

BRETtenham MAGAZINE

MAY 2022
No. 412



Welcome...

....to this edition of the Brettenham magazine. Thank you to Brian Gooderham for his review of the oil lamp display at Hitcham Church recently (page 12). Another recipe for you to try, cheesy pasta this month (page 11). Don't forget the Village Inn will be on Friday 6th May, details on page 17. Make sure you check the 'Dates for your Diary' on page 5, and of course there are the regular articles, updates and news so please enjoy the read.

Please keep sending your news, jokes and photos to...brettenhammagazine@outlook.com.



Thanks to Pete Knight for the glorious blossom on the front cover and Carrie Dye for capturing the jubilee inspired colours of the village green floral display (above).

Bigger Ernie Winners

1st Linda Southgate £30

2nd Tania De Burnay £15

3rd Cat Z £10



Delicious! Janyne Latimer tried Michelle's Hot Cross Bun recipe from the last edition

Sunday Village Inn

Sunday 22nd May, from 12.30pm

Brettenham Village Hall

Village Noticeboard

Village Hall

To book contact Julie or Ozzie on 07810434470 or email bvahallbookings@gmail.com
To request a licenced bar contact Peter Truin 07799 640326 or petertruin@aol.com

Village Website

www.brettenham.onesuffolk.net
If you would like to see something new on the website please contact Beth Clarke clarkeeac3@gmail.com

facebook 

Where to get Village News?

Check out the latest village news on the **BVA Facebook** page
[Facebook.com/pg/BrettenhamVillage/posts](https://www.facebook.com/pg/BrettenhamVillage/posts)
If you would like anything added to the page contact Greg Potter at greg.potter66@me.com

If you would like to receive regular village **email updates** please contact peterkt@live.co.uk



Suffolk Mermaid Fish & Chips

Every Thursday, from 6.40pm to 7.10pm outside the church



June Mag Deadline:

15th May

Brettenham magazine is published and edited by the Brettenham Magazine Editing Team (brettenhammagazine@outlook.com) on behalf of Brettenham Parish Council. The views expressed by the contributors to the magazine are not necessarily those of Brettenham Parish Council. As well as the printed copy, the magazine is available online, in full, via the village website: www.brettenham.onesuffolk.net

Brettenham Parish Council

The Annual Parish meeting was held on 14th April 2022, followed by a Parish Council meeting, and the details of these will be available shortly.

The following planning applications have been received since our last report:-

DC/22/00873	Land West Of, Church Farm, Buxhall Road, Brettenham	Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/00838- Condition 4 (Archaeological Written Investigation)
DC/22/01312	66 The Street, Brettenham	Householder Application - Erection of a rear conservatory
DC/22/01555	Crownings , Buxhall Road, Brettenham	Full Planning Application - Erection of 1No single storey detached dwelling (amended scheme to previously approved DC/20/04764).

Clerk/RFO: Della Clarke

Email: brettenhamparishcouncil@btinternet.com

Chair: Chris Clarke

Friends of Bildeston Surgery

Thank you to everyone in the village who sent donations for the Table Top sale held in Whatfield village hall on Saturday 26th March. All your contributions were very much appreciated. It was quite a busy and well attended event. We sold items to the value of £96.50 and were given donations to the value of £31, making an overall total of £127.50.

David Golding



Dates For Your Diary

Thursday 12th May - Annual Parish Council meeting 7.30pm

Thursday 2nd June - Brettenham Jubilee Celebrations 5pm (page 13)

Sunday 5th June - BYO Picnic Lunch at village hall 12.30pm (page 13)

Saturday 25th June - Safari Supper (page 13)

Saturday 9th July - Summer Fair at the village hall

Thursday 14th July - Parish Council meeting 7.30pm

Thursday 8th September - Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm

Sunday 18th September - Apple Day 12pm

Thursday 10th November - Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm

The Brettenham Flyers

If you're considering a new challenge, or just fancy joining us on a morning jog / walk around the village for a little exercise (approx. 5.7K), come and join the Brettenham Flyers for a Sunday morning lift.

