



Wanted - Upright Piano

Pamela Widdison needs an upright piano. Must be in good working order i.e. no keys sticking.

01953 883043

ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS MARKET

Middle Street Watton

16th. August 9-3pm

Situated in front of Wayland Hall and the length of Middle Street, a small, new, annual, open air, antiques market with about 25 tables catering for all tastes, something for everyone.

The Museum will be open with an extensive range of Antiques and Bric a Brac for sale and its Coffee Bar will be open with FREE refreshments and 'light' bites. Come and search for a bargain.

Spaces still available, amateur or professional contact

info@museum4watton.org.uk

01953 797060 (answerphone)



Cadet Corporal Major Henry Drury receiving the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for service to the Army Cadets from Norfolk's Lord Lieutenant Lady Dannatt, MBE, in May. Full story and pictures on page 3.

The Watton Society Watton in Bloom 2026



This year's competition was judged by the Town Mayor on Saturday 18th. April.

The competition is something run by the Watton Society which no one knows they have entered, as the criteria is "Gardens that can be seen from the road with an excellent show of colour from flowers or

shrubs in bloom"

The Society committee members plus some other members are given an area of the town to look round and select properties that fit the criteria.

These are then given to our president the mayor to judge. This year there were 16 properties

selected, and the mayor Gillian Tarrant chose:- Peter and Anita Saunders of 10 Hamilton Close.

The Town Council were also given a Commended for the excellent display of planters and hanging baskets around the town.

Thank you to everybody who helped us with this competition this year.

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Top Award for Watton Army Cadet

On 20th May, Cadet Corporal Major Henry Drury received the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for service to the Army Cadets from Norfolk's Lord Lieutenant Lady Dannatt, MBE, at an event hosted in The Legends Lounge at Norwich City Football Club.

This is the time of year when exceptional members of our Reserve and Cadet forces receive recognition for their hard work and this year was no exception. Representatives from all the Cadet services were in attendance.

Watton Cadet Detachment commander Staff Corporal Aidan Hall said "It's a fantastic honour for Henry to receive this recognition. He has been a dedicated member of the detachment since joining us in September 2022. He has progressed really well and is an inspiration to his peers and younger members of the detachment. He has developed into a fine young man. I was honoured two years ago to receive the adult version of the certificate, It is humbling to realise that others have noticed and nominated you."

Henry's father, Adam Drury, added "The Army Cadet Force has been the cornerstone of Henry's growth, shaping the remarkable character we see today and instilling in him the values that make him the exceptional role model he is in everything he does."

Congratulations also must go to the county's Regimental Sargent Major Peter Frewin, who received the adult certificate for his continued



service and commitment to the Cadet Force.

If you are aged 12 or over and are interested in joining the Army Cadets, either visit the detachment on Tuesday evenings 7-9:30pm, contact the County HQ at Email: ea-noraol@rfca.org.uk or Phone: 01362 694515, or register your interest at armycadets.com



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Breckland Council Selects New Chairman

Breckland Council has selected its new Chairman for 2026/2027. Cllr Nigel Wilkin (left) was appointed by fellow councillors at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 21 May.

First elected to Breckland Council in 1995, Cllr Wilkin served as Vice-Chairman for 2025/2026 and previously served as Chairman in 2011/2012. Cllr Wilkin is the ward member for Necton.

After the meeting, Cllr Wilkin said: "I am honoured to have been appointed Chairman by my fellow councillors. Having served Breckland for many years,

it is a privilege to take on this role once again and represent our district over the coming year.

"I look forward to meeting residents, community groups and local businesses across Breckland, celebrating the fantastic work that takes place in our towns and villages, and supporting the causes that make such a difference to people's lives."

Following his appointment, Cllr Wilkin announced the charity that he will fundraise for during his term. His chosen charity is Dereham Meeting Point, which supports people living in and around Dereham by providing home-cooked meals and a range of activities, such as games, crafts, exercises, and events. This enables local people to remain active, provides opportunities to socialise, and reduces isolation. Cllr William Nunn (right) has been elected as Breckland Council's Vice-Chairman.

Hare and Seek - the Answer the Winner & the Next Clue

READ THE CLUE(S) - it or they really help (I think) but still retain an air of devious mystery for fun.

So, what were the clues? Well, in the how to play section, where the first clue is, I said . . .

"Harry has been off boxing again and I gather he won more than one match! But he didn't break any rules.

It does seem like Harry certainly knows the Form when it comes to looking after his Leverets; even if mum will pass the buck . . . ?

According to the Woodland Trust:

Brown hares are famous for their energetic behaviour, and during the month of March in particular they are known to 'box' frantically with one another.

These 'mad March hares' do this because they are in their mating season, with the males (bucks) seeking out any females (does) that have come into season.

The boxing usually occurs when a male is being too persistent with a female, chasing her across fields in an attempt to mate. When she's had enough, she'll turn around and try to fend him off in a fierce boxing match! This behaviour can go on for weeks."

The progeny of such activity are called Leverets. A hare's 'Form' is a shallow, scraped depression in the ground or grass where hares rest and hide during the day. Unlike rabbits, hares do not dig underground burrows. Instead, they live entirely above ground and rely on excellent camouflage and speed to avoid predators.

Lastly I said Harry didn't break any rules, so if you wasted time looking at the field of rabbits with the "No Hares Allowed" sign, you only have yourself to blame . . . :-)

Harry was in his form on the left hand side of the long grass picture after Lotta's column (see below).

The winner drawn was: A Plumley. well done to you! And a £10 voucher to spend at Watton Bakery prize is yours.

I hope you found it fun? Quite a few people entered and if you were one of them, call into Adcocks and you can collect a small Fridge Magnet for your trouble if I haven't seen you already. Now I wonder where Harry is hiding this month?

A Clue and How to Play Hare & Seek

Each month, a tiny black hare will be hiding somewhere in the pages of the Watton & Wayland Times. Your job is simple: spot him. He could be tucked into an advert, peeking from a photograph, or lurking in a puzzle grid or somewhere else, but he won't make it easy for you, he is quite good at staying unseen. Once you've found him, just let me know where he is. Pop your answer over to me by email or message, and you'll be entered into the winners draw. One correct finder will be crowned that month's winner and take away a £10 voucher for Watton Bakery.

Sharpen your eyes...

Now that Harry has responsibilities with his offspring he's been looking around trying to get a shin up the ladder. I don't think he'll have much chance but you never know.

And if you don't find him this month, you'll kick yourself!

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Annual Cream Tea Afternoon

Well here we are again fast approaching the cream tea fund raising event. Where does all the time go? It only seems a few months ago since the last one !!! As usual the funds raised will be shared equally between the Watton & Wayland Memory Cafe and St. Mary's Church. Last year you helped to raise £3000 for these wonderful charities that carry out such amazing work.

The town would soon notice the difference if these charities were not around as so much good happens behind the scenes. St. Mary's provides clubs for adults and children, coffee mornings on the first Saturday in the month between 10am and noon, up to date films once a month, craft fairs and much more.

If you feel you would like to join us at the memory cafe we meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 10am until noon at the Methodist Centre on the high street. For further information, support or to become a volunteer helper please contact us on 01953 882225.

There will, of course, be our scrumptious Cornish clotted cream tea and the usual stalls together with the enormous cake stall, raffle and tombola. We are lucky enough to have the fantastic wood turner back so you could treat yourself to something beautiful as well as supporting charity.

All this takes place on Saturday 15th August between 2pm and 5pm at 34 Vicarage Walk. If you require any further information please call 01953 885811 or 07741472117.

All that now remains is for the sun to shine and all you good people to turn up to enjoy the fun and friendship whilst supporting these wonderful charities to carry on their good work.

Looking forward to seeing you all whether you are a regular or a first timer come along and have a great time.

Watton Twinning Association

Our six day trip to Weeze this year was very special. Five members went by Ryanair from Stansted to Eindhoven in Holland just over the German border the were picked up by minibus and the other members went by ferry from Harwich to Hoeke van Holland by car they left a couple of days earlier and stayed longer so they could explore more of Germany before retuning home. I travelled

on Wednesday 27th May until 1st June, the first two days to I spent with my twin family to have some some quality time to catch up with all the news and meet the children, also to have a couple of tours around Weeze to see all the changes since my last visit and there were many. Weeze covers a very large area and has three castles and a large forest, it has expanded a lot and has many factories and places of employment. A new school is being built, they have a new sports hall and the old one is being demolished. Weeze Airport which used to be RAF Larbruuck and was used to fly airmen and personnel from RAF Watton back and forth years ago, has many plans in the pipeline. Some of the old buildings like the church and cinema have been turned into museums with many things in them from the old airforce days and an aeroplane standing outside, the old airman's quarters have been renovated as flats for young people to rent, it also has a large building for asylum seekers.

On Friday 29th the 3 day celebrations were officially opened. Everyday there were different performances (right) on the outside stage, singing, dancing, magic shows, juggling, acrobats, there were a jazz band, a marching band followed by everyone in a procession which took us to a big hall for food and drink, There were stalls run by all the different clubs, food and drink stalls, dancing and singing by the school children and the kindergarten, roundabouts and climbing games. So much to see and do it wasn't possible to see it all. It was then officially closed at

6pm on Sunday 31st May.

Next year it will the 40th Anniversary of our "Twin Towns" and it will our turn to Celebrate this occasion so as it is the two councils that are officially twinned and our club are the representatives of this I and my committee will be working with Watton Council and making a celebration event in Watton. We will also be holding some events to raise money for this visit to enable us to take our visitors out and about to see different places and to learn about our culture the same as we learn about theirs when we visit them.

At present I haven't got a date for this but as soon as I have it will be in the Wayland News. If you are interested in knowing more about Watton Twinning Association lease contact on 07450793916 or by e.mail on magsdevine44@gmail.com

Margaret Devine (Chair)

Pictured left: Keith Gilbert presenting a picture to the Burgermeister.



Miss Mardle's Rude awakening

Eyes heavy with sleep
I seep back into consciousness.
I try to stop
but look at the clock,
4.06 again.

What happened to sleeping all night.
I think it's the light of the dawn of a new day
that's got in the way,
of a full 8 hours.

My thoughts cower in my dream sodden
brain
as I try to train
myself to meditate
back to a state
of peace.

Try as I might
to fight
the urge to awaken,
my mind is taken
to the worries of the world.
I'm hurled
back to reality
to the clarity of life.

No more sweet dreams for me.
I rise, make tea
and sit watching the sunrise
as I devise a plan to face the day.
It's 4.06 again.




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In Your Garden with Lotta Potts

Lord Byron wrote: “The English winter - ending in July, To recommence in August”.

In some years he may well have had a point but I prefer a comment from Alan Titchmarsh that July is the only month in the British Isles that is reliably frost-free. Even in Scotland. Now there’s a thought. Onward to notable days:

Around the first week: RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Its advantage over Chelsea is way more space and shopping! Not only shopping but a plant creche and students who will cart your purchases in wheelbarrows to the ferry boats. Once off the boat at the station you realise just how much shopping you did but the experience is wonderful.

16th St Swithun’s Day. Bishop of Winchester 852-862. folklore tells us that should it rain today it will continue wet for 40 days and 40 nights. The Met Office confirms that since records began in 1861 this has never happened. The same folklore tells us that if today is sunny that, too, will continue for 40 days and 40 nights. They frequently forget to mention this.

