

Raynhams' Newsletter - January 2022

We hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas and New Year. There are two quick announcements to make at the start of this issue. First, a six-week course of line dancing classes will start from 20th January, unless there are any last-minute changes to current guidance on Covid-19. Numbers are limited and places must be booked in advance, so if you would like to take part, then please email westray.newsletter@gmail.com. Second, please remember the Village Hall bar is still open on Fridays from 6 to 10 pm.

Notices

'End of an Era' coffee morning on 22nd January

Please note this event has now been postponed until Spring later this year.

Recycle your crisp packets

We now have a recycling point for used crisp packets in the Reading Room to help raise funds for the Whitwell and Reepham Railway.

Update from County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Minutes, Agendas and reports of Parish Council meetings are available to view and download from our website at www.raynhampc.info, which also includes the latest news from Norfolk County Council.

Parish Council meetings are held in West Raynham Village Hall starting at 7 pm, and the dates for this year are:

- 25 January
- 29 March
- 31 May - Annual Parish Meeting (APM) & Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (APCM)
- 26 July
- 27 September
- 29 November

Groups and Clubs - dates for your diary

- **Saturday 15th, 22nd, 29th** - Knit and natter from 10 am in the Village Hall
- **Thursday 27th** - Raynhams' Gardening Club from 6 pm in the Village Hall
- **Thursday 3rd February** - Raynhams' Book Club from 5:30 pm, venue TBC

Newsletter Info and Contact Details

- Deadline for articles or notices is the 28th of each month
- westray.newsletter@gmail.com to send in articles or manage subscriptions
- <https://www.raynhampc.info/documents> to view and download newsletters

Reverend Dr Edward Bundock

Our Rector of 24 years, the Revd Dr Edward Bundock is retiring and will sadly be leaving West Raynham in the coming months. However, he, Catherine and his daughters Aligan and Kaira will be only moving to Fakenham, so they won't be far. In addition to his parochial work covering the benefice of eight churches and two ruins, Father Edward has also found time to write widely on various topics including local history. A pamphlet on the history of West Raynham School was published in 2004, and a general history of the Raynhams and Helhoughton is in the final stages of preparation. During his last service at East Rudham on 2nd January, Father Edward summarised his time here in the following sermon which is reproduced in its entirety:

Not a sermon. Nor putting the diocese to rights - an impossible task. Also, you have to be careful when looking back on these occasions the accounts of achievements sound like an obituary.

If you had moved into a house in Rudham in 1971 and if you moved 26 years later you would have known eight clergy. The average stay to that point was three years and three months. But had you come in 1997 and moved almost 25 years later you would have known one.

This service I want to be a thanksgiving for what we have done together - it's enormous.

First, we are growing churches. We supply the diocese with a third of what they say they need. We do not have messy churches, café churches - dumbed down religion that succeeds in patronising adults and children.

When we came, there were certain ideas being promoted which are still being pedalled today. These were that children could not enjoy or learn from normal services in church. The Eucharist was regarded as a barrier for the unconfirmed. Processions like ours for rogation and Corpus Christi were not considered at all. Twenty years on, there is no evidence that in the long run churches which followed those ideas have grown. If they had, there wouldn't be the crisis we face now. We are a group of parishes which has grown numerically, and this has been helped by sacramental worship and the things we have done.

First, there is the celebration of the church's year. East Rudham has had a Christingle service and on two occasions, a Nativity play in the Norfolk dialect. Ash Wednesday has been kept at Tatterford. On Palm Sunday we have processed from West Raynham's ruin to Helhoughton - that is a group service, as have been the Holy week services. We restored the services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil so that they became central to the life of the group. We have restored a rogation procession which was at East Raynham to begin with and South Raynham most recently. We reintroduced a Corpus Christi procession and a procession on St Margaret's day. Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament has been reintroduced at Tatterford, Helhoughton, South Raynham and Houghton. In one year at South Raynham, we arranged for the Queen's pigeons to be released after the Mass on Whitsunday as a sign of the Gospel being spread.

Apart from these specifically liturgical events, we have also had:

Duck races, Highland games and a tug of war across the river at Helhoughton. We have served huge quantities of tea and cake at the Houghton horse trials and have organised cricket matches at Houghton as well as a concert premiering a piece of music unpublished for two hundred years. In West Rudham we had a ceilidh to celebrate the Queen's diamond jubilee, and a beacon at Houghton for the same occasion. The Raynhams have had horticultural society

shows and community lunches, which also started in the Raynhams, have been continued in Helhoughton. For local young people, we had a youth group, and then a playvan childrens' group. We have had carol singing across several villages and in recent years the singers have been driven from place to place in an old converted French ambulance. There is an ecumenical discussion group which has now been running for many years. There have been particular things which one might not expect, for example, Toftrees was sent a bill by the electricity company three years after the supply was disconnected. Then there was the confirmation at Tattersett when the bishop was warned not to talk too long because we would lose the light and there was no electricity. He did not take my advice and we sang the last hymn in darkness as best we could.