Every Sunday at the Village Hall

Walkers / Dogs – 0850

Runners / Cyclists – 0900

All ages, abilities & animals welcome.

For more info contact Ozzie:

oilyturk67@hotmail.com

.....Jog on, jog on....



Brettenham Village Association (BVA)

Hi all, so this is it, my last article for the magazine as BVA Chair. Am I going to miss writing these articles? Whilst some months I think what on earth am I going to find to write about, it's funny how there always seems to be something that needs or warrants reporting, especially now that things are "getting back to normal" which means more events happening. And even during the darkest days of lockdown, there was of course plenty to bring to the attention of residents. Plus of course, bizarre occurrences like the Great Storm and consequent flooding, a truly horrible experience for many in the village. However, both the pandemic and the flooding also brought out the very best in our community with many people going above and beyond the call of duty to help others in need. It feels like my tenure as BVA Chair has been a strange, and sometimes surreal one. But I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the helm of the BVA and will look back on it with a great deal of fondness. So that's a long-winded way of saying yes, I think I will miss writing the monthly magazine articles!

By the time you read this, we will have had the BVA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and all being well a new Chair will be in situ. Whoever it is, I wish them all the best and I will of course offer whatever advice and guidance I can to ease the transition. The Chair will have the support of a terrific range of BVA Officers, and we are very lucky to be able to draw on such a dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers.

If I have one regret as BVA Chair is that, despite best efforts, I have been unable to tempt every Brettenham resident to engage proactively in some aspect of community life. Brettenham is an amazing little village and we definitely "punch above our weight" event-wise given our modest size. I truly believe in the concept of community, and our vibrant social scene for me is what makes Brettenham a very special place, not just its visual attractiveness. Hopefully the combined efforts of all of the village institutions (the BVA, the Parish Council, the PCC, and the Gardening Club), can continue to offer up a healthy range of services and events to appeal to one and all.

I'd like to offer my sincere thanks to Viv and Geoffrey and all of the Church volunteers for serving up such delicious food for the April Friday Village Inn. (see photo on page 7). Once again, numbers attending the Village Inn were a little down on what we would normally expect, but I really do hope there was a reasonable profit to contribute to Church funds. The April Sunday

Village Inn (which coincided with Easter Sunday) was busier than usual, aided no doubt by some lovely sunshine; it was great to see so many people sitting on the terrace enjoying a drink and catching up with friends, family and neighbours. It's particularly pleasing that some of our newer residents are attending Village Inns and other events, and here's hoping the better weather will tempt more people out over the summer months.

For the May Friday Village Inn, we will once again have the Mobile Pizza Co in attendance, and they will be serving up their tasty pizzas from 7.00pm until such time as the orders dry up. So please come along and support the Village Inn if you can. Details can be found on 17.

Plans are coming along nicely for the Jubilee Weekend events. Here's a reminder of what we have in store:

- Thursday 2nd June – BBQ and Village Inn (from approx. 5pm)
- Sunday 5th June – BYO Picnic (from approx. 12.30pm)

Final details will be published in the June magazine, plus circulated via the village email list.

Also, Em continues to receive requests to be involved with the Safari Supper on Saturday 25th June. There are still a few spaces available, so please do let her know if you would like to take part. Em's contact details are emilysmwoods@hotmail.co.uk or 07738 127204.

I think that's pretty much it from me. Thank you again to all of those who have contacted me with kind thoughts and wishes. I hope I have managed to make a reasonably decent fist of the BVA Chair role during the past three years, and I do wish my successor all the very best.

Pete peterkt@live.co.uk 07752 222 866



April Village Inn

I was unable to be at the Village Inn but I have been told, and can see by the amount raised, that it went very well. We made just under £400 for our much needed church funds. Thank you very much to everyone who cooked, ate or helped in anyway. **Annie Tavener**

St Mary's Church Brettenham

Rev'd Canon Tiffer Robinson

Tel: 737197 or 07789 772024

Email: tifferrobinson@gmail.com

Church Warden Annie Tavener Tel: 736412

Email: annie_tav@hotmail.com



Easter is finally here! I know what you are thinking: Easter was last month! You'd be right, but Easter is also this month, lasting as it does 50 days. That's because for 40 days Jesus spent time with his disciples after his resurrection, at one point appearing to over 500 people at once. If you think

the idea of someone coming back from the dead is impossible, you'd be in good company, as so did the people of the middle east in the 1st century. And it is impossible for us, but nothing is impossible for God.

