



The Heron

Community Magazine

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End

April 2025

Sewage Treatment Plant Plans Proposed on Old Roffco Works Site

-Full story on page 11-



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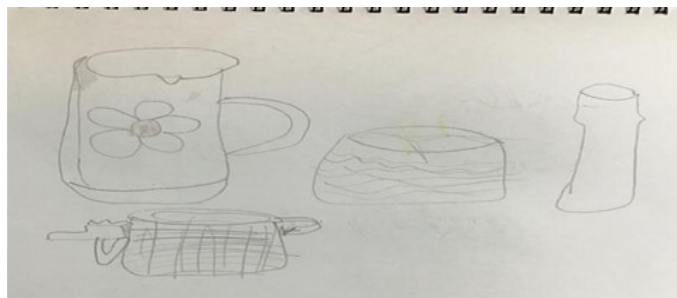
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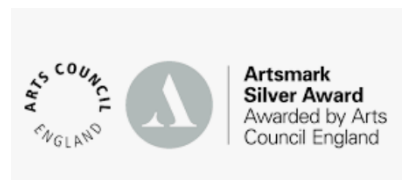
We are delighted to have achieved the Silver Artsmark Award!

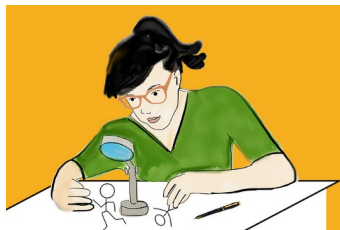
“Townley Primary’s first Artsmark journey has done much to establish the place of the arts within the life of the school and the children’s learning. You recognise the contribution that the arts make to pupil and staff wellbeing and your developments have led to tangible improvements in pupils’ engagement, enjoyment of learning and attendance. You have developed your Art and Music curriculum in particular, now providing a clearer skills progression and also introducing pupils to a more diverse range of artists.”

Artsmark feedback 2025



Remember that you can find out more about us on our website or Facebook page. If you are thinking of applying for a place at our school and would like to more, call and make an appointment, we would love to show you around.





Are you a Doodler?

At a recent meeting for the Heron, I noticed that one of our team had produced an elaborate doodle (which I thought I'd kept, but sadly not), and this reminded me of someone I used to work for a number of years ago – when she came out of a meeting, I had learned to look at her notepad – if the doodles were rounded and free flowing, then the meeting had gone well, but if they were sharp and jagged, it was best to keep out of her way for an hour or so. I will add that she was a great manager, and this was simply a way of unconsciously expressing her frustration during the meeting. It did make me wonder if there was any science behind doodling, and of course the internet came to my rescue.

There is science that proves doodles aren't silly, nor are they a sign of lower intelligence. In fact, doodles are evidence that you are smarter, more analytical, and better focused than your non-doodling colleagues.

When researchers looked inside the brains of people who were doodling, colouring and free drawing, using functional near-infrared spectroscopy (FNIRS), they found that all three activated the prefrontal cortex.

This is the part of the brain involved in managing your ability to problem-solve, reason, use logic, and remember things. It's also the part of the brain you use to direct your attention, which is serious business when it comes to staying focused in conference rooms, classrooms, or even on that boring teleconference where Joe is going over the very same thing he presented last week. All of those hearts, flowers, and stick people were busy firing up neurons and increasing blood flow. According to research, when participants monitored a monotonous mock telephone message for the names of people coming to a party, the doodling group performed better on the monitoring task and recalled 29% more information on a surprise memory test than those who didn't doodle. This is evidence that doodling isn't a sign of a distracted brain. Instead, it is the useful tool of a brain that is trying to stay focused. Doodling keeps your brain connected enough to the task at hand that it doesn't skip off to other, more fanciful, lines of thought when the current task is boring.

Scribbling notes longhand improves cognition

A study found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. While the researchers found that taking more notes can be beneficial, the laptop note takers tended to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing the information. Longhand notes resulted in better cognition as students reframed ideas in their own words and had the capacity to diagram.

Taking notes longhand is more than just recording information. There is valuable thinking that happens as you do it — and that processing helps with memory and understanding.

In a research study with over 1,000 participants, it turned out that doodlers weren't confined to jobs in design or the arts, a full 86% of the computer and information employees said they doodle, which smashed the stereotype that doodling is for designers and artists alone.

Speaking of serious jobs, did you know that even president's doodle? An article in The Atlantic reports on doodles from President's from Thomas Jefferson to George HW Bush. (Andrew Jackson's alligator was particularly entertaining.)

The point is that if both information and heads of state can doodle — some on letterhead with an official looking national seal — your marked-up agenda margins are in good company. And finally, there is scientific evidence that I should continue to use a fountain pen in meetings instead of a computer.

Extracted from an article by Cathy Hutchison <https://cathyhutchison.medium.com/to-doodle-or-not-to-doodle-science-says-doodlers-brains-are-smarter-and-sharper-40ee9f27d5aa>



Heron Annual Plant Sale
Sunday 11th May 2025
Christchurch Community Centre
Garden (Bowling Green)
10.00am to 2.00pm

This is our annual fundraising plant sale, please come and support us.

If you have any spare plants, pots, planters or good quality gardening equipment that you would be willing to donate - or anything suitable as a raffle prize - we would be happy to receive it.

Please contact Sandra on 01354 638478 for further information.

All proceeds raised go towards keeping your magazine in production.

Advertising in the Heron

Quarter Page (14cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Portrait Format

6 x issues £52 (1 year)

Eighth Page (6.5cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Landscape Format

6 x issues £36 (1 year)

Please contact 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. Business advertisers can book a series of 6 adverts (for 1 year's worth of advertising), paid in advance. Adverts for village fundraising events, personal announcements, or small private ads are usually free.