So what should we optimists be doing this month? Most of my reading material concentrates on holidays and pruning. As far as holidays are concerned the advice is always on security first. Lock all tools, particularly ladders, in the shed or garage and lock a side gate if you have one. Containers and hanging baskets at the front are a bit of a no-no for two reasons: if you leave them they are likely to die and advertise that the property is empty. If you take them down that’s another advert. If you regularly take holidays in July (applies to August as well) it’s best not to have summer containers unless you have a friend, relative or neighbour to take charge of watering them. These contacts may also be pressed into looking after the rest of the garden as well. Make it easy for them by grouping containers in the back garden all together then give them a good soak to start them off. Pick any ripe fruit or veg you may have and let your friends/ neighbours etc. have any more that ripen in your absence. You will probably be obliged to reciprocate when they go away so look at your garden and think what would make it a pleasure to look after rather than a chore which may get neglected. If you have indoor plants put the large ones outside somewhere cool and shady and give them a good wet. This should last for up to a two-week break but if you have a garden-sitter they will probably only have to re-wet them once. The small indoor pots can be set on an old blanket or towel in the bath, watered and the cloth soaked. Close the bathroom curtains or blinds and they’ll be fine.

So you’re not going away in July. This should be a month of colour and flowers that will keep going until September or October so they are good value. As an additional advantage many are perennials – crocosmia, penstemon, buddleja, hardy fuchsias, agapanthus, lavender, hebe, roses, delphiniums to name but a few and these are all supported by annuals in beds, baskets, containers such as pelargoniums

(not to be confused with geraniums that are border perennials and will also be flowering this month) the latest versions of annual pelargoniums are the improved continental cascade varieties which turn up decorating the fronts of Swiss chalets on holiday brochures. Other annuals are the ever-increasing petunia family. Once upon a time there was a music hall ditty about a lonely little petunia in the onion bed. Nowadays they are not lonely or little. Plant them with onions if you wish but the trailing surfinias are stunning and fragrant (they need shelter to share the perfume) or the million bells types for more exposed areas as they have smaller flowers that will deal with adverse weather better than their large cousins. Either way they are lovely annual plants. The lawn will need cutting regularly but stop if there is a long period of hot weather. The grass will actually stop growing in these conditions. It will certainly not need watering unless it’s a new lawn and only then if it’s really necessary. If it’s warm and the growth slows then raise the mower blades so as not to achieve that ‘scalped’ effect. Even a grass-hater like me doesn’t think this a good look.

Right so I have dealt with holidays and strayed into popular plants and realised I did mention pruning. This is mainly dead-heading on flowers. All plants benefit from dead-heading as their main purpose in life is reproduction – same as animals I suppose. Once the bee, moth, butterfly or other pollinator has done its stuff the seed is forming and the flower’s job is done. The seed then develops and is sown so no more flowers. Frustrate the little devils by removing the flower and seed-head. You can do this as ‘live-pruning’ as well. Just a fancy term for cutting flowers at their best for the vase. Take out as much stem as necessary, down to a new shoot or bud then the plant won’t look like a bunch of sticks. At the other extreme, take out flowered stems of delphiniums and lupins right down to the crown. With luck they will produce a late flush of smaller flowers. On the other hand if you need to increase your stock leave them to it. Lupins always seem to send their seeds far and wide to the oddest places but to be honest the self-sown plants seem to do better than the ones you put in in the first place.

Roses can be pruned either way and the ramblers will definitely need a decent prune once they have finished flowering. Climbers, too, although these will need more of a tidying trim to keep them in bounds with their supports. The dreaded wisteria will need pruning this month but most people (including me) look at this with dread. It sounds so simple but when told this plant should be pruned twice a year, now and in January, you do wonder what you’ve let yourself in for. The instructions start off with if you never prune anything else at all in the garden, the one thing you can’t afford to leave running riot is wisteria. At best you’ll never see any flowers as they are lost in the over-growth and at worst it will rip down your drainpipes and bury your house in a jungle. Now that sounds like a threat. However, the same instructions begin with the initial planting. First of all put in a framework of horizontal wires then train the stems of the new plant to the extent of the space you have allowed for it. This is for wall-planting, obviously. Pergolas need to be covered with plant material a

little more generously but after that the instructions are the same: cut all the long, whippy tendrils back to 15cm (6ins). This makes the plant build up short flowering spurs with fewer leaves and more flowers. Sounds simple. At the same time cut the main stems (of the wall-trained plants) back to the limit of their patch. If a lot of new growth appears later in the season cut it all back again in the winter. So not compulsory then. Oh let’s have a go. Mr T then suggests training a wisteria as a standard. He actually did this on Gardeners’ World some years ago. In his hands it looked easy. I thought he should have added that old warning about not trying this at home but if you fancy it and don’t have a suitable wall or structure here goes. Plant it either in the ground or a large tub on the patio and let it twine up a strong stake. Tie it in at regular intervals 10-15cm and once it reaches the top of the stake keep stopping the new shoots until it forms a dense head and once formed a standard wisteria will need pruning annually now, with the same idea as before but easier to get at.

Briefly on to veg. The main enemies are slugs, snails, ants, caterpillars and blight. If I’ve missed your favourite I apologise. Slugs and snails can be dealt with by physical means (bucket of salt water, torch and pick them off in the evening), pellets but be careful about the quantity you use and be mindful of the wildlife such as hedgehogs that are partial to a slug, nematodes (never tried it as it appears they need careful handling for temperature) but are readily available. Ants will only be a real nuisance in the borders, burrowing under roots until these are waving in thin air. However the ants will fly away in August. If you really need to get rid of them in paving or the lawn turn the hose on them and flood them out. Don’t waste boiling water on them, cold blast from the hose is just as good and on the lawn boiling water will kill the grass as well. Caterpillars can be picked off but it’s better to deal with the eggs, which can be rubbed off the undersides of brassica leaves. On the other hand net vulnerable crops to keep the butterflies out in the first place. Keep checking and removing the eggs as butterflies waiting to lay will get in any netting. Blight occurs with warm, damp weather and affects potatoes and tomatoes. First early potatoes will usually avoid blight as they crop before the blight arrives. Watch second earlies as these often dodge it as well but look out for brown patches on leaves and stems. Cut down all foliage to ground level and cover where the stems entered the earth. The tubers will stop growing but the crop should be rescued. Main-crop spuds are really at risk but is it worth bothering with them in small gardens when they are so cheap ? Treat tomatoes the same. The Monday Don experiment with outdoor tomatoes failed so dismally that he now grows tomatoes under cover. That’s a shame as outdoor tomatoes do have a bit extra in the flavour department or is that wishful thinking?

Well that’s most things I can think of covered for July. Sigh of relief for boy Julian as I have exceeded my limit again but it is a gardening time of year. Less follows in winter.

Two things to remember: this is a great month to sit awhile and enjoy your garden but keep weeding.

Churches Conservation Trust's Tenth anniversary of Champing™

This year, the Churches Conservation Trust is excited to announce that it will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of Champing. For new audiences unfamiliar with the initiative, or for returning guests who already know and love Champing, a stay at our newest Champing church, St Peter’s Church, Hockwold, in Norfolk, is the perfect way to find out what the buzz is all about.

For more than a decade now, churches across the country, from the medieval to the Gothic, Georgian, and Victorian – have opened their doors to overnight guests looking for a unique way to connect with England’s ecclesiastical heritage. Champing guests, or Champers, choose to holiday in historic churches for all kinds of reasons. It’s a chance to step back in time, to make a centuries-old nave or chancel your home for the night. It’s also a chance to unplug, and to reconnect with the stunning English landscapes that these churches inhabit.

There is no better time than the 10th anniversary of the initiative to announce the grand opening of St Peter’s Church, Hockwold, the newest addition to our Champing network. Imposing St Peter’s is airy and light-filled, with beautifully carved fifteenth-century angels soaring in the rafters. While you’re here, you can wander or cycle through Thetford Forest, explore Oxburgh Estate, or, if you’d like to discover even more ecclesiastical history, pay a visit to The Priory of our Lady of Thetford, a 12th-century monastery and for centuries served as the burial place of Norfolk’s medieval Earls and Dukes.

Chana James, Communications Manager for the Churches Conservation Trust, founded Champing in 2016 as a way to accommodate an overnight visit to All Saints’, Aldwinckle, by a group of adventurous scouts. Since then, she has seen Champing grow from a one-off overnight visit into a national and international phenomenon:

Champing had humble beginnings. Of course, it all started out as an overnight event for a group of scouts in Northamptonshire. But that planted the idea in our minds, and we began to wonder if it had the potential to become something bigger. When I introduced the idea for the first time to some of our church communities, I received a very mixed response. Some reacted positively, while others were incredulous. When we opened our first churches for regular bookings, I remember lying awake at night, wondering what the guests were thinking. Were they sleeping soundly, or struggling to drift off in the vast stillness of our churches? I could never have imagined how deeply people would resonate with Champing.

As Champing celebrates its tenth birthday this season, we’d like to encourage church and history lovers to celebrate their own big occasions with an overnight stay in an historic church. Champing offers group discount of 25% off for parties of 8 or over. And, new for this season, Champing also offers a stackable 25% discount on a second night of Champing.

Book your decennial Champing stay on our website, or reach out to us directly at champing@theccct.co.uk.

I Was There

Gunner Fred Richard Taylor, 1916-2006. Pt2

Museum4Watton
Wednesday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm

It is 1942, Singapore has fallen and the Allies have surrendered to the Japanese. Fred is now a POW at the infamous Changi prison camp. Conditions are already harsh; there is little food, men are subjected to regular beatings, medicines are in short supply, and the men are suffering as a result. The Japanese make an offer to the captured men, allowing them the opportunity to earn 'plenty of mishy mashy (food)' in exchange for hard work. As Fred and his fellow captives are so hungry, many accept the offer. They are marched to Singapore docks where they are 'herded into the hold of the S.S Bell like cattle'. In such crowded, unsanitary conditions, it is

not long before dysentery breaks out amongst the men, weakening them further. Their first job on arriving at the docks is loading and unloading essential Japanese supplies. The days are long and hard with little food or sleep; many men are beaten so badly they die. Fred says there are glimpses of humanity; friendships forged with French settlers who, at great risk to themselves, source essential medical supplies for the POWs. It is not long before Fred finds himself on the move again, this time by train. Riding on the roofs, clinging on for days, with barely a stitch of clothing on their backs and only a plain bowl of rice to sustain them. The men show great resilience at all times, which the Japanese find difficult to deal with: "What beat the Japanese was we never gave up singing... Our heads were always held high". Fred was soon to learn he was to be used as slave labour on the notorious Burma Railway, the 'Railway of Death'. By early 1942, Japan had seized control of a substantial area of

South East Asia, including British Malaya, Singapore, and Thailand. However, its sea supply routes to Burma (Myanmar) were highly vulnerable to allied submarines. To solve this problem, Japanese command ordered the construction of an overland rail link spanning from Ban Pong, Thailand, to Thanbyuzayat, Myanmar. 250,000 Southeast Asian civilians and 60,000 allied soldiers were to die under brutal conditions building the 415km supply railway line. Construction of the railway was hampered by dense jungle, hilly terrain, and several major rivers, making construction extremely difficult. On arrival at the jungle clearing camps, Fred and his comrades were to meet other POWs who had been working on the railway for some time. "They were strange, glared at you, never spoke, some were just skeletons". Every so often the men would come across a clearing in the jungle where "a true photo" of the horrors the men endured stood as testament: "A thousand or more

white wood crosses stood in memory of those gallant slaves" the graves of British, Australian, Dutch and civilian casualties. As time passed, conditions worsened, men grew weaker: "Weeks passed, months and years we never knew what day it was...just another...how many more?... How many more of us would be laid to rest in the red rotten soil infested with ants as big as beetles?" Fred spent time labouring on some of the most infamous stages of the railway, including Three Pagoda Pass and Hellfire Pass. He also spent the last days of his captivity helping to construct an airstrip in west Thailand. As the war was drawing to a close and the Allies were gaining the upper hand during the Burma campaign, the mood in camp amongst their Japanese captives was not lost on Fred and his fellow internees. "The Japanese were acting very queer...we were very worried...we had good reason. In the camp was a 60ft by 20ft by 20ft trench and at each end a machine gun...it was a very hard thing to come to after we had slaved for 3½ years."

