

The Raynhams' Newsletter - March 2025

Dates for the Diary

- **Friday 7th** - Pub night in Helhoughton Village Hall from 7 to 11pm.
- **Saturday 8th** - Bingo night in The Airman's Arms with eyes down from 7:30pm. Contact via the Facebook page to reserve seats.
- **Saturday 8th, 15th, 22nd** - Creative Crafters in the Village Hall from 10am to midday.
- **Saturday 8th, 15th, 22nd** - Bar night in the Village Hall from 7 to 11pm.
- **Tuesday 25th** - Coffee morning in Helhoughton Village Hall for Swaffham and Litcham Home Hospice from 10am to midday.
- **Tuesday 25th** - Meeting of the Parish Council in the Village Hall from 7pm.
- **Friday 28th** - Mobile library at West Raynham bus shelter from 9:30 to 9:45am.
- **Friday 28th** - Meeting of the Gardening Club in the Village Hall from 6 to 7pm.
- **Monday 31st** - Meeting of the Village Hall Committee in the Village Hall from 6:30pm.

Local Church Services

- **Wednesday 5th** - St Margaret, Tatterford: Ash Wednesday service from 6pm.
- **Sunday 9th** - St Mary's, East Raynham: Evensong from 6pm.
- **Sunday 23rd** - All Saints, Helhoughton: Communion from 10:30am.

Church Services for Easter

On Sunday 13th April there will be a service for Palm Sunday in preparation for Easter. The service will start at 10:30am in the ruins of St Margaret's in West Raynham and then move down to St Mary's in East Raynham.

The local Easter Sunday service will be held in Helhoughton on Sunday 20th April from 10.30am

Coffee Morning on Wednesday 2nd April



Come along to the Coffee Morning on 2nd April and see an exhibition of work by pupils of West Raynham School.

You will also be able to sample some of their own cakes and sausage rolls.

Proceeds from the Coffee Morning will be given to the school for outdoor play equipment, with a particular request from the pupils for a basketball hoop and basket balls.

Everyone welcome! Do pop in if you have time.

Newsletter Contact Details and Past Issues

- Deadline for submissions - 25th of each month.
- westray.newsletter@gmail.com - To send in articles or manage subscriptions.
- <https://www.raynhampc.info/documents> - Download previous Newsletters.
- Recent issues available to view in West Raynham Reading Room.

The Airman's Arms

BINGO

Eyes down Saturday 8th

March, 7:30 PM



Cash prizes to be won!



Booking your seat is essential as spaces are limited. Just DM us!

Buy your bingo books & drinks from 7 PM.

Easter Bingo

Monday April 14th

West Raynham



Village Hall



Doors Open 6pm

Eyes Down 7.30pm

Raffle & Refreshments

PROCEEDS:

St.Margarets Ruins

more info: Tracy Jolliffe
07788882018 text only

Just For Fun

Sat May 17th 7pm - Late
Scores on the doors competition



EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST
SWITZERLAND 2025



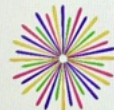
On The Big Screen

West Raynham

Village Hall



FANCY DRESS (optional)



BAR OPEN



Everyone Welcome

More info: Tracy j 07788882018



MESSAGE MEGAN: 07557308945 OR EMAIL: MEGJBOND@GMAIL.COM

Wanted

A cleaner/maintenance person for West Raynham village hall. Approximately three hours per month. If you are interested, please email: westraynham.vhc@gmail.com.

St. Margaret's Ruins - Funk & Soul Night - 12th April



Preserving the Past, Engaging the Present, Inspiring the Future

St. Margaret's in Ruins Fundraising Funk & Soul Night

Saturday 12th April 2025

19:00 - 23:00 (DJ from 20:00)

📍 West Raynham Village Hall, The Street, West Raynham, Norfolk

💙 Join us for an evening of fun, and fundraising to support the preservation of St. Margaret's in Ruins in West Raynham.