The resurrection of Jesus is not just an impressive trick, it is what Christians mean when they talk about eternal life. We believe that life is something physical, something real, and that when God made us with bodies he said "It is good" not "Oops I made a mistake". Death and decay are what robs us of our bodies, and this is a terrible, awful thing. In rising with a new body, never to die again, Jesus made a way for us to do the same.

In Stanley Spencer's wonderful artwork there are multiple imaginings of what this will look like, on the day of resurrection. People seeming to wake from sleep from their graves in an English churchyard, talking and laughing and doing their hair! Theologians have spent the last two millenia discussing what form our resurrection bodies will take: will we be eternally young, and if so, what age? Will we be gendered, will we bear the scars of our old life, will we still be authentically us? Research has shown that a butterfly can remember some things from their time as a caterpillar - despite being totally liquified in the cocoon. The bible says

“we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed”.

We continue to celebrate Easter right up until Christ’s ascension after 40 days, and then there’s 10 days until Pentecost, which coincides with the Queen’s jubilee. As we give thanks for her many years of service, we also give thanks that, for those who trust in Jesus Christ, death is not the end, and life will continue in all its fullness, free from pain, from misery and suffering. Come to any of our services to find out more, and Happy Easter!

Reverend Canon Christopher "Tiffer" Robinson

Treasures of the Turf

Our fundraising, illustrated talk about the history of horse racing and it’s association with Newmarket was extremely interesting and very entertaining. Chris Garibaldi gave us a wonderful talk and showed us some amazing pictures, and we are very grateful to him for giving up his time for us. I am still getting positive comments from people saying how much they enjoyed the evening. The total raised from ticket sales, raffle and donations, was over £740, which far exceeded our expectations. Thank you so much Chris, and everyone who supported the evening.

Annie Tavener

Suffolk Library Services

After being in Brettenham for 5 months we were surprised and pleased to find out that Suffolk Libraries has a mobile service. Please see Locations, times and dates.

Stop	Village Location	Time
8H	Brettenham - Village Hall	12:45–13:05
8L	Brettenham - Church	15:20–15:35



2022: 14 January, 11 February, 11 March, 8 April, 6 May, 1 July, 29 July, 26 August, 23 September, 21 October, 18 November, 16 December. **No visit in June.**

May Programme of Services in the Benefice

1 The Third Sunday of Easter

Rattlesden	9.45am	Rattlesden Annual Meeting
Thorpe Morieux	10.00am	Morning Prayer
Hitcham	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Brettenham	11.15am	Family Communion
Rattlesden Pavilion (Birds Green)	6.00pm	Praise and Donuts

8 The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Brettenham	8.30am	BCP Holy Communion
Rattlesden	9.45am	Morning Prayer (Streamed)
Thorpe Morieux	10.00am	Family Communion
Hitcham	11.00am	Holy Communion

15 The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Rattlesden	9.45am	Holy Communion (Streamed)
Thorpe Morieux	10.00am	Morning Prayer
Hitcham	11.00am	Family Service

22 The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Brettenham	8.30am	BCP Holy Communion
Rattlesden	9.45am for	Breakfast Church (Streamed)
Rattlesden	11.00am	Quiet service
Hitcham	11.00am	Holy Communion
Thorpe Morieux	6pm	BCP Evensong

26 Ascension Day (Thursday)

Drinkstone	7.00pm	Ascension Day Eucharist
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29 The Seventh Sunday of Easter

Rattlesden	10.30am	Benefice Eucharist
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Recipe Page

Cheesy Pasta (15 mins)

Ingredients:

