



# The WOOLHOL! Heron

Community Magazine

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End

December 2024



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# Bank Raising and Desilting Works

**Background** - The Middle Level Commissioners provide flood risk management to protect 8,516 households, 1,643 commercial and industrial properties, over 57,000 hectares of agricultural land, road links, railway lines, power stations and a prison in Cambridgeshire. The river system consists of over 190km of watercourses, most of which are navigable, that need maintaining to continue to function.

**What we are doing** - We are pleased to announce that our contractor Balfour Beatty will start the first phase of our multi-million-pound project in October. This is the most significant work that we have carried out

since the construction of the new St Germans Pumping Station in 2010. The project aims to sustain the level of service provided by the Middle Level System. Work to

desilt the Main Drain from Cottons Corner in Three Holes to St Mary's Bridge close to St Germans Pumping Station will start in October and will take approximately 6 months. We will be carrying out the desilting works from the watercourse using excavators situated on pontoons. To lift the plant and equipment into the watercourse, we will install 3 temporary crane pads at locations along the Main Drain. The desilted material will be placed on both banks and left to dry. The drying process takes approximately 12 months, weather dependent. Once the material is dry, it will be levelled, and grass seeded. Before works start we will be carrying out environmental surveys along the Main Drain and establishing our site compound.



**Public Access** - We want to keep the public safe while we work. To do

this we will need to temporarily close sections of the bank where there are public footpaths. Each public footpath will be closed for up to 6 months depending on how long it takes to restore the footpaths to a safe condition following the works. This is largely weather dependent, but we will re-open each footpath as soon as possible once it is safe to do so. Please observe the footpath closure signs, keep children away from working areas and keep all dogs on a lead.

**In the community** - We are committed to engaging with local people about the Middle Level Commissioners and the work that we do. In July, our Chief Engineer Nicola Oldfield attended the Ramsey Rural Museum as guest speaker, providing an insight into the history and operations of the Middle Level Commissioners.

During August our Engineer Tom and his friend James, took on the Prostate Cancer UK Charity's Cycle the Month challenge. One in eight men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime and it's the UK's third biggest cancer killer. Cycling as ACDC (Anti-Cancer Dad Cyclists) they committed to cycle 100 miles during the month of August to raise as much as they could to help fund lifesaving research for men and their families affected by the disease. At the end of the challenge, they had cycled over 450 miles and raised over £900! To find out more visit <http://www.prostatecanceruk.org>

In October we visited local schools to talk to Year 6 children about how Middle Level Commissioners help to provide flood resilience to their local community and what they can do to help. We will be attending local Parish Council meetings, along the Main Drain, to talk to the communities about the desilting works that we will be carrying out.

September 2024 marks 90 years of pumping from the Middle Level of the Fens into the Great Ouse Tidal River at our station at Wiggshall St Germans. To find out more visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fdch-eaWF8>





# TOWNLEY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Christchurch, Wisbech, Cambs. PE14 9NA  
 office@townley.cambs.sch.uk  
**Website:** www.townley.cambs.sch.uk  
 01354 638229



Facebook—Townley School and Nursery

Remember that our website has lots more information about school.

**November 2024**

We are very blessed at Townley to be at the heart of the communities that we serve. We have been able to secure some fantastic new Forest School volunteers to support our sessions and have received some kind donations of equipment for the children. I was fortunate enough to meet the daughter of a former Headteacher, Mr Davis a few weeks ago -it sounds like Townley has always been a special place to lead.

The building works have started again. We are extremely grateful to the residents of Crown Road, who have been incredibly patient with the disruption caused by the installation of the new entrance. The local authority has told me it's their most complex site as not only is the new build going up, but we are looking to have solar panels and air source heating installed – in addition to the new mobile for the Enhanced Resource Base!

Emperor Class (Y5/6) have been writing myths based on the story of Odysseus and the Cyclops, focussing on balancing description and dialogue. Our class book is 'Secrets of a Sun King'. We are using written methods to multiply in maths. We had a visit from the Life Bus this week and learnt about different types of drugs and how to be safe around drugs. Year 6 are training to be 'Wellbeing Warriors' with the MHST.

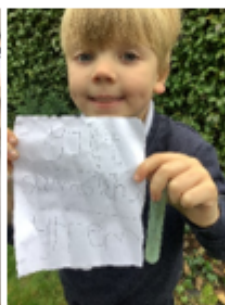


Emerald Class (Y3/4) enjoyed walking to the churchyard with the rest of the school as part of Remembrance. As part of their unit on cooking and nutrition in Design and Technology, the children baked a basic biscuit recipe, following food hygiene rules. In RE, they evaluated information about Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu scriptures. The children talked about the sources and origins of some religious scriptures.

Hawker Class (Y1/2) we visited the life bus where we learnt about our bodies and the way in which the food we eat affects our energy levels. We are currently reading Mrs Noah's pockets. In geography we have reminded ourselves that Africa is a continent and not a country. Using maps of Africa we found Kenya and coloured it in, also the countries that border it. In RE have been learning about giving thanks for harvest. We have been learning to hand stitch too!



EYFS Class (YN/R) we have been reading 'The Elves and the Shoemaker' by Rob Lloyd Jones and we've had lots of activities based on the story. Reception have been investigating how shoes are made and having a go at practical skills using a sewing machine to make slippers and elf bags. They have been designing shoes themselves, talking about elves and what they might do and look like!



# Advertising in the Heron

**Quarter Page** (14cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

**Portrait Format**

6 x issues £52

12 x issues £92

**Eighth Page** (6.5cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

**Landscape Format**

6 x issues £36

12 x issues £66

Please contact [adverts@theheron.info](mailto:adverts@theheron.info) or phone Elaine on 01354 638310.

**Advertisers** - all our advert rates and conditions can be found on our website [www.theheron.info](http://www.theheron.info). Business advertisers can book a series of 6 or 12 adverts, paid in advance. Adverts for village fundraising events, personal announcements, or small private ads are usually free.

## Diary Dates

Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby – page 24
Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am- 1pm	CCC – page 23
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Dole Distribution	2-3pm	CCC – page 21
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Ben's Yard Xmas Fayre	10am-4pm	Ben's yard Ely – Page 10
Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Xmas Fayre	10am-2pm	CCC – page 9
Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Skylark Xmas Fayre	10am-4pm	Skylark Garden Centre
Mon 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC – page 9
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am- 1pm	CCC – page 23
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	Fenland Farmers Sleigh Run	5pm	See page 16
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025	Welle Cinema – The Holiday	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall - page 28
Wed 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025	Coffee/Lunch Break & Birthdays	11am- 1pm	CCC – page 23
Sat 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025	Two course Lunch & Film	12:30pm start	CCC – page 9
Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2025	Welle Cinema – Glorious	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall – page 28
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	Gardening Club	7.00pm	CCC - page 23
Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2025	Woodturning for all – WI	2-4pm	CCC – page 24
<b>Regular Weekly Events</b>			
Monday	Short Mat Bowls	7- 9pm	CCC – page 24
Tuesday	Hobby & Craft Club	10am-1pm	CCC – page 23
Sunday	Car Boot Sale	8am - 12pm	Skylark Garden Centre
Wednesday	Chair Based Exercise	10-10:50am	CCC - 07880543821 (Kathleen)
Thursday	Cake, Coffee & Chat	1:30-3:30pm	CCC – page 30
Friday	Christchurch Umbrella Breakfast	9:30-11:30am	CCC – page 30
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu	Mobile Post Office	4:10 - 4:30pm	Lay-by near Fen View

**At the time of going to press, all information is as accurate and up to date as we can make it. Changes and updates may be published subsequently. All information contributed by outside agencies, including dates etc., will be assumed to be correct.**

**NB as a matter of courtesy no content from the Heron should be used without prior permission.**

# Editorial and Heron News

Hello everyone. We're back!

One thing you will hopefully notice is that we have included a separate card with important phone numbers and information. One point that came out of the survey we did is that people like to have important numbers to hand, but it did seem a bit pointless using a page each issue to print the same information. We're only printing this once, so please keep this card safe for your own reference.

As you have no doubt read from the letter that went out last month, the plan is to produce the Heron every 2 months. There have been various reasons for the pause in production, the magazine relies heavily on myself, Elaine and a voluntary team to put the magazine together, and we have been tied up with other matters over the summer (for me, the not-so-small matter of getting married, see back cover). As always, if anyone can help with the magazine (especially if you know Microsoft Publisher), then please get in touch.

We have been away just long enough to miss reporting on Padgetts Road and the new Island at the end of Church Road (but just in time for the closure of the A1101). In theory, that surface is designed to last for 10

years, if I understand correctly.

We have a piece about Richard Hughes who unfortunately passed away in September. I never met Richard as I am relatively new to the village, but it is obvious from others (and from reading the article) that he was very well liked and will be sadly missed. The very best wishes to his widow, Stacia, who sent this to us. The village also lost Brian Kay recently, and our thoughts are with Sandra at this time.

We are starting a regular series on Stonea Camp, something I've driven past so many times, as I'm sure have many, without knowing what actually is there.