Thankfully the perceived threat never materialised. On the day the Allied troops were told the war was over, Fred and his campmates didn't quite believe it, he explains, "they (Japanese) were very strange and to our astonishment was very polite, saying the war was finished...this was too good to be true... either we were going crackers, or they were." Fred was to learn the Atom bomb had been dropped, and Japan had surrendered. They were finally going home. Fred ends his memoir "It has been a wonderful pleasure to have told you a few of those facts, what we went through...Our motto is the same today...Here's to all FEPOW's; keep the spirit going that kept us going. Shortly after the war ended, Fred was to become the landlord of the Prince of Wales pub in Stow Bedon, now closed. It was during his tenure as the landlord of the Eagle at Hockham that Fred was to write his memoir on his life as a POW at the hands of the Japanese. 140,000 military personnel were captured by the Japanese during WW2, with a death rate of 27%, seven times that experienced by Allied POWs in German and Italian camps. Fred's experiences during the war make for a harrowing read; I have only chosen a few select quotes from his memoir in writing this piece; there is still plenty more for you to discover. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Taylor family for taking the time to share Fred's memoir with us. It is a remarkable historical resource and testament to one local man's strength and resilience at the hands of a brutal wartime regime. If you would like to learn more about Fred's life in the army during WW2 and his time spent as a FEPOW, please visit us at Museum4Watton where you can study Fred's memoir in detail for yourself.

District Councillor Chat With Cllr Claire Bowes

I have received enquiries from concerned residents about the opening of a new Vape shop in Watton, which also sells sweets. I agree this is not a satisfactory situation and unfortunately, currently, Vape shops are not regulated by licensing laws. However the government's Tobacco and Vapes Bill has now gone through the necessary stages in the House of Commons and the Lords and has gained Royal Assent and will become Law in January 2027. As the statutory licensing authority it is assumed that Breckland will be responsible for the licensing of such premises from that date. The licence will be mandatory and heavily restrict flavours & displays. All sales will be banned to those born after 1st January 2009. Breckland Council was pleased to take part in the consultation for this. As always local intelligence is very important in drawing the council's attention to potential breaches of licensing and trading laws.

A round-up of other Breckland Council news and activities
The Council will be promoting our area's strong links with the Armed Forces community ahead of Armed Forces Week at the end of June and supporting the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. Breckland's Safer Street Wardens continue to patrol all the market towns, but are also now patrolling Swanton Morley, following a request and funding agreement from Swanton Morley Parish Council.

The wardens have been well received across the district.
Community Asset (Land) Transfers: Breckland currently has 6 parishes and 3 towns, including Watton, with confirmed sites that wish to take on land.

Car Park Transfers Project: Legal process to transfer ownership is ongoing at this time. All at slightly different stages. Thetford – completed 4 June
Dereham – expected to complete end of June, Swaffham & Watton sign - expected to complete in July.
Attleborough - has revised HoT to review.

Watton Middle Street Project: UKSPF funding has supported detailed design work by Norfolk County Council, to provide cost estimates and developed designs. Delivery funding is expected to be sought through the Investment Fund; however, following the Government's cancellation of

the mayoral elections, funding timescales remain uncertain. As a result, further design and consultation work has been paused until greater clarity is available, although the project remains well placed to progress quickly when funding opportunities are confirmed.

Digital and Creative Media Centre (DCMC), Watton: Breckland Council has been facilitating support to enable this project to start work on detailed design and seeking planning permission and has been able to contribute grant funding (via UKSPF funds) to support them with these plans.

Shop Front Grant Scheme: With UKSPF funds, the shop front repair and redecoration grant scheme (match funded by the landlord), supporting the recently implemented District Wide Shop Front Design Guide, has been very popular with other Norfolk Council's keen to learn from Breckland on this. £27,000 has been granted with 9 applications being approved with works underway.

Contractor challenges and poor weather have delayed completion; however, the council is looking forward to showcasing the end results over coming months.

The Government's Food Waste collection implementation means that container distribution to households will take place w/c 3 Aug to w/c 7 September.

Local Depot extension is in progress and the programme will go live in 2 phases; w/c 7 September and w/c 21 September.

Breckland Business Awards: To celebrate businesses across the district Breckland Council is planning an awards event to take place on 10 September.

Requests for sponsorship for the event have commenced and awards will be launched at the end of June.

Pride in Breckland Grants: £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 our market towns and supporting projects that make a real difference to residents, businesses, and visitors. The fund is being allocated to all 5 market towns with town councils who will then be able to use the one-off grants to support projects that benefit their towns.

Breckland is also starting to scope a Christmas event to be held in each of the district market towns - more news to follow.
Claire Bowes District Councillor,
Watton Ward claire.bowes@breckland.gov.uk
07789796937

Improving Access to Your GP Practice

We would like to update patients on recent improvements to our telephone system and the changes we have made to help make contacting the practice easier.

Many patients will be aware that we introduced a new telephone system in February. While the aim was to improve access to our services, we recognise that the transition was not without challenges. We are grateful to patients for their patience, understanding and valuable feedback during this period.

As a result of patient feedback, we have made further changes to our telephone options to help callers reach the right team more quickly and reduce waiting times wherever possible. Our current telephone options are:

Press 1 for our automated system, Patient Partner

Press 2 to speak to our medication team (available 10:00-15:00 Monday-Friday)

For all other queries, please hold to speak to our reception team

Patient Partner is available 24 hours a day and allows patients to manage many routine requests without waiting on the phone. This includes booking, checking, changing or cancelling appointments, ordering repeat medication, leaving non-urgent messages for you the reception or medication teams, and obtaining information about registering with the practice.

These improvements are designed to reduce pressure on our phone lines, improve call handling and ensure patients are directed to the most appropriate team as efficiently as possible. This also enables our reception staff to spend more time supporting patients who require direct assistance.

We remain committed to listening to patient feedback and continually improving the way patients access our services. Thank you for your continued support as we work to enhance communication and access across the practice.
Jessica Gaskell, Practice Business Manager

Antiques and Collectors Market

On Sunday the 16th August, from 9-3pm in Middle Street Museum4Watton will be hosting an Antiques and collectors market. Supported by Love Your Market Town and sponsored by Norfolk County Council, this will be a free event to attend. We welcome both trade and amateur enquiries for pitches. For more information, please contact the Museum4Watton on 01953 797060 or email us at info@museum4watton.org.uk

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New Book Reveals Norfolk's Forgotten First World War Airfields

Groundbreaking research uncovers the vital role Norfolk played in Britain's earliest air war

A fascinating new book is bringing to life a little-known chapter of Norfolk's history, revealing how the county became a key centre of military aviation during the First World War.

The Archaeology of Norfolk's First World War Airfields, by Norfolk archaeologist and historian Gary Rossin, explores the network of airfields, training stations and aircraft facilities that spread across the county between 1914 and 1918. While Norfolk is often associated with the famous bomber and fighter bases of the Second World War, Rossin's research shows that the county's aviation story began much earlier.

At the outbreak of war, Norfolk possessed just one operational military airfield at Great Yarmouth. Within a few short years, however, dozens of new sites had appeared across the county as Britain scrambled to defend itself against German Zeppelin raids and train the growing numbers of pilots needed on the Western Front.

The book traces this remarkable transformation, examining how rural landscapes were changed by the arrival of aircraft, hangars and military personnel. It also highlights the impact these developments had on local communities, many of which suddenly found themselves at the centre of Britain's emerging air war. Particular attention is given to the airfields that formed part of Norfolk's home defence network, protecting the east coast from aerial attack, as well as the training stations that helped prepare young pilots for service overseas. The study also explores Norfolk's contribution to aircraft manufacturing, including the important role played by Norwich engineering firm Boulton & Paul.

The project grew from archaeological excavations at the former First World War aerodrome at Sedgeford but soon expanded into a county-wide investigation of Norfolk's aviation heritage. Drawing on archaeological discoveries, archive records, maps and historic photographs, the book presents the most comprehensive account yet published of Norfolk's First World War airfields.

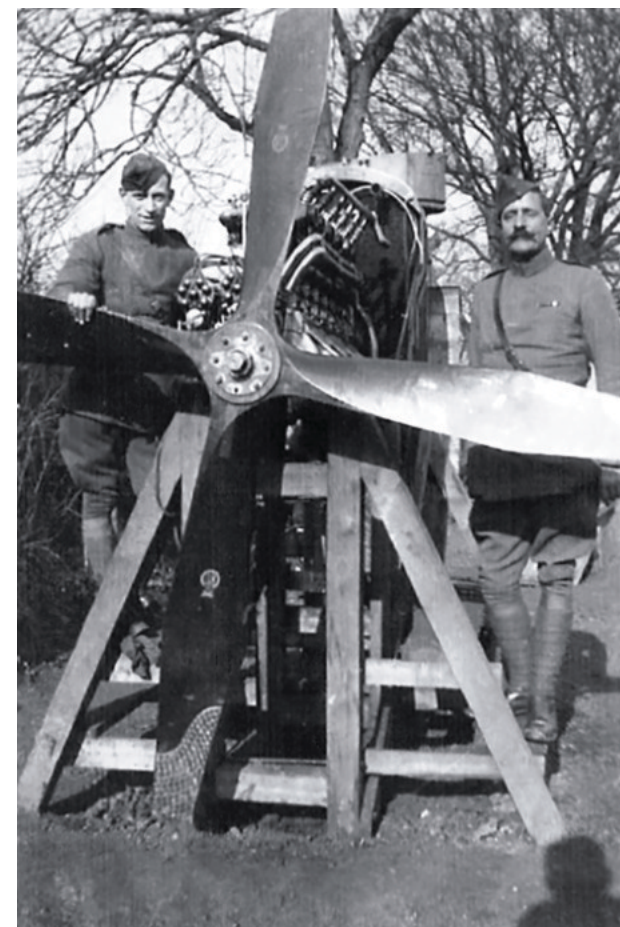
For readers in Wayland and the wider area, the book provides details of the nearest airfields at Gooderstone Warren and Hingham. The latter still having a First World War era Armstrong Hut as its library. The library was temporarily closed on 13 January this year after a potential flooring issue was found.

Richly illustrated and meticulously researched, the publication will appeal to local historians, aviation enthusiasts and anyone interested in Norfolk's wartime past.

The Archaeology of Norfolk's First World War Airfields (ISBN: 978-1-869831-60-8, £29.95 for two volumes) is published by Poppyland Publishing and is available locally from The Norfolk Gift Company, 11 High Street, Watton, Thetford, IP25 6AB, and online from the Poppyland Publishing website at poppyland.co.uk.



Author, Gary Rossin



Royal Flying Corps personnel testing an aircraft engine on a trestle in the grounds of the Old Grammar School Hingham. (Image - Hingham History Centre Website)



The Old Lincoln Hall. The building was previously used as the village hall at Hingham and was believed to have been brought to the site from Thetford, on the back of a traction engine, after the end of the War. (Image - Hingham History Centre Website).

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Watton (Loch Neaton) Bowls Club



With 2026 bowls season in full swing, the Clubs internal competitions have been well attended with a great turn-out for a new competition to the club – Aussie Pairs – which saw Elaine Aberdeen and Colin Hill as winners, being presented with the Cup by Club Chair Len Green (pictured above)

Watton Charity Cup

Also, the Club Triples competition was held in late May with Shirley Ball, Robin Green and Andrew Taylor-Balls being the winning team. Pictured right.