250ml milk

20g butter

250g Penne pasta

1 tsp salt

1 Small onion

3 cloves garlic

1 Large tomato

150g strong cheddar cheese

Optional extras: - 25g grated cheese, breadcrumbs, bacon or chorizo



Method

- * In a small bowl warm the milk and butter until lukewarm
- * Add the pasta and allow to slowly cook - keep stirring
- * Whilst the pasta is cooking, chop the onion, garlic and tomato (bacon or Chorizo can also be added as extra)
- * Cook in a little butter in a large frying pan
- * When the pasta is cooked, add the pasta and milk to the frying pan
- * Grate the cheese and add to the pasta
- * Stir until the cheese has melted
- * Optional - sprinkle with extra cheese and breadcrumbs and grill until golden brown
- * Lovely served with garlic bread



A Magical Evening at Hitcham Church

What a nostalgic evening it was when a few weeks ago, All Saints Church in Hitcham was lit by a magnificent display of Victorian oil lamps, as seen in grand houses and practical workplaces.

The newly hung bells were rang by both novice and experienced ringers, as well as some of the visitors that had a chance to try their hand, while Marie played the organ.

This event gave me the opportunity to demonstrate my oil lamp illuminated "Victorian Magic Lanterns", showing hand-painted slides, slip slides and chromatropes (slides with geometric patterns that move). Some of the slides date back to the early 18th century and were of great interest to both the young and old.

Oil, or paraffin as it was more commonly known, was a great household commodity during the 19th century, being used for both cooking and lighting. Most shops and hardware stores sold paraffin loose i.e. it would be measured into the customer's own cans. The larger stores did home deliveries of paraffin and goods. At one time, Hicks at Hitcham had two vans delivering to sixteen local villages on a weekly basis, as did Hopgoods of Stowmarket, Stiffs of Kersey and Partridges of Hadleigh.

Brian Gooderham



The photo on the left shows Brian's Magic Lantern in action





Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Thursday 2nd June – Village Inn



From 5pm including BBQ and Beacon Lighting

There will be traditional barbeque fare on the evening, and any profits will go to charity/charities, to be decided. If you would like vegetarian or vegan cooked fare, please bring it along and we will cook it for you. Please let us know in advance so we can have separate barbeque and utensils available. For further information contact Alyson: 07798 633044

Beacon Lighting time will be 9.45pm.

Sunday 5th June - BYO Picnic Lunch

To round-off the long, bank holiday weekend, come along with family and friends and a picnic lunch to the playing field, as Brettenham hosts its own version of the national 'Big Jubilee Lunch' taking place that day. The bar will be open from 12.30pm, so come along any time from then.



Thanks to Viv Bourne for the very Spring scene in her garden

Brettenham Gardening Club



Village Green Display

We have been so pleased with the Spring display this year, especially after the wet Winter and some rabbits/squirrels taking a liking to the Tulip bulbs, but they have survived and the display this Spring has been beautiful. The Summer display has been designed with a colour palette to commemorate The Queens Platinum Jubilee. Late May will see this new planting carried out by volunteers from the Gardening Club. Thanks as always to all volunteers who care for the plants, undertake the planting and watering in the Summer, and of course to Ray Latimer for cutting the grass.

Potato in a Bucket Competition

This competition is open to all villagers, and once again we have had a huge number of entrants, so let's hope that with careful nurturing that we all see a bumper crop this year, as always this can be very competitive. Weigh in will be at the Summer Fair in July. Good Luck!

Members' Garden Visit to Holm House Gardens, Drinkstone Monday 13th June 3pm. Just a gentle reminder to all members to put the date in your diary. The entrance fee for the visit is £10 per person and will include tea and cake. It is certainly an amazing garden to visit. If you would like to attend, please contact Jane Moulding.

New members to the Gardening Club are always welcome. Membership is just £5 a year and we have a calendar of events, which involve the whole village. We share tips and advice on plants and meet as regularly as we can.



Contact Jane McDonald 01449 736957 felicityjmcDonald@hotmail.co.uk
or Jane Moulding 01449736178 grahame.moulding@btopenworld.com

The Suffolk Walking Festival returns

Tickets are on sale now for The Suffolk Walking Festival as it returns in 2022 for its 14th instalment.