One matter I would rather not be reporting on is the fact that one of our residents received a very unpleasant, and anonymous, letter regarding road safety outside their property. Apart from the fact that this type of communication is almost certainly illegal, any grievances regarding road safety should not be aired against a resident but should be raised with the Parish Council in the first instance. You can do this directly to one of the Parish Councillors (not anonymously, please) or come along to a Parish Council Meeting.

Beyond that, may I wish all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the whole of the Heron Team.

**Copy Deadline** - The deadline for copy for the edition of the Heron is 17th January 2025.

## Enjoy reading the Heron?

If you haven't donated already and are interested in helping to support the production costs, you can now donate electronically at: [www.madegreat.co.uk/sponsorship](http://www.madegreat.co.uk/sponsorship)

**100% of your donation goes towards printing costs.**

You can choose to have your name printed in the next issue of the magazine or keep your donation anonymous.



Do you know someone who would like to receive a Heron each month, who doesn't live in the village? Contact us at [adverts@theheron.info](mailto:adverts@theheron.info) and we will send them a subscription form.

The cost is £27.00 per year (including P&P).

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

*Editorial Team Leader* - Clive Benjamin - [editor@theheron.info](mailto:editor@theheron.info)

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*Treasurer, Advertising Manager* - Elaine Reed-Hughes - [adverts@theheron.info](mailto:adverts@theheron.info) Tel: 01354 638310

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*General Queries* - [enquiries@theheron.info](mailto:enquiries@theheron.info)



Website: [www.theheron.info](http://www.theheron.info)

## Suffolk and Norfolk have formed an unlikely alliance to get Cambridgeshire booted out of East Anglia

The annoying, flat county has enjoyed the benefits of quaint East Anglian status for far too long – without actually bringing anything to the party itself. Apart from Cambridge, which is a nice little city, the rest of the county is only useful for driving through in order to get to important places like the Midlands or Oop North. The rest of Cambridgeshire is a barren wasteland full of weird people and dykes, as well as other drainage solutions for the Fens.

Not even a couple of cathedrals – one in Ely and another in Peterborough (and let's not get started about Peterborough) – can justify it being a parasite which feeds off the success of the real East Anglians who attract tourism and wealth.

Now the great and the good from Suffolk and Norfolk, traditional enemies on so many issues, have teamed up to strike Cambridgeshire from East Anglia altogether. The region was originally formed of only these two counties – originally called North and South Folk of the Kingdom of East Angles, but the big-eared flatlanders joined in when pesky princess Etheldreda of the Isle of Ely got wed around the year 650.

Ever since the swamplands of Cambridgeshire have been drained to make it more bearable – and in turn Cambridgeshire has drained the life from East Anglia, a place of beautiful countryside, coastline, breweries, a fine football team (in Ipswich, obviously) and the place listed as a number one destination by visitors from around Britain and beyond.

A spokesman for the newly formed Anglia Against Cambridgeshire Coalition, which consists of county council chiefs, MPs, tourism and business leaders, said: "We don't mind parts of North Essex being in East Anglia because it is picturesque, but Cambridgeshire brings us nothing.

"We'd be better off flooding it, providing a pretty natural boundary to East Anglia from the rest of the country." The results of a poll carried out by the Suffolk Gazette are:

Should Cambs be booted out of East Anglia?

Yes, of course 31.3%	Yes, and Norfolk 27.1%
No, I like flat things 41.6%	

So there you have it. Cheerio, Cambridgeshire!

Source: *The Suffolk Gazette*

## The Story of the Sixpence and the Christmas Pudding

Stir-up-Sunday was on November 24<sup>th</sup>. It is traditionally the day when families get together on the Sunday before the season of advent, to make a Christmas pudding. It is key that every member of the family gives the pudding mixture a stir and makes a wish at the same time.



Traditionally, a silver sixpence was stirred in to bring whoever found the coin on Christmas Day wealth and good luck in the year to come.

This tradition dates back to what was known as 'Twelfth Night Cake', which was eaten during the Twelfth Night festivities.

Originally a dried pea or bean was baked in the cake and whoever found it became 'king or queen' for the night. There are records dating back to as early as 1300s recording this tradition.

The first coins used were silver farthings or pennies. After World War One, it became a threepenny bit and then a sixpence.

Today we use a five pence piece, but it's courteous to warn people it's in there before they tuck in, or they may break a tooth!

It is with great sadness that we report the recent passing of Brian Kay.

Sandra would like to say thank you for all the support, and for all of the message and cards she has received.

Peggy and Graham Warby would like to wish all of their friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## Chocolate Christmas Pudding

### For the sponge

4 eggs	100g caster sugar
100g self-raising flour	50g cocoa, plus extra for dusting the tin
85g butter melted (plus extra for greasing)	50ml espresso/strong coffee (+2 tbsp Tia Maria)

### For the mousse

3 eggs, separated	50g caster sugar
175g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)	200ml double cream

### For the topping

142ml double cream	100g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
50g butter	1 tbsp golden syrup
1 tbsp Tia Maria	1 tbsp espresso

### To serve

chocolate-covered cocoa beans    dark and white chocolate curls

### Method

#### step 1

Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Butter a 22 x 31cm or similar Swiss roll tin, then line with buttered baking paper. Tip in 1 tbsp cocoa, turn the tin until it's evenly coated, then tap out any excess.

#### step 2

For the sponge, beat the eggs and sugar with electric beaters for 7 mins, or until thick enough to hold a trail. Fold in flour and cocoa, then swirl in butter and fold through. Tip into the tin, bake for 10 mins until just firm, then cool under a clean tea towel.

#### step 3

For the mousse, beat the egg yolks with the sugar until thick and pale. Melt the chocolate and loosely whip the cream until it just holds its shape. Quickly beat half the cream and all of the chocolate into the egg mix, then gently fold in the rest of the cream. Whisk the egg whites until softly peaked, then fold in.

#### step 4

Grease a 1.4 litre/2½ pint basin with a little oil. Line with cling film, letting it overhang. To build the pudding, cut a circle of sponge to fit the bottom of the basin and put it in. Cut seven sloping rectangles about 10cm long from the sponge and fit them tightly together around the bowl. Sprinkle with most of the coffee and Tia Maria mix. Fill the bowl halfway with the mousse then, using what's left of the sponge, top the mousse with a snug-fitting circle of cake. Sprinkle with remaining coffee mix. Spoon in the rest of the mousse, then cover with the overhanging cling film. Chill for at least 4 hrs until firm (ideally overnight), then turn onto a plate.

#### step 5

For the topping, heat all the ingredients gently in a bowl over a pan of simmering water until the chocolate melts. Leave to cool, stirring occasionally, until thick and glossy. Spread all over the turned-out pudding, then top with the chocolate-coated cocoa beans and chocolate curls.



## PC Snippets

Just a quick roundup of the last couple of months of Parish Council meetings. If you wish to know more, then the PC minutes are available at:

<http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk/minutes/>

or better still, come along to the meetings at the CCC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:30pm.

The following have been discussed:

- Affordable Housing – the initial survey has showed sufficient demand, and the proposal will now be taken forward.
- Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Awaiting action from Clarion Housing. Cllr Roy has chased this up with Clarion as this didn't seem to be actioned.
- Wayside Estate pedestrian safety - a meeting has taken place with the new Local Highway Officer
- Litter bin outside former village shop - The bin should be relocated soon though there is some confusion as to who is responsible
- Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service visit - Cllr Hughes will contact the Breakfast team to arrange a suitable date. The Clerk reported that no meetings have taken place regarding local policing
- Cllr Roy has reported that the original notices relating to the caravan at Syringa House were withdrawn and new notices are being issued.
- District Council consultations on the infrastructure delivery plan, the draft gambling policy, and local validation requirements for planning applications, an update on the retendering of the street light maintenance contract, tougher penalties for fly-tipping and littering, the Combined Authority's bus franchising consultation, the National Association of Local Councils' new website, a Plunkett UK webinar on transforming vacant spaces and the relaunch of the Green Energy Switch free appliance scheme.
- Cllr Hayes asked who is responsible for the trees in the Recreation Ground. The Clerk explained that the Recreation Ground charity is responsible, but the Council has previously undertaken work. Members agreed to inspect the trees to consider options for future maintenance.
- Recreation Ground Extension - The contractor has suggested preparing the ground and sowing the grass during the winter months. Members questioned whether this should be delayed until the spring. They agreed that a cut should take place now but that spraying, preparing the ground and drilling should wait. Quotes are being obtained for the installation of an access culvert, telegraph poles and bird boxes.
- Highways - The Chairman reported that the Local Highway Improvement application for no overtaking lines and signs at the junction of Upwell Road and Sixteen Foot Bank had been successful, achieving the highest score of this year's applications. Works will commence once the detailed drawings have been prepared.
- A member of the public suggested that public time should be at the end of the meetings to allow discussion around matters that had arisen. The PCC had no objection to this, and there is now a public time at the start and then end of the meetings.

At the November meeting, representatives from the Middle Level Commission and Balfour Beatty were present and gave an interesting presentation on the desilting and bank raising works – more detail about this is in this edition of the Heron

One final point from the November meeting - the Chairman was dismayed to report that a resident of the village has received what can only be described as an anonymous poison pen letter regarding a road safety issue. This is not the manner in which matters should be dealt with. The Parish Council is the first point of contact for such matters, and any such report should be done in a civil manner.