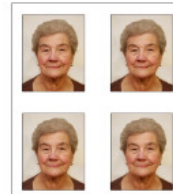
In early June, Watton (Loch Neaton) Bowls Club hosted teams from local bowling clubs, Bradenham, Harling, Shropham, Hingham, and for the first time Priory Garden (Wymondham) competing for the Watton Charity Cup. The Watton Charity Cup – formally the Coral Cup – is an annual competition to raise funds to support charities based in the local community.

In a very close competition, Harling Bowls Club (pictured below) narrowly overcome last year's winners Shropham, on shots difference, with both clubs attaining the maximum winning points.



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Meet the 'Ton Up Boys' of Wayland Mens Shed



Wayland Men's Shed has now been established at Watton Sports Centre for 5 years and I am pleased to announce that after a meeting with the main trustee we have reached agreement on a continued relationship. This means that we have assurance to be able to continue to provide the facility for men to meet up. The benefits to members and their families cannot be overstated and there is plenty of evidence from members of how it has helped with reducing isolation, depression and general well-being. There are costs involved with providing this much needed support service and apart from a minimal annual membership subscription of £20 and a £2 per session fee we rely on donations, grants, workshop projects, computer repairs & sales and Quiz nights to keep us going. As we are a charity, we periodically seek grants to support our work. We are very grateful to the Norfolk Community Foundation supporting older

people fund, which is provided by the Earl of Northampton's Charity, for giving us a grant in December last to help with our objectives over the year. The newly elected Mayor, Sarah Humphries, has announced that Wayland Men's Shed will be one of her chosen charities during her year in office. She has shown interest in what we are doing and expressed her support. She has already visited during our Monday session on 1st June talking to members in the social room and workshops as well as witnessing the Shanty group in rehearsal. We are very appreciative for her support. Eleven members went to the Anglia Karting Centre at North Pickenham on Friday 15th May to experience the thrill of racing round the circuit without the fear of getting a speeding ticket. It was an exhilarating afternoon and an opportunity to escape from the stresses of life as well as reverting to our youth again. 60 members and guests boarded a coach

on Friday 5th June to travel to Wroxham on the Broads. After some free time there, we boarded the coach again to take us to nearby Horning where we boarded the Mississippi paddle boat to take us on a 3 hour trip along the Broads. It was a fabulous afternoon with good weather and crowned with an afternoon tea on board. On 10th June we held our Annual General Meeting at the Sports Centre. A report was given outlining the work of the committee plus all the activities and sub groups over the past year. The committee can't have done a bad job as they were all re-elected to continue for another year. 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 or contact: Malcolm Trayhorn, Trustee, Chairman & Social Secretary Tel: 07729993163

Thompson Community Hall

ICE CREAMS We continue Ice Creams until the end of term, although it looks as if the last one might be taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner elections unfortunately. Otherwise, we are open from 3pm to 4.30 each Thursday after school for snacks and ice creams for the children and carers.
FILM NIGHT Our July film will be on July 3rd. We are showing One Battle After Another starring Leonardo di Caprio and Sean Penn. Screening begins at 7pm. £5 per head with free popcorn and ice cream sales.
CLASSIC CARS AND COFFEE Our

July meet is on July 5th 10-1pm. Free entry. Bacon and sausage baps, hot and cold drinks, cakes and ice cream on sale.

THE ORIGINAL THOMPSON AND GRISTON SECONDHAND BOOK FAIR

The July Fair is on July 18th from 10am - 3.30. Please see our main ad for all the details. You can be assured of the usual excellent selection of books and our wonderful refreshments. This year alongside us our Millennium Green are holding an event for youngsters to celebrate National Year of Reading. Lots of activities for them to enjoy too as well as lots of lovely books for them in our sale. All proceeds will go to local charities.

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Watton Town Council Updates, News, and Events

2026 Town Crier Competition

Watton Town Council hosted its third Town Criers Competition on Saturday 30th May, it was a spectacular turnout with 13 Town Criers coming from across the country to compete. There was 5 prizes up for grabs, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize - as well as Best Ambassador and Best Themed Cry.



The winners were as follows:
 1st Prize - Adrian Holmes
 2nd Prize - John Griffiths
 3rd Prize - Mark Northway
 Best Ambassador - Faye Thompson
 Best Themed Cry - Mark Northway

We can't wait to do it all again in 2028!



Photography by Kev Lamb of Thetford Photography Group

Watton Spring Fair Market

This year Watton Town Council hosted its first Spring Fair Market, the high street was lined with nearly 40 stalls - ranging from food and drink, crafts, gift ware, raffles, and tombolas! Thankfully the locals braved the heat to come and check out what was on offer - even if they couldn't stand the sunshine for too long.

The winner of the Hare Trail was announced as Clementine Daughy - congratulations Clementine!

The Town Council raffle made £173 for this year's Mayor's charities, Wayland Men Shed and Beside Youth CIC.



Photo by Ry Hindle

WATTON FOOD HUB

GOT SPARE PRODUCE?

IF YOU HAVE A SURPLUS OF PRODUCE FROM YOUR ALLOTMENT OR GARDEN PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING IT TO THE FOOD HUB!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
 foodhub@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk
 Watton Community Centre, Harvey Street, IP25 6EB

Town Council Updates

Saham Toney Parish Council has been invoiced for an agreed 50% contribution towards the costs of the Watton and Saham Flood Action Group (WASFAG) website 2026-27.

It was resolved to accept the IT Policy as presented and with suggested additions as within the agenda pack for the meeting.

The transfer of the current Breckland Council owned car parks in the town is being reviewed by the solicitor acting for the Town Council. It was resolved to take indemnity insurance relating to the transfer of the car parks in the town from Breckland District Council to Watton Town Council as offered at a cost of £55. However, the policy limit will be investigated as to whether the value should be increased. The Clerk was given discretion to agree an increased premium if this was deemed beneficial.

It was resolved that, as task and finish groups, the Loch Neaton working group and the Sports Centre working group will be called upon if

needed and membership will be confirmed at that time.

Councillors were asked to consider installing dog waste bins at Heritage Park and it was agreed a report will be compiled suggesting future strategy for the provision of litter and dog waste bins in the parish. This matter will be an agenda item for the Full Council meeting on June 23rd 2026.

It was agreed that the weekly Wednesday Market will be held in the car park at Queen's Hall for the foreseeable future due to unforeseen insurance issues with the road closure in Middle Street. It was resolved that the Council will offer to hire the space each Wednesday morning at a suggested fee of £100 per month and that additional advertising material for the market will be purchased.

The Norfolk County Council High Street Matters Project Manager has contacted the Town Council to arrange a

meeting to discuss High Street Matters and how this relates to Watton. A date will be arranged.

The Internal Audit was undertaken on 08/06/26 and the auditors report is expected. Signing off the accounts for the year ending 31/03/26 and completion of the Annual Governance Statements will be agenda items for the Town Council meeting on 23/06/26.

Cllr. Keith Gilbert informed the Council of his enjoyable trip to Weeze for the town's 800th celebrations. He represented the Town Council and passed on a gift and greetings on behalf of Watton.

Alison from Love Watton spoke to promote a new community project: Flourishing Watton. This is part of a wider Flourish movement and Love Watton is hoping that Watton will come together to create the first "Flourishing Town" in Norfolk. Love Watton would like people to visit their stall at Watton Carnival when they will be officially launching the project.

It was resolved to limit grant funding and not donate more than the grant pot figure set within the annual budget. Match funding of up to £500 per application will be expected and unsuccessful applicants will be given reasons why a grant is not made.

It was resolved that the Market working group will be tasked with discussing the benefits of creating a Four-Year Plan for Watton Market to coincide with the Council's Financial Four-Year Plan.

It was resolved to create a 'Town Council High Street Restoration Plan' which could be used as guidance to bring projects into a single vision. Once compiled the Plan will be brought back to Full Council for consideration.

It was resolved to grant £750 to Watton Carnival as requested. The Carnival Committee will be made aware of the planned changes to the Council's grant policy which are expected to be in place next year.

It was resolved to progress with the transfer of land assets from Breckland District Council to the Town Council as presented. It was noted maintenance of the areas will need further consideration.

There is currently 1 vacancy for a Town Councillor, if you are over 18 and an elector of Watton, or live within a radius of 3 miles of Watton, or work, or own a property in Watton and you would like to be considered for the position please contact the Clerk on 01953 881007 or at clerk@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk for an application form.

Deadline for applications is 6th July.

A word from the Mayor

Since being elected it's been a whirlwind first few weeks. My first official engagement as Mayor was on 24th May when I attended our Spring Fair which, on the hottest weekend of the year, was very well attended by the residents of Watton and our community groups.

The purpose of our spring fair is to celebrate the new season, strengthen our community ties, showcase Watton's heritage, hopefully boost our local economy, and provide an event where the whole family can be entertained. The event serves as a seasonal reset, bringing all of us together after the isolating winter months and what a glorious day we had today to celebrate that.

I'd like to extend my thanks and appreciation to all of those who worked tirelessly to ensure our event was a success and of course to all those took the time to come and support our town and also to help raise funds for my two charities this year.

On 26th May I helped out with refreshments at the Community Centre for the Community Fun Day which was well attended considering the hot weather and the children enjoyed their crafting activities and petting the rabbits and guinea pigs.

Whilst there I met with Ellie who runs Beside Youth, one of my chosen charities and some of the young people she is mentoring which was a great opportunity to hear about her work first hand and how this helps young lives.

On 30th May I had a fabulous time judging the Town Crier competition in the town accompanied by our Deputy Mayor. Huge thanks to our Town Crier, Mike Wabe who presided over the event and his lovely wife Caroline for her superb organisational skills. It was an amazing, loud and very colourful day with so many Town Criers representing their towns from across the country.

The event was very well received in the town with lots of our townsfolk attending and listening to all the wonderful cries. After a cry from our very own Town Crier to set the standard each candidate gave a cry of their home town and then in the second round a cry celebrating famous Norfolk folk, many of which were really amusing. Thanks to my fellow judges Cllr Stan Hebborn and Malcolm Trayhorn and also to Sue Dent and Lorren Woodgett whose hard work made the event such a success.

WATTON TOWN COUNCIL

BIKE TAKEOVER

This Event will be held on:

30 AUGUST, 2026 **10AM - 4PM**

ON WATTON HIGH STREET

SATURDAY 29th EVENT AT:
WATTON SPORTS CENTRE
 PART OF WATTON BIKE WEEKEND

For more information visit website at www.wattonbikeweekend.online

On 1st June I met with the gentlemen helping individuals afford immediate, at Wayland Men's Shed. I met lots of life-sustaining items safely and with their members chatting over a cup of dignity. The dedicated trustees, most of whom have worked for many years assisting this charity as well as with not only to meet up with new found other local community groups do so friends but to engage in various clubs and activities including woodworking, computer repairs and dismantling of items beyond repair for recycling.

On Tuesday 9th June I met the Committee of Watton Relief in Need (WRIN) and of which I'm also a Trustee.

Watton Relief in Need is a Charity governed by an ancient charter and, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, grants can be made only to the residents of the Parish of Watton to support those who are experiencing financial hardship, distress, or need by providing direct monetary grants or to help purchase essential items and services to ease hardship. In essence WRIN's grants are designed to cover gaps in statutory support.

These grants act as a crucial bridge when statutory services fall short,

On Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th June we have the Watton Open Gardens and Yard Sales Weekend. Cllr. Sarah Humphries Mayor 2026-2027

www.wattonreliefinneed.co.uk
 To conclude, just a little reminder of the town events coming up for the rest of this month.