The festival, which launches on 14 May 2022 at Clare Country Park, boasts over 70 guided walks that will take you across wild countryside, outstanding landscapes, rolling hills, forests, and coastal beauty spots. With lots of weekend, evening and family walks. The programme has accessible, short, medium, long-distance walks, and more challenging walks – so there is something for everyone.

This year's programme will discover a dragon in the iconic Stour Valley, explore Hawkedon's horizons through idyllic green villages, celebrate 75 years at RSPB, tell stories of smugglers and shipping routes at Dunwich Heath, and spend time watching Sweep the sheepdog in action managing Orford Ness Nature Reserve's very own herd of rare breed sheep.

You can tune into bats on a twilight safari through ancient woodland at Priestley Wood, brush up your whittling skills and make damper bread over an open fire in the woods at Thornham Walks, and get crafty at Brandon Country Park finding willow, sticks, leaves and rushes in the woods to make and keep your own creations.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

"It is a fantastic achievement to see The Suffolk Walking Festival reach its fourteenth year, holding its title as one of the longest running festivals of its kind in the UK. It is unfortunate that the festival in 2020 had to be cancelled, and in 2021 it took place virtually; so it is very exciting to see the festival return in full.

"The festival grows in popularity each year with its vast variety of walks and events. It shows off some of Suffolk's most beautiful scenery which makes up part of the 3,500 miles of public rights of way across the county.

"These events remain a great way to keep active and meet others. I would encourage everyone to get out there and explore."

Visit www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk for more details of the programme, to sign up to regular newsletters, and to buy tickets.



Getting to Know... Ella Brinkley

Full Name:	Ella Ruth Brinkley
Birthplace:	Bury St Edmunds
How long have you lived in	My whole life (19 years)
Current/Last Job:	Cleaner
Do you have any pets?	A goat and two gerbils
What is your biggest fear?	Never being able to drive
What makes you laugh the most?	Charlotte Schofield
What would you change about yourself if you could?	Knowing before it's one too many shots of tequila
What is the favourite place you have visited?	Flex nightclub
What really makes you angry?	The fact that Max Verstappen won the
What is your favourite book/film/play/show?	She's the Man
What has been your proudest moment?	When I got an A in my A Levels
What did you want to be when you	Cleaner
If you could choose to do anything for a	Sleep
What is your favourite game/sport?	F1
If you could only eat one meal for the	Shepherds pie
Have you ever had a nickname? What is	Brinkles
Who would you want to be stranded	John Stones – cause he's fit
What would you do if you had a	Build a pub and call it 'The Goat'
If you could travel to any place in the	Bali -I just really wanna go
What's your best claim to fame?	The bouncers knowing who I am when I go to Bury Weatherspoons
What skill would you like to master?	Driving

Friday Village Inn
Friday 6th May, from 7.00pm
Brettenham Village Hall

With food provided by The Mobile Pizza Co. from 7.00pm
 (no pre-booking required) Visit: www.themobilepizzaco.co.uk



WOOD FIRED PIZZA MENU FAVOURITES
 07982 427 483   
 ENQUIRIES@THEMOBILEPIZZACO.CO.UK WWW.THEMOBILEPIZZACO.CO.UK

Our pizzas are all made on our signature neopolitan style dough, then topped with san marzano passata and fior di latte mozzarella.

NEOPOLITAN Cheese and tomato... A true benchmark	SEASONAL VEG If it's in season, it is in here!	PEPPERONI Authentic Italian pepperoni
BBQ POLLO Chicken, Pepper and red onion	THE DIVIDER Ham & Pineapple	CALABRIAN Nduja & red onions
GENOE POLLO Chicken, courgette, tomato, pine nuts & pesto	VEGAN MUST HAVE Hummus, tomato, roast aubergine & courgette	MEAT FEAST Chicken, pepperoni and ham (spice it up if you wish!)

* Extra toppings / changes to set menu + £1.00

SMALL £6 7 INCH **MEDIUM £9 9 INCH** **LARGE £15 12 INCH**
ASK FOR WEEKLY SPECIALS!!