The Parish Council has been invited to respond to a consultation on the infrastructure in Christchurch, but we need your help. We're particularly interested in your experience of the public utilities, such as electricity, water, drainage, sewage, telephone, broadband and mobile communications. There are no forms to fill in, just send a message to: [clerk@christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk)

or drop it into the post box outside the front door of the Community Centre. Please provide contact details to enable us to discuss the issues with you. Thank you.

The Parish Council has started the process of setting the budget for next year. Do you have ideas for projects or services that would make a difference to you and other members of our community? Please submit your ideas via the website [www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk) or on paper to any member of the Council or the post box outside the front door of the Community Centre. You are welcome to attend any Parish Council meeting to discuss ideas and issues. The meetings take place in the Community Centre on the second Monday of every month at 7.30pm.

# Church News

Date	Location and service	Location and service
1 <sup>st</sup> December	<b>Christchurch</b> - Morning Prayer 10.30am	Doddington - Holy Communion 10.30am
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Manea- Holy Communion 10.30am	Wimblington – Carol Service - 3pm
15 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>Christchurch</b> – Holy Communion 10.30	Doddington – Carol Service – 6pm Benwick – Carol/Crib – 3pm
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	<b>Christchurch</b> – Carol Service – 5pm Manea – Carol Service – 6pm Welney – Holy Communion - 4pm	Wimblington – Holy Communion – 10.30am
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>Christchurch</b> – Holy Communion – 8pm Manea – Christingle – 2.30pm Welney – Carol Service – 4pm	Doddington – Crib Service – 2pm Wimblington – Crib Service – 4.30pm Wimblington – Holy Communion – 11.30pm
25 <sup>th</sup> December		Doddington – Holy Communion – 10.30am
29 <sup>th</sup> December	United Benefice Holy Communion Service – Doddington - 10.30am	
January 2025	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays there are services in Christchurch and Doddington 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays there are services in Manea and Wimblington 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday there is a service of Holy Communion in Welney 4pm Please check Facebook and Church Notice Board for further details.	

## Events

7<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Fayre in Christchurch Community Centre. 10am – 2pm. Check details on notice boards and on Facebook.

25<sup>th</sup> January – Two course lunch followed by a film. 12.30pm start. Contact Helen on 01354 638092 for details.

## The church building

There are still repairs to be made to the church, the cost of which will run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. We are hoping to submit a bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. This is a long process and we will have to find 5% of the total bid ourselves, so we continue to hold our fund-raising events. We are very grateful to those of you who have supported us with this and hope you feel able to continue to do so. I know the church building and church yard are very important to people in the village and we really are doing our best to maintain both. I am praying that the church yard doesn't flood this winter.

Helen Chappell, Church Warden



## LAS POSADAS DURING ADVENT, BEGINNING ON ADVENT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1ST



Adapted from a Spanish tradition (las posadas means 'the inns'). Joseph and Mary could not find a place to stay in Bethlehem. Different people in Christchurch offer them their home for a night during Advent, and will be particularly thinking of, and/or praying for, all homeless people and refugees.

Do join in! I make a double list, as we have two different sets of pregnant Mary and Joseph. You may want to reserve a special date, or just take whatever date is available. Please contact me, Annie Nason, and I will give you a date and sort out how/where you can collect the Holy Family images....



OR I can deliver to/collect from you. Message me on FB, email me on [annie\\_nason@yahoo.com](mailto:annie_nason@yahoo.com), or call me on 01354 638088.

# Looking for somewhere to go? What's on in the area.

## Christchurch

**Lockdales Auctioneers Valuation** - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December - 9:30am - 1:30pm - Christchurch Community Centre

**Dole Distribution** - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2pm - 3pm - Christchurch Community Centre

**Christmas Fayre** - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December - 10am - 2pm - Christchurch Community Centre

**Fenland Farmers Christmas Sleigh Run** - Farmers Boy to Dun Cow – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December - 5pm

## Ely

**Ben's Yard Christmas Fair 2024** - CB7 5TR, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December - 10am – 4pm

Admission: £4.00, Under 12's free

**Ely Cathedral** - A number of Christmas events (some sold out at the time of writing, but some still available), website for events is <https://www.elycathedral.org/events>

## Welney

**WWT - Wetland Wakeup** - Join the warden before dawn to watch the stunning sight of flocks of swans and ducks waking up on the wetlands - 6.30am- 9am including breakfast. Cost: £30 per adult, £15 per child. WWT also has a number of other Swan watching events and hare walks.

<https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/welney/whats-on/events/wetland-wakeup>



## Manea

**Village Hall - Gala Xmas Fayre** - 8<sup>th</sup> December - 2pm – 5pm

**Xmas Lights Switch On** - 8<sup>th</sup> December - 5:30pm

## March

**St John's Church, Winter Wonderland** - 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December - 4pm – 8pm

## Wimblington & Doddington

**Skylark Garden Centre, Christmas Market & Craft Fayre**

Saturdays - 30<sup>th</sup> Nov & 7<sup>th</sup> December 10am - 4pm – Free entry

**Cinderella, Doddington Village Hall**, 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> December – tickets £5 from Green Welly Garden Centre

## COVID 19, Flu, RSV and Pneumococcal Vaccines

NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is urging anyone eligible for their COVID-19, flu, RSV or pneumococcal vaccines to make sure they've had them this winter. Please check if you, or someone you care for, is eligible - each vaccine has a slightly different eligibility criteria as follows:

**Flu vaccine** – for anyone aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2025); have certain long-term health conditions; are pregnant; live in a care home; are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive a carer's allowance; or live with someone who has a weakened immune system.

**COVID-19 vaccine** – for anyone aged 65+; those aged between six months and 64 years who are at increased risk of getting seriously ill due to a health condition or treatment; people who live in a care home for older adults, and those who are pregnant; and frontline health and care workers.

**RSV vaccine** – for anyone who is pregnant, or aged 75-79.

**Pneumococcal vaccine** – for anyone 65 or over (only one dose is needed).

To find out more about these vaccines and how to book them, or find a walk-in clinic, please visit The Vaccinators website <https://www.cpics.org.uk/the-vaccinators>

# Duke of Edinburgh Scheme

In October, this year I started my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award with my school. The award requires that I complete activities in three different areas: Physical, Volunteering and Skill. I also must complete an expedition.



For my physical section I am doing cycling. My goals for this are to extend the distance of my ride each day and be able to ultimately complete a long distance cycling event with my Dad.

For my volunteering I am helping out with The Heron village magazine. Keep an eye out for me delivering papers down Green Lane! I will also be addressing and sending out the postal Heron deliveries. My goal for my volunteering is to support the community newspaper team by delivering newspapers and writing articles for the papers.

For my skill I am working towards grade 6 on the flute. I am going to achieve this by practicing daily at home and my weekly flute lessons.

I will update you with my progress in the next edition of The Heron where I will also tell you about my expedition!

By Hannah Paine

*Wow, that's brilliant Hannah. Well done. We are glad to have you on board and thank you for your articles and helping with the deliveries. - Clive, Editor*

## From the Office of Steve Barclay

Getting funding into new local sports facilities is an important part of making our area an even better place to live. So, it was brilliant that Leverington Sports and Social Club secured a grant for £414,206 in October from the Football Foundation to renovate and expand the changing rooms. This comes on top of the £473,000 funding that was secured for a new 3G pitch in July 2022.

Encouraging business investment is just as important, so it was great to join Iain Kirkbright and his fantastic team at Sunlounger Travel in Wisbech, together with Wisbech Mayor Sidney Imafidon, to officially open their new shop in the Horsefair. This is the fifth shop in their business franchise. It's great to see this investment in Wisbech and the benefits it will bring to local residents planning any holiday travel.

Last month, new evidence revealed that waste incinerators are now as dirty as coal power, raising new questions over the future of the Wisbech incinerator. The UK has improved recycling certain types of waste, such as food, which is now increasingly being sent to anaerobic digesters or composted. This means that the type of waste being burnt by incinerators is increasingly made up of plastic. As this is ultimately made of fossil fuels, burning it is more environmentally harmful than burying it in landfill. The new analysis from the BBC reveals that emissions are now on a par with coal and around five times more polluting than the average UK unit of electricity. I believe we should now reconsider whether further waste incineration is compatible with our

commitments to protect the environment, and it supports my campaign to stop the Wisbech incinerator.

The long-anticipated Whittlesey Relief Road project has finally announced its first public consultation. Residents and businesses are invited to view and comment on the options for the project, which aims to address traffic issues and boost future growth. Your feedback on the options will be used to inform the final designs, with a decision expected in early 2025. Consultation information will be available at Whittlesey Town Council offices throughout the consultation period, which runs from Wednesday, 23 October to Friday, 22 November.

In the Budget last month, the Government announced its intention to remove inheritance tax relief for family farms making it harder for farmers to pass their holdings onto their children and grandchildren, meaning many will have to sell their farms. This will reduce the amount of farming land in the UK, make us more reliant on imports, and undermine our food security. It will also reduce the amount of land available for tenant farmers, further impacting food security. I will be supporting our farming community in any way I can to hopefully make the Government reconsider.