Diary Dates

Tue 1st Apr	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 1st Apr	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Fri 4th Apr	Fairytale Proms at Ely Cathedral	8:50pm - 10pm	Ely cathedral
Sun 6th Apr	Welle Cinema - One Life	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Tue 8th Apr	Women's Circle - Pudding Evening	7pm	CCC
Sat 12th Apr	Beetle Drive	3pm	CCC
Mon 14th Apr	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Wed 16th Apr	Rearranged - Woodturning for All	2pm - 4pm	CCC
Sun 4th May	Welle Cinema - Firebrand	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Tue 6th May	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 6th May	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Sun 11th May	Heron Annual Plant Sale	10-2pm	CCC Garden
Mon 12th May	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Tue 13th May	Women's Circle - Brian Bignell	7pm	CCC
Wed 28th May	Board Game & Jigsaw Afternoon	12-4.30pm	CCC
Sun 1st June	Welle Cinema - Conclave	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Sun 22nd June	Open Gardens	TBC	CCC for Tea & Cake
Regular Weekly			
Monday	Short Mat Bowls	7pm - 9pm	CCC
Tuesday	Hobby & Craft Club	10am - 1pm	CCC
Sunday	Car Boot Sale	8am - 12pm	Skylark Garden Centre
Wednesday	Chair Based Exercise	10am - 10:50am	CCC - 07880543821
Thursday	Cake, Coffee & Chat	1:30pm - 3:30pm	CCC
Thursday	Car Boot Sale	9am onwards (buyers)	Upwell Field
Friday	Christchurch Umbrella Breakfast	9:30am - 11:30am	CCC
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu	Mobile Post Office	4:10pm - 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

Hello, and welcome to the March/April edition of the Heron.

Firstly, we would like to offer our condolences to Julie Buckley's family and friends at what must be an extremely difficult time for them.

This is also a reminder to please look out for your neighbours – this is a small community and the feeling of caring for others in the village is one of the attractions of living here. I am sure that more details will come out in time, and I would like to thank the admins of the local Facebook group for keeping on top of postings (and membership requests) to keep speculation and misinformation to a minimum.

With regards to the hare coursing that took place a few weeks back - the opinion of most, at the meeting I attended in Manea the following Monday, was that the hare coursing was simply an excuse to terrorise those villages concerned. The last account I saw was that 23 individuals had been arrested, from quite a widespread area, so the police have thankfully been hard at work investigating this incident.

I attended the Golden Age event in Friday Bridge, and was amazed by how busy this was and the number of organisations that were represented there that can really make a difference, including AgeUK, Independent Age, Citizens Advice, Ramblers, NHS and Cambridgeshire Council. If you can attend these fairs, I would highly recommend it, the next event is Friday, June 20, 10am to 1pm, at Manor Leisure Centre, Station Road, Whittlesey, PE7 1UA, more details on here: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage> Following on from this, Tracy and I volunteered for a research project for Dementia, and had a brilliant 2 or 3 hours at Fulbourn Hospital – more on this to follow as they would like more volunteers.

It's coming up to that time of year again and we are pleased to announce our annual plant sale fundraiser on Sunday 11th May. This year we are planning to have it on the old Bowling Green at the Community Centre. We are keeping everything crossed for a nice, warm and sunny day (see page 3 for more details)!

Clive Benjamin

Copy Deadline - The deadline for copy for the June edition of the Heron is 16th May.

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

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 and we will send them a subscription form.

The cost is £15.00 for 6 editions (including P&P).

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Website: www.theheron.info

Volunteers wanted to support programme of free and low-cost social and fitness sessions for all in Fenland

Volunteers are being sought to help lead a new free sports reminiscence-based group for older people - the latest addition to a programme of free and low-cost exercise and wellbeing classes for all ages in Fenland.

In a separate addition, a specialist exercise group for people with diabetes is being offered. The full Fenland District Council Active Fenland programme, open to all in Fenland, includes everything from kickboxing for beginners to dementia-friendly seated exercise.

Volunteers are sought for a new 'Sporting Memories' group in Whittlesey. It will allow older people with an interest in sport to come together weekly for two hours. The session will include an hour of relaxed chat, which can include quizzes and fun activities such as 'spot the ball', free refreshments and an hour of light physical exercise such as kurling, chair-based exercise or boccia.

The group is for anyone aged 50-plus, including those living with dementia or other long-term health conditions. Active Fenland is supporting the project which is led by the Sporting Memories charity.

Volunteers are sought to support or run the session, which is expected to be held 1pm to 3pm

Wednesdays. Volunteers do not need to be available to attend every week. Training and support is provided.

Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Fenland District Council's portfolio holder for leisure, said: "Active Fenland prides itself on offering a diverse range of free and low-cost exercise and wellbeing activities for people across the district.

"We're delighted to see these new offers added.

"We look forward to seeing people reap the rewards of the Sporting Memories group and know the joy it brings will not only extend to those who attend, but to the volunteers who deliver it too. We repeatedly hear the huge benefits of self-worth and purpose volunteers feel for getting involved — and we're so thankful for that because without them these things could not happen."



Active Fenland secures grant funding to provide opportunities for people to live more active lives, especially where they might face additional barriers to do so.

Activities are offered at venues across the district.

A new exercise class specifically for people with diabetes, takes place 12.30pm to 1.30pm, Tuesdays, £3 per session, at Hudson Leisure Centre, Harecroft Road, Wisbech, PE13 1RL. Book and pay at leisure centre.

To find out more about volunteering with Sporting Memories email Kelly.hart@sportingmemories.uk Find the full Active Fenland programme at: www.fenland.gov.uk/article/18370 This includes activities in: Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech, wider Fenland and home-based.



Reports of 'Nottingham Knockers' in Fenland

Police are warning members of the public to be vigilant following reports of door-to-door scam sales in Fenland.

Between 13th and 15th January, there have been 13 reports made of men knocking on doors, telling residents they have recently been released from prison and are selling goods to raise much needed funds.

Two people have handed over money to these salesmen, with one paying £500 using a combination of cash and bank transfer.

Sergeant David Arnold, from the Wisbech Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), said: "We are aware that there has been information shared on social media about these 'Nottingham Knockers' who have been targeting homes across Fenland.

"We believe there might be other people in the area who have been approached but not reported to us – this could be for many reasons, such as money wasn't handed over or people may feel embarrassed to have fallen victim to these scams.

Anyone with information or concerns about door-to-door scams in Fenland should [contact us online](#) or use our [web chat service](#). Those without internet access should call 101.

Your Letters

OOPS. Sorry!

Being 80, I may well be older, but obviously not much wiser as the years go by. Sigh.

In the last edition of the Heron, I said “the Romans conquered Britain getting on for 1,000 years ago”. I was thinking of the Norman Conquest 1066 and all that. Had I been talking about the Roman Conquest, that figure would have been getting on for 2,000 years agoAD 43.