WATTON FOOD HUB CALENDAR JULY 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	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	31		

TUESDAYS - Food Hub Open 12:30-14:30 | **JULY** - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30
THURSDAYS - Food Hub Open 09:30-12:00 | **15 JULY** - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30

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Days by Coach 2026

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Saturday 8th August Bakewell & Castleton Adult £45 Child £25

Thursday 13th August Fakenham & Wells Adult £20 Child £10

Saturday 22nd August Wroxham & Boat Trip Adult £35 Child £25

Wednesday 2nd September Ryan's Birthday Mystery With Lunch

Adult £45 Child £25

Sat. 12th September Gt Yarmouth & Lowestoft Adult £25 Child £15

Sat. 3rd October Springfields Outlet Shopping Adult £25 Child £15

Saturday 31st October Boundary Mill & Downtown Garden Centre

Adult £35 Child £20

Holidays 2026

North Wales 27th July – 1st August

Turkey & Tinsel Bournemouth 27th – 30th November

Shows 2026

Cromer Pier Summer Show 5th August 2.30pm Show Adult £50

ABBA Voyage 26th September 3pm Show £125

Knitting & Stitching at Alexandra Palace 10th October Adult £50

Thursford Christmas Spectacular December 2pm Show £65

Cromer Pier Christmas Show 15th Dec. 2.30pm Show Adult £50

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Artificial Intelligence Today: Promise, Limits and How to Spot It

From Julian: I've been using Artificial Intelligence, or AI, seriously for over a year now, in all sorts of ways - mostly to help me solve technical problems and to fact check things. It's important to understand that there are many different AI models, just as there are many different human specialists, each with their own area of expertise. I tend to think in analogies, and I see AI models a bit like contestants on Mastermind: each one has a specialist subject as well as a decent spread of general knowledge.

One of AI's real superpowers, in my experience, is acting as a kind of turbocharged search engine - able to dig up technical information buried so deep online that the correct answer might be sitting on page 26 of the Google results.

By following the links it provides, I'm not relying on what the AI claims, but on what it has actually found. In a recent exchange with one model, I was trying to check the accuracy of some information and could tell it was having a bit of a "bad day". As a sanity check, I asked another model how good it was at recognising AI generated content.

My concern was simple: if one AI model asserts something as fact and another AI model ingests it, can the second one recognise that the first might be wrong? I wasn't reassured when it admitted it wasn't very good at distinguishing AI generated material from real world data.

All of this makes me think we should learn to understand AI better - to spot the little "tell tales" that might warn us when something presented as human written is actually AI generated. So I asked Co Pilot, one of the models I use, to write an article about itself for us explaining a few things:-

AI has become one of the defining technologies of modern life. It writes text, generates images, analyses data, translates languages and even helps doctors interpret medical scans. For some people it represents extraordinary opportunity; for others, a source of uncertainty or concern. As AI becomes more visible in everyday life, understanding what it can do, what it cannot do, and how to recognise its fingerprints is becoming increasingly important.

At its heart, AI is a collection of mathematical systems trained to recognise patterns. A system such as a language model learns from vast amounts of text and uses those patterns to generate new sentences. Image-generation tools learn from millions of pictures and can create new ones that resemble what they have seen. Other forms of AI specialise in identifying objects in photographs, predicting trends in data or spotting unusual activity in financial transactions. Despite the sophistication of these systems, AI does not think or understand in the way humans do. It does not have beliefs, intentions or emotions. It does not "know" things in the human sense; instead, it predicts what is likely to come next based on the patterns it has absorbed.

AI is particularly strong in areas where speed, scale and pattern recognition matter. It can process enormous amounts of information far faster than any person. It can generate text quickly, whether that is an article, a summary or a creative idea. It can identify trends in data that would take a human analyst days or weeks to uncover. It can translate languages with impressive fluency and support creative work by offering suggestions, variations or new directions. In many of these areas, AI acts as an amplifier: it helps people work faster, explore more ideas or handle tasks that would otherwise be too time-consuming.

However, AI also has clear limitations. It cannot understand context in the deep, intuitive way humans do. It may misinterpret humour, sarcasm or cultural references. It cannot guarantee accuracy, and it sometimes produces what are known as "hallucinations" — confident statements that are simply untrue. It cannot make moral or ethical judgments, nor can it replace the experience and insight of trained professionals. AI has no lived reality, no personal memories and no emotional understanding. It does not operate independently or pursue its own goals; it responds to prompts and instructions.

Even in areas where AI is strong, it has blind spots. It struggles with ambiguity and may guess incorrectly if a question is vague. It can summarise medical or legal information, but it cannot replace a doctor or a solicitor. It can describe how to fix a bicycle, but it cannot inspect one. It can help plan a project, but it cannot anticipate every real-world variable. It can recognise emotional language, but it does not feel emotion itself. These limitations are not flaws so much as the natural

boundaries of what pattern-based systems can achieve. As AI becomes more common, people are increasingly asking how they can tell whether something was created by a machine. There is no single test, but there are several reliable clues. One of the most noticeable is the smoothness of the language. AI-generated text often has a very even rhythm, with few spelling mistakes and a polished but slightly generic tone. It may repeat certain sentence structures or phrases. Another clue is the absence of specific detail. AI sometimes avoids exact dates, precise numbers or personal anecdotes, and may speak confidently while remaining vague.

AI-generated images also have tell-tale signs. Hands and fingers may look strange. Shadows may fall in impossible directions. Lighting may be inconsistent. Patterns may repeat in unnatural ways. Objects may blend into each other or appear distorted. Even the most advanced systems occasionally produce visual glitches that reveal their artificial origins.

There is also a certain emotional flatness that can give AI away. Although AI can mimic tone, it may feel too neutral, too balanced or too polite. Human writing often contains sharper edges, stronger opinions or quirks of personality. AI sometimes circles back to the same idea in slightly different words, creating a sense of repetition that feels mechanical.

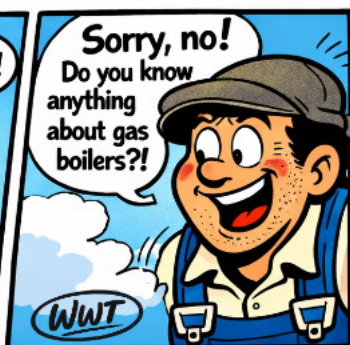
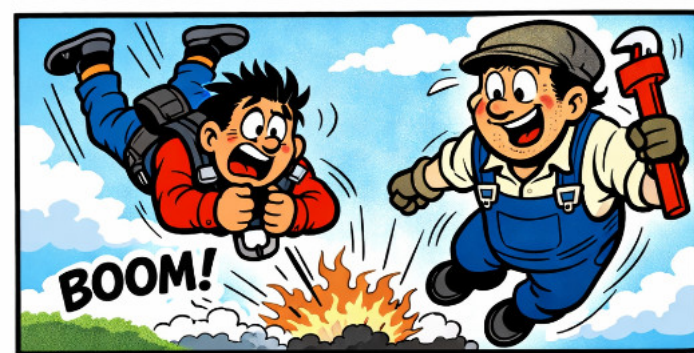
Despite these limitations, AI is not replacing humanity; it is reshaping the landscape in which humans operate. The most successful uses of AI come from partnership. Writers use AI to brainstorm ideas. Teachers use it to create lesson materials. Businesses use it to analyse data. Artists use it to explore new styles. In every case, the human remains the decision-maker, the editor, the moral compass and the creative force.

The debate around AI is both healthy and necessary. It encourages society to ask important questions about trust, creativity, fairness and the future of work. But the key to navigating this new era is understanding: knowing what AI is, what it can do and what it cannot. AI is a tool — powerful, fast and increasingly capable — but still a tool. Its value depends entirely on how people choose to use it.

Julian again: There is one more article - absolutely true and accurate so no need to worry - within this issue that is AI generated; can you identify it? And to demonstrate it is not just words that AI is good at the cartoon on the left was drawn by Co-Pilot at my request - all I had to do was tell it the joke in words - it did the rest!

Poppies From Saham

Members of Saham WI recently produced one hundred and eleven knitted poppies after a request from the Royal British Legion for poppies for their 2026 Standing With Giants display, remembering fallen service personnel. This was a great result considering the relatively short time frame available.





The Knife Angel: A Monument to Hope and Change

Standing tall and glinting with thousands of surrendered blades, the Knife Angel is one of Britain's most striking modern sculptures; a haunting yet hopeful symbol of the fight against knife crime and violence. Created by artist Alfie Bradley at the British Ironworks Centre in Shropshire, the twenty seven feet tall figure is made from more than 100,000 knives collected from police amnesty bins across the UK. Each blade was cleaned, blunted, and welded into place, forming the wings and body of an angel that seems both protective and sorrowful.

The project began in 2014 as part of a national campaign to raise awareness of knife crime and to remember its victims. Every knife used in the sculpture carries a story - some engraved with the names of those lost to violence, others representing anonymous acts of harm. The result is a powerful visual reminder of the human cost behind the statistics.

Since its completion, the Knife Angel has toured towns and cities across the country, drawing crowds and sparking conversations wherever it goes. Its presence encourages communities to reflect on the causes of violence and to commit to change. Local authorities often use its visit to promote education programmes, youth outreach, and support for victims' families.

Beyond its immediate impact, the Knife Angel has become a national symbol of resilience and unity. It reminds us that transformation is possible — that something destructive can be turned into a message of peace. The sculpture's creator, Alfie Bradley, has described it as "a monument for all those affected by knife crime, and a call for action to make our streets safer." For many visitors, standing before the Knife Angel is an emotional experience. The sheer scale of the piece, combined with the knowledge of what it's made from, evokes both sadness and hope. It's a work that demands reflection - not only on the tragedy of violence but on the strength of communities determined to overcome it.

As the Knife Angel continues its journey around the UK, it carries with it a message that transcends geography: that peace, compassion, and awareness can rise from even the darkest of materials.



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The Breckland Birder's May Observations

By Paul Newport

The majority of summer migrants would have arrived in April, however, there will be a slowing down of incoming birds in early May as most will now be back on territory for breeding. The month of May sees an increase in Swift numbers and the 1st of May saw a few birds screaming above Watton with a small party of 5 passing through rooftops in the town centre. Also seen was a distant and high Sparrowhawk being pursued by a Crow species.

A visit to Wretham Heath on 3rd May was very productive with 50 bird species recorded. Numerous highlights with breeding evidence seen included two records of Lapwing successes, one Lapwing was either incubating or brooding and a pair was seen with a single chick. Two pairs of Egyptian Geese had a total of 12 goslings (five and seven). Despite searching, no passage waders were seen at either Langmere or Ringmere. A walk through Waterloo Plantation produced a singing Redstart along with Blackcaps and singing Tree Creeper. Blue Tits were seen entering a nest site in a cavity in an old Scots Pine. The Harling Drove was very productive with singing Willow Warbler and a displaying ♂ Siskin, whilst breeding successes were seen with a pair of Stonechats (♀ food carrying) and alarm calling. A Robin was also seen carrying food.

A Willow Warbler is pictured bottom right.
On the 4th I the Hockham area evidence of successful breeding by Goshawk with an overflying bird carrying prey for young in the nest. At Cranberry Rough singing Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, and at least two calling Cuckoos seen and heard.

Another local walk I like to make in May begins at St Botolph's Church at Stow Bedon, along Gravelpit Hill to Lower Stow Bedon, Rocklands Road to Mere Road and return to Stow Bedon. This three mile walk passes

through undulating, open country with a couple of decent climbs where roads are lined with tall mixed hedgerows. This walk saw several singing Whitethroats, a singing Lesser Whitethroat, one singing Garden Warbler, and on farmland off Mere Road a pair of Grey Partridges were seen in crops. Muck heaps are one of my go to habitats in May as these sites, with their stagnant water seepages often attract passage wading birds, one such site was checked this morning and although no waders were seen, a few Pied Wagtails were seen searching for small invertebrate prey.

