeding.

March also sees the arrival of the first summer migrants, the first bird to arrive is the Chiffchaff, a common migrant which betrays its presence with its onomatopoeic song, meaning that the species sings its name "chiff chaff chiff chaff".

We are very fortunate to live in a very special area of Britain where unique habitats, a semi-continental climate, the lowest rainfall, and of course the bird species, many of them scarce or rare, which are found in Breckland but less so in other areas of Britain, one of those species is the Woodlark which I previously wrote about. Probably the most enigmatic bird associated with Breckland is the Stone Curlew (pictured middle right), a wader species which arrives with us in March of each year. The plumage is highly cryptic allowing it to blend perfectly on for example, a stony field, where sometimes only the slightest movement of the bird betrays its presence. An amazing feature of the Stone Curlew is its very large yellow eye which tells us this species is most active at night.

Other early summer migrants includes the Wheatear, a long distance migrant which is often found on passage in Breckland, this is a bird of open country and can be

found on large short-cropped fields, heathland, meadows, and rolling grassland. The Wheatear is a bird of passage in Breckland although it is a very scarce breeder where it chooses disused rabbit burrows for nesting in.

Probably the most famous harbinger of spring is the Swallow, a long distant migrant, arrives with us from the third week of March. Historically, naturalists in the 18th century were obsessed with finding where Swallows went for the winter, some believed that because of their close association with water and roosting in reedbeds that Swallows hibernated in holes in muddy banks of ponds and rivers. As we near the end of March we see other Warbler species beginning to arrive, this includes the Blackcap which generally starts to arrive from the third week of the month and by the months end, Willow Warblers start to arrive from their African wintering grounds.

April sees the greatest movement of birds into Britain from their wintering grounds in Africa and unlike autumn migration which is a protracted affair, there is a greater urgency for birds to arrive in spring in order to establish and secure territories for the breeding season. The woodlands begin to fill with the rich song of Blackcaps and later in the month, Garden Warblers, but I must say one of the species I eagerly await the return of is the Whitethroat (pictured bottom right), this species suffered catastrophic declines on their wintering grounds in the Sahel region of Africa in the winter of 1968 following a severe drought there and the following spring of 1969 around 90% of Whitethroats failed to return to Britain having suffered in that drought. At the current time Whitethroats are recovering well but not to the levels prior to 1968, this is why my heart lifts when I hear the first Whitethroat each spring. A close cousin of the Whitethroat, the Lesser Whitethroat was not affected by the drought of 1968 as this species takes an entirely different migration route from its wintering grounds in Africa to here in Britain.

Who could forget the Cuckoo, one of the most recognisable calls in Britain's birds, this species arrives from mid-April to remain with us for a relatively short time before departing again in July, although juvenile birds do not leave until August and September. And finally, the Swift, I see these enigmatic birds in our skies from the last week in April, their screaming parties through the rooftops is the epitome of summer days.

Paul Newport.  
AKA Breckland Birder.



Woodlark



Stone Curlew



Whitethroat

# Russian Samovars

**MUSEUM 4 WATTON  
Wednesday-Saturday  
10 am-4 pm**

One of our latest acquisitions here at M4W was kindly donated by one of our volunteers. The item in question is a Russian samovar and was bought back by our volunteers' parents from Russia whilst travelling there during the latter half of the twentieth century.

Tea drinking in Russia is a centuries-old cultural tradition centred around hospitality and community. The samovar represents warmth and a welcoming atmosphere and was once widely used by all sections of Russian society, making it an integral part of most households.

Zavarka, the traditional Russian method of brewing tea in which the samovar plays an important role, involves the brewing of a very strong concentrate of black loose-leaf tea called zavarka. This black loose-leafed mix creates a highly concentrated, strong tea base, not for the faint-hearted. This concentrate is then diluted with hot water from the samovar to the individual's taste and

served in glasses with metal holders called podstakannik. It is usually served with jam, honey or lemon. While not as commonly used as in the past, they remain a symbol of traditional, slow-paced hospitality and are often bought out for special occasions.

A Samovar (self-boiling in Russian), is typically made from copper or polished brass to ensure durability and efficient heating and can be ornately decorated. While brass and copper were the most common materials, more decorative and high-end models were made from silver, bronze, or nickel. The samovar on display at the museum is made from silver plate and dates from 1825. Inside, they were often plated with tin to prevent water contamination. A traditional samovar consists of a large metal container with a tap near the bottom and a metal pipe running vertically up the middle. This pipe is filled with a solid fuel, such as charcoal, which is ignited to heat the water in the surrounding container. A small chimney ensures draft. After the water boils and the fire is extinguished, the chimney is removed, and a teapot (zavarnik) is placed on top to be heated by the rising hot air. In this way, the tea can be kept warm for a number of

hours.

Although widely used in Russia since the eighteenth century, the origin of the samovar is unknown. The earliest pottery-made samovar remains were found in Azerbaijan, a former member of the USSR, and are estimated to be around 3600 years old. Since the eighteenth century, Tula, in Western Russia, has been associated with high-quality samovar making.

The samovar on public display at the museum has on the front many engraved 'awards'; however, it has been so loved over the years (polished) they are barely visible. Antique Russian samovars often feature these stamped medals or emblems (awards) on their bodies, representing excellence in design, prestigious exhibitions, or imperial approval.