I am sure you all spotted the mistake Begging your pardon.

Annie Nason



In partnership with

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

Have you been affected by cancer?

New support group and one-to-one support now available in Fenland



Local charity, Cambridgeshire ACRE, is running a new project aimed at increasing cancer survival rates and improving the lives of people living in Fenland.

The project offers several new activities for people affected by cancer, whether as a patient themselves or as a family member of someone affected by cancer:

- Frank About Cancer is a small peer support group of people in similar situation, which gathers in a confidential space at March Library's Wordsworth Room every fourth Wednesday of the month from 10.15am – 11.45am. We know that it's often easier to talk through your worries with someone outside of your family, so please do come along to join us.
- Our specially trained Macmillan Village Agents, Magda and Kathy, are also happy to help you find answers to your questions about cancer if you visit their drop-in, also on the fourth Wednesday of the month, at March Library, from 12pm - 1pm.
- You can also arrange a 1:1 chat with a Macmillan Village Agent in your home, over the phone or even at a local café if you prefer. Macmillan Village Agents can give tailored support and are available to talk through any worries you might have.
- And finally, we are recruiting volunteer Community Cancer Champions who will support us with this project by talking about cancer in their own communities, helping to raise awareness of its signs and symptoms. If you'd be interested in joining us, find out more at <https://campsacre.org.uk/fenland-community-cancer-champion/>

Should you have any questions, please contact the team at Cambridgeshire ACRE on 01353 860850.



Please remember that no dogs are allowed on the playing field. Thank you. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

PC Snippets

Discussed over the last 2 PCC meetings, full details of all past minutes of PCC meetings are available at <http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk/minutes/> Household items outside property in Upwell Road, there has been a partial clearance (this was at time of Feb PCC meeting) and Cllr Roy had arranged a meeting with the Clerk and Clarion Housing Group Regional Operations Office to discuss.

The Clerk reported that he has received feedback from a resident of Tipps End reporting regular short power cuts in late afternoons. Several members confirmed that they too had experienced this. The Clerk offered to raise this matter with UK Power Networks. The resident also mentioned the poor mobile telephone signal in the area. Cllr Roy explained that residents of Elm had similar experiences. Following discussions with a director of UKPN, a helicopter survey had identified faults to be rectified, particularly with trees affecting overhead power lines. A similar approach might be worthwhile for Christchurch.

Cllr Roy reminded members about the ongoing consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and encouraged them to respond. Cllr Roy is working to compile a list of smaller voluntary organisations that might benefit from advice and support. Cllr Burfield was asked to provide details of groups using the Community Centre.

Tiger bus service - The Clerk advised members that he had asked the Combined Authority whether the service would take residents to Upwell and had been told that this was outside the operating area for the service. There is no connection to the Go to Town bus services to Wisbech and Downham Market either. An email has been sent to the Combined Authority expressing the Council's concerns. It has been agreed to invite the Police Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT) to the Annual Parish Meeting to talk about their work, and also to invite the Fire Service to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.

There is a new person overseeing Community Speedwatch and other police community initiatives. A new speed

recording device is now available, being much smaller and cheaper than existing Speedwatch cameras.

Members and Residents Issues Cllr Hayes reported that there had been another incident involving Kimberlea in Crown Road. Neighbours continue to monitor the property. The village defibrillators were discussed, with only one of these being recognised on the national scheme (the one sited at the CCC), the others needing routine replacement parts and also a permanent power supply to prevent the batteries from failing due to cold weather.

Village Residents have expressed concern regarding the lack of visibility at the junction of Upwell Road and Church Road due to parked vehicles close to the corner narrowing the available road width.

Cllr Hughes reported that plans have been received for the Local Highways Improvements accident reduction scheme at the junction of Upwell Road and the Sixteen Foot Bank. Members reviewed and approved the plans. The street lights in Fen View have been replaced and the light at the rear entrance to the Recreation Ground has been moved to a less vulnerable position.

Recreation Ground - A date will be confirmed shortly for the Probation Service to bring Community Service teams to work on the Recreation Ground. The Clerk suggested that the willow branches and similar material might be formed into a large bug and small mammal hotel similar to those on the Elm Canal footpath. The Middle Level Commissioners have agreed to allow a lower specification for the culvert for the Recreation Ground Extension as it is primarily for pedestrian use.

Other matters discussed included the relocation of the Wisbech Funfair, the relaunch of the highways 20mph scheme, another successful fly-tipping prosecution, confirmation of the commitment to bus franchising and the Mayor's withdrawal from May's election, the approval of planning for Townley School's temporary building and the Cost of Living Fair.

A donation of £500 was approved to go to MAGPAS.

Extreme

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Solution on Page 12

On the 22nd June there is an Open Garden event in the village. We will be serving tea/coffee and cakes at the Christchurch Community Centre. All welcome. Details to follow.

Church News

All services are at 10.30am unless otherwise stated	
6 th April	Christchurch – Morning Prayer Doddington – Holy Communion
13 th April	Manea – Holy Communion Wimblington – Morning Prayer
17 th April (Thursday)	Agape Meal – Wimblington 6pm
18 th April (Friday)	An Hour at the Cross – Doddington 2pm
20 th April	Christchurch, Wimblington and Doddington– Easter Day Holy Communion Manea – Easter Day Holy Communion -6.30pm Welney – Easter Day Holy Communion – 3pm Benwick – Easter Day Evening Prayer – 3pm
27 th April	Manea – Morning Prayer Wimblington – Holy Communion
4 th May	Christchurch – Morning Prayer Doddington – Holy Communion
11 th May	Manea - Holy Communion Wimblington – Morning Prayer
18 th May	Christchurch – Holy Communion Doddington – Morning Prayer
25 th May	Manea – Morning Prayer Wimblington – Holy Communion

Beetle Drive and Chippy Tea Saturday 12th April - 3pm Christchurch Community Centre

Back by popular demand...
a Beetle Drive.
Loads of fun for all ages and the
chance to win prizes!
Followed by
Fish and Chips

£6.50 per person

Board Games and Jigsaw Afternoon Wednesday 28th May - 12-4.30pm (Half Term Holiday)

£2 per person

Come along and play some of your old
favourite board games or try something new.
**Children welcome but must be
accompanied by an adult.**

Children's lunch bags and other food will be
available to purchase.