Dance the night away with DJ Funky Chicken, enjoy delicious Mexican food! 🌮🎵
Village Hall Bar will be open for guests to purchase drinks (extremely reasonable).
Silent Auction.

Tickets £10 minimum donation per person on entry.

HOW TO JOIN IN

- 💎 **Pre-order** tickets (details at the email below)
- 🍲 Donate items for the Silent Auction and Raffle
- 🌮 Help prepare and provide Mexican themed food
- ❤️ Volunteer your time – every little helps!

Contact: Anne-Marie Martin at enquiries@stmargaretsruins.org



St Margaret's Ruins - Fundraising Weekend - 12th to 14th April



Preserving the Past, Engaging the Present, Inspiring the Future

St. Margaret's in Ruins Fundraising Weekend
12th – 14th April 2025
West Raynham Village Hall & Surrounding Areas

♥ Join us for a weekend of community, fun, and fundraising to support the preservation of St. Margaret's in Ruins!

WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

- 🧹 Spring Clean of the Churchyard – Sat, 10:00–12:00
Lend a hand to tidy up St. Margaret's grounds. Refreshments provided!
- 🎵 Funk & Soul Night – Sat, 19:00 onwards
Dance the night away with DJ Funky Chicken, enjoy delicious Mexican food! 🌮🎶
Silent Auction. Bar open for purchase of drinks.
Minimum £10 donation per person on entry (prebook).
- 🚗 Mick's Tractor Run – Sun 09:30-14:00. Breakfast from 08:30 in the Village Hall and refreshments on return. A scenic tractor parade with stops along the route. Any vehicles welcome. *Minimum £5 per donation per person on the day.*
- 🎰 Tracy's Easter Bingo Night – Mon, 18:00, eyes down 19:30.
Fun prizes, a raffle, and a great way to round off the weekend! *Tickets on door.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- 👥 Join the events & bring your friends!
- 🎫 Pre-order tickets for the Funk & Soul Night
- 🍲 Donate items for the Silent Auction and Raffle
- 🌮 Help prepare and provide Mexican themed food
- ❤️ Volunteer your time – every little helps!

Contact: Anne-Marie Martin at enquiries@stmargaretsruins.org



Dog Fouling

Although the majority of dog owners are responsible and do clear up after their dogs, it is noticeable there has been an increase in dog waste left on paths and in meadows and fields around West Raynham and surrounding areas. Dog waste can carry the eggs of intestinal roundworms which may cause toxocariasis in humans, and although this is rare it can severely affect the liver, lungs or eyes.

So, please can all owners remember to pick up after their dogs and there are several bins in and around the village which can be used to dispose of the dog waste.

Note that a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100 can be issued to anyone failing to clear up after their dog. If the case goes to court this could cost the owner or person in charge of the animal up to £1,000. The law states that either being unaware your dog has fouled or not having a suitable bag are not reasonable excuses.

The Fight for Fakenham Commons

Part 3 - A Summer of Discontent (2)

The Norfolk News claimed the disturbances in May had been caused by "ill-advised people who had made the inclosure an occasion for lawlessness and riot, which will probably entail upon them and their misguided followers very unpleasant consequences". Yet it tempered its condemnation with criticism of the allottees, many of whom, it believed, had been too hasty in fencing off their land: "...knowing the strong feeling on the part of those who are deprived of the right to turn their ponies and donkeys, cows or other animals, on which their livelihood largely depends, on the Common or Heath - a right they have exercised during their whole working lifetime, and to lose which is to them a hard and serious matter - would it not have been well that those who are more fortunate in receiving allotments of the same should have shown less haste in fencing; for although the ground has been awarded to them, they have not yet received the award officially, and we have heard several poor men argue strongly and sincerely that the parties had yet no right to the land, as they have not got their 'writings'. Had the claimants been less hasty in enclosing, the riot might have been prevented, and they would have saved their posts and rails". The report ended with a reminder that the fire, which at one point extended the full length of the heath, "was very beautiful" with hundreds of people flocking to witness it. The burning of the furze, it added, was "beneficial as it helped to clear the land".