On the 16th May I visited Ashill Common where good numbers of Whitethroats and Blackcaps were both seen and heard, also, a single Lesser Whitethroat was singing. A single Turtle Dove was singing its beautiful purring song, which for me is the epitome of a English summers day. Turtle Doves are significantly threatened in Britain with a 99% reduction in numbers in recent decades with shooting in the Mediterranean being a threat to this delightful species.

A Turtle Dove is pictured top right
On May 17th I led a Norfolk Wildlife Trust walk at Cranberry Rough. I met my group at Galleyhill and following introductions, it was fortuitous when we were immediately greeted by both singing Blackcap and Garden Warbler, this was a good start as it was my intention to locate both of these Warbler species for the purpose of describing how to separate the songs of these similar sounding species. This was to be a great mornings walk for finding common breeding species, this included more Garden Warblers and Blackcaps, but also Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler. We also heard a very close Cetti's Warbler, an amazingly loud song for such a small bird. This was also a good morning for Cuckoos with at least 3 birds present, these comprised two calling males and a frequently calling female, which was also seen. The female Cuckoo gives a wonderful loud bubbling call and it was rewarding to learn that a couple members of my group had no idea that the female Cuckoo gave such a call. High overhead a couple of Hobbies were seen soaring against the cloudy sky, however, a little later a further two Hobbies were seen quite close to overhead, it was possible to

appreciate this incredible falcon at close range. A single Yellow Wagtail was seen at range on wire fencing. Finally, back at our original meeting point both Garden Warbler and Blackcap were singing and overhead a single Siskin passed over calling.

On the 21 May at Little Cressingham, evidence of successful breeding by Stonechats seen with a family party of 6 birds present, also, Whitethroats were busily feeding young at the nest and luckily I was able to sit reasonably close to watch this wonderful behaviour. Also present on heathland was a Curlew displaying song-flight.

On the morning of 22 May I visited a beautiful area of grazing meadows near the Griston Road, here, I located two singing Stock Doves, singing Blackcap and two Grey Partridges (pair). A single Little Owl was seen flying over open country between trees, the flight is fast and undulating (odd for an Owl).

On the 24 May a single Raven was seen from the garden overflying low over houses, a couple of Rooks nearby provided a good size comparison between the species.

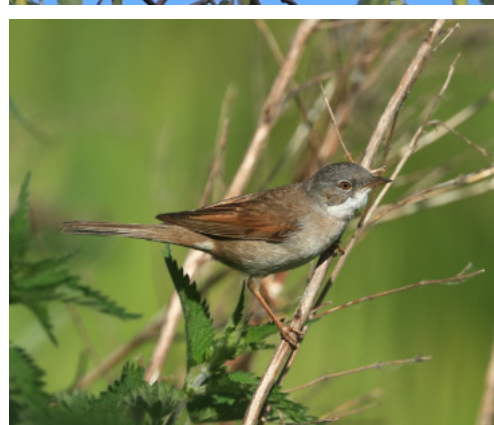
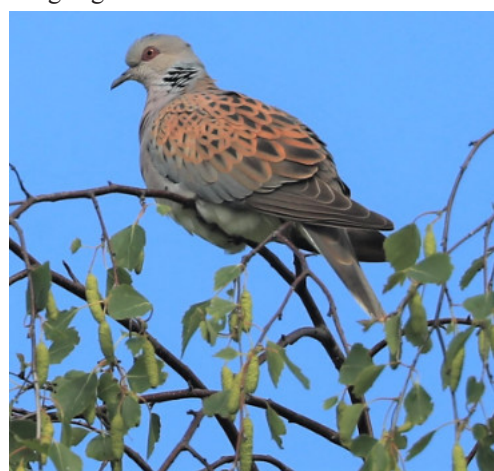
On the 25 May a walk along Watton Brook at Little Cressingham produced Whitethroats (adults feeding young), a singing Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Bunting, a Curlew performing song-flight, and a family party of 6+ Stonechats.

Plenty of evidence of breeding successes seen on the 30 May at Stow Bedon, this included Spotted Flycatchers on territory, Goldcrests and Treecreepers in suitable breeding habitat, and at least 3 Garden Warbler territories which included a bird carrying food for young in the nest. Whitethroats were also noted which included an adult bird carrying food for young in the nest which was in a large bramble patch.

Singing Cetti's Warbler, Willow Warbler, and Blackcaps also seen and heard. In nearby woodland both Goshawk and Tawny Owl were heard calling.

A Whitethroat is pictured middle right.
For the final day of May I once again walked the Watton Brook valley near Little Cressingham, and as is often the case my first bird seen was a Whitethroat carrying food for young which seemed to have dispersed more widely in the valley. Whitethroats were noted at a further three localities along the valley

where a single Sedge Warbler was singing in rank vegetation alongside the brook. This bird also displayed song-flight, also, when in flight, the Sedge Warbler showed a lovely warm brown, unstreaked rump. Several Stonechats were seen on fencing of which many were juvenile birds, and finally, a Curlew displayed song-flight.



Last Month's Codeword Result

Last month's prize was a £25 voucher to spend at Watton Edwards Premier and the answer to the puzzle was: **Love Your High Street**

The winner this month was K Keen and the runner up W Crosby. Well done to both of you! 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, Kalpesh from Watton Edwards News was given the pack, which he shuffled as he wished, and then drew one card for the Winner and one more for the Runner Up.

The Editor supervised and correlated the cards drawn with the table of entries, and if 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!

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Swaffham & District u3a

In June, Barbara Meyer gave us an overview on her conservation work in Africa with the Big Cats Conservation programme and how her photography is aimed at raising awareness of the threats to the big cats. The photos were stunning and the talk was presented with passion and demonstrated her knowledge of the problems facing these endangered species.

The work of the Purfleet Trust with the homeless in Kings Lynn is highlighted in our talk on 2nd July. It is not only accommodation that the homeless need, but also access to so many support services and this is covered by the work of the Trust.

In August the speaker will be from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and be given by David Horsley. The Trust is the oldest one in the country and manages over 60 nature reserves and other protected sites.

The monthly meetings afford an opportunity for members to join together, have a cup of tea/coffee and socialise before being entertained by excellent speakers. Members can join one of over thirty groups on offer such as Archery, Music appreciation, both classical and rock, French, and Walking. See the website for more information.

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: swaffham.u3a.asite.uk



Happy Birthday Inner Wheel

This year Watton Inner Wheel is 45 years old and, as usual we had to have a birthday celebration. We normally have a supper but this year we broke the pattern and held a birthday tea instead. We invite members from our district, which extends as far as Saffron Walden and Felixstowe so to make it easier for them, and us, we

decided to change the format which worked very well. The ladies spent an hour in the morning decorating the tables in the Queens Hall and in the afternoon our guests arrived. President Heather welcomed everyone and the candles representing Inner Wheel past, present and future and international Inner Wheel were lit, after which Peter Goodrum gave us a very entertaining, informative talk about some gems of Norfolk, ranging from the coast to the countryside, the beautiful and the quaint and he even found places some of us had never heard of.

His knowledge of Norfolk is amazing and he had many stories to enhance his talk, all delivered in his Norfolk accent! After his talk we were all ready for a cup of tea and the delicious sandwiches and cakes we had all prepared. After a lot of chat, a very successful afternoon came to an end - just the washing up to do, then home! Jenny Simons (Club Correspondent)

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Don't forget our Autumn Sale November 21st

2027 dates - 6th March, 17th July 20th November

All proceeds to benefit Griston Church, Thompson Church and Thompson Community Hall

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

Bingo - every Monday, doors open at 19:00, eyes down at 20:00
CLM Fitness Dance Classes - 21st and 28th July, 18:45 - 19:45
Carpet Bowls - every Wednesday 13.30
Line Dancing - every Wednesday, 18:00 - 21:00
Pilates Thursday evening 18.15 - 19.30 - only 2nd, 9th & 30th in July
Ballroom Dancing - Saturday 4th July, 19:30 - 22:30

Other events:
Irish Country Music (Shawn Cuddy and Curtis Magee) - 7th July, 19:30. Call 01553 617546 to book your tickets (£15 each).
Blood Donors - 14th July - book your appointment online. No walk-ins.
Ju Jitsu - 5th and 19th June, 18:00 - 20:00
Medium - 24th July, 19:00

For further information check out the Queens Hall website
web:queenshall-watton.co.uk

Wayland Shantymen

Wednesday 19th August 2026
 11:00 - 13:00

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The Queens Hall and Wayland Shantymen

The Queens Hall is a charity organisation, run by volunteers. To help with the general up-keep we are holding a lunchtime concert on Wednesday 19th August 2026 - 11am to 1pm. The Shantymen are a sociable group, and have been busy rehearsing and singing new songs and old favourites. You will be encouraged to join in!
We would like to see lots of people supporting both the Queens Hall and the Wayland Shantymen. Proceeds towards the

Queens Hall and the Shantymen's nominated charity. The concert will be followed by a light lunch of sandwiches, tea or coffee, plus a raffle. Tickets £7.50 including refreshments. Available from Adcocks from Monday 13th July or Graham 07962 107144. (Cash only please). Please purchase your tickets in advance, we did have to turn people away last year.
We hope to see you there and to enjoy the concert.

CODEWORD

Blast me Bor! They hev only gone and got a £25 Voucher wot you can spend at the Italian Job in tha High Street! That there Hal does lovely food there ol' partner!
CODEWORD

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):

1, 11, 7, 9, 22, 10, 3, 15, 24, 9, 8, 16, 9, 24, 14, 10, 1, 4, 10, 15, 26, 11, 25, 8, 9

Send the Codeword you think is the answer, along with your name and contact details in an email to me at 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 detailed above. 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 a page in the paper somewhere. 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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Worship in July

Sun 5th	10am	Holy Communion
Sun 12th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	2nd Sunday
Sun 19th	10am	Holy Communion
Sun 26th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	4th Sunday with Mission for Seafarers' speaker

Polish Catholic Community

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

St. Peter & St Paul's Church,

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www.carbrookechurch.co.uk

Sun 5th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Sun 12th	10.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 19th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Sun 26th	10.30am	Holy Communion

Watton Methodist Church

57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

wattonmethodist.chessck.co.uk

Minister: Rev Neil Vels

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6.30pm in the Large Vestry 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays

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Wednesday Coffee Morning in The Methodist Centre

Weekly from 9:30am to 11.30am
Alongside the Country Market

**Tuesdays@2 in The Methodist Centre
Tuesday 14th July at 2pm**

We shall be making felt watering cans with flowers, followed by refreshments. All welcome, regardless of age or ability

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



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.

July at ANC

5th July - No Public Meeting -
Watton Carnival

12th July - Worship Service

19th July - Community Café

26th July - Worship Service

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.

All Saints Church, Threxton

Sunday 5th July at 10.30 a.m.

A warm welcome to all

Ashill Group Services

Sunday 5 July, Trinity 5, 9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion
10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Lay-led service
10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Holy Communion

Sunday 12 July, Trinity 6, 9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Lay-led service
10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Holy Communion
10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Morning Praise

Sunday 19 July, Trinity 7, 9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Lay-led service
9.30 am, St Peter's Merton, Holy Communion
10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Lay-led service
10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, All-Age Service

Sunday 26 July, St James the Apostle, 9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion
10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Lay-led service
10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Book of Common Prayer: Morning Prayer
6.30 pm, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Hymns on a Summer's Evening (Singalong!)

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

The Wayland Group of Parishes

Sunday 5th July
Holy Cross, Caston
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 12th July
Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 19th July
St Peter & St Paul, Griston
10.30am Family Holy Communion

Sunday 26th July
St Botolph, Stow Bedon
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 2nd August
St Martin's, Thompson
10.30am United Holy Communion

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

Swaffham and Watton Roman Catholic Community

Mass held at the Watton Methodist Church at 5.00pm on Saturdays.