Hi there! I'm so pleased to give you all an update on where we are at with the church building that gives its name to the village.

On Saturday 29th March the Parochial Church Council launched a second round of consultation with everyone in the village of Christchurch. We held a meeting at the Community Centre inviting anyone with an interest or opinions on what should happen to the church building to come along and enjoy some St David's Day tea and cake in the process.

It was a chance to remind ourselves of the history of the building, what happened in the last renovation of 1995, and what needs to be done to address the current situation. The main problem is that the original Victorian drains are beyond repair, and so rainwater isn't getting away from the building, making it damp inside. This has caused the ceiling to collapse, making the building too unsafe to use. Apart from that - it's a great building in good shape!

We also heard from Holly Robinson, who is the Historic Church Buildings Support Officer of the Diocese of Ely. She told us that funds are readily available, not least from the National Lottery Heritage Fund who are increasingly channeling resources towards church buildings. What we

need is a project team of people who are willing to work with the Parochial Church Council to scope the project, apply for funds, and make the repairs.

We are therefore looking for people who have experience in making fundraising applications, getting grants, managing projects, communicating with stakeholders, and managing a project of this size. We already have a few people who have expressed an interest and are looking for 3 or 4 more.

But more importantly, if this project is going to be a success for the next generation of villagers, we need to know how you value the building. So please fill in the survey on this QR code, or the paper survey insert with this copy of the Heron and drop it into a box in the porch of the church. We will be collecting your responses until Monday 28th April and we will publish the results of the survey in the June/July issue of the Heron. It only takes 60 seconds to fill in the survey.

Many thanks for giving this article your attention. If you want to be in touch do contact me or Helen Chappell, our churchwarden.

Canon Mark Collinson, Rector of Christchurch and the Six Fen Churches.

mark.6fenchurches@gmail.com 0787 4847 157 or
helenchappell3101@gmail.com.



Looking for somewhere to go?

What's on soon ...

Thu - Sat. 3rd-5th April, 7:30pm - **Upwell Gilbert & Sullivan Society** present Ruddigore or The Witches Curse at Upwell Methodist Church, Town Street, Upwell PE14 9DQ admission child adult £8 child £4 Tel: 07711 809536 to book.

Fri 4th April, 8:50pm **The Fairy Tale Proms, Ely Cathedral** – concert singing themes from fairytale movies – tickets from Eventbrite website or call 01353 667735 for more info.

Sat 5th April, show starts 9pm - **The New Jersey Boys Music of Frankie Valli** at GER Club, Robingoodfellows Lane, March PE15 8HS. Admission members £8, non members £10 in advance, £15 on the door. Tickets contact 01354 652335.

Sun 27th April, 10am-4pm - **St Georges Day Fayre**, March High Street. Stalls, activities in library and March museum.

Sat 10th May, Sun 11th May (extra tour 11am-1pm), Sun 15th Jun, 13th Jul, 17th Aug and 14th Sep – all days 2pm – 4:30pm - **Bourn Windmill Open Days** - see below. Contact Kate on 07926 359098 or cfm.armstrong@gmail.com

Sun 11th May, 10am-2pm **Heron Annual Plant Sale** – Christchurch Community Centre Garden (Bowling Green).

Fri 20th June, 10am to 1pm, at **Golden Age Event** at Manor Leisure Centre, Station Road, Whittlesey, PE7 1UA.

Sat 5th July, 10am onwards – **Skylark Summer Market**, Skylark Garden Centre, Wimblington, Free entry.



RARE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT BOURN WINDMILL

It is a great day out for all the family and will be of interest to all ages, young and old! Come and see the oldest windmill of its type in the country, help push it around and ride in it, enjoy tea and cake in its grounds!

First weekend opened: Saturday 10th May 2-4.30 p.m. and Sunday 11th May 11am to 4.30 p.m. Then on Sundays each month 2 - 4.30pm 15th June, 13th July, 17th August and 14th September. Lots of parking space. Sat Nav: Caxton Road, Bourn CB23 2SU. Entry is £4 per adult, £1 per child, free to members.

Bourn Mill is owned by Cambridge Past, Present & Future: the charity that protects the beauty of Cambridge, its heritage and green spaces. To join us as a member, donor or volunteer see www.cambridgeppf.org

New Small Business in the Village

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Karen Page and I have just moved to Euximoor Drove having renovated our house over the last 4 years. I have been dog grooming for more than 28 years and since I was very young my dream has been to work with dogs. I retrained when I was 30 and it has been the best thing I ever did! As you can imagine, working with dogs can be a challenge but I absolutely love it!

In addition to grooming I am a Championship show judge so I eat - sleep - and live dogs! I also breed and show Norwich Terriers, Miniature Schnauzers and Dalmatians.

Having to hand strip terriers and clip the Schnauzers means I have a lot of experience in those areas. For those that don't know, Stripping a dog is a grooming technique that involves removing excess hair from a dog's coat by hand. It's different from clipping, which only cuts the top layer of hair.

I have a Facebook page "Karens Cut and Strip" and if you wish for a realistic quote, for having your dogs groomed, please feel free to contact me or see my advert on page 16 in this magazine.



**Karen's Cut
and Strip**

Village Planning Application

An application is being made to create a satellite plant to the sewerage farm at the end of Green Lane. This new plant will be sited at the old Roffco recycling depot on Upwell Road, Christchurch.

The application, made by the Anglian Water Sewage Handling Installation Team (A.W.S.H.I.T) aims to ensure there are adequate sewage facilities for the growing village. Anglian Water is applying for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to ask for permission to build the new sewage works on this site.

Steve Reed, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is currently considering the merits of the scheme. Mr Reed said the application for

the new sewage works needed to be considered under updated planning policies and has proposed a deadline of 1st April 2026 in order to give officials more time to “conduct further consultation on emerging planning policy and analysis of responses to a future consultation”.

The government has committed £25 to the proposed project to build the new sewage works, with the overall cost estimated to be in excess of £50.

The project manager, Ms April Phulle, noted that as the prevailing wind is from the West, this would blow any noxious emissions into Norfolk, and since they recently campaigned to throw Cambridgeshire out of East Anglia, we don't anticipate that the residents of Christchurch would object to this proposal.



Fake legs used as a pointer for pothole

A man fed up with the state of a road near his village has poked fun at a large pothole, by putting a pair of fake legs in the huge puddle it has created.