The samovar is somewhat appropriately displayed in a cabinet in the coffee bar at the museum.

Our coffee bar is open when we are, and we have a selection of Rombouts filter coffee, artisan Norfolk tea, hot chocolate, Bovril and cold drinks to choose from, alongside a selection of biscuits and with no item costing no more than £1, it's an inexpensive treat. We promise our tea won't be left to brew all day!! We look forward to meeting you soon.



# Wretham Gardens And Church Ready For Visitors



The ten acre gardens of the former Wretham rectory, now Wretham Lodge, and the church of St. Ethelbert across the road offer their usual warm welcome to visitors on Sunday April 26th, from 11am to 5pm.

It is the only time that the gardens will be open to the public this year and also not at the usual Easter weekend because the early festival means spring flowers will not be in full bloom. Admission to the gardens is £7 for adults with children free and dogs, on short leads, are welcome. Proceeds go to NGS charities.

In the pretty Victorian church, refreshments and homemade cakes will be served all day.

Wretham is on the A1075 from Thetford to Watton.

# Take Time For A Cuppa Event At Ashill Memory Cafe

Wednesday May 6th. 11am - 2 pm. at Ashill Community Centre.

"Time for a Cuppa" is an annual event that aims to bring people together to enjoy tea, coffee and cake while raising funds and awareness for dementia.

It serves as a reminder of the comfort

and community that can be found in sharing a warm drink and highlights the need for better care and support for those living with dementia.

The timings will allow for people to come and go at whatever time suits them best.

Joining us will be Helene our Dementia Nurse Specialist as well as Holly our Welfare Support Officer from Breckland who will be available for those of you needing a chat to discuss any concerns you might have.

There will also be lots of great music, a raffle and of course lots of

tea, coffee and cake! We also have Anna Yeoman with us on the day to offer hand massages and nail painting for those wanting even more of a treat!

All of the support on the day is from people who are gladly giving their time for free which means that all proceeds raised will go straight to our chosen charity.

We would love for you all to join us to see what the memory cafe gets up to and to have a great time. See you there!

For more information call Gill 07548626337

# Last Month's Codeword Result

Last month's winner was drawn XXXX, and the prize was another "choose your own prize". The answer to the puzzle was:

**"UNCOPYRIGHTABLE ANSWER"**

The winner this month was J Mounter and the Runner Up was P Goddard

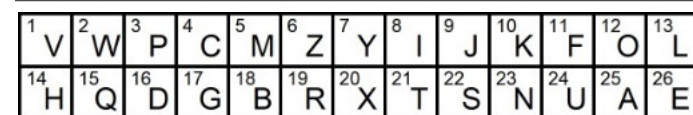
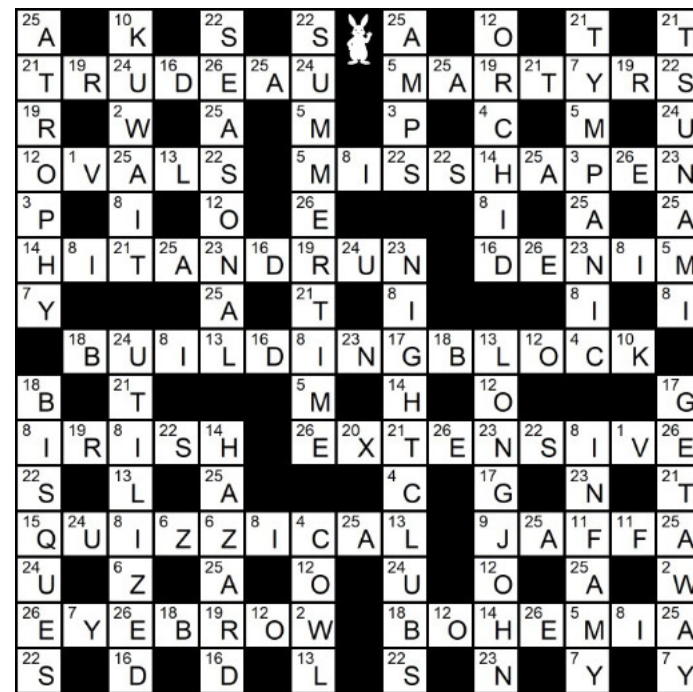
To explain how the winners were drawn; all correct entries were recorded in a table as they arrived, each line of which has a single card from a standard pack assigned to it. e.g. 6 of Diamonds or 7 of Clubs etc.

For the draw, Inger was given the pack, which she shuffled as she wished, and then drew one card for the Winner and one for the Runner Up.

The Editor supervised and correlated the cards drawn with the table of entries, and if it was there was no winner assigned to that card, it was discarded and another card drawn.

In that way I ensure winners are drawn at random and fair play is guaranteed. As always, I hope you found the puzzle both fun and not too challenging.

For the next Codeword grid and more details of this month's competition please see whatever page it is on! (Actually in this issue it's on the next page.)



# FOOT HEALTH CARE

FOOT CARE TREATMENT IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME

## Treatments Include

- Routine Nail Care
- Ingrown Toe Nails
- Fungal Nail Treatment
- Corns & Callus Removal
- Athlete's Foot treatment
- Verruca Treatment
- Advise on The Diabetic Foot

Foot massage given at the end of all treatments

**ANDREW GREENLAND** (MCFHP, MAFHP)  
Qualified Foot Health Professional

Tel: (01953) 884386  
Mob: 07743 116447

Registered member of the British Association of Foot Health Professionals

## April - What's On! at St Mary's Church, Watton

Church Road, Watton, IP25 6DQ.