Watton Methodist Church
57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

The welcome prospect of rest . . .

July has arrived, bringing longer days, the end of the school term, and the welcome prospect of summer holidays. For many of us, the lead-up to this season is frantic. We rush to clear our desks, pack bags, and tie up loose ends, treating rest as a prize we must desperately earn. However, I don't think rest should be a prize to be earned but a spiritual necessity.

The word "holiday" originates from "holy day". This suggests that time off should be more than just a change of scenery or a packed itinerary of sightseeing. True rest requires us to unplug from the noise of our daily routines and create space for renewal. In his earthly ministry, Jesus faced relentless demands from crowds seeking healing and teaching. Yet, he never let busyness consume his soul. He frequently withdrew to mountains, lakesides, and

quiet spaces to recharge. He also recognised that his disciples were so tired they "had no leisure even to eat," giving them a direct command: "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). We're all created with limitations, aren't we? If we don't intentionally stop, we risk fracturing our relationship with God, others, and ourselves.

Whether you are travelling abroad, enjoying a staycation, or simply spending quiet afternoons in the garden this month, I encourage you to embrace the gift of doing nothing. Step away from the screens, breathe deeply, and reconnect. Jesus' invitation stands for each of us this summer: "Come to me, all you who are weary... and I will give you rest."

With much love and many blessings,
Vanessa

Reverend Vanessa is the rector for the Wayland benefice of Breckles, Caston, Great Hockham, Griston, Thompson, and Stow Bedon. You can contact her on 07984 318885 or by email at vanessadlayfield@gmail.com

What's On! at St Mary's Church, Watton in July

Church Road, Watton, IP25 6DQ

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.

Friday 3rd 2pm – 4pm Craft Group: Enjoy refreshments & company whilst crafting. £1 donation. In the church rooms.

Sat 4th 10am – 12noon 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 both our community & the wider world in a time of informal prayer. 2nd & 4th Thurs of month.

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

Are you not used to visiting a church service and wondering for a reason to make a visit?

One reason: Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

You are welcome to visit Purpose Church

The Watton Sports Centre, Dereham Road, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EZ.

Service every Sunday 10.30am

More information contact Nick

07940049933 or nicknundy@gmail.com

Sat 11th 2pm A talk on the 'Round Tower Churches of Norfolk': An interesting talk given by the society's Richard Barham. Free entry with donations gratefully received towards St Mary's Church. Refreshments available.

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.

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 – 12noon 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!

Tues 28th 2pm – 4pm Tuesday Club: Join us for a social afternoon of games & laughter here at St Mary's. Confectionary prizes to be won! Donation gratefully received for refreshments. All welcome!

Thurs 30th 2pm Scam Safe Awareness Session: With scams everywhere, we have Trading Standards coming in to hold a talk to help keep everyone safe from falling victim to scams we may come across online and in our everyday life. Free and all welcome to attend.

Fri 31st 2pm – 4pm Craft Group: Enjoy refreshments & company whilst crafting. £1 donation. In the church rooms.

June's Winners of the 200 Club!

1st prize £50: Lorraine Eldridge, No. 49

2nd prizes £25 each: Sue McCarthy, No. 176, Jane Dye, No. 26



Great Hockham Gardening Club

The middle of May – and we are already collecting waste water due to no rain. The middle of May - and we have lost crops due to frost. The middle of May and the highest May temperature on record. If the plants survived all that, some of the remainder were flattened by the wind. Strange times.

But the weather was perfect for the 754th Annual Great Hockham Horn Fair (three pictures right), a jamboree that brings together the people of the parish and a good time is had by all. Stalls and activities of every kind: BBQ, tea and cakes, pottery, Jewellery, classic cars, metalware, alpacas and our own Jane with her paintings and cards – not forgetting ourselves with our world-famous plant stall. If our members were not working the stall on the day they had been propagating plants for it in the weeks prior to the event. Activities included Maypole dancing, welly throwing and the World Stick Balancing Championship. Prue's son Spencer had come over from America especially to take part, but he only came second. Nevertheless, everybody mucks in.

I got up close and personal with Resusci Anne, a lady with whom I have had intermittent relationships over the years. But it now seems she prefers a somewhat more up to date approach. In our youth it was seven chest compressions for every two breaths; currently it's thirty and two – in conjunction with using any defibrillator kit that may be on hand. I was thanked by Judy, one of our members and an event organiser, for having a go. It seems that Anne and her chaperones, ambulance drivers Joy and Will, turn up at event after event and no one pays her court. Sad! So come on, the next time you see her, even if she looks a little breathless, give her a kiss. You won't look a dummy and it could win you the heart-felt thanks of anyone you might be able to help subsequent to your liaison.

Our first outside visit of the season was to West Barsham Hall. Not, as their website says, the 'plain Edwardian house that has never pretended to be anything else', but to its encompassing private garden. The garden is not usually open to the general public, but only by special arrangement, so we must give special thanks to Liz, our programme secretary, for booking this special appointment.

Leading us on our tour was Steven the Garden, ably assisted by Daniel the Grass (right) following up the rear ensuring there were no stragglers. Starting at the hall Steven introduced us to some of the history of the garden. The original layout of the carefully trimmed yew hedges was designed by Gertrude Jekyll in 1921, although she never visited the hall herself. Apparently, the layout was sent on a piece of tracing paper. This is now looked after by the current custodians, Susanna and Jeremy Soames, along with their children including interior designer Flora Soames. Also helping with the curating and planting at the garden is the renowned garden designer, Sean A. Pritchard. At the moment Mrs. Soams, with regular differences of opinion with Steven, are currently working through a ten-year plan to develop the garden

As to the garden. We first passed by and

through some of those aforementioned yew hedges and I learnt something I had never heard of: yew clippings were once collected and processed for the treatment of cancer. The Barsham Hall was sourced for this resource as there was a large enough quantity to warrant the cost of collection. This was, in fact, a cash crop as the hall was paid for the clippings. It was then exported to France, Italy and Germany, where they were processed and used in treatment of cancer. This no longer happens as there are now synthetically manufactured alternatives. But this leads to a problem: what to do with the cuttings which are carcinogenic. Simon did not dwell on this subject.

Mrs. Bates has let some grassed areas unmowed as she likes the way the sun shines through the seed heads in the evening: Steven wants to cut them as he thinks they look a mess. We passed by the most wonderful London Plain tree, the trunk and branches twisted and gnarled. I remarked how wonderful the timber might be for making a coffee table. Steven thought the tree was better left where it was. We then passed behind the lake, a beautiful area of water large enough to have two small islands: quite picturesque with the weeping willows framing the grassland up to the house. To the right we were eyed disdainfully by some sheep. As there were not many of us Steven let us walk round the greenhouse which was packed with a wonderful array of colourful pot plants. We finally went into the conservatory where Kate the Cake plied us with tea, coffee and an array of wonderfully unhealthy homemade cakes.

The garden was mainly laid out as parkland with both open areas and other more natural areas connected by intimate pathways. It was my kind of garden, not regimented, wonderful. The weather had been forecast as wet, in fact earlier in the day there was a severe hail storm which reduced those of our plants not frozen, parched or flattened into lace curtains. In the end there was sunshine and only a light shower as we finished the tour, so not a problem.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 10th June at Vicarage House, Great Hockham, IP24 1PE. A 6-acre garden; more tea and cakes. Edward.



Keeping Watton Tidy - Young Litter Pickers



Whilst it would be unfair to describe Watton's streets as 'litter-strewn' it is remarkable how much can be found when you are looking for it, as Watton Rotary Club discovered at the end of April, when we embarked upon a litter pick around the town centre. Organised by Rotarian Paul Weatherill, and with the enthusiastic support of local Air Cadets, Army Cadets

and Shipdham Spitfires Scout Group, some 20 sacks of rubbish were collected over a 2 hour period. We are also very grateful to Breckland Council, who kindly provided us with our equipment.

On a busy Saturday morning in Watton, we set off from the car park at St Mary's Church on a route that took us along Church Walk, Harvey Street, and then back again via the

High Street and Norwich Road. It became quite competitive at times, with groups of pickers trying to be first to fill their bags. Andrew Barwood, president of the Rotary Club said 'The environment is a major area of focus for our Rotary Club and it is very satisfying to know that a simple activity like litter picking can make a big difference to how people view their local area. The

enthusiasm showed by all our young volunteers was infectious and made the 2 hours pass very quickly. We were encouraged throughout the morning by the many favourable comments and expressions of thanks we received from people we met along the way, which made us feel it was a very worthwhile undertaking and that it was appreciated by local residents.'

The season so far at RSPB Lakenheath Fen

When June draws to a close and we move into midsummer, we can't help but take a look back and see how the wildlife have fared so far. Some species, like warblers, Bearded Tits and ducks will continue to try to raise broods during the coming weeks and even into early autumn, but for some species like Bittern, Marsh Harrier and Crane, they only raise one family each year- generally these are larger species that take longer to develop and need more time to learn how to be an adult than smaller birds do.

So, what do we know at the start of July? Well, we know from our early morning weekly surveys that we have had 17 booming male Bitterns (the beautifully marked brown heron for which this reserve was created). Male birds issue their deep, far-carrying boom on warm Spring days from within their territory, making them easy to count. This is one fewer than our record of 18 in 2025, so we are very pleased with that and it shows us

that we are managing the reedbed habitat here well for them. Time (and more surveys) will tell how many females build nests and raise young here this summer. From the same surveys in April and May, we think we have had 11 Marsh Harrier nests, and as I write this we have had our first report come in of a fledgling, with many more hopefully to come.

So far, our Cranes are doing well- all three pairs either have had eggs or small chicks to look after, but these take a whopping 14-16 weeks from laying to fledging, so we won't be able to report on their success until at least late July. This spring, our Hobby numbers rose to roughly 30-40 birds, but as we enter June these mostly disperse to their breeding grounds elsewhere in East Anglia. We are left with perhaps 3-5 pairs across the reserve who will now be feeding hungry, growing chicks on large insects like beetles and dragonflies, as well as small birds. Their fledglings are VERY noisy so if you hear incessant screeching from tall trees in July, see if you can see the culprit from the paths- it may well be a family of young Hobbies harassing their parents for food! Mid-June is normally the time when we see the first young Bearded Tits leaving their nest and following their parents around in small groups, through the reedbeds, much like Long-tailed Tits do. If the conditions are good and there is plenty of insect food around, they may try to raise another couple of broods before the

cooler weather of autumn arrives.

Our warden Haydn has done a stellar job of monitoring the success of dozens of tit boxes around the Visitor Centre and Brandon Fen - and has reported an average year for them, overall - with some chicks not surviving in some boxes, but most chicks still making it to fledging. This could well be because of the cooler spring weather which will have slowed down the development and reduced the size and number of caterpillars available to the parents when they need them, who try to coincide their sole breeding attempt each year with the peak of the caterpillar season. Other bugs like spiders and aphids can be used by the parents too, but their success really does depend on the caterpillars.

In the autumn, we will report again on how the wildlife has done, but so far, it's been a pretty good season!

RSPB Lakenheath Fen Events

Places for all events need to be booked online: <https://bit.ly/LakenheathFenEvents> or in person at the Visitor Centre ahead of the event.

Moth Mornings

Learn more about the amazing world of moths- join us to admire what we catch in our harmless trap.

31 July, 28 August, 25 September (10am

to 11am)

Guided Pond Dipping

Why not borrow a pond-dipping kit to see what beautiful and strange creatures live below the water?

4 July, 1 August, 5 September (11am-1pm)

Summer Wildlife Walk

Join us on a tour of the reserve to look for star species such as Kingfishers, Hobbies, Marsh Harriers and Bitterns as well as lots of warblers, butterflies and dragonflies.