Nature Notes

Recent research carried out by Bristol University has found that garden size is not the most important factor for pollinators. Insects that have the opportunity to forage over many gardens in which there are a wide range of plants is what makes the difference. By foraging across many gardens, with diverse plants that flower at different times of the year, the pollinating insects have access to a continuous and reliable food supply. In nearly 500 surveys across 59 gardens more than 600 plant types were recorded.

Gardens in affluent areas tended to produce more nectar sugar but larger gardens did not. They have the potential to supply more nectar sugar but this is not often realised because they can have a larger proportion of non-nectar-rich lawn. Smaller gardens packed with plants are more beneficial.

The research also looked into flower structure. Some flowers, such as fuchsias and salvias have long corolla tubes which only feed insects with long tongues, thus making the food inaccessible to many insects. Growing plants with single or open flowers allow a wider range of insects to reach the centres of the flowers.

Here are some plants that flower in the winter you may wish to include in your garden; winter aconite, hellebore and purple honeysuckle. Some spring suggestions; bugle, bergenia, native primrose and the common cowslip. Summer choices; yarrow, canterbury bells, cornflower and foxglove. For the Autumn; dahlia,



michaelmas daisy and chrysanthemum. For a far more comprehensive list including trees, shrubs and bulbs go to

rhs.org.uk/plantsforpollinators

David Golding

Bildeston Foodbank Update – A Reminder

Who are Bildeston Food Bank?

We are a small foodbank run by local volunteers supporting people in need. We are free, discreet and non-judgemental. Our chair is Shaun Moffat

Who do we help?

We look after residents in need in Bildeston and the surrounding satellite villages including Semer and Brettenham, Chelsworth, Hitcham, Kersey, Kettlebaston, Lindsey, Milden, Monks Eleigh, Nedging with Naughton and Wattisham.

As economic hardship bites deeper and some people are being forced to choose between heating and eating, this is a reminder to ask for your help in supplying food items to individuals and families who are currently affected by hardship.

Individuals/families do not need to be referred by the authorities. Locally, for either help with giving or receiving donations, please contact in confidence:-

Alyson Wilson, Spinney Cottage 07798 633044

Anne-Marie Hodgkiss 07818 286770

If you would rather contact the Foodbank directly you can do this through Facebook messenger from the Bildeston Foodbank Facebook page.

Tel:01449 257136 Bildestoncsg@gmail.com



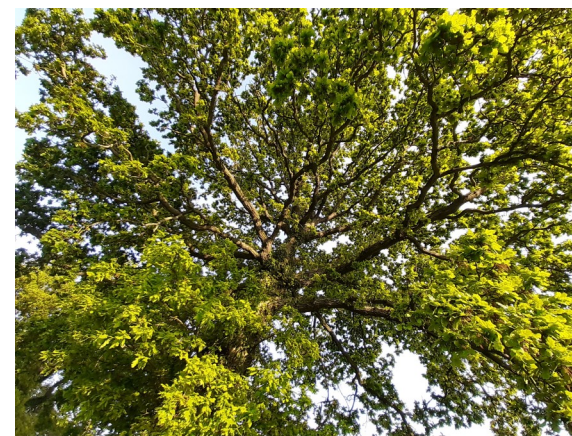
Write on... 

Enkindled Spring by D H Lawrence

This spring as it comes bursts up in bonfires green,
Wild puffing of emerald trees, and flame-filled bushes,
Thorn-blossom lifting in wreaths of smoke between
Where the wood fumes up and the watery, flickering rushes.

I am amazed at this spring, this conflagration
Of green fires lit on the soil of the earth, this blaze
Of growing, and sparks that puff in wild gyration,
Faces of people streaming across my gaze.

And I, what fountain of fire am I among
This leaping combustion of spring? My spirit is tossed
About like a shadow buffeted in the throng
Of flames, a shadow that's gone astray, and is lost.



Please send your suggestions for the page **Write On** to:
brettenhammagazine@outlook.com. It can be poetry, prose, a book or film review or something you have written that you would like to share.