[www.stmaryswatton.org](http://www.stmaryswatton.org)

wattonchurch@gmail.com  
01953 881252

Wed 1st 1.30pm - 4pm (location in Watton) Bereavement Group: Contact Linda Benton on 07803 017340 or linbenton2978@gmail.com for details. 1st Wed of month.

Sat 4th 10am - 12 Noon Saturday Chat: Join us on the 1st Sat of month for our coffee morning. Come with friends or alone and make new ones!

Tues 7th 5pm - 6pm Prayer & Praise: Sing your favourite worship songs & pray with & for the community. 1st Tues of month.

Thurs 9th 2pm - 2.30pm Prayer Gathering - Led by Rev Dave Cossey. Come join us as God's people to lift up both our community & the wider world in a time of informal prayer. 2nd & 4th

Thurs of month.

Fri 10th 2pm - 4pm Community Cinema: Showing 'The Choral'. Doors open at 1:15pm for 2pm start. £5 ticket on the door inc. hot drink & cake.

Tues 14th 2pm - 4pm Tuesday Club: Join us for a social after Noon of games & laughter here at St Mary's. Confectionary prizes to be won! Donation gratefully received for refreshments. All welcome!

Wed 15th 1pm - 2.30pm Ecumenical Ladies' Prayer Group: At Home Church, Dereham Rd, Watton. Fellowship followed by prayer time. Please bring a packed lunch, hot drinks provided.

Fri 17th 2pm - 4pm Craft Group: Enjoy refreshments & company whilst crafting. £1 donation.

Thurs 23rd 10am - 3pm Open Church: St Mary's open to all to visit, pray, explore, and discover what we offer the community. Friendly volunteers on hand to help with any enquiries.

2pm - 2.30pm Prayer Gathering: Led by Rev Dave Cossey. Come join us as God's people to lift up both our community & the wider world in a time of informal prayer. 2nd & 4th Thurs of month.

Sat 25th 10am - 12 Noon Messy

Church: Kids, bring your adult for a FREE morning of fun, stories, play and craft activities (aimed at primary age, but all ages and families welcome). PLUS! Food and drinks served too!

### March's Winners of the 200 Club!

1st prize £50: Hazel Chamberlin, No. 154  
2nd prizes £25 each: Jennifer Hurley, No. 151, Sybil Gant for Kevin Edwards, No. 135

## Badminton Club

On January 30th the Badminton Group said a sad farewell to Charles Newman at the Breckland Crematorium followed by a lovely buffet at the Sports Centre. He played Badminton until a few weeks before his death despite being 90. We always welcome new members whatever your ability. If you are interested in joining our Badminton Group we meet at the Sports Centre every Tuesday at 9am. It costs £5 per week and this includes tea or coffee. We look forward to seeing you. For more information please contact Ruth Stapleton 01953883190

# CODEWORD

**There is a twist this month!! Solve the Codeword(s) below and enter as usual. For a side competition the letters in this month's answer are also an anagram relating to this issue. If solved, submitting the answer will give you a chance of winning a small prize which I will choose just for you.**

Let me know with your main entry what you would like as a prize and I will try to fulfil your wish as creatively as possible within the budget I have set myself :-)

Each number in the Codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. In the lower 'control' grid I have given you two letters to start with. Copy each of those letters to all the matching numbered squares on the big puzzle grid.

Now, using your knowledge of the English language, work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you discover the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and the control grid. Consecutive squares are not necessarily just one word.

Finally, when you have all the numbers in the control grid, decode the following codeword(s):

10, 16, 20, 10, 17, 20, 16, 14,  
26, 2, 11, 14, 10, 13, 11

Send the Codeword you think is the answer, along with your name and contact details in an email to me at [wattontimes@gmail.com](mailto:wattontimes@gmail.com)

Or, if you don't do email, in an envelope marked 'Competition' to Julian, Care of Adcocks, 32 High Street, Watton. All correct entries received BEFORE midnight on the 12th of the month of the paper, will be put into a draw, and the first entry drawn will win the prize whatever it is. There will also be a Mug & Coaster set for the Runner Up Last month's winner's name and the solution to last month's Codeword are on Page 6. Entry is open to everyone, but in relation to all aspects of the competition's conduct and results, the Editor's decision shall be final.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14	15	16	17	18	K	19	20	21	22	23	24	S	25	26

**St Mary's Church, Watton**

Church Road, Watton, IP25 6DQ

www.stmaryswatton.org

Weekly Wednesday Services at 10am  
Worship in April

Thur 2nd	7pm	Maundy Thursday Service
Fri 3rd	10am	Walk of Witness FROM The Methodist Church to...
	10.30am	...St Mary's for a service (approx. 10.30am)
Sun 5th	10am	Easter Sunday
Sun 12th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	2nd Sunday
Sun 19th	10am	Holy Communion
Sun 26th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	4th Sunday

**Polish Catholic Community**

St Mary's Church, Watton, IP25 6DQ Every  
Thursday and Saturday  
at 6pm - 8pm

**St. Peter & St Paul's Church,**

3 Church Street, Carbrooke, IP25 6SW

www.carbrookechurch.co.uk

Sun 5th	3pm	Easter Day Service with Rev Dave Cossey
Sun 12th	10.30am	Morning Worship with Rev Christina Mason
Sun 19th	10.30am	Morning Worship with Mr Mark Ward
Sun 26th	10.30am	Holy Communion with Rev Dave Cossey

**All Saints Church, Threxton**

Sunday 12th April 10.30a.m.