It is one of several that have formed on Haverhill Road in the Cambridgeshire village of Castle Camps, close to the Suffolk border.

James Coxall said the crater had been there for eight months and although it was not a busy road, if there were oncoming vehicles you would "have to either stop or hit the pothole". Cambridgeshire County Council said one of its highways' officers would inspect the road and "repairs will be made as required".

Mr Coxall, a 41-year-old carpenter, said the pothole had been there for a long time so his family decided to "have a bit of fun with it". The family created the pothole "person" turning some old clothes and rags into a pair of legs, clothed in jeans and colourful shoes. "The shoes were going to charity anyway, so we thought we'd give them an outing first," said Mr Coxall. "We stuffed the jeans with old rags and I used some wood to keep the legs sturdy and upright."

He placed the creation in the puddle, with the feet sticking out at the top, and weighed it all down with a brick. Image Sophie Montague/BBC

Taken from a BBC News article by Helen Burchell, 26th Feb 2025

Christchurch Over 65s Annual Parish Lunch Sunday 27th April 2025 12.30pm for 1.00pm

If you or your partner live in the Christchurch Parish, and are 65 or over, you are very welcome to join us at our annual lunch on 27th April.

Invitations will be going out in early April, to all those people we have on file, but if you haven't received an invite by the 13th April, please call Ruth Ingram on 01354 638419 to book your place.

All those from the parish, who qualify, are very welcome and we look forward to seeing you.

Parish Lunch Committee



Identifying Birdsong – the Merlin Bird ID App

The Fens is a fantastic place for wildlife with fields, rivers and ditches providing a great habitat for an abundance of different species of birds. With Welney Wetlands not far away, more unusual species are being seen in and around our village.

In 2009, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology developed - with the funding from National Science Foundation, donors, photographers and audio recordists, eBird - the Merlin Bird ID app to enable people all over the world to identify birds using sound and photos. It works by using your mobile's microphone to record their song or you can take a photo, it then identifies the species and gives a description of the bird, its habitat and migration information. It can then be saved to a life list on the app so you can keep a record yourself and if you wanted, share the record with friends who also have the app for a bit of friendly competition!

The data collected on the app is used by ornithologists and scientists to study bird populations, migration patterns and ecological changes. Welney Wetlands would be a good place to use the app which if you are having a bit of competition with friends would certainly add more than a few of the unusual birds which you wouldn't normally see around such as wading birds.

Just walking around or being in your garden listening to birdsong, how often do you hear birds and not see them or see them but don't recognise the species? Now, thanks to this clever app you can.

Editors note – please don't use the app to play back birdsong outdoors, and beware that the app can get it wrong on occasion (eg. misidentifying a distant barking dog as a Great Bittern), but a great app when used properly.



Magpie Centre Update

It's spring at last – and time for some changes at the Magpie Centre, home of West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association. As you may know, our Chairwoman stepped down, for personal reasons, some time ago, and at the time of writing we were still on the lookout for a new leader.

Our Annual General Meeting was February 26. After the meeting, Magpie Centre Yard Manager Natalie Dade and RDA Group Instructor Jo Gordon gave short presentations on the Magpie Centre horses and their role in therapy.

The Magpie Nest, which opened in October 2024 is thriving. This programme is designed to help students with additional needs who struggle to thrive in a mainstream environment. Through the therapeutic approach of using equines, two students have become engaged with ASDAN Animal Care and one young person is learning Self Care and Gardening. A new Alternative Provision pony has been acquired. He is settling in well and building a nurturing, trusting bond with the children, which is something that the children find more challenging with adults.

The Friday Home Educated group are working hard to achieve their RDA proficiency goals in horsemanship. They are learning what it takes to care for a horse and are growing in confidence weekly.

And – it does come round quickly, doesn't it? We are Calling all Crafters to take a stall (£12 per 3m space) for our Craft Fair, scheduled for Saturday June 7 at the Magpie Centre, Wallington Hall South Runcton (on the A10, three miles north of Downham Market) PE33 0EP. Stalls will be under cover in the indoor school, which is wheelchair accessible. To book your place, contact 07715 467866 or email magpiecccraft@outlook.com.

Solution

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

Christchurch Book Club

The Christchurch Book club met up in February to discuss the book we had been reading by Lisa Jewell called The House We Grew Up In. Mixed views on this particular book although most of us had read other books by this author. We are currently reading The Midnight House by Amanda Geard.

Our next book will be The Other Passenger by Louise Candlish. New members are always welcome. For some members of our book club, they prefer to read the book electronically rather than a physical book so for anyone looking to come along to our meeting, it is personal preference at the end of the day! For further details or if you would like to come along to the next meeting, which is Tuesday 1st April, at 7:30, and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.



February 2025 saw the gardening club return from its hiatus and its annual A.G.M. It was good to catch up with friends and get the new year rolling, as the committee was unchanged, and business was covered. There is a full program of meetings and speakers booked for the coming months, overseen by our club secretary Marion Hawthorn.

First up in March was a longstanding friend of the club Jenni Cairns. It's quite a while since Jenni last visited when she was fresh from winning best in show at the Hampton Court Flower Show, for her show garden. Since that time, it seems Jenni's star has been on the rise, as over the course of an hour she took us through the many and varied high profile art works and gardens she has been involved with.

Notably Jenni designed and built a float for the late Queens Jubilee Pageant, in 2022. She has designed and built garden artworks for the grounds of Anglesey Abbey, as well as installations for Glastonbury and most recently a three floor solo exhibition of her work at Peterborough Museum, examples of which can be seen on Jenni's web site and Instagram pages. The exhibition is still on until the end of this month. She is also being exhibited at Chelsea this year, so you can check it out. Jenni can be contacted at www.juniperhouseemporium.co.uk.

Next Month on Tuesday 18th April we have Sarah Jane Nurseries coming to talk on setting up a nursery. The following month is Philippa Pearson who, as Garden Designer of repute, explains the art of the show garden. All our meetings are open to guests, call 01354638230 for details or come along on the night.

Steve

The arrival of a new 4G phone mast (in Manea) following a six-year campaign received a great reception from locals.

Chairman of Manea Parish Council Ben Bonos said he fought a long battle to get the installation completed in Manea, Cambridgeshire.



The Fenland village has traditionally been a so-called "not spot" for mobile phone signal.