Rambling with Gus

Hitcham loop: approx. 2 1/4 miles, approx. 1 hour, starts near the Post Office.

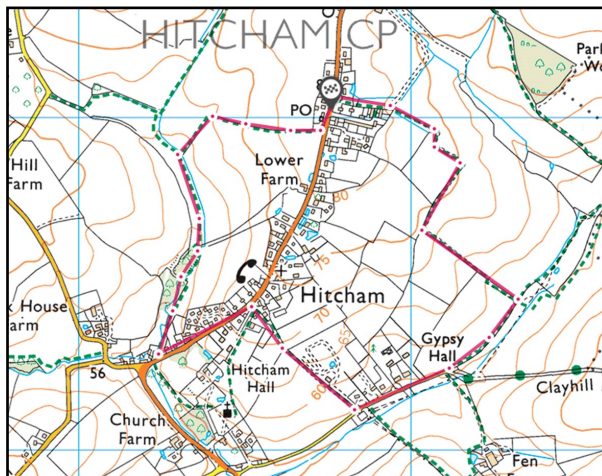
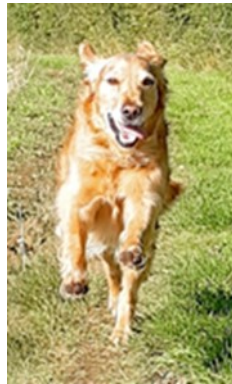
This is a short walk, mainly on grassy paths, following field headlands with views towards Wattisham. There is even a seat part way round, a good spot to relax and take in the scenery.

For added interest, you may wish to take a detour into the magnificent Hitcham church. In the church you will find a display about the Rev John Henslow who was Rector here from 1837—1861. Henslow was a great friend and mentor to Charles Darwin.

To start the walk, if arriving by car, park in the cul-de-sac opposite the Post Office. The footpath starts on the opposite side of the road to the Post Office and to the right of the cul-de-sac. This path follows the field hedges for approx. 1/2 a mile before coming to a T junction with another path in a small copse. Turn right and follow the path which will lead you to a quiet road. Turn right onto the road. After approx. 500 metres take the footpath on the right, this takes you back to the main Hitcham road at Squirrels coach yard. Turn right onto the road and cross over. At the bottom of the hill take the footpath to the right. This winds past cottage gardens before opening out into a wildflower meadow. Half way along the meadow, take the path to the right across a small bridge. This takes you back to the Post Office where they sell delicious homemade cakes and local products.

You can find this route listed on the OS Online Maps as: Gus Rambles at Hitcham

Carrie Dye



Motoring Memories, Part XI

Stuart's motoring memories are drawn from his childhood in the 1960s and 70s growing up in Bretttenham where his father ran a village shop and filling station. This month Stuart reflects on advanced driving skills.

Making Progress

I had read about schemes to promote improved driving beyond the basic test but until 1989 I had not followed this up. However, after getting involved initially I am still going, thirty years later. There are two main charities promoting advanced driving, which are IAMRoadsmart (institute of Advanced Motorists Roadsmart) and ROADAR (ROSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders) and I now volunteer with both to assist other people to improve or progress their driving. Both organisations base their training on the emergency services system of driving and the handbook is called Roadcraft. The latest edition published this year is easier to understand and is jargon free. After undergoing training with an "observer" a test is taken. This takes around an



hour and is based on the principles in Roadcraft. On average ten hours of training is required for people to be prepared for the test, dependent on how quickly the person picks up the skills. The main purpose of the training is for people to improve their skills, road safety and thus

make it safer for everybody, and reduce injuries and fatalities.

In 1989 I took both tests and successfully passed. The next thing, I was being asked to take over observing a Road Safety Officer who had her test in a few weeks. I had no training as an Observer and there was an assumption I would be able to help. It is very different now with Observers being tested regularly on their own driving skills and ability to undertake the coaching.

Over the past thirty years I have coached around 130 people to test level. Mostly an enjoyable experience with a few exceptions. A few scary and funny events.