Everyone welcome



**All Nations Church**

**All Nations Church, Watton**

We meet every Sunday at 10:30am at  
the Youth and Community Centre on  
Harvey Street.

We would love to have you with us.  
**April at ANC**

- 5th April - Easter Sunday Worship Service
- 12th April - Community Café
- 19th April - Worship Service
- 26th April - Community Café

If you would like to get in touch or find out  
more then please email:  
hello@ancwatton.co.uk  
Or call Harry on 07999 564055  
If you are interested in an introduction to the  
Christian faith and a chance to ask any  
questions you have then please get in  
contact to join our next Alpha course.

**Swaffham and Watton  
Roman Catholic  
Community**

Saturday Mass held at the Watton  
Methodist Church at 5.00pm.

Easter Vigil mass held at our Lady of  
Pity RC Church Swaffham at 8.30pm on  
Easter Saturday.

Easter Sunday Mass held at Watton  
Methodist Church at 8.00am.

**Watton Methodist Church**  
57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

**Watton Methodist  
Church**

57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

wattonmethodist.chessck.co.uk

Minister: Rev Neil Vels

**Sunday Service Times**

10.30am in Church;  
6.30pm in the Large Vestry  
2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays

**Easter**

Friday 3rd April 10am Walk of  
Witness from the Methodist Church  
to St Mary's Church for  
Good Friday Service  
Sunday 5th April 10.30am Easter  
Holy Communion with Rev Neil Vels  
no evening service

**Wednesday Coffee Morning in The  
Methodist Centre**

Weekly from 4th 9:30am to 11:30am  
Alongside the Country Market

**Tuesdays@2 in The Methodist Centre**

Tuesday 14th April at 2pm  
Beetle Drive with Prizes and delicious  
refreshments

The Methodist Centre has 2 halls  
available to hire either on a regular  
basis or one-offs. Hire includes WiFi,  
hearing loops, facilities for the  
disabled, kitchen for light catering. For  
details of very moderate rates and  
availability phone 01953 881451

**The Wayland Group  
of Parishes**

**Sunday 29th March Palm Sunday**

10.30am United Holy Communion  
St Martin's, Thompson

**Monday 30th March**

6.00pm Compline  
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

**Tuesday 31st March**

6.00pm Compline  
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

**Wednesday 1st April**

6.00pm Compline  
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

**Friday 3rd April Good Friday**

10.00am - 3.00pm

The Wayland Churches will be open for  
private prayer & reflection

**Sunday 5th April Easter Day**

10.30am United Holy Communion  
St Margaret's, Breckles

**Sunday 12th April**

10.30am United Holy Communion  
Holy Cross, Caston

**Sunday 19th April**

10.30am United Holy Communion  
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham

**Sunday 26th April**

10.30am United Holy Communion  
St Peter & St Paul, Griston

**Wayland Group Parish Churches**

St Margaret's, Breckles; Holy Cross,  
Caston, Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham;  
St Peter & St Paul, Griston  
St Botolph's, Stow Bedon;  
St Martin's, Thompson

**Ashill Group Services**

**Wednesday 1 April, Holy Wednesday**

7 pm, Night Prayer, St Peter's Merton

**Thursday 2 April, Maundy Thursday**

7.30 pm, Communion of the Lord's Supper,  
St John the Evangelist's, Ovington

**Friday 3 April, Good Friday**

10 am, Scriptural Stations of the Cross, St  
George's, Saham Toney (meet at Wells Cole  
Community, and

2 pm, Good Friday Liturgy, St Nicholas' Ashill

**Saturday 4 April, Easter Eve, 7.30 pm,**

Easter Vigil with Holy Communion, St  
George's Saham Toney

**Sunday 5 April, EASTER DAY**

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington,  
Lay-led Service

10.30 am, St George's, Saham Toney, Lay-  
led Service

**Thursday 9 April, Easter Thursday**

2 pm Messy Church (crafts for children),  
St Nicholas Ashill

**Sunday 12 April, Easter 2**

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's,  
Ovington, Lay-led Service

10.30 am, St George's, Saham Toney, Holy  
Communion (and AMP/APCM)

**Sunday 19 April, Easter 3**

9.30 am, St Peter's Merton, Holy Communion

Sunday April, 9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill,  
Lay-led Service (and AMP/APCM)

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's,  
Ovington, Lay-led Service

10.30 am, St George's, Saham Toney, Lay-  
led Service

**Thursday 23 April**

7.00 pm, St George's, Saham Toney, Holy  
Communion for St George's Day

**Friday 24th April**

2pm St Peter's Merton AMP/APCM

**Sunday 26 April, Easter 4**

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Lay-led Service

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's,  
Ovington, Holy Communion (and AMP/PCM)

10.30 am, St George's, Saham Toney, Holy  
Communion

There are normally lay-led services on  
Sundays when there is not Holy  
Communion: 9.30am at Ashill; 10.30am at  
Saham Toney; 10.30am at Ovington

**We offer you a warm welcome at  
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The Watton Sports Centre, Dereham  
Road, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EZ.