Ending on a much happier note, as this is the last edition before Christmas, I would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2025.

*Steve Barclay*  
MP FOR NORTH EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE



## A wonky Christmas tree that made headlines across the world has been chopped up so people can buy a piece of history.

There was an initial outcry about the pronounced lean of the 9m (30ft) spruce when it was erected in 2023 in March, Cambridgeshire. After it brought a much-needed boost to the town, another wonky tree has been sourced for this year.

The 2023 tree has been donated to the town's Make and Mend Shed, external and volunteers are transforming it into stepping stones, clocks - and even a centrepiece for a wedding.

Chair Dave Everett, 66, said to be involved with something that brought "worldwide fame" to the town was "a bit of an honour".

After the 2023 tree was cut down, it was offered it to the Make and Mend Shed, which is a community workshop offering people a chance to socialise over projects. Mr Everett said: "It had been cut into slices which range from 18in (45cm) round from the base of the tree to 6in (15cm) round from its top and we were very pleased to be offered it."

Because a chainsaw was used to make the slices, each one needed sanding down to make it level and the finished items were then varnished.

So far, stepping stones for gardens have proved popular and the volunteers have also made clocks. "Somebody asked us to make a centrepiece for a wedding which turned out really well, using three slices of wood and a branch from another tree," said Mr Everett.

"We're also experimenting with burning the wood to make patterns, although it's not the easiest thing to do and is still in the early stages."

All money raised will go towards the March Christmas Lights Committee, although he said no prices had been fixed and people were simply asked for donations.

"Something that doesn't come along that often with worldwide fame so to be involved with it, yes, it is a bit of an honour," Mr Everett said.

Source: BBC News



# Stonea Camp

Stonea Camp is famously known for being Britain's lowest lying Iron Age Hill Fort, situated at only two metres above sea level, and is located in Wimblington, Cambridgeshire.

The site's connection with the Iceni tribe makes it an incredible draw, especially for those who are very keen on walking in the footsteps of Queen Boudicca! Indeed, it is such a privilege for us to have the opportunity to do so, and right on our doorstep too. That is of course, until we are faced with the access road, and unless driving a robust 4x4, many are put off, for fear of damaging their vehicles and turn around. I am sure many people reading now, have experienced similar.

Have you ever wondered, how a field in the middle of the rural Cambridgeshire Fens was discovered to be a site of such archaeological importance? It's always the first question I ask of visitors and the answer is usually a resounding, 'Yes!'



A century ago, and over a period of time, there had been much anecdotal evidence from farmers, having worked the land at Stonea, and many and varied items had been found; but then came, Sir Cyril Fox! He was one of the most distinguished archaeologists to have graduated from Magdalene College, Cambridge. Over a century ago, he wrote the celebrated book, 'The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region.' During that time, he was also part time Curator of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology in Cambridge.

As part of the research for his book, he would cycle to sites noted for their archaeological importance, each no more than 33 miles radius from the Museum, and Stonea Camp fell into that category. He visited and carried out some field walking, after which he wrote of the site; 'It is almost wholly ancient pasture and no difficulty should arise in respect of preservation. There are so few large earthworks in the Fenlands; and so little is known of the condition of life in early times that the preservation of this camp for future careful exploitation is much to be desired.'

Stonea Camp's site rested as the remains of an Iron Age Hill Fort for almost 2,000 years, during which time, little was known of its secrets, but over time the local farming community had reported finding coins, spears and even skeletons at Stonea Camp.

Settlement is dated from 500BC and exhibits at least two phases of development over several hundred years of settlement with a D shaped set of earth banks surrounded by a larger more formal set of banks and ditches. Evidence shows one large round house, with offerings found in ditches, which has led archaeologists to believe this was an Iron Age, Iceni feasting or spiritual site. Coinage found at the site is mostly Iceni. Archaeological finds date back to the Neolithic.

Stonea Camp lies on the border of three tribes - the Iceni, Catavellauni & Coritani tribes. The fact the site lays at a significant three-way crossroads point, for three tribes, would have made Stonea Camp of significant spiritual value to the Iceni. As an Iceni spiritual and feasting site, Boudicca would definitely have visited Stonea Camp! Potentially walking in the footsteps of Boudicca, who amassed and led a force of 100,000 warriors, holding the Romans at bay for more than six months, longer than any other military leader, ever recorded in ancient history, is simply awe inspiring and not to be missed!

During World War 2, the 'Dig for Victory' campaign saw things change, as the government encouraged farmers to convert as much land as possible into arable agriculture, this drive saw Stonea Camp flattened and it remained an arable field until the 1980s when the site returned to pasture. It has seen three programmes of partial excavation starting in; 1959, 1980 and 1990; even so, only approximately 0.5% of the site has been fully excavated. These programmes proved that Stonea Camp has evidence of earlier Bronze Age origin, later Roman and Saxon settlements, and even evidence that Cromwell and his Generals made use of the site during the civil war.

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There are 1,224 hill forts in England, six of these in Cambridgeshire, three of which are large multivallate hill forts - meaning it has more than one rampart or defensive circuit - which includes Stonea Camp.

Due to its national historical importance, it has been listed as a scheduled monument and is protected against ground disturbance and unlicensed metal detecting, so written consent must be obtained from Historic England before any archaeological surveys or excavations can begin.

In 1980 the British Museum, led by local Archaeologist Tim Potter, (whose father, Cedric Potter had been the Headmaster of March Grammar School), excavated Stonea Camp and a nearby site to the north, which had previously revealed a Roman settlement. Many students from March's Neale Wade School, were given the opportunity to take part in those excavations, thanks to the Head of History at the time, the late Peter Hewitt, who managed to gain funding for students to be included. For many that had the opportunity, it was a life changing and positive experience.



The excavations uncovered the foundations of a multi-storey, Roman tower, constructed in the first century AD. This tower is believed to have been an administration centre and would have been the tallest Roman building in the area. Imagine the scene; a massively tall, square, stone building overshadowing the Iceni's round house constructions at Stonea Camp; a place the tribe visited regularly for feasting and spiritual purposes.

Is Stonea Camp only significant for being Britain's lowest lying Iron Age hill fort? No, there is much more to it! Even so, we still have a long way to go to discover all of its secrets!

Since 1991, the site has been owned by Cambridgeshire's County Farms Estate and is managed by a tenant farmer. It is a Pocket Park and is accessible to the public and available 24/7.

We do, however, recommend attending an open day, having a group presentation or guided walk, because when visiting Stonea Camp, it is advisable to do so in a robust vehicle, especially during the autumn and winter months; during springtime and summer access is not as bad, but the open days do have the added bonus of solutions to any access problems, if funding allows.

Periodically public, open days are organised, where a whole learning experience of Celtic life under Roman rule can be appreciated. Visitors will hear storytellers, recounting stories based on historical fact for all ages, giving a greater understanding to the life and times of the Iceni. There is opportunity to see Iron Age and Roman re-enactors, to engage with local museums and heritage organisations, to speak with professional archaeologists and to have guided tours.

Now that you have some background information on Stonea Camp, please do look out for our next article which will enlighten readers further on the significant archaeological and historical importance of the site. In the meantime if you would like to know more about Stonea Camp, or would like information on forthcoming open days at the site, a presentation or guided tour, please email Heritage, Culture & Community (HCC) Stonea at [hccstonea@gmail.com](mailto:hccstonea@gmail.com) or follow our Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/hccstoneacamps>, or our Instagram page, [https://www.instagram.com/hcc\\_stonea](https://www.instagram.com/hcc_stonea), we would be delighted to assist.

Amanda Carlin – Chairman HCC Stonea.