On 4th June, the press declared that calm had been restored, and the disturbances had "happily been brought to a close". Reinforcements of police had arrived in the town, under the command of Superintendent Bloomfield, "preventing further outrages and restoring the town to quietness". It was only to be a temporary peace, however.



Enclosure map showing Back Common and Mill Common

At the Fakenham Petty Sessions on May 30th, 14 people appeared in connection with the riot. Lord of the Manor Willoughby Jones was present in his role as magistrate but chose not to adjudicate in view of a potential conflict of interest - Jones was himself an allottee. Resident at Cranmer Hall, a few miles to the north of Fakenham, Jones was a Baronet as well as a landowner and the largest beneficiary of the enclosure. The presiding magistrates were Reverend D. L. Astley, Reverend Richard Phayre and J. Everitt Esq. Phayre was rector of the parish of East and West Raynham whilst Delaval Loftus Astley, later the 18th Lord Hastings, was a member of the family of landed gentry resident at Melton Constable Hall, and brother of Jacob Delaval Astley, another beneficiary of the enclosure scheme at Fakenham. Amongst those up before the bench were Francis Fiddaman, a fish hawker, George Crockley, a labourer, and William Mason, another fish hawker, all of Fakenham, and all charged with damaging fences on Malt Mill Common.

Simms Reeve for the defence argued that the allottees did not have full rights to erect fences until the commissioners' award had been fully granted. This position was endorsed by the surveyor Robert Wright, himself called to give evidence. Wright conceded that the commissioners had not yet made their award, and that he, unlike Wetherell, had not given any allottees permission to enter their allotments. After discussions between the magistrates, it was decided to withdraw the charges against all of those accused of perpetrating the disorder, on the understanding that no further breaches took place. Future acts of violence, they warned, would not be treated with similar forbearance as had prevailed on this occasion. They were anxious to see "good feeling" restored to the town and accepted that what had occurred had arisen from a general misunderstanding of their rights on both sides. Applause rang out in the court room as the cases were dismissed.

There were no further reports of disturbances during June, but there remained an atmosphere of simmering discontent. An anonymous notice was posted in the marketplace at the beginning of the month, warning that those who purchase, sell or plant any part of the commons or heath "will do so at their own hazard". The Norfolk News described the town as in "a state of great agitation", labelling the enclosure "a miserable affair, which has, in setting class against class in bitter hatred and hostility, done more mischief than can be repaired for years". The paper considered the enclosure to be perfectly legal, but acknowledged Flaxman and others' conviction that it was illegal, conceding that their campaign had been conducted in a temperate fashion.

Speakers at the public meetings had been roundly cheered and songs referring to the enclosure sung, but proceedings had not been excessively boisterous until Saturday 9th July when a number of police, under the command of Superintendent Blomfield, assembled in the marketplace as a public meeting took place, with James Flaxman addressing a large crowd. After the meeting he walked at the head of a procession to Back Common, the throng singing as they went. Flaxman spoke again at the Common, then led them back to the marketplace where he made another speech, after which the crowd, continuing to sing, accompanied Flaxman back to his home on the Heath. There was no violence aside from "some groaning" outside the house of Mr Watson and one or two palings pulled off Mr Sillett's fence.

For the authorities, though, the parades and speeches were a provocation too far, and fearing things could get out of hand quickly, a warrant was issued for Flaxman's arrest on a charge of inciting a breach of the peace. At noon he was apprehended and taken to Great Ryburgh where he was arraigned before magistrates Phayre and Everett at a public house in the village and asked to bind himself under a penalty of £300 that he would not repeat these proceedings for eight months, with two bail payments of £150 each. Failing to pay bail, Flaxman was sent to jail in Norwich Castle. Word of the arrest spread rapidly around Fakenham prompting a large gathering in the marketplace, which threatened to spill over into disorder until addressed by Mr Blyth, stonemason and carver of Hayes Lane, who urged calm. At the same time crowds also gathered on the heath, where the fences of Rev. James Lee Warner and other allottees were ceremoniously pulled up, after which the unruly mob walked to the Back Common where fences belonging to Howorth and Sillett were also removed and thrown into the ditches and river.