Website purposechurch.org.uk

Sundays: 10.30am morning service

Thursday: Community coffee and chat

10.00am

If there is something you would like us to  
pray for please let us know

More information contact Nick

07940049933 or nicknundy@gmail.com

**April - What's On at The Queens  
Hall, Norwich Road, Watton**

Ballroom Dancing - 4th April, 19:30 - 22:30

Carboot Sale - 5th April, 9:00 - 14:00

NHS Blood Donors - 6th April

Flower Arranging Demonstration and  
Afternoon Tea - 10th April at 14:30

Medium - 17th April, 19:00

Disco - 25th April, more information with ticket  
information to be published online

**The Regular events are:**

Bingo - Monday, 13th, 20th & 27th

CLM Fitness Dance Classes - 7th, 14th and 21st

18:45 - 19:45

Carpet Bowls - every Wednesday at 13:30

Line Dancing - Wednesday, 1st, 8th, 15th and  
22nd 18:00 - 21:00

Pilates - Thursday 2nd and 9th 18:15 - 19:30

Ju Jitsu - 3rd, 10th and 24th April, 17:30.

For further information check out the  
Queens Hall website  
<https://queenshall-watton.co.uk>

**I've  
always  
been  
egg-cited  
for  
Easter!**

I am one of four siblings. As a child I  
remember that, on Good Friday, our  
local baker would open his shop early to  
a queue of customers waiting to collect  
fresh hot cross buns. Our grandfather  
would wake at 5.30am to be one of the  
first there to collect a dozen in time for  
breakfast.

On Easter Saturday, Mum would help us  
to make gorgeous boiled egg creations,  
which usually involved cracking the  
shells of hard-boiled eggs and placing  
them in food dye for 30 minutes before  
drying them and peeling the shell,  
revealing a marble effect on the white, or  
tying string around hard boiled eggs  
before placing them in dye, to leave a  
patterned shell when the string was  
finally removed. On Easter Sunday after  
church, we always had roast lamb for  
lunch, followed by the Easter egg hunt in  
the garden.

But did you know that, long before  
Christianity, eggs were used in spring  
festivals by cultures worldwide to  
symbolise fertility, rebirth, and the start  
of new life?

It was the early Christians in  
Mesopotamia who adopted the idea of  
the egg to symbolise Christ's empty  
tomb. In those days, eggs would be  
stained red to represent the blood of  
Christ shed at the crucifixion. During the  
Middle Ages, eggs were forbidden  
throughout the 40 days of Lent, but  
preserved by hard-boiling and eaten as a  
special treat on Easter Sunday. In 13th  
century England, eggs were decorated  
and often blessed by the church to be  
given as gifts, and that tradition  
continues today.

I've always been egg-cited for Easter  
and I still am. It's my favourite Christian  
festival (in part because it doesn't carry  
the same pressures as Christmas) but the  
real significance of Easter is, for me, far  
greater. We have the wonder, difficulty  
and depth of Holy Week to journey  
through before the joy of Easter day  
when we celebrate Christ's empty tomb,  
which proved he'd risen from the dead,  
just as the Scriptures had foretold. That's  
why I'm egg-cited for Easter and, I have  
to admit, I'm rather partial to chocolate  
Easter Eggs too!

With every blessing for a joyful  
Eastertide.

Vanessa x

Reverend Vanessa is the rector for the  
Wayland parishes of Breckles, Caston,  
Great Hockham, Griston, Thompson,  
and Stow Bedon. She is available for  
baptisms, weddings, funerals and  
pastoral visiting.

You can contact her on 07984 318885 or  
by email at  
vanessadlayfield@gmail.com

# Sow to Grow - Direct Sowing Hardy Annuals

Jason started his presentation with a list of pros and cons of direct sowing of hardy annuals. The positives of direct sowing into the flower beds is that you do not need to have a greenhouse. Also you can choose a wide variety of colour schemes easily. You can plant a range of sizes to give a vertical interest to you flower beds and finally direct sowing hardy annual requires a minimum of plant care once sown. Once they are grown you can harvest as cut flowers for the house or flower arranging. The downsides of direct sowing is that until established the new flowers are at risk of whatever the elements throw at them. Some species can self-sow readily and take over a flower bed, so need to be kept in check.

Normally you would start your direct sowing of hardy annuals around mid-April

Ashill, Holme Hale & District Garden Club  
The garden club February meeting had seed expert Jason Breed talking about how to direct sow and grow hardy annuals. Jason is area sales manager for Moles Seeds Ltd, a supplier of seeds to the horticultural trade.



after the risk of frost has passed and the soil is starting to warm up. You should sow thinly in the first instance and then once you get germination you can do a second sowing to fill in any gaps where germination failed. For the taller hardy annuals like sunflowers you will need to support the flower stems.

Jason then discussed specific hardy annual flowers which were his favourites, either for the colour they provided or due to ease of maintaining. These included Calendula (English marigold), Cornflowers, Cosmos, Lavatera, Zinnias and Sunflowers.