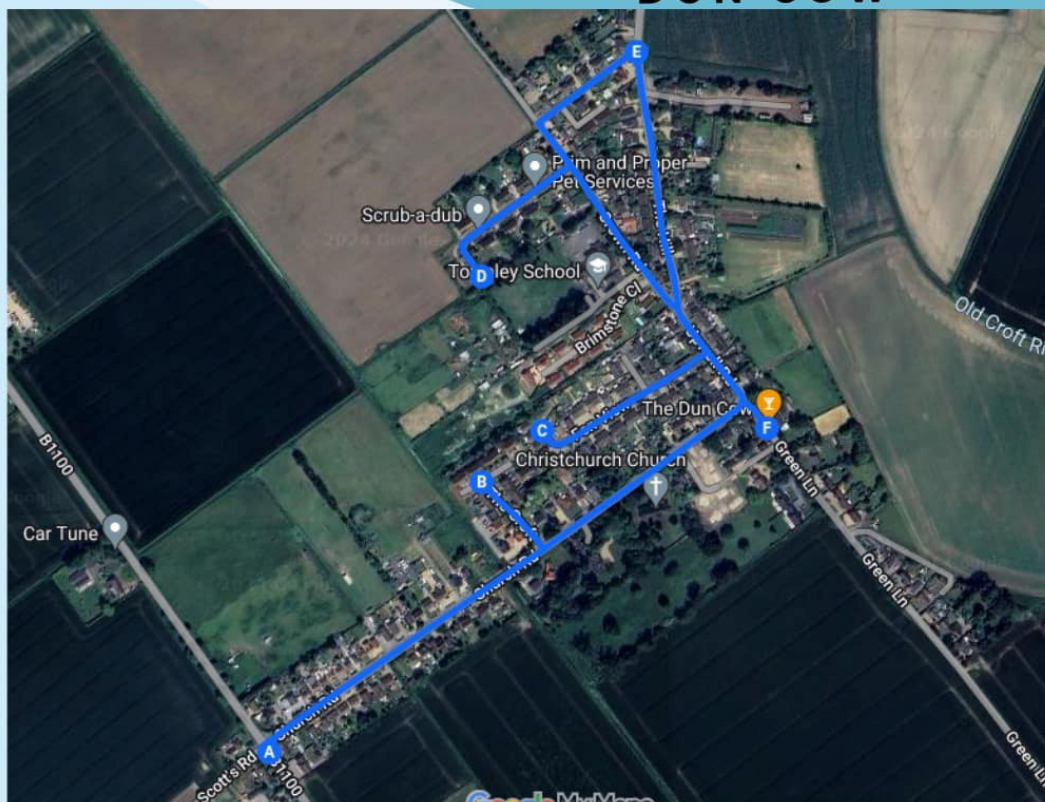
**TOY APPREAL:  
HINCHINGBROOKE  
HOLLY WARD.  
DONATION POINT:  
CHEQUERS INN  
@FRIDAY BRIDGE  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
DONATIONS!**

**COME AND MEET SANTA AT HIS MEET  
AND GREET AT THE DUN COW  
CHRISTCHURCH!**



**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE  
FROM FENLAND FARMERS**

**SATURDAY 21ST  
DECEMBER @5PM  
STARTING AT  
FARMERS BOY  
FINISHING AT THE  
DUN COW**



**STARTING AT FARMERS BOY, CHURCH  
ROAD, THE CROFT, FEN VIEW, PASSING  
THE SCHOOL, CROWN AVENUE,  
WAYSIDE ESTATE, UPWELL ROAD,  
FINISHING AT THE DUN COW**



# Richard Hughes 1961-2024

*Article written by Stacia Briggs*

Richard Hughes – who was born and raised in Christchurch – has died following a long illness borne with unbelievable grace, strength and courage.

Born in 1961 in the flatlands of the Fens, Richard was a second son for Alma and Peter and a little brother for David. Later, he would become Phillip's big brother and he loved being "the one in the middle", saying he had the best of both worlds, neither forging the way or being the baby.

Stories of Christchurch were always close to hand throughout his life. Waiting for the school bus in Rolfe's Garage next to the brazier while the welders worked next to him, sparks flying. Countless hours spent playing on the football field and in the bus shelter and then the comparative glamour of The Dun Cow at the age of 14.

There were tales of the delicious teatime spreads made by his Mum, his Dad dressing up for the weekly shopping trip to Wisbech in shirt and tie, of diesel-flavoured ice-cream from Pocky's red and white van, much-anticipated visits from the Corona man and hot summers spent picking strawberries on the family allotment.

Richard could never pinpoint the moment that he decided that he wanted to be a chef, but as he took his O-levels he heard impossibly glamorous sounding stories of Cousin Ralph working at The Imperial Hotel on Great Yarmouth's seafront. He'd never been in a "proper" restaurant or a hotel until the day he started work in one: and had no idea what he was letting himself in for, attending his interview with his Dad and lying through his teeth that he was a passionate home cook.

New boss Roger Mobbs offered him a job, and at the age of 15, he was driven to Great Yarmouth by Alma and Peter to start work. His Dad told him five times the day before he left that he could change his mind and stay at home, but his Mum scolded him and told him he "just wasn't being helpful". His Dad later told him that after dropping off her middle son to begin his new life more than 80 miles and almost two hours away, his Mum cried for the whole journey home.

Seduced by The Imperial Hotel's glamour, he had imagined himself in pristine chef whites and tall hat, working on wonderful French menus designed by Mr Mobbs. He dreamt of making mousselines and pâtés, Steak Diane and crepes Suzette, but instead spent whole days peeling potatoes in the draughty vegetable prep room. Painfully shy and awkward, he later wrote: "I was probably the worst trainee that the poor team at The Imperial had ever set eyes on."

Every summer, a gaggle of trainees were taken at the

Hotel and most would leave – exhausted or ejected – in September. Richard bucked the trend and stayed the course. He credited a huge amount of his success to Mr (never Chef, never Mr Mobbs), the chef who saw something in him when he was just 15 that he never really saw in himself.

After finishing his apprenticeship, he went to college one day a week for eight years – four years at Great Yarmouth, four at City College Norwich - honing the skills he would use for the rest of his career and then learning how to teach. It was at The Imperial where Richard met his first wife Sue, another Fenland expat: the couple married when Richard was 21 and first daughter Alison was born in 1985, followed two years later by Stacey, his beloved girls, his absolute pride and joy.

After six years at The Imperial, Richard was offered the chance to run the hotel's prestigious Rambouillet Room restaurant, but by then his feet were beginning to itch and at the age of 25, he began to apply for other jobs.

One was The Castle Hotel at Taunton, a head chef role he turned down because the manager wanted an immediate start and he would not leave without notice. That role went to some other bloke on The Castle's list: Gary Rhodes.

He did take the next job – which he hated and which he said was so brutal that it taught him how NEVER to treat staff – as head chef at the Michelin-starred Rookery Hall at Nantwich but returned to Norfolk as soon as he could. There followed stints at South Walsham Hall, The Friendly Hotel, The Ritz and Norwich Theatre Royal where he learnt showmanship from impresario Dick Condon. He also started teaching at Norwich City College.

Richard's first lesson was when he stood in for his tutor, who gave him £35 and told him he just needed to follow a pre-written module. Fresh from a shift at the Theatre, he looked at the lesson plan as he walked into the classroom: it was at this point he realised he would be teaching pupils how to bake sponge cakes: something he'd never done.



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Faced with a group of around 15 members of a local Women's Institute, it took five minutes for the women to realise he had no clue what he was doing. One woman stopped him, took over and told him to sit down, watch her and learn how to cook. It did get better. Eventually.

By his late teens, Richard had set himself a goal: to open a restaurant by the time he was 30 – and he did, with two whole days to spare. Richard and Sue opened Number 24 in Wymondham in 1991 after a long search for the perfect property that ended with a search for, as he put it, “the only thing we could afford”. Alison and Stacey were, by this point, six and four. After re-mortgaging the family home, furnishing the restaurant with patio sets and calling on the skills of his seamstress Mum and practical Dad and brothers, Number 24 opened with a princely £64 left to spare.

Number 24 was a big success and Richard's name became well-known. He entered National Chef of the Year and got through to the finals three times in a row, was given a column in The Caterer, had a slot on Radio Norfolk and TV work was coming in: he was also fully-booked at the restaurant and busy with outside catering jobs.

As he drove home from catering for a wedding, he passed The Old Beams restaurant in Brundall and noticed it was for sale – within weeks, heaven and earth were moved and the 16<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottage he'd fallen in love with had been bought. In the winter of 2002, Richard and Sue opened The Lavender House to instant acclaim.

An obsession with what top chefs were doing led to a series of innovations at The Lavender House: the first kitchen table in Norfolk where diners could watch chefs at work, regular fact-finding trips to London, the publication of his first books, the appearance on TV with Rick Stein, the opening of The Richard Hughes Cookery School.

In 2012, the cookery school won the inaugural British Cookery School of the Year, beating Gordon Ramsay, Leiths Cookery School and Rosemary Shrager: it was a career highlight in a lifetime filled with awards and plaudits.

After separating from Sue, Richard moved to Brundall in a flat he shared with Stacey. He was approached by Norfolk entrepreneur Iain Wilson and, after some work in the kitchens at Byfords, the pair took on The Pigs at Edgefield, a pub which introduced Norfolk to the five-mile menu, the Pudding Table and a barter scheme.

In 2009, Richard and Iain were approached by The Assembly House Trust to take over Norwich's most beautiful house which at that point was making a huge loss and was in danger of closing its doors. It took eight years before either Richard or Iain would see a penny from The Assembly House, but both were determined to bring it back to its former glory.

He and second wife Stacia met when she was begrudgingly sent for a cookery class at The Lavender House's new Cookery School by the features' editor at the Eastern Daily Press. It was the start of a true love story that surprised them both: the man who said he had no time for a relationship with the woman who said she would never marry: the pair quickly moved in together with Stacia's children Ruby and Cole and married in 2016.

Having sold his share of The Pigs to Iain, he closed The Lavender House in 2017 and moved the cookery school to The Assembly House, where he was finally able to enjoy life a little bit more: holidays in France, renovating two houses with Stacia, spending time with his family and in particular his beloved grandsons Isaac, Miles and Bennett.

At The Assembly House, and with a team that included many staff who had worked with him since the days of Number 24 and The Lavender House, Richard created a business that won national and international acclaim. As he always had, he loved coming to work. He loved his team, he loved his customers, he loved being in hospitality to his very core: no one could charm a customer like Richard.