Bonos, 44, believed the new mast would "open up opportunities for people", while one happy resident said they had signal for the first time in nearly a decade.

The 20m (65ft) tall mast, installed by O2 engineers in January 2025, allowed children in the nearby park to keep in contact with family.

Bonos said the original application to install the mast was rejected in 2019 and there were later problems to do with trees, land ownership, acquisition, radio requirements, and fibre availability. Covid-19 then further delayed the project by about 18 months.

"Remote working has become more prevalent since Covid-19 and many residents in towns and cities take a good signal for granted - I think the new mast will change people's lives," he said. "Connectivity issues are among the biggest disadvantages faced by people who live in rural communities, restricting their opportunities."

Residents took to social media to praise the new mast and one user said: "My phone signal has also improved! Great addition to Manea, it's been a long time coming." Another posted: "I have a phone signal at home for the first time in nine years!"

Source: BBC News

How do you feel about your mobile phone signal, internet speed or any other service in Christchurch?

This is something that is covered by the Infrastructure survey, to which there has been virtually no response.

The Parish Council can only push for improved services if there is demand from the local community, so if you would like to see improvements (and who knows, maybe eventually our very own mobile phone mast), then email your views to the Clerk to the Parish Council on clerk@christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk

Christchurch Women's Circle

Christchurch Women's Circle will be launched with a Pudding Evening on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 7pm at Christchurch Community Centre. It will be an open meeting for women to come along and put ideas forward for this new group.

The meetings will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7pm and following on May 13th our speaker is Brian Bignall a 1960's photographer who has photographed many of the top bands and singers of its time.

This will be open to members, family and friends, so please come and join us for a little nostalgia of the 60s, cost is £5 including light refreshments.

This new group has come about after a majority vote to suspend Christchurch WI and move forward. Christchurch WI was formed in April 1928 and has provided many opportunities for its members and supported its community over so many years.

We look forward to seeing you.

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Christchurch Hobby and Craft Club

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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.

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SUNDAY 4TH MAY
FIREBRAND (15)

In blood-soaked Tudor England, twice married, accomplished, and educated Katherine Parr (Alicia Vikander), reluctantly agrees to become the sixth wife of the tyrannical King Henry VIII (Jude Law). Her consent to marry him carries great personal risk, given that her predecessors are either vanquished, beheaded, or dead. When Henry appoints her as Regent, the nation's ruler during his absence when he departs to fight overseas, he lays a dangerous path for her. Henry's courtiers, suspecting she's sympathetic to radical Protestant beliefs that have taken root in the kingdom and are a threat to their power, scheme against her and cast doubts upon her fidelity to the increasingly ailing and paranoid King. Once Henry returns to England, his courtiers convince him to turn his fury on the nation's radicals, including Katherine's childhood friend Anne Askew, who becomes one of the scores of people convicted of treason and burned at the stake. Horrified and privately grieving, Katherine finds herself under ever-increasing scrutiny and suspicion. Knowing that even a whisper of scandal might lead to her downfall, Katherine must unleash her own scheme to fight for survival

SUNDAY 1ST JUNE
CONCLAVE (12)

Following the death of the Pope, the reluctant Cardinal Lawrence is tasked with overseeing the group of Cardinals from across the globe that make up the Conclave; those responsible for selecting a new leader for the Church. But as the political machinations inside the Vatican intensify, Lawrence realizes that the departed Pope had kept a secret from them that he must uncover before a new Pope is chosen

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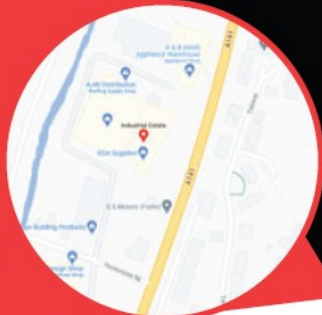
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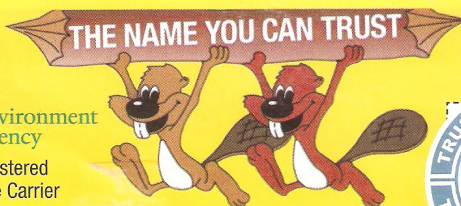
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Being an on-call firefighter has many benefits. As well as being paid an annual wage and for the time spent at incidents or training, there are also opportunities to develop first aid skills and heavy goods vehicle driving qualifications.

Find out more about becoming an on-call firefighter by visiting our website: <https://bit.ly/CFRSONcall>
Help keep your home and family fire safe – complete our online home safety check.

You can carry out your own home fire safety check online by visiting the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service website. The online home safety check helps you carry out your own fire risk assessment and is a simple way to help reduce risks and keep your home safe from fire. It takes you through some simple questions about you and your home, then provides an action plan that you can download and print. You can fill it in for yourself or a member of your family that might need help.

Visit https://bit.ly/Home_Safety_Check to find out more and start your online home safety check.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Sadly, this is my final article in the Heron. However, I can now explain to you how the expedition is going to work. Throughout the last few weeks, we have been planning our routes for the final expedition (when we stay overnight). My group split into two teams to tackle the work twice as fast. We are a group of five though so I had to work with two others (we were a group of three) and, if you can count up to five, the other group was just two people. My team worked on day two of the expedition and the others did day one. Recently, we printed off our maps and are now discovering the things we will be needing for the big expedition! Next week we will be planning the food we will be taking as well as going through our kit list to make sure we have everything we need. I'm not looking forward to having to carry everything in our rucksacks. Taking on the challenge of completing my bronze Duke of Edinburgh award has been great. I've learned new skills as well as improving my fitness by joining my Dad cycling. I can't wait for my upcoming expedition, I'm sure it'll be an excellent adventure!

Hannah Paine

Editor - It certainly sounds like you are in for a tough but exciting time Hannah. Good luck!



Calls for a flag to be given official recognition have been given a "huge" boost by Peterborough City Council who have agreed to write to the Flag Institute to ask that the Flag of the Fens be granted official recognition.

Peter James Bowman, a local historian and author who designed the flag in 2016, said that the council's support was a "huge result" for his campaign to have it included on the Flag Institute's registry.

The yellow stripe represents Fenland's agriculture, while the blue stripes represent its waterways.



QR Codes - what's the real risk?