### Upcoming Garden Club Events

Our March 2026 meeting (26th) has Gwenda Kyd presenting a fascinating talk about 'Chemical Warfare (and co-operation) in the Garden' which gives insights into how plants use various natural chemicals to either attract

pollinators or repel predators. Our April meeting (23rd) will be given by horticulturist and nurserywoman Luci Skinner talking about 'Growing Pelargoniums'. The garden club's first outing of the year will be to see the new Tulips at Houghton event in the walled garden at Houghton Hall on Thursday April 30th.

All meetings are held at Holme Hale Pavilion and start at 2.30pm. New members from anywhere in the district are always welcome, so come along and improve your gardening knowledge, while enjoying a welcoming environment with like minded colleagues. If you enjoy the afternoon then you can join the club for just £6 per club year.

Web: [ashillgardeningclub.wordpress.com/](http://ashillgardeningclub.wordpress.com/)  
Email: [ashillholmeahlegardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:ashillholmeahlegardenclub@gmail.com)

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# A busy week in the Community for residents at Buckingham Lodge

Starting with Dyb Dyb Dyb "Do your best, Do our best" and a fascinating show and tell for residents from 2nd Wayland Scout Group.

Amazing residents to see how hobbies have changed from one generation to the next...

Followed by a trip to local public house The Kings Arms for a drink after the home was gifted 6 x drinks vouchers.

Warmly greeted by staff members Agne Virketyte and Stacey Haworth, the afternoon was spent chatting about Holidays Concorde and Cats.. with Baileys being the favourite tittle for Rita and Esme.. A huge Thank you to Intergenerational Children's group

Friend in Deed whose team won the vouchers and donated them to the home..

Then the week ending with a very interesting Military talk entitled "Cyprus Memories - A Serviceman's Journey" delivered by local man Keith Thomas who enthralled everyone with his experiences of his Service as a RAF pilot in Cyprus in the 1980's. "It was a holiday island" he explained "what could go wrong?"

Based at RAF Akrotiri and achieving an impressive tally of 1000 flight hours, Keith described 84 Squadron, Cyprus as 3 years of adventure, from assisting police to prevent drug smuggling, to scuba diving and the frustrations of not being able to buy decent underwear. A lovely week of memories, friendships, and community.



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# Great Hockham Gardening Club

With a background in science and having run Walnut Nursery for twenty-five years, who better than Jim Paine (top right) to give us the inside on, 'The Secret Life of Plants'.

Jim began by emphasising that to understand the plants we see today, we had to look at the past, the entire history of the earth from when it first formed and then we had to look at all life from the very beginning. He hoped that by having an understanding of life's history it would increase our enjoyment of gardening.

The Earth, and all the planets were made from the leftovers after the formation of the Sun. The history of the Earth is divided into four eons:

The Hadean Eon, (4600 - 4000 mya (million years ago)), the formation of the Earth. Named after Hades, the Greek god of the underworld, the Hadean environment was that of boiling rock, hellish. During this time a Mars sized object collided with the Earth. The aftermath of the collision resulted in two important things that have had a major influence on the life we see today: The Earth was left with a rotational axis 23.5 degrees perpendicular to the plain of its orbit, which gave us seasons, and the moon, whose mass was sufficient to cause the ocean tides.

The Archean Eon, (4000 - 2500 mya), first life. From the Greek archaios meaning 'ancient', the Archean saw the formation of a single continent and water settling at the Earth's surface. It was becoming warm, wet and now stable - chemistry was now possible. The chemistry became more complex and at some point, the chemistry could be called life. These were prokaryotic cells, simple, single-celled organisms lacking a nucleus with membrane-bound organelles.

The Proterozoic Eon, (2500 - 542 mya). Proterozoic combines two words of Greek origin: protero meaning 'former, earlier', and zoic, meaning 'of life'. This eon saw the transition to an oxygenated atmosphere and the evolution of eukaryotic cells - defined by having their DNA enclosed within a distinct

nucleus. Association cooperation and amalgamation of cells led to the first complex organisms, including plants, animals, fungi and protists. This was the advent of multicellular organisms, early complex life. Because of the tides, parts of the land became intertidal. There would be cyclic periods of wet and dry. Any life form able to cope with this would have an advantage, would have a habitat not available to others. Green algae, mosses and fungi appeared. Plants evolved structure and some moved onto the land.

Finally, The Phanerozoic eon, (542 mya - present). From phaneros meaning 'apparent, manifest, evident, known'. In other words, when life became solid enough to leave visible fossils in the rocks. It is characterised by the evolution of all complex life - plants and animals,

Concentrating on plants Jim gave many examples of how plants have become complex both in their form and lifestyle. The evolution of seeds allowed plants to survive seasonal darkness and drought. A plant could wait out bad times until more favourable conditions returned. The evolution of Sexual reproduction gave organisms the ability to produce offspring with more variability. This allowed for more rapid evolution.

Some plants have evolved extremely ingenious methods of reproduction. Jim gave the example of a water plant where the male anthers ripen underwater and release structures like little boats. Little packets of pollen have their heads held just clear of the water by surface tension forming a little hollow in the surface. When the pollen boat comes close to the female, it slides down the slope, maximising the possibility of

fertilisation. We are all aware of wind pollination, important because it is used by many food plants.