Diagnosed after the first lockdown with the illness he would live with until September 1, he worked throughout and continued to drive his businesses forward, encourage the next generation into the hospitality industry and do his best to help as many people as he could. Richard was still working three days before he died, writing the menus that thousands of Assembly House customers will enjoy over the next five years, ensuring the succession plan he had put in place last year was perfect.

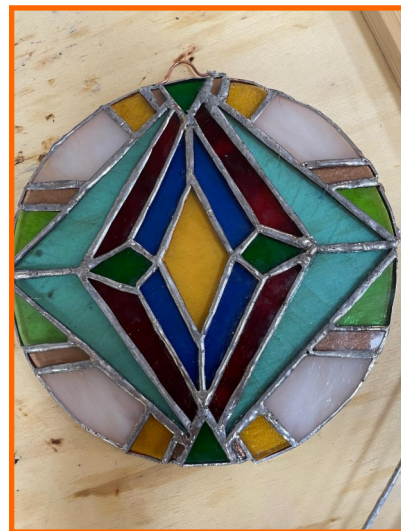
Richard will always be the head of his family and at the heart of The Assembly House – he was loving, clever, talented, funny, kind, generous, could swear for Britain...the list is endless. But most of all, he was such a good man. A really, really good man.

At his funeral, Richard asked that donations in his memory could be made to benefit the Church of Christ in Christchurch where his Mum and Dad rest.

You can donate here: <https://richard-hughes4.muchloved.com/Fundraising>



# Christchurch Craft and Hobby Club



Over the last few months, some of the members of the Christchurch Craft and Hobbies Club have participated in our 'Introduction to Working with Stained Glass' course. They have learnt the basic skills of cutting glass, and the copper foil technique which allows us to join the glass together. This was popularised by Tiffany and can be used to create a variety of pieces e.g. sun catchers, lampshades, etc.

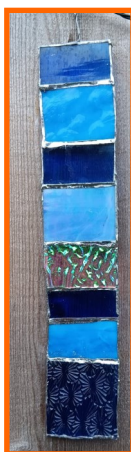
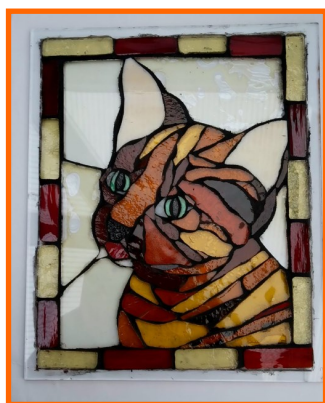
They have also learned glass appliqué, which is where stained glass pieces are stuck on a plain glass base to form a pattern or picture. This is very similar to mosaics, but the end result is transparent and can then be used as a window pane in a door or as a decorative picture, etc.

The course has proven to be great fun amongst those taking part, and a unique immersive experience, which is always firing the imagination for future projects, along with testing skills along the way.

Anyone interested in joining...the course is over 4 days, 10.00am to 1-00pm (total 12 hrs), with coffee/tea and a buffet lunch included, and is held on Tuesday mornings at Christchurch Community Centre. All necessary equipment is provided and we are a friendly bunch.

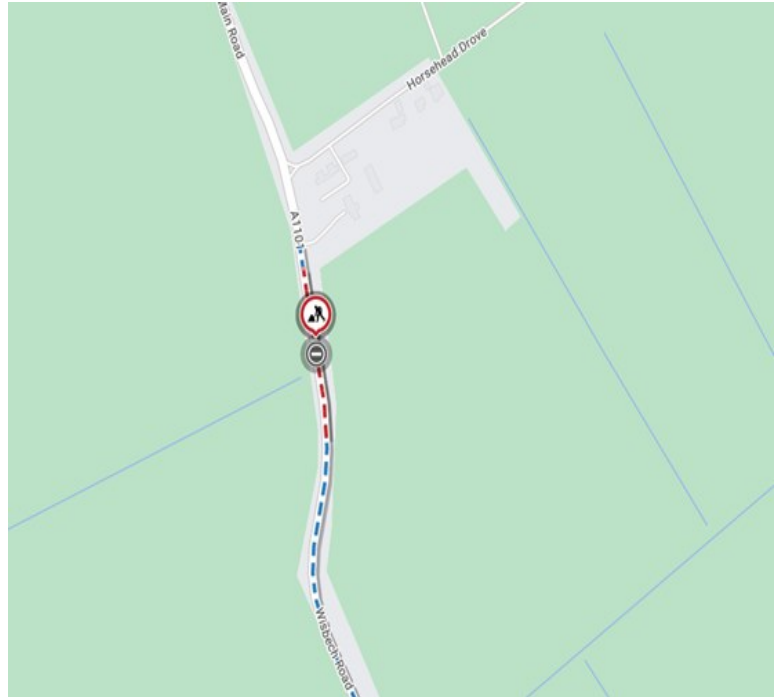
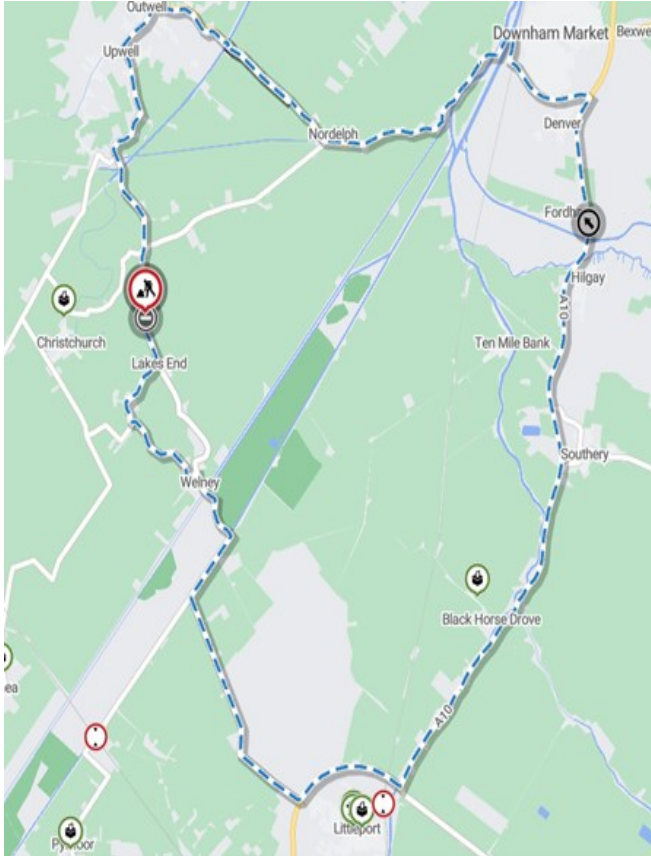
The cost for a 4 day course is £85 at this time though the cost is to be reviewed in the New Year. The fee will cover all materials and use of equipment needed during the course.

For further details please contact Janet Harper 07941 465319.



# Road Closure

Norfolk County Council proposes to make a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (the “Order”) (WTRO5366) affecting the A1101 Main Road from 500m south of its junction with Horsehead Drive for 100m southwards (the “Road”) in the Parish of Upwell to facilitate Norfolk County Council carriageway resurfacing works, the Road will be temporarily closed (except for pedestrian access) for the duration of the works/period the closure is necessary which is anticipated to be from 2nd to 6th December 2024, but may continue to be closed until the 17th January 2025 where the closure is still required beyond the anticipated dates.



Vehicular access will be permitted to a final destination in the Road where signs indicating such access is possible and permitted are in place.

The Order shall automatically revoke on the completion of the works when the closure is no longer necessary or otherwise on the 17th January 2025 without further notice.

If necessary, the restriction could run for a maximum period of 18 months from the date the Order is effective.

Alternative route is via: A1101 Main Road/ Wisbech Road/ March Road/New Road/Main Street/Wash Road/ Suspension Bridge/Bates Drove/Wisbech Road, A10 Lynn Road/Ferry Bank/ Southery Bypass/Fordham Bypass/A1122 Southern Bypass, Western Bypass A1122, Station Road, Bridge Road, Lady Drove, Downham Road, Outwell Road, Well Creek Road, Church Terrace, Rectory Road, Town Street, Townsend Road (West Downham, Nordelph, Denver, Downham Market, Southery, Christchurch, Littleport, Hilgay, Fordham, Ryston Welney, Outwell, Upwell).

A person who contravenes, or who uses or permits the use of a vehicle in contravention of the closure imposed by the Order shall be guilty of an offence with a penalty of £1000 maximum fine on conviction and/or endorsement for contravention.

In the event of the start date being delayed the new start date will be displayed on site in advance.

Full details on the closure are available at <https://one.network>.



BENWICK | CHRISTCHURCH | DODDINGTON | MANEA | WELNEY | WIMBLINGTON

Hi there!

My name is Mark Collinson and I'm the new Rector of the Six Fen Churches, of Christchurch, Doddington with Benwick, Manea, Welney and Wimblington. My wife, Sue, is a Licensed Lay Minister and she will be serving these communities as a volunteer. As newbies to the area we are discovering more about life in the Fens.