The following day, a large body of police reinforcements armed with cutlasses arrived in Fakenham under the command of Colonel Black, Chief Constable of Norfolk, proceeding to patrol the streets amidst a crowd of onlookers. A peaceful meeting took place on Mill Common, where the audience were apprised of steps being taken to support Flaxman, including a subscription for his defence. Despite the meeting being orderly, Colonel Black and magistrate Phayre arrived and ordered the crowd to disperse.

Flaxman's treatment was unnecessarily harsh, his friends insisting that quite the opposite of inciting riot, he was, with his advice and influence, attempting to prevent it. He had been falsely accused they believed and had not been allowed counsel or to call witnesses in his defence. A poor man, he was asked to find bail at an extravagant amount, in default of which he was sent to prison. The Norwich Mercury took a less sympathetic line, claiming the rioters were labouring men who had no interest whatever in the dispute, but "come into town of an evening from the neighbouring villages for the express purpose of disturbance and riot". Prominent people, it added, were unable to walk the streets: "Even now ladies (members of families whose property in the parish gives them a title to allotment) cannot enter the town or walk the streets without personal and pointed insult".

On 17th July, rumours were circulating that Flaxman, having served a week in jail, was to be released, prompting efforts to organise a procession through the town, an idea that was quickly quashed by a formidable array of armed police, with, as the Norfolk News described "cold steel at their sides". Instead, around 200 to 300 people descended on the station to witness his arrival, singing as they went one of the popular refrains of the resistance, "Don't be Fidgetty, we shall win, our Common back again". This was no doubt a derogatory reference to John Fidgett Wright, one of the beneficiaries of land on the Heath, former tea dealer and now clerk to the local court of petty sessions. The labouring classes associated him not only with the appropriation of the commons, but as an accomplice to the dispensation of punitive sanctions for engaging in the resistance.

The Mercury described the scene as Flaxman arrived: "On the arrival of the train at 9.45pm, a slight attempt at applause was raised, but this was very creditably stopped by a deprecatory motion of Mr Flaxman, who immediately jumped into the vehicle awaiting his arrival, and drove straight to his home on the heath". Flaxman, as a condition for his release, had been required to swear not to incite violence, and thus was studious in ignoring

the assembled throng. The report in *The Mercury* continued: "The people then quietly dispersed, and the streets were soon after left to the measured tramp of the police, who patrolled the town in squads, with mounted men to keep up communication with the more distant points of the parish. £50 reward is offered for information which shall lead to the conviction of any parties concerned in the destruction, on Tuesday night, of gates and fencing erected by Rev. James Lee Warner and other allottees on the Heath and Back Common. Col. Black the Chief Constable also warns the public against assembling in the streets in groups. A number of summonses have been issued, and these will come on for hearing at the petty sessions on Monday next, and will, we trust, be the last we shall hear of this outrageous resistance to law and order".

The disturbances were not over, though. On 22nd July, between 10 and 11pm around 60 people gathered on the Heath, shaking the wire fencing whilst singing their popular songs, among them:

Roll up, roll up!
Down with the rails!
Down with the rails!

There was no evidence of damage or violence, and the crowd dispersed once the police appeared, although a number reappeared later, including one man armed with an axe. Ten people were arrested for taking part in an 'unlawful and tumultuous assemblage' and 'acting in a manner calculated to cause a breach of the peace, and to excite alarm amongst Her Majesty's peaceable subjects.

[Next Month - The Legal Case to Save the Commons](#)

Phil Henshaw.