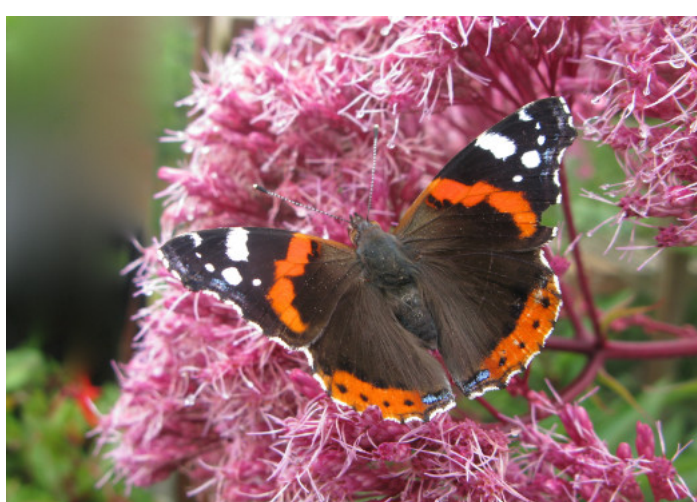
Flowering plants evolved, fertilised by insect pollination. This form of reproduction has become extremely successful judging by the numbers that we see now. There are about 1000 species of conifers, 11,000 - 15,000 ferns, 12000 - 23,000 mosses, but 350,000 - 400,000 species of flowering plant making them the most numerous and diverse of land plants. Jim gave a quick word of caution: Butterflies, an important pollinator, sometimes over winter in sheds, so be sure to clear away any old spiders' webs. Bumble bees are the prime insect pollinator. Along with other bees they have only evolved from wasps recently: bees 130 mya, bumbles only 25 - 40 mya. Many flowers have colours in the infra-red and ultraviolet that humans cannot see, but insects can. Some plants produce a chemical that is addictive to insects - tobacco and caffeine. The insect is hooked and preferentially chooses that plant, increasing the chances of pollination.

Then there is what plants do below the soil. Plants form relationships and can benefit from one another. Fungus forms a rhizosphere. This attracts bacteria that can defend the plant. It seems that different species can help one another: this mycorrhizal network enable mature oak trees to help young beech and mature beech young oak.



way the information conveyed can be infinite. So, from just carbon dioxide, water and sunlight, plants can make complex structures. And then there are systems: a flower is created, fly feeds on pollen, fly catcher catches fly, sparrowhawk catches bird, feeds young, young fly away, mother dies, body falls to the ground, decomposes and feeds the next generation of plants. Plants are driving the entire ecosystem using simple things to construct complex systems.

Jim ended his informative and thought-provoking talk by saying that here is the only place in the known universe where we know there is life: perhaps we should look after it. For our next meeting, the last before we venture forth into our outside meetings, we will be hosting Dr. Ian Bedford who will be talking about 'Them and Us'. 8th of April, 1400, Hockham village hall. Edward.



Living organisms are self-organising, no architect is required. In the case of a baby in the womb, fingers form spontaneously, there is no top-down master plan. It is the same with plants. Relatively simple chemistry can express a more complex characteristic which we call life. There are only twenty-six letters in the alphabet. Scattered randomly they seldom make sense, but assembled in an ordered



# Watton Country Market Methodist Church Centre every Wednesday 8.30a.m. to 11.30a.m.

We are now in our 52nd year of trading, thanks to all that came to help celebrate our Birthday on Christmas eve.

What is Country Market? We are part of a National organisation set up after the First World War to help communities use their skills and assets at home. Knit a

jumper, grow some potatoes, make jam, make a pie start a Market and sell them to your neighbours! Obviously not that simple in those times but we have carried it on and there are many that Cook Craft and Grow across the UK as we do here on a Wednesday morning.

Our 'thing' is it has to be made or grown at home. We have homemade pies, cakes, meals, jams, marmalade, pickles and chutney plus local honey.

We have hand crafted knit / crochet / sewn clothes for all age groups. Bags, bows, cards for all occasions, hand made silver earrings and chains, necklaces, doggy accessories, wood turned pots and bowls and more.

When the conditions are right the plant lady will turn up with trays of wonderful plants she has been growing at home We also through the year have seasonal fruit and vegetables and cut flowers as available. If you can't see what you want please ask because we usually have someone who can make it for you, we

love a challenge ! We are a Cooperative and work from a Rulebook, our Cooks have ratings from local health departments and hygiene certificates.

Most of all it has to be fun, we all love to make and will do a little happy dance if someone loves what we have made enough to buy it!

In the room next to us the Methodist Church helpers or helpers from other Community groups have a coffee morning each week starting at 930am.

So take a stroll or a drive (We have a carpark) on a Wednesday morning and pop in and see us, we are the far end of Town towards the Library.

Want to join in? Contact 07592997399 Debbie or our Facebook page.

**He's not Hare. Or is he?**



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# Letter from Australia

By Chris O'Connor

Australia is no stranger to heat. Some may be surprised to discover that it is the hottest continent on Earth (some think of the Sahara, but that is a desert, not a continent).

Anyway back to now. Regretfully, we live with the constant fear of bushfires. Only a few months ago, one fire wiped out an area the size of Britain, burnt one town to the ground and



killed hundreds of thousands of animals. During that period the temperatures around the nation were in the 40's, with one town reaching a staggering 50.

In my hometown, which is just outside Adelaide in South Australia, the temperature was 45 for three days in a row. The heat from the rays emanating from the sun was so intense that it burned the leaves off trees. The tree you see in this picture was a lime tree that I had been cultivating for years - it was gone in one oven-baking day.