As well as events to consider, there is the repair and renewal of the church buildings. At Toftrees the bats have been banished to the tower. This cost the Department of the Environment £300,000 and took about 12 years. Tatterford, Toftrees and Houghton have all had new roofs. Bells have been restored at Toftrees, Tatterford, Houghton, East Raynham, East Rudham and Tattersett. Organs have been restored in South Raynham and West Rudham and introduced in Tatterford and Houghton. I shall not forget moving the organ to Tatterford in a horse box. Statues have been introduced at East Rudham, West Raynham, South Raynham and painted in Helhoughton and Tatterford. We have acquired various other items, for example, little icons, pictures, veils for Lent, thuribles, candle sticks, pews, Sanctus bells and vestments.

This account which includes so many different events and traditions, and enrichments of our church buildings is not exhaustive, but it indicates ways in which the church has reached out to the wider community, which in turn, is the reason why there has been growth.

For all these things, thank you Lord and thank you people. - thank you for your support - thank you for all we enjoyed together.

My family - my thanks for their love. Thank you.

Village Hall Coffee Morning

Many thanks to Monica Fitzjohn for organising a very successful coffee morning on 4th December. Thanks also go to the helper elves for putting up the decorations, as well as the wonderful stall holders who provided a wide range of gifts and stocking fillers just in time for Christmas! Several raffle prizes were handed out by Monica and Kate Mead at the end, and included a wonderful cake of a snowman. The coffee morning raised £400 for Macmillan Cancer Support.



Solar Fund Grants

The Raynham Solar Fund is now in its sixth funding round and the committee were pleased to receive a wide and varied range of applications. The following applications were successful and will be delivered over the next year:

- **St Margaret's churchyard conservation project phase three:** wildflower plug planting and new fencing for sheep grazing, a continuation of this very successful project. David Stubbs provides regular updates in this newsletter.
- **Snowdrops around the village sign:** these will be planted 'in the green' early in the New Year, and lookout for an appeal for volunteer bulb planters.
- **Plant stall and planters:** replace the plant stand opposite Seppings Meadow and provide four planters around West Raynham to be maintained by the Gardening Club.
- **Bird feeders and supply of bird food for winter feeding:** open to all parishioners and a supply of sunflower seeds will be available in the West Raynham Reading Room and new feeders can be supplied, further details from Andrew Buck.
- **Changing the street lamps on The Drove:** the Parish Council advised that this application would tie-in with an initiative to change all the parish street lights to LED bulbs in the face of rising electricity prices.
- **Fish & Chip supper:** repeat of the successful and well supported community event held last year, and Melvin Forman will supply details later in the year.
- **Circuit training:** purchase of equipment and providing a trainer for circuit training in the village hall. This proposal will improve community cohesion and promote healthy living. Lookout for further news from Paresh Shah about this activity.
- **Coach day trip on Sat. 16th July to St. Ives and Ely:** free for all the Raynhams' parishioners - for further details and to reserve a place please contact Janice Hankey on 07776 025040.

Arthritis Action

Arthritis Action Groups give people the opportunity to meet others living with arthritis and can be a great way to share hints, tips and experiences with others who understand the impact arthritis can have on your daily life.

Meetings take place about every six weeks and due to Covid-19 these meetings are taking place online using Zoom or with telephone conference calls if you do not have access to the internet.

For more information, please contact Marc Williams, Area Co-ordinator, by phoning 07562 430886.

Village Hall improvements - Paul Reeve

The Village Hall Committee is very pleased to announce the completion of upgrades to the Audio-Visual equipment in the Village Hall. Although this has been a more involved project than initially anticipated, now that it is complete it provides some key benefits for both the Hall and Reading Room.

We now have full Broadband access which is simple to connect to and available in both the Hall itself and the Reading Room. The broadband service is being provided free of charge for the next 24 months, courtesy of Community Broadband providers Voneus.

The audio-visual facilities in the Hall have been significantly upgraded to help ensure that, as well as still supporting playing of DVDs and CDs, we can also use online streaming services for movies and music, and to make presentations - for example with PowerPoint - which will increase usability for clubs and societies, and also provide some additional options for community fund raising.

Access to use the system has been simplified using a single tablet-based control, rather than the plethora of remotes and buttons we've previously had to deal with. There is also single button Bluetooth connectivity for mobiles and personal devices. To help improve accessibility within the hall, we have also implemented a hearing induction loop, which is permanently active.

Now that we have full broadband and Wi-Fi, we have been able to introduce a contactless payment service, which is already in use for the bar - so card payments can be taken and no more rooting around for loose change on a Friday night! This will also be used to help support taking payments at some of our community events.



Funding for the project has been supported through a grant obtained by the Village Hall Committee from the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund, with additional assistance from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) - both of whom we owe significant thanks for their support. The implementation itself was undertaken by Norfolk based specialists Saturn AV, who have provided an excellent service and will be providing on-going support, should it be needed.

If you would like to know how to use the system and would like a demonstration, then please send an email to westray.newsletter@gmail.com so we can arrange a convenient date and time.