1. How safe is it to scan that QR code in the pub? Or in that email?
2. I was curious about this topic, I am very careful about links in emails and other ways of attempting to catch me out (to date, I never have been), so an item on facebook where scammers were putting fake "missed delivery" cards through letter boxes with QR codes taking you to scam websites made me look at this. The advice below is from the National Cyber Security Centre.
3. QR codes have been around since the 90s, although in the UK they really came to prominence during COVID lockdowns where they were used for everything from ordering food to indicating vaccination status.
4. They're widely used today for things like quickly directing users to websites, logging into devices that lack keyboards (such as online video services on smart devices), or ordering or paying for goods and services.
5. Understandably, people sometimes worry about whether to trust these QR codes. Many are used in public spaces (like pubs and restaurants), and so you might be wondering: are criminals placing malicious QR codes to steal money, information, or trick people in some way?
6. Reports of QR-enabled fraud in the UK can be found online (including one from [BBC News where a woman was scammed at a railway station](#)), but this type of scam is relatively small compared to other types of cyber fraud. The majority of QR code-related fraud tends to happen in open spaces (like stations and car parks) and often involves an element of social engineering. In the above example, criminals posing as bank staff rang the victim to continue the deception.
7. However, QR codes are increasingly being used in phishing emails (a technique sometimes called 'quishing'). From the criminal's perspective, using QR codes in this way makes sense for a number of reasons.
8. Most people are now suspicious of dubious-looking links in emails, and are (correctly) cautious of clicking on [shortened links](#). Criminals are therefore using QR codes to disguise the links to malicious websites that phishing emails contain.
9. Not all security tools designed to detect phishing emails will scan images, so a QR code directing the user to a malicious website might slip through.

Users are more likely to use their personal phone to scan the QR code. Personal devices may not have the same security protections as a computer that's provided by your employer.

To summarise:

- The QR codes used in pubs or restaurants are probably safe for you to scan.
- Scanning QR codes in open spaces (like stations and car parks) might be riskier. As with many cyber-attacks, you should be suspicious if you're asked to provide what feels like too much information, whether that's on a website or in any follow-up communications (such as a phone call).

If you receive an email with a QR code in it, and you're asked to scan it, you should exercise caution as the NCSC is seeing an increase in these types of 'quishing' attacks.

Finally, we recommend that you use the QR-scanner that comes with your phone, rather than using an app downloaded from an app store.

Editor - Out of interest, did you scan the QR code in this article? That took me 15 seconds to create online, which really shows how easy it is for scammers.

ENGLISH CREAM TEA CELEBRATION - WEDNESDAY 9th JULY 2 – 4:30 P.M. AT THE GONVILLE HOTEL - IN AID OF THE NSPCC

You are invited to join us for an English Afternoon Tea event in the private gardens of the Gonville Hotel, Gonville Place, Cambridge. At 2pm cordials will be served and florist Madeline Bradley will give a floral demonstration and talk about trends in special occasion flowers, royal connections and will create several flower arrangements which will then be raffled at the end of the event. At 3pm Sandwiches, assorted cakes and a freshly made scone with clotted cream and jam will be served along with fine leaf teas. £27.50 per

person. Groups of friends and families are most welcome to attend.

If you are interested in coming to this event, please email Mrs Anne Newman: nsppc.cambsdc@gmail.com and let her know if there are any special dietary requirements. Cheques payable to 'NSPCC Charity' and post to Mrs Anne Newman, 49 Warburton House, Vawser Way, Cambridge CB2 0AS. Electronic payments: Nat West Bank, Sort Code 60-00-01, Account NSPCC, Account No 48807591. (Please reference your payment: TEA plus your surname & initial.) All funds raised will go towards the NSPCCs work in this region to support and help children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect.

Village Contacts and Useful Information

By now you should have all received a hard-backed copy of the Contacts and Useful Information which featured regularly in the magazine. It was decided that we could free up a page in the magazine by offering this as a 'pull out and keep' page for readers. However, if you are new to the village, and haven't received a copy, please let us know (enquiries@theheron.info) and we will do our best to get one to you.

March Golf Club donates £3,785 to Caring Together Charity

March Golf Club has made a generous donation of £3,785 to Caring Together Charity which will help fund vital services for unpaid carers of all ages.

The donation was raised through a series of fundraising efforts organised by Club Captain, Jeff Dunham, and Lady Captain, Michal Simpson, and generously supported by the golf club members. Jeff and Michal from March Golf Club recently presented the cheque to Zoe from Caring Together, Michal from March Golf Club shared her enthusiasm; "As soon as I heard about the services Caring Together offer, I knew that this was a charity I wanted to support, particularly as their services could benefit some of our members who are caring for ill or disabled husbands/wives and parents. I'm so appreciative of everyone who has

supported Jeff and I in our fundraising efforts. We raised £3,785, which I know is going to make a difference to some lives."

The funds will go towards providing essential support for carers who often face challenges such as isolation, financial strain, and mental health struggles. Caring Together offers a wide range of services, from practical advice and information to emotional support and respite care.

"We are incredibly grateful to the members of March Golf Club for their kind and generous donation," said Zoe from Caring Together. "This amount will make a real difference in helping us continue our work with carers across the region. It's heartwarming to see local communities coming together to support such an important cause."

For more information about Caring Together and how to get involved, visit: <https://www.caringtogether.org/>



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On Demand

The Tiger Bus - From booking to destination

Booking to go to March and back was a seamless process. We gave the destination and the time we wanted to be there and we were then given a time to be at the pick-up point (the bus stop, wouldn't you know!) giving us a 15-minute window in which the bus would arrive. We walked up to the bus stop at the allotted time to see the bus arrive after only a few minutes (at the beginning of our allotted time slot) and we were the only ones on it.

The bus was clean, and the driver was very polite and helpful. He obviously knew my name from the booking and knew our destination. It was certainly a direct route

into March, and we were alone for the entire journey. The driver then told us where he would be picking us up from, before we left the bus. At the appointed time we were at the bus stop and the bus duly arrived. Again, we were the only people using the service.

The whole experience was first class throughout. My only 'complaint' as a non-driver is that there were not more people using the service, meaning that as the old adage says, if you don't use it you lose it.

The Tiger bus service is easy to use as long as it is within the Cambridgeshire area, but will not extend to over the Norfolk border. (*Editor: which unfortunately means it can't be used to go to the Doctor's surgery.*) I have to say, I will definitely use the service again to go to both March and Chatteris and would encourage other people to try the service.