A Spanish lady wanted to follow her husband's example and take the test. Two major issues were that her ability to understand English was not well honed. Secondly she did not enjoy driving and drove infrequently, but when she did so felt that going everywhere as fast as possible would be best. As

an Observer, training people takes place in their car. I only have words and gestures to manage the situation, unlike a Driving Instructor, there are no dual controls. On this occasion the Spanish lady had decided to overtake a lorry on a single carriage way road. Bear in mind overtaking is the most dangerous manoeuvre. A car was coming towards us but was still far enough away to be of no concern. The lady now decided to completely change her usual style and complete the overtakeslowly. I calmly advised her to speed up. Her inability to grasp firstly what I had said, and secondly the developing danger was evident. I do not speak any Spanish, but with the increasing danger my voice getting louder, somehow the urgency of the situation became evident. Perhaps my gestures helped, or maybe that international language of four letters was understood. I was quite relieved we survived. The lady did eventually decide that following her husband was not a good idea, I agreed. Some thirty years later I still occasionally bump into her and we laugh about the incident.

Vauxhall had a link with IAMRoadsmart some years ago whereby they offered a night driving assessment, which was undertaken by IAM observers. A gentleman arrived at my house for the assessment. In those days I lived in quite a narrow, dead end residential town street with cars parked on both sides of the road. After initial introductions, checking documentation and a discussion about the event we got into the gentleman's car. He drove to the dead end of the street, promptly engaged reverse gear and without hesitation or deviation drove as fast backwards to the other end as possible. I pondered quitting whilst ahead but being of an inquisitive nature decided to carry on with the assessment. It was evident that this individual was highly trained, demonstrated some very advanced skills and was extremely safe, smooth and progressive in his driving. There was nothing I would have been able to add. I told him this after we concluded and then asked about his experience and why the assessment. He was trained in the Special Forces, ambush avoidance being a specialty. He had come to IAM to do the assessment due to a disagreement with another observer, who had refused to accept that this gentleman had the skills he stated. I was quite happy to acknowledge that his level of training, skill and experience exceeded mine, my IAM colleague sadly could not bring himself to do so.

For books about driving and helping you to enjoy your driving whilst staying safe go to reglocal.com

Stuart Earle

What's New in Hitcham

Alternative Tuesday 10th & 24th May AFTER SEVENS would love to welcome new members to join. Local ladies group enjoys speakers and demonstrations on various subjects and often have theatre outings and other trips. Tel 01449 678 378 or 07780 676 799

Every Thursday. HATHA YOGA 19.45 - 20.45. To guarantee your place or for more information email Sadie Clarke, qualified yoga teacher, on Facebook info@32yoga.co.uk or call 07598 425 976. £5 per class or save money by paying in advance for 4 sessions at £18.

Every Second Thursday 12th May 14.00-16.00. THE RURAL COFFEE CARAVAN. Welcomes everyone on the second Thursday of every month- for a friendly natter over complimentary tea, coffee and cake at Hitcham Village Hall with a great source of information to share. For more info www.ruralcoffeecaravan.or.uk or call 01379 855 338

Every Friday. LINE DANCING. 18.30 - 19.30. For mixed abilities. £5.50 to pre-booked & check availability or £18. course of 4 classes. For more info email Rosie on Idrosie@yahoo.co.uk or call 07748 563 926

First Sunday every month– 10.00-12.00 HITCHAM SCRIBBLERS art group for anyone to join, from complete beginners and established artists. Draw or paint people, landscapes, buildings or whatever collective ideas we may have. Contact Simone Beadle on 07775786850

Saturday 21st May COFFEE MORNING. 10.00 -11.30 Complimentary tea, coffee, squash and biscuits. Raffle & cake stall.

Saturday 21st May CHOOSE REFILLS. 10.00 - 12.00. Bring your own bottle to refill with household cleaning or body care products and only buy what you need without unnecessary packaging. www.chooserefills.co.uk 01449 612 289.

Tuesday 31st May BINGO. 19.00 for 19.30pm. Bingo books and flyers £1 each – Cash Prizes Only! Plus raffle for great prizes. A fun night with unlimited free cuppas and biccys or a cash/card bar! For more information call 07774 744 723.

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