As I sit and write this the temperature at 5 pm

is still 37 degrees and we have been told it is a warm night ahead. Thank goodness for air conditioning.

Having moved here some 50 years ago I have watched the temperature seem to rise more and more each year, just a degree or two but enough and scientists put this down to global warming. True or not I don't know but I do know it is hotter this year than any other I have lived through and the Bureau of Meteorology tells us we have at least another two months of warm weather.

Don't get me wrong. Australia is still a fortunate country to live in but you have to understand it - and heat and bushfires are part of the life. In the 1980's we had a bushfire that spread for some 500 kilometres through three states. It burnt out hundreds of homes, killed over 100 people and countless wildlife. It came within 100 meters of my home but some angel was looking over me that day and my young son and I managed to pour enough water on and around it to prevent it from hitting our home and street.

Back in 2002 I lived through another bushfire which once again had a mortality in the thousands (humans and animals). MY home once again was saved, but it scared me so much I sold up and moved to a less bush fire prone area. When I talk to Julian, the Editor of this rag, we

often discuss the weather and he told me the other day you had been inundated with rain for weeks and weeks recently. In South Australia (and many other parts of the nation), we have not had a decent drop of rain for over five months; so next time it is hot in your neck of the woods, just imagine not being able to take your dog for a walk because the pavement is too hot for his feet!

Have a pleasant summer when it comes. Ed: Chris tells me that just one day after writing this, they had 70mm of rain!! But then none since that. That's a rum place that is.

# Watton Society

## February Meeting

This month we were given a very interesting talk by Keith Thomas entitled My Tour in the Omani Airforce

He told us of the work done by the Airforce and showed us images of the various helicopters he flew whilst in the Omani Airforce. He told us of the first class accommodation he was given and

the very enjoyable meals he was provided with, along with some of the various missions he undertook with them. A very enjoyable and informative talk. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 15th. April in the Methodist Hall on the High Street at 7.45 PM with Patricia Alker from Project Dukem giving us the History of Tea and Coffee, starting in Ethiopia and following the journey around the world to China.

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## Watton & Wayland Times

Deadline is 4pm on the 12th of the month preceding publication and that is the last date and time that copy will be considered for inclusion. Arrival of your copy before deadline does not guarantee inclusion.

You can contact Julian by telephone on 01953 571990 or 07864720480 or by email to: [wattontimes@gmail.com](mailto:wattontimes@gmail.com)

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**Messy Church** at St Mary's

Sat 28<sup>th</sup> March: 10am-12  
Sat 25<sup>th</sup> April: 10am-12  
Sat 16<sup>th</sup> May: 10am-12  
Tues 9<sup>th</sup> June: 4pm-6pm

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# 3rd Watton Brownies Celebration

In October last year the 3rd Watton Brownie Pack celebrated their 55th Birthday. The Pack was started in 1970 and we invited the first Brown Owl Pauline Ralph (my Great Aunt) from Ipswich to join us on a Zoom for a special Pack meeting. Also, Jenny Lusher who was Brown Owl for 28 years (my Nanny) was at the meeting. The Pack is now run by my Auntie, Rachel Skipper, and Bryony Horn. We learnt about the way the Brownies were in 1970 and how much the

activities, Badges and Uniforms have changed. Written by Emily During the meeting the Brownies decorated cakes (pictured), played Kim's game, a table setting game before eating the cakes that we had decorated. Jenny also spoke on Radio Norfolk about the history of the Unit and the fact that there are and have 3 generations of the same family involved. Emily's mum, Catherine, also helps occasionally and manages the accounts.



## Tea at the Ritz

With Miss Mardle and the mongrel . . .

We're at it again, me mongrel and me having afternoon tea at the Ritz. The grub's proper posh, They make a nice cuppa splosh I can say it's the absolute biz.

Me mongrel is dressed as a baby today, Pretty pink dress, tights and a hat. He's not very impressed about how he is dressed, he'd rather have worn a cravat.

"No pets allowed" says the Palm Court, if discovered we'd defo be thrown out. The pram's Silver Cross, I'm pushing it like a boss, We can pull this off, I have no doubt.

The waitress comes over to me mongrel and me, saying what a cute child you have there. Only his eyes are on show, face covered by a huge bow, all he can do is just stare.

I've ordered afternoon tea for me mongrel and me, I'm feeding him small bits of cake. A crumb's stuck in his throat, he's started to choke, I think the waitress suspects he's a fake.

We've been escorted out, me mongrel and me, plonked on the pavement outside. I had to pay double for causing such trouble, But d'ya know what, at least we tried!



No, this is not him. It's a zoomed in picture of him in hiding that was taken with a very old camera . . . Don't get all negative just keep looking!



# Watton Players Inaugural Show

Come and see our very first show, 'A Night At The Musicals' on Saturday 16th May, at the Queens Hall, doors open at 7pm., Show starts at 7.30pm. Lots of famous songs from various musicals. Its an evening you don't want to miss. All money raised will go to our next production which will be announced soon. Tickets are on sale now, adults £12, Children £8, and we all look forward to seeing you there: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/watton-players](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/watton-players)

Presented by Watton Players

## A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS

At The Queens Hall, Watton

Saturday 16th May

- Doors open: 19:00
- Show starts: 19:30
- Adult tickets: £12
- Children tickets: £8

Tickets available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/watton-players](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/watton-players)

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