12 July (9:30am-12:30pm)

Big Wild Sleepout 2026

Our annual 24 hours of wildlife-themed fun is back, with guided walks, pond-dipping, stargazing, bat detecting and a camp fire.

1-2 August (1pm-1pm)

Summer Walking Safari

Our popular longer walk is back, where guests will cover approximately 6.5 miles and take in the full range of habitats here, hopefully seeing plenty of wildlife along the way!

Sunday 2 August (2-7pm)

Bats and Birds Guided Walk

On this new event, we will take our bat detectors out to see if we can hear a range of the beautiful bats that live here, along with some birds typical of dusk and night on the reserve.

Saturday 12 September (5:30-8pm)

With best wishes from the reserve, Heidi Jones (Visitor Experience Officer, RSPB Lakenheath Fen).

Bee-Friendly Gardening

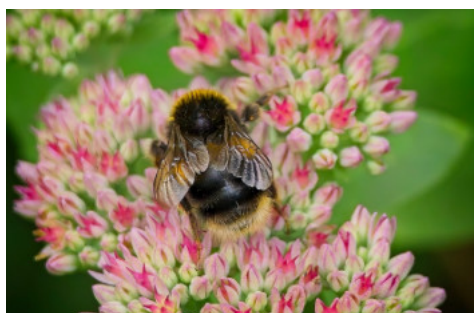
Ashill, Holme Hale & District Garden Club

Bees are the most important pollinator in our gardens and more broadly for most flower and vegetable species, accounting for 65-75% of all pollination. However, bees are in decline due to the extensive use of harmful chemicals in both the agricultural and horticultural industry. As gardeners we have an opportunity to help this most useful of insects by planting flowers and shrubs that provide the nectar and pollen that bees need to survive. At our May meeting, Lynda Hunt, an experienced Norfolk based bee-keeper, gave a detailed insight into bee-keeping and the life cycle of bees and how we, as gardeners, can help slow the decline of this superhero of pollination for the gardener and farmer.

Lynda started her presentation with some statistics on bees, informing us that there are 250 different bee species in the UK, of which 197 are found in our rural county of Norfolk. Lynda provided some fascinating facts around the dynamics of a bee hive, which revolves around the Queen bee, with her prodigious laying of eggs at the rate of 1,500 to 2,000 eggs per day in spring when building up the colony. Because worker bees only live for a few weeks to months the queen has to keep producing new progeny, which can amount up to a million eggs in her lifetime. A typical hive will have around 50,000-60,000 bees. Invasive species, such as the Asian Hornet, are a major predator for our native bees, with a hornet eating up to 50 bees per day, which they predate on the wing.

By planting long flowering plants such as catmint, geraniums and borage gardeners can give bees a food source all through spring and summer. Bees particularly like small open flowers, as they are more accessible. Certain plants are a great source for premium honey, such as Leptospermum scoparium, native to New Zealand and Australia, which produces Tea tree honey, commonly known as Manuka honey.

The presentation finished with lively Q&A and a number of members went away with a view to learning how to take up bee-keeping. There are several regional Norfolk bee-keeping clubs who offer courses to learn how to do this and provide advice and



support to new bee-keepers.

Upcoming Garden Club Events

Our June meeting (25th) has Andrew Sankey talking about 'Joseph Banks, Kew and the Plant Hunters'. The Club's Annual Flower Show will be held on Sunday June 28th with free entry to the general public from 2pm. Our July meeting has Jim Paine talking about the Botanical gardens around the world.

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.

Website: ashillgardeningclub.wordpress.com/
Email: ashillholmeahalegardenclub@gmail.com

West Norfolk Aviation Society

Our member Ann Morgan began her talk by illustrating her family tree with a series of photographs. She proudly mentioned a connection dating back to the sister of Sir Christopher Wren and another to a member of the Royal Society. Born in Harrow shortly before the outbreak of WW2, she told us that she had only a few memories of the War. Highlights included visiting her grandparents in Woodbridge included being given sweet treats by American troops and, once, narrowly avoiding a strafing German fighter. Despite that incident, she developed a love of aircraft. She won a scholarship to a nearby Grammar School from where she went to secretarial college. First Jobs at a London Chemical company and the Western Australia

Government Agency in the Strand followed. Whilst working in London in the mid-fifties, she rediscovered her interest in aircraft and regularly visited Heathrow airport to watch the flying activity from the roof of the newly built Queen's Building. She then found a job in the airport engineering department working with Quantas and BOAC. Leaving Heathrow, she met and married her husband. Ann followed him as he moved, rather too frequently, from job to job via Bristol, Cambridge, Newton Abbot and Coggeshall. With her marriage over Ann and her young son moved out and onwards. She took up some new hobbies and worked her way up in management at various earth moving and road haulage firms. She ended up in marketing for a renowned pharmaceutical company and finally finished work at the age of 56. Thanks, Ann, for the fascinating insight of your life.

Next month Keith Thomas returns to talk about his tour on Search & Rescue helicopters with 22 Sqn. at RAF Chivenor. All welcome on Tuesday 07 July @ 7.15 pm. Further details on our website, non-members entrance fee £5 per head includes a light buffet.

Barry Raphael, Stand In Scribe

ASHILL, HOLME HALE & DISTRICT ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW

With over 200 entries across 12 flower classes. Plus crafts, photography and home baking classes this is a show not to be missed! In addition to the floral entries there will be a quality plant sale and tombola prizes. Refreshments will be served, including delicious home made cakes. So come along and support your local garden club for a lovely afternoon enjoying floral beauty and good company.

All of this plus...
ENTRY is FREE!

SUNDAY JUNE 28th 2026

AT HOLME HALE PAVILION, SCHOOL ROAD
HOLME HALE, IP25 7PD

'Open to the Public from 2.00pm to 4.00pm'

Website: <https://ashillgardeningclub.wordpress.com>
Email: ashillholmeahalegardenclub@gmail.com
Enquiries: 07564 691202

Little Ellingham Vintage Working Weekend

Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th August (From 10am)
Sat Nav NR17 1JS £5 Entrance (Cash Only Please)



Enjoy a Fun Day Out Seeing
Nostalgic Vehicles - Farm - Cycles Cars
Steam - Military and Farm
Working Displays

Evening Entertainment and live band
Supporting East Anglian Air Ambulance



Farmers Need Our Support

By Terry Jermy MP, South West Norfolk.

As MP for South West Norfolk, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Farming and Member of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, it is fair to say that I am concerned about the future of farming and the numerous challenges facing the industry. Having lobbied the Government to provide targeted support to farmers who are facing pricing shocks as a result of the conflict in the Middle East, I was pleased with the Chancellor's recent £400 million support package.

Included in the package was the announcement that the Government will be cutting the duty rate on red diesel by over a third per litre from 10.18p to 6.48p - the lowest rate in over 20 years - to support farmers who are facing substantially increased costs on fertiliser and fuel due to the war in Iran.

This lower rate will take effect from June 15th and remain in place until December, supporting the agricultural sector in the fuel intensive harvest period through to the end of the year.

This will help to keep the cost of doing business down at a difficult time when red diesel prices are around 50% more than their pre-crisis levels.

I was also pleased with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

confirming the launch date of 30th June for the Government's newly refreshed Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme.

Following the pause of the scheme last year, I worked with West Norfolk farmers to collate their thoughts and feedback on the scheme's previous iteration, and the ways this support could be better

targeted and implemented. I fed their views back to DEFRA Ministers and other Government officials to help ensure the new SFI would better support farmers. Recently, I also met with Angela Eagle, Minister of State for Farming in DEFRA to discuss precision breeding and the UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement.

The SPS Agreement is the proposed framework which will form a new strategic partnership with the EU on the trade and movement of plants, plant products, animals, animal products, feed and food.

It is designed to make trade faster and cheaper, smooth supply changes, and help improve the number of exports from the UK following the implications of Brexit, by allowing for the vast majority of the above movements to be undertaken without certificates or controls.

I have spoken with many West Norfolk farmers in addition to researchers and scientists from the University of East Anglia and across the region about the proposed framework, particularly in relation to precision breeding where the UK is the global leader.

The SPS Agreement is currently being negotiated, and I was pleased to meet with the Minister to share the feedback of West Norfolk to help inform the proposed policy measures and negotiations.

If you are a West Norfolk farmer and would like to meet, or share your thoughts or ideas to help inform Government policy, please do email me:

terry.jermy.mp@parliament.uk

Over the summer, I will be embarking on my second constituency listening tour, where I will be visiting 31 of our South West Norfolk villages to meet with residents. Should you wish to arrange a time to meet, please do get in touch via my email above.



The Wayland Partnership Development Trust

We have begun a small Growing Together project thanks to a small grant from Norfolk Community Foundation and we are working together with Beside Youth and local volunteers to develop it. More details as the project grows.

DRAGONFLY GALLERY

If you are seeking cheap craft materials Swapshop is available on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings 10-1 with our dedicated volunteer team who manage it for us available to help every Wednesday.

WORKSHOP Stitch a pretty and useful pouch bag with Wendy of CollinsCrafts. All materials provided in a choice of colour-ways. £14 a head. July 3rd 10.15-12.45. Contact us to book. Email dragonflygallerywayland@gmail.com or phone 01963 880204.



IS THIS A SCAM?

FREE!
All welcome to attend

With scams everywhere nowadays, it's even more important to stay scam safe than ever.

We have Trading Standards coming to hold a talk to help keep everyone safe from falling victim to scams we come across online and in our everyday lives.

THURSDAY
30TH JULY
2 PM

ST MARY'S CHURCH
CHURCH RD, WATTON, IP25 6DQ

CAKES FOR CANCER 3

Saturday July 4th

2- 5pm at 15 Richmond Road, Saham Toney

Come along and enjoy a homemade cake and cuppa with us, or just buy a cake

All proceeds to
Breast Cancer UK and
Prostate Cancer UK

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

All views expressed in articles in the Watton & Wayland Times are those of the contributors and not necessarily the views of the Editor or Printers. While every care and effort has been taken to ensure accuracy, neither accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

This issue of the Watton & Wayland Times was compiled and edited by: Julian Horn at 32 High Street, Watton IP25 6AE and is published by Watton & Wayland Times Ltd. Company Number 16140119 Registered Office: 38 High Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AE And printed by: Sharman & Company Ltd, Newark Road, Peterborough PE1 5TD Phone: 01733 424 949

Richmond Park Golf Club (Ladies Section)

Now winter is over we have started playing our 18 hole competitions again and having been a bit too hot in May we are now dodging the frequent showers. Congratulations go to two of our ladies, Julie Ellis and Hillary Sutton who have had great success in the Daily Mail Competition having beaten Swaffham, Thetford, Ryston, Thorney Lakes near Peterborough and now face Mattishall in the next round. Anne Bell won the Granny Cup and Lesley Davis, the Cherrie Cup. Lesley was also successful with Rosie Sutterby in the Combination Cup. We are now looking forward to the promised more settled weather to continue our 2026 programme of events. Pictured are Rosie and Lesley holding the Combination Cup.



News From Watton Evening WI

Well, we are at the end of June already and summer is definitely here. Some of our ladies braved the really hot weather to do our usual Tombola stall at the Spring Fair, as you will see from the photo which shows from left to right, Jan Wassell, Anita Maslin, Pat Holdcroft, Suzanne Cairns, Lynne Tarbard, and Ruth Stapleton. Our June meeting was very good as we all made some lovely flower arrangements, which we all enjoyed very much! The next meeting in July sounds very interesting as we will be making cards for the Wayland Project. All our usual clubs have been going, the Book Club, the Craft Group and the Lunch Club, so members have been very busy. Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at the Methodist Centre in Watton High Street and they are at 7.30pm. All are welcome to come and join in the fun, just turn up or if you would like more information, then please contact Margaret Herbert on 01953 882269

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