So what have we discovered?

Everyone is very friendly and smiley! As I left my house one morning all I could see was happy smiling children and parents taking their kids to school. If you see me in the street wearing my dog-collar do say 'Hi' as I'd love to meet you. I also had lunch recently after a service in the Dun Cow and received a warm welcome.

It's flat. Yes, I know you know it, but for a newcomer it's flat - apart from the bumpy roads, which, thankfully have been attended to by the Council recently. We lived in Amsterdam in the Netherlands for fourteen years, and that's where we brought up our two children, Izzy and Sam. So the Fens feel very familiar with wide open fields and no fences, just ditches, and big skies where you see the sun striking the clouds with the most amazing colours.

So why are we here? We are here because we believe that the church should be a place where everyone can belong. When Jesus walked this earth, he didn't discriminate between who he healed, or

helped. Everyone got to taste the power of his preaching, or the wholeness of his touch.

We believe that Jesus is speaking to you in the village today, without even coming to church. Jesus may be giving you a dream about himself which left you feeling secure and comforted. Jesus may be prompting you to think about phoning someone you've not been in touch with recently. Jesus may be encouraging you to say sorry to repair a broken relationship. We want to help you get to know this Jesus, so the church can be a centre of spiritual wellbeing, from which we become more of who God wants us to be - in heart, body, mind, and spirit.

If you want to get in touch, to arrange a baptism, wedding or a funeral, or simply to ask for a prayer or blessing please call me on 0787 4847 157 or email [mark.6fenchurches@gmail.com](mailto:mark.6fenchurches@gmail.com)



+

SIXFENCHURCHES

|



## MAGPIE CENTRE NEWS

By now, our thoughts are firmly focused on Christmas once again but looking towards the New Year, it's time to get organised with a 2025 Magpie Centre calendar, which depicts our lovely horses and ponies in action. Priced at £9.99 each, these are available from the Magpie Centre, Wallington Hall, South Runcton, PE33 0EP. Tel: 01553 810202.

November saw the start of the Magpie Centre's Learning Through Riding programme for home-schooled children, many of whom have learning disabilities. This project has been hugely helped by a grant of £80,000 a year for three years from the National Lottery Community Fund. Parents of home-

schooled children who feel their child would benefit from being part of the Magpie Centre's community of horse lovers are welcome to contact the Centre to find out more.

After a busy summer, Tea With a Pony has closed for the winter, and is due to recommence in April 2025. This activity is designed for older people to meet, socialise and greet one of our ponies in the Magpie Centre's wheelchair-accessible sensory garden at Wallington Hall. It may be of particular interest to care home Activities Organisers, seeking new opportunities for their service users. Tea With a Pony takes place every Wednesday 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm from April to October and costs £6.00 per person. Book through the Magpie Centre on 01553 810202.

Wishing all readers a very Merry Christmas and thanks for your support in 2024.

# **UPWELL (CAMBRIDGE) CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES**

Registered Charity No 203558  
(Former Isle part of the Parish)

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## **DOLE DISTRIBUTION**

THE TRUSTEES ANNOUNCE THAT THE ANNUAL  
DISTRIBUTION WILL BE HELD ON

**FRIDAY**

**6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

AT

**CHRISTCHURCH  
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Between 2.00 and 3.00pm

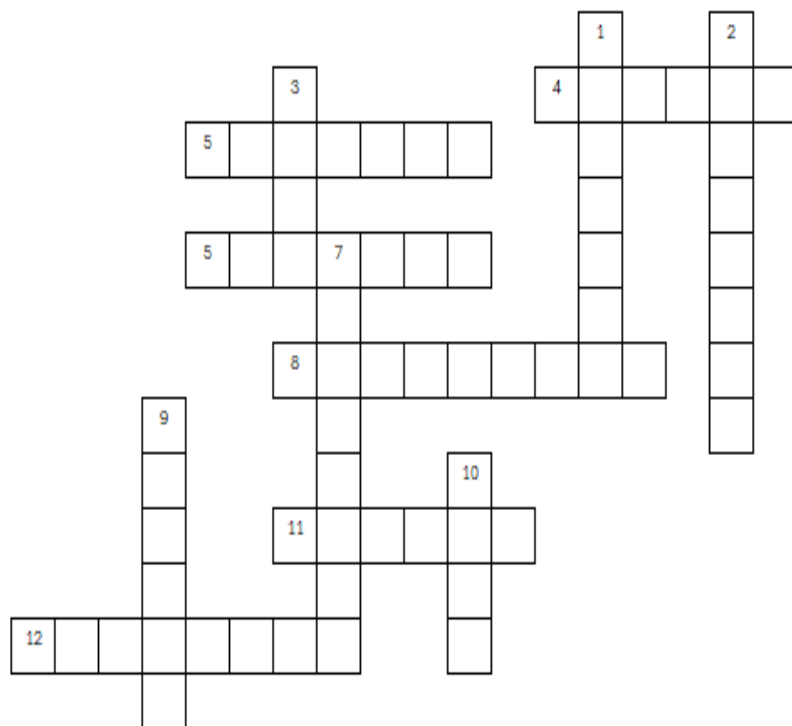
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The aged and infirm will receive the first consideration.  
No able bodied man or woman under 65 need apply.  
ONLY those resident in the Parish for at least five years  
will be considered.

Further information may be obtained from :-  
Mrs J Bliss - Christchurch - 01354 638343

# Winter Crossword

(Answers on page 26)



Down

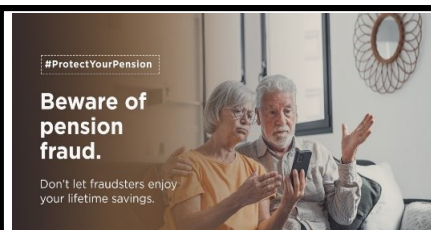
1. A large piece of woollen or similar material used as a covering on a bed or elsewhere for warmth
2. The twelfth month of the year in the Northern Hemisphere usually considered the first month of Winter
3. Burning
7. A severe snowstorm with high winds
9. Shake slightly and uncontrollably as a result of being cold
10. Make or become liquified by heat

Across

4. A covering for the hand - worn for protection against cold or dirt
5. A vertical channel or pipe which conducts smoke and gasses from a fire or furnace, typically through the roof
6. A large floating mass of ice detached from a glacier or ice sheet
8. Spend the winter in a dormant state
11. An outer garment extending either to the waist or hips, fastening down the front
12. Wood that is burnt as Fuel

## Brain Teasers

1. What type of Cheese is made backwards?
2. What is full of holes but still holds water?
3. What 5 letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
4. A plane crashed between the border of France and Belgium. Where were the survivors buried?
5. Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain?
6. What is the ending of everything?
7. A red house is made from red bricks. A blue house is made from blue bricks. A yellow house is made from yellow bricks. What is a green house made from?
8. You have a 7-minute hourglass and an 11-minute hourglass, how can you boil an egg in exactly 15 minutes?



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## Protect your Pension

**Action Fraud is warning savers to stay vigilant and protect their pensions and investments from fraudsters trying to trick people out of their lifetime savings, as new data reveals £17.7 million lost to pension fraud last year.**

There were 559 reports of pension fraud in total and £17,750,635 lost in 2023, with an average loss of £46,959 per person.

Action Fraud, the national fraud and cybercrime reporting service, has launched a pension fraud awareness campaign, warning people to protect their pension pots and investments from fraudsters, by encouraging the public to do their research before making changes to pension arrangements.

Unexpected and unsolicited offers, free pension reviews, promises of high returns which sound too good to be true and pressure to make a decision quickly are all warning signs of scam. Use the information and tools on the FCA Website to protect yourself and your retirement.



## Christchurch Gardening Club - We're Back!

In fact, the Club has been very busy. Beginning in February with the AGM, where the committee was returned unchanged. March saw Gary Wilmot enlightening the members with tales of developing a small holding in Wales. Swiftly followed in April by David Reeve, who kept us all enthralled with stories of protecting The Royal family. May featured a very special night for the Club when Norfolk Owls came to visit. A memorable evening for all who were present.

The Club's Summer Buffett followed in June, where the members gathered to eat, drink and be merry - not too merry though.

The Gault Woodland Trust was well represented by Joan and Richard Munns, who gave us chapter and verse on the work of the trust.

A welcome visit from one of the Club's longtime friends in August featured Mary from Manea, who talked about succulents. A new friend arrived at the Club in the shape of Philippa Pearson in September, giving tips on Garden Design.

October featured "The Gardening Man", Graham Chappell, with a slide show on clearing and maintaining gardens.

The Club's final meeting of the year was in November, which this year took place at Deweys Diner in Wisbech, where we all enjoyed a very good meal, the diner's owner, Trevor, did us proud with an excellent carvery. Some cool jazz arrangements of well-known tunes were provided live by Steve Waye. A really nice way to round off the year.

The Club reconvenes on Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Community Centre.

Steve

## Christchurch Hobby and Craft Club

**Every Tuesday  
10.00 AM- 1.00 PM**

**Christchurch Community Centre**

Bring your art, craft or hobby along to the club to work on and share with like-minded friends.