Liz Scott

Letters to the Editorial Team

The Editorial team welcome letters from its readers. Please email letters to: editor@heron.info or post them to *The Editor of The Heron, 1 Brimstone Close, Christchurch PE14 9EE*. **PLEASE NOTE:** Letters will only be considered for publication if they are accompanied by name and contact details. The Heron will not share any contact details unless given permission.

We look forward to hearing from you!

What Led to the Roman Invasion of Britain

Caligula became Emperor of Rome in AD 37 following the death of his great-uncle and adoptive grandfather, Emperor Tiberius. Born in AD 12, Caligula was the son of the popular general Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder. His early life was marked by political intrigue and tragedy. After Germanicus' mysterious death in AD 19, suspicion of joint responsibility for his death fell at Agrippina and her son's door, by Emperor Tiberius and his advisor, Sejanus. Many of Caligula's relatives, including his mother, were exiled or killed, leaving him as one of the last surviving male heirs of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

Despite this turbulent background, Caligula managed to gain favour with Emperor Tiberius, largely due to his ability to conceal any resentment he may have felt. Caligula was summoned to the island of Capri, where he spent years under Tiberius's watchful eye. When Tiberius died in AD 37, his will named both Caligula and his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, as joint heirs to the throne. However, Caligula quickly consolidated power with the support of the Praetorian Guard, the elite military force responsible for protecting the emperor. The Guard, led by its commander Macro, declared Caligula the sole ruler, sidelining Gemellus and ensuring the young prince's path to absolute power.



Caligula's early reign was met with widespread enthusiasm. The Roman people, the Senate, and the army welcomed him as the son of Germanicus, a beloved figure in Rome. He initially made popular decisions, such as granting bonuses to the military, recalling political exiles, and hosting lavish public games. However, within months, his rule took a darker turn. After suffering from a severe illness, he emerged erratic, cruel, and obsessed with his own divinity. His actions became increasingly unpredictable, leading to conflict with the Senate and his own inner circle.



The Praetorian Guard was an elite unit of soldiers originally formed under Emperor Augustus to serve as the personal bodyguards of the emperor. They played a crucial role in Roman politics, serving not only as protectors but also as kingmakers, often determining who would ascend to the throne. Their loyalty was often dictated by financial incentives and personal gain rather than ideological allegiance.

Under Emperor Caligula, the Praetorian Guard initially supported him, particularly as he showered them with gifts and bonuses. However, his increasingly erratic behaviour, humiliations of senators, and costly extravagances alienated both the Senate and the Guard. Caligula engaged in reckless spending, declared himself a living god, and allegedly planned a campaign to move the capital from Rome to

Alexandria. His paranoia led to arbitrary executions, and public humiliation of those around him, including members of the Praetorian Guard.

By AD 41, tensions had reached a breaking point. A conspiracy formed within the Praetorian Guard, led by Cassius Chaerea, an officer who Caligula had repeatedly insulted and degraded. On 24th January AD 41, during a series of games at Rome's, Palatine Hill, the conspirators ambushed Caligula in a corridor. They stabbed him multiple times and killed him. Caligula's wife, Caesonia, and their young daughter were also executed to prevent any claims to the throne.

These assassinations threw Rome into chaos. The Senate briefly attempted to restore the Republic, but the Praetorian Guard had other plans. They needed an emperor who would maintain their influence and power. In the aftermath of Caligula's murder, the Guard found his uncle, Claudius, hiding in the palace. Instead of killing him, they proclaimed him the new emperor.

Claudius was the younger brother of Germanicus, making him Caligula's uncle. Despite being a member of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Claudius had been largely overlooked due to his perceived physical weaknesses and intellectual interests. Many considered him an unlikely candidate for emperor, but his survival was due in part to being seen as harmless. The Praetorian Guard's decision to install him as emperor ensured their continued power and influence.

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One of Emperor Claudius's most significant achievements was the conquest of Britain. The Roman conquest had a profound impact on the native tribes of Britain, including the Iceni. Sites like Stonea Camp would have been strategic locations in Britain's tribal resistance to Roman rule. The Roman conquest reshaped the landscape of Britain, leading to the spread of Roman infrastructure, governance, and culture. Caligula's short and turbulent reign ended violently due to his own excesses and the growing resentment of the Praetorian Guard. His assassination paved the way for Claudius, who would go on to leave a lasting mark on Roman Britain. The conquest of Britain had far-reaching effects on the native tribes, including the Iceni, whose rebellion against Rome became one of the most famous acts of resistance in British history. The Roman occupation reshaped the island, leaving behind a legacy that would influence Britain for centuries.



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 or follow our Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/hccstoneacamb>s, or our Instagram page, https://www.instagram.com/hcc_stonea, we would be delighted to assist.

Amanda Carlin – Chairman HCC Stonea.

'Pointless' walking challenge has popularity surge

A walking challenge described as "pointless" by its own organisers has become so popular it has had to reject people who want to join.

In 1979, Jonathon Partington, a PHD maths student at the University of Cambridge thought it would be a fun idea to march from the Fenland town of March all the way back to the city, on a date during the month of March. Dubbed the "March March march", the 30-mile hike has continued to take place almost every year since.

Lead official Colin Bell, said: "For some reason we've gone viral this year. Last year we had 16 walkers and this year we've had 44... I had to turn people away."

"It is by far our largest march ever. It looks like word got into the university, so we have 15 students and other people that heard about us for no obvious reason," he added.

Mr Bell joined the march in 1990 when he was a student. He is now the head official of the group and known as the "Custos Martis". It is a tradition for the group to stop during the 12-hour march and send postcards to the university's maths department.

The largest group to take part was 27 participants in 1992. The smallest was just two in 2017, and was paused between 2012 and 2017 due to dwindling

numbers and in 2002 weather conditions prevented people completing it, with the walkers giving up after gale force winds launched soil and at least one dead pigeon at the group.

The oldest person to complete the trek was Gregory Sankaran, who is in his early 60s and finished 19 marches between 1982 and 2023. A boy named Hugh, aged 10, became the youngest to finish the hike in 2022.

"Sometimes you just want to do something because of the name. We climbed Everest because it was there, we go to March because that's there."

The increased interest has confused Mr Bell, who mused: "Perhaps the world has gone slightly mad."



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.