Photos of The Raynhams

Our thanks to Richard Brooke for providing several images of various landmarks in and around West Raynham. The scans of postcards on this page are part of a series produced by Roy's of Helhoughton. On the next page are two aerial photos featuring the Greyhound pub and Bowling Green in West Raynham, and St Mary's Church in East Raynham. These photos were taken by Richard's father, R.F. Brooke, from an Airspeed Oxford aeroplane during a training flight on 14th March 1953 from RAF West Raynham.

If you have any similar postcards or photos of the local area which you are willing to share, then please do get in touch either by sending an email to westray.newsletter@gmail.com or leaving a note in the village hall post box.



Old Bridge; Raynham Park



The Lake; Raynham Park



The Street; W. Raynham



Chapel and R. Elgar, butcher; W. Raynham



Hall yards; E. Raynham



The Rectory; W. Raynham

VILLAGE TUIT (GARIMOND)

14/7/53

TAKEN FROM 082000 1000'



Nature Notes for December 2021 - David Stubbs

I have been observing wildlife in the Raynham area since late 2015, and fairly intensively since 2018. Over these last four years I have seen, or had reported to me, a total of 132 species of birds, all within walking distance of West Raynham. 2020 and 2021 have been the most productive, with 112 species recorded in both years.

A few of these are random rarities, but for the most part - certainly well over 100 - they are regularly occurring species in our area. Perhaps mostly importantly, I estimate we have about 80 species that breed here.

During the past year, we added eight new species to the local list:

- **Stonechat** - first seen up near the solar farm in January and also reported in the same area in December, this is probably a regular winter bird on the old airfield, but will be hard to find as most of the area is inaccessible.
- **Short-eared owl and jack snipe** - both seen during the February cold snap, again up near the solar farm and are typical, albeit rare, wanderers in snowy conditions.
- **White-tailed eagle** - one of the birds released in the Isle of Wight that took a tour of the south and east of England, with several reports from across Norfolk. This one was seen heading over the solar farm one afternoon in March.
- **Great egret** - two reported sightings, one from along the Wensum near South Raynham in April and a second on the marshlands at Southmill near Shereford in late autumn. Given that this species is expanding across Norfolk, and there was one regularly seen at Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve, we can expect more regular sightings of this impressive, large egret in years to come.
- **Ring-necked parakeet** - a single bird was reported in Helhoughton in July. This species is abundant in London and the surrounding counties, but so far has relatively little presence in Norfolk. It will probably expand its range across the county in the coming years.
- **Mandarin duck** - another exotic bird that has established feral populations in many parts of the country. A drake was found on Raynham Lake in April and had probably come over from Pensthorpe, where a small population can be found along the river.
- **Black-tailed godwit** - as reported in last month's Nature Notes, I heard a small flock passing over West Raynham one evening in November. Quite a number of waders and wildfowl move around at night, so given enough time and patience, we may expect various other random records of this or other species passing through our area.

These are the notables for 2021, but in many respects the real highlights are the familiar and regular species that characterise our local bird fauna. Everyone who reads these Nature Notes will know I am totally captivated by the breeding colonies of swifts and house martins that inhabit West Raynham and animate the village throughout the summer months. For me they will always be our top birds.

Amongst my other favourites are the sight and sound of cuckoos in the marshes and wet woodlands along the Wensum, as well as the profusion of different warbler species that occur in the same habitats. The large flock of greylag geese in the estate parkland is always an impressive sight, and the pasture grassland and old chestnut trees here are regular haunts of mistle thrushes, and in winter, fieldfares and redwings.

I never fail to be thrilled by the sight of red kites, even though they are probably our second-most frequently seen bird of prey, after buzzard. Kites are impressive for their size and

graceful flight and the way they feel truly part of the landscape, even though they have only recently colonised the area following successful reintroduction programmes in various parts of the country.

Aside from birds, the Raynhams' area has plenty of natural interest in the form of a wide variety of mammals, amphibians, invertebrates and wild plants. While a large part of the landscape is devoted to arable farming, there is a good mix of woodlands, wetlands and areas of scrub and hedgerows that provide vital habitat for wildlife. Indeed, the length of the River Wensum is officially designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The latter derives from the European Habitats Directive, and although that no longer applies post-Brexit, the meaning of SACs has been incorporated into updated UK regulations, providing important continuity of protected status for our most special wildlife habitats.

Looking ahead to 2022

I am always pleased to hear from local people with interesting sightings to report. I would especially like to know more about wildlife on the other side of the air base, so please do not hesitate to get in touch.

At the end of January, the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch takes place over the weekend of 28th, 29th and 30th. Do take part if you can and to find out more visit the website at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>.

Conservation work

We will of course continue with the grassland management at the churchyard, which will be the fifth season of this project, generously supported by the Raynham Solar Fund. After the successful introduction of sheep grazing this last autumn, we plan to continue this approach, in partnership with Hawk and Owl Trust's Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve. If you fancy joining in with the hay making in summer and sheep monitoring in the autumn, please do let me know - we rely on volunteers to help with this project, and it is a great way of being part of a community activity.

Happy New Year to everyone.

If you have any unusual nature observations during the month, please let me know:
David Stubbs: davidstubbs1@btinternet.com or WhatsApp me on 07974922197