Maybe you will introduce us to something new or find something you would like to try, i.e. artwork, needlework, crochet, card making, Lego, or maybe there is a jigsaw puzzle looking for someone to finish while you are thinking of what to start.

Interested?

Contact Janet Harper on 07941 465319 or Pat Rigby on 07776 142642

## COFFEE/LUNCH BREAK

– on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of every month.

**Come for coffee, or come with your own lunch and stay awhile.**

**11am – 1pm in the Community Centre – a warm place!**

**December 2024 dates:** Weds Dec 4<sup>th</sup>; Weds Dec 18<sup>th</sup>  
**January 2025:** Just one in January... Weds 15<sup>th</sup> ... see below ...

***We are starting the year off with a Double "Big Birthday" Party.***

***Gwyneth celebrates her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in February; Annie celebrates her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday later in January.***

***Please – no presents except YOUR PRESENCE.***

Everyone is invited! Have coffee and cake, and join in a bring-and-share Lunch. Bring a savoury dish to share, and enjoy!



## Evil Soduko

	2			1			8	
		6					3	
4			5			6		1
	7		4					
							1	
		8		5		9		2
						3		
8					9			
		9		2		5		6

Solution on Page 26



## Indoor Short Mat Bowls

New club meeting every Monday 7-9pm at Christchurch Community Centre.

ALL WELCOME! (Spare bowls available to loan.)

For further details call Janet Harper on 07941 465319.



## Christchurch Book Club

Welcome back to The Christchurch Book Club! We have still been meeting each month to discuss the books we have been reading, the most recent ones being Half a World Away by Mike Gayle which was a good book and one to read with tissues at the ready, and we are currently reading The Snakes by Sadie Jones.

Our next book will be The Farmer's Wife by Helen Rebanks which is a good read and true to type according to one of our club members and she should know!

New members are always welcome. For further details or if you would like to come along to the next meeting, which is usually the first Tuesday of every month, and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.



Since the last issue of the Heron the WI has enjoyed a variety of speakers from keeping Safe from Scamming, Lowland

Rescue (Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue), The Life of a Bee and the Honey it Provides, and the Hedgehog Hotel Rescue Centre. All proved interesting and enlightening. At the November meeting we made paper flowers following instructions given by one of our members Linda Jack, this was a very enjoyable evening.

Looking towards 2025 we have an open afternoon.

## Woodturning for All

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Learning about this fascinating Craft and a  
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**Wednesday February 26<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**2pm start – 4pm**

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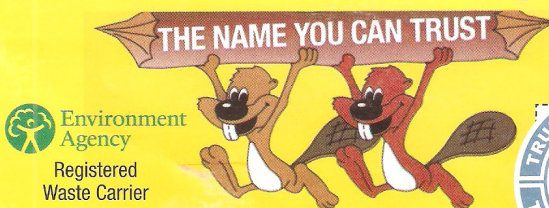
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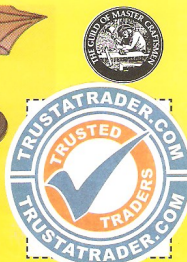
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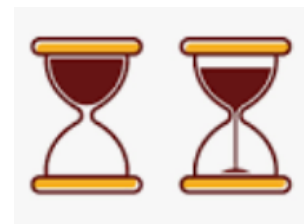
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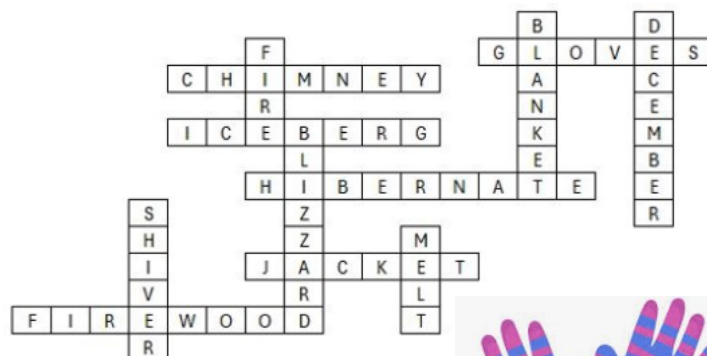
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## Brain Teaser Answers

1. Edam
2. A sponge
3. Short
4. They weren't. Survivors don't need to be buried.
5. Mount Everest – it just hadn't been discovered yet.
6. The letter "G"
7. Glass
8. Start both hourglasses as you start boiling the egg. After the 7-minute hourglass runs out, turn it over to start it again. Four minutes later, when the 11-minute hourglass runs out, turn the 7-minute hourglass again, wait for this to run out, which will take another 4 minutes and you are at 15 minutes.



## Winter Crossword Solution



# Thermal Imaging for a cosier home



Cambridge Carbon Footprint are once again delighted to offer to residents, and organizations, across Cambridge and South Cambs the opportunity to borrow and learn how to use a thermal imaging camera for free, to help create cozier and more efficient homes. Learn how to interpret thermal images, to identify draughts, gaps in insulation, heating problems, etc. Knowing where your home is losing heat is great for deciding on home improvements, and making fixes, both for homeowners and renters. In their last borrowing period between November '23 and April '24 they successfully trained over 600 individuals and made over 400 thermal camera loans to residents across our region.

***“really useful tool for assessing the home’s heat loss and for planning improvements” - Borrower***

They also encourage individuals or organizations to undertake training in order to survey multiple homes. In 2024 volunteers from communities across Cambridgeshire undertook surveys of 113 neighbouring homes and community buildings.

## Training Sessions:

**Free** training sessions will take place online from 7:30-9:00 pm on: Wed 11 Dec, Tue 14 Jan, Wed 12 Feb – go to <https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/events/> and look for the Thermal Imaging Training.

## Camera Borrowing:

**We only lend cameras to people who have attended the training.** Bookings are now open. **Free** Loans of cameras are through to April: Each loan: Fri pm to Mon am, or Mon pm to Fri am, from 14 volunteer camera hosts around South Cambs and Cambridge City.



***An excellent scheme - very much appreciate the opportunity to borrow the camera -thank you!***

## A few pictures from the 2024 car shows:



# Our Editor Got Married!



So, part of the reason you haven't seen the Heron for a while is because your editor (ie. me) decided to go off and get married. Having seen the hard work involved in Tracy helping to arrange her daughter's wedding, we thought we'd take the easy option and go off and get married on our own, and to make sure that no one would even dream of complicating matters, and after the seed of the idea being placed during a conversation with friends of ours, we decided that we'd get married in St Lucia. After about half a dozen emails, plus a video call to the photographer, that was it.... all arranged.

We were repeatedly advised/reminded by the organiser that we needed to consider the weather, which would be extremely hot and humid (the hottest part of the year, and the hottest part of the day), so make sure we chose our attire accordingly. For me, that was easy – cotton and linen would be comfortable, and reasonably cool. I had to trust that Tracy (and more importantly, her daughters, who were helping her to choose a dress) would be equally sensible.

So we arrived at St Lucia a week early, as we had been instructed we needed to do in order to get the paperwork sorted for the wedding, which was done with no problem, while we set about enjoying our pre-wedding holiday exploring the island in a hire car (they do have some roads which reminded us of the state of our local roads), and we enjoyed a beautiful holiday – until (for a reason I can't remember) I looked at my weather app and noticed that there was a storm building a long way to the east. The day after, when I looked, it had developed into a tropical storm and then into Hurricane Beryl, and now had a path – and we were in the way of it! So, the couple of days pre wedding were partly taken by weather watching, and on the day itself, we arranged for the wedding to be brought forward by an hour to keep ahead of the weather – no problem, except the registrar got caught

up in traffic from the evacuation in the nearby town, so our wedding was back on at the original arranged time of 2pm. So instead of the hot and humid weather we had been warned about, in the space of our 30 minute ceremony, we had torrential rain, thunder, more rain (the registrar asked us if we wanted to hold off for a while, but we decided it was what it was, and to continue) – and then glorious sunshine and the most beautiful setting we could hope for.

The day after the wedding, we were confined to our lodge (by order of the government) while the hurricane passed, and then we had another week just chilling and enjoying the start of married life, before returning home, and the start of the post wedding celebrations, with friends, then my family, and culminating 3 months later with a celebration with Tracy's family plus local friends – who would have thought that we would be surfing in Christchurch Community Centre while listening to Hawaii 5-0 played on the Ukulele, and I'm sure that everyone there will remember Delilah for a long time to come.

One final thought – I think we have our own definition of a whirlwind marriage. Before I met Tracy, she was in the Dominican Republic and trapped by Hurricane Irma. Not long after we met, we went on holiday to Iceland, and as we landed, they shut the airport for 2 days as bad weather descended, and now we've been through Hurricane Beryl, so who knows what weather we have ahead of us. I attribute this to Tracy (because I wasn't there for Hurricane Irma) but whatever it is, we'll manage it together.

Clive Benjamin



*Clive & Tracy "surfing" at their post wedding bash at the Community Centre*

Any views expressed in The Heron do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heron Editorial Team. The team aim to provide a balanced view of village opinions where such views are expressed. We reserve the right to edit any submissions where we feel this is appropriate.



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