

Raynhams' Newsletter - February 2021

Welcome to this month's issue!

Our thanks again to all of the wonderful contributors who still continue to provide articles and announcements for the newsletter! If you have any notes or observations you we could include, then do get in touch.

As some of you may have seen, the Reading Room in West Raynham is temporarily closed for redecoration. Besides retaining storage of items needed for the village hall, the intention is to include a small space where people can meet and sit (whenever that will be!), a display of leaflets and information on the local area, and a food bank collection point. If you have any thoughts or suggestions about the Reading Room then please contact Paresh at Foundry Cottage (E: pareshs999@gmail.com).

Solar Fund projects for garden birds

Winter feeding of garden birds - Andrew Buck

The Solar Fund has enabled the provision of bird feeders and a supply of feed to encourage parishioners to feed wild birds through the winter months.

I have chosen sunflower hearts and peanuts, as my experience in West Raynham has been that these attract the widest range of garden birds with very few issues of increased rodent activity.

The offer is open to all Raynhams parishioners, and initially one feeder will be provided per household on a first come, first served basis. If you would like to be part of this project, please email me and I will organise a feeder and suitable feed: andrew.buck@chemspec.co.uk.

Free bird boxes - Helen Brooke

This year the Solar Fund has financed the purchase of nest boxes for the Raynhams Parish with the aim of providing nesting places for breeding birds and to help promote the conservation and diversity of local wildlife.

There are a limited number of nest boxes available, free of charge, for residents of the Raynhams Parish and these will be given out on a first come, first served basis (one per household). It is National Nest Box week from 14-21 February and their website www.nestboxweek.com gives lots of useful information about where to site boxes and how to maintain them.

Please call Helen Brooke on 01328 838220 to arrange collection/delivery.

Newsletter contact details

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

Postal Voting in 2021 Elections - North Norfolk District Council

On Thursday 6 May 2021 elections will be taking place in North Norfolk with electors voting in the Norfolk County Council elections and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Election. There are also several Parish Council by-elections scheduled to be held on this day.

Given the ongoing situation with the Covid-19 pandemic we want to give electors as much time as possible to change voting arrangements if voting in a Polling Station during the pandemic is not desired.

If you wish to vote by post contact us by email at postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or by phoning 01263 516046 and we will send you a form.

Please note any application for a postal vote must be completed by hand using 'wet ink' and any digitally signed applications will not be accepted. Given the anticipated high volume of applications for postal votes you should make your application as soon as possible.

In order to apply for a postal vote, you must be a registered elector within North Norfolk. Registration can be done online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or you can phone 01263 516046.

Completed applications can be returned by email to postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or posted to: Electoral Services, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN.

Notices

Tombola and raffle prizes

Please donate any unwanted gifts or other items that can be used as prizes for tombola and raffle draws during our Easter and Summer events. Items can be left in the Reading Room from next month when the decorating work will have finished.

Lockdown craft stall

During the Village Day on Sunday 27th June Janice Hankey will be running a 'lockdown craft stall', and if you would like to sell any craft pieces you made during the past year, then please call Janice on 07776 025040.

Dog owners

Please can dog owners, especially owners of big dogs, pick up after their pets wherever they are and not just in the villages.

Village Hall Committee

Committee meetings take place every two months, mostly by email for the time being, and the next meeting is on 16th March. Please get in touch if you have any ideas or suggestions for the committee. Current efforts are:

- Village hall – the Easter coffee morning is planned for Saturday 3rd April, depending on coronavirus restrictions, with cakes and other refreshments, tombola and raffle draws, and presentations for the 2020 photo competition winners;
- Village hall car park – replacement fencing was installed in November 2020;
- Reading Room – temporarily closed for redecoration until the end of February.

Contact: Paresh Shah E: pareshs999@gmail.com.

An update from the Raynham team – Jo Bosch

Like many of you, our working lives have been somewhat disrupted, with some of us working from home whilst juggling home schooling and missing our colleagues, and everyone watching the vaccine roll-out with great anticipation. We do hope that some of you have already had your 'jab' so that you can feel safer and more positive about the coming year. Nature doesn't understand a global pandemic however, so our farm team continue to work with the seasons at the usual pace, looking after the livestock and preparing for spring.

We're not resting on our laurels and Lisa, our Events Manager, continues to work on an (ever-changing) events programme for the year which understandably focuses on the summer and early autumn. All being well, we do plan to go ahead with some exciting pop-up outdoor food and music events, as well as outdoor theatre in August. We're monitoring the situation very carefully and keeping abreast of all the measures that will need to be in place to make them as safe and enjoyable as possible, and as soon as we have more concrete details for you, we'll let you know.

Don't forget, if you'd like to hear more about what we're up to you can connect to us through www.facebook.com/RaynhamNorfolk or www.instagram.com/raynhamnorfolk/, or subscribe to our newsletter by visiting www.raynham.co.uk/get-in-touch/.

Walking in Norfolk

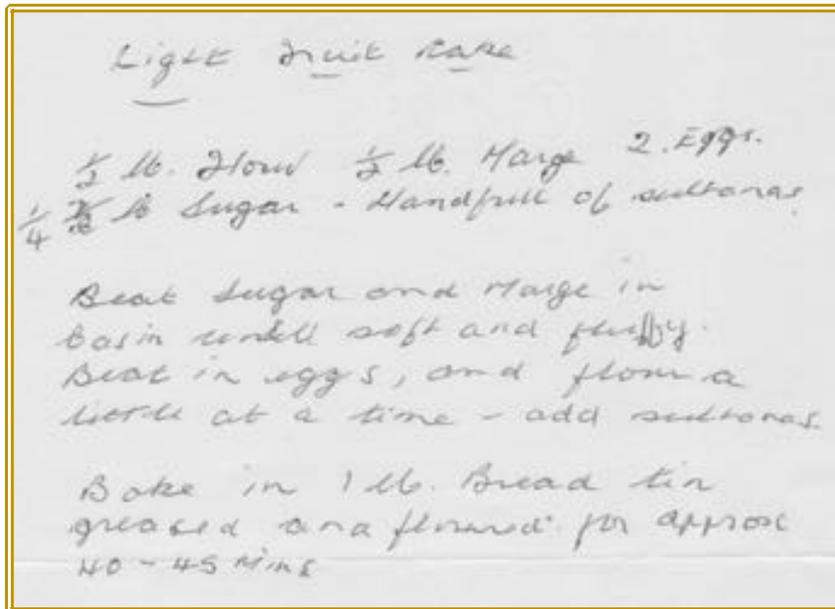
Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks? Then Walking in Norfolk is the website for you! At www.walkinginengland.co.uk/norfolk you can find hundreds of walks to download and print for free. With walks ranging from half a mile to twelve miles plus, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy!

The website also has links to books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is here in one place.

Contact: John Harris E: john@walkinginengland.co.uk; W: www.walkinginengland.co.uk.

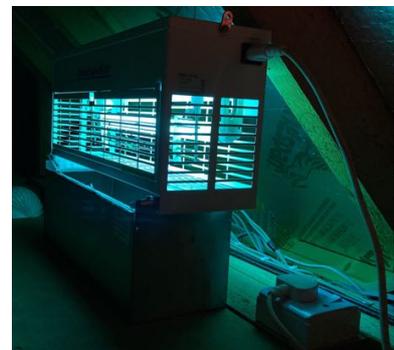
Recipe Corner: Light fruit cake - Judy Pell

This is another one of my Mum's recipes and a firm favourite. She actually got it originally from her sister in law, my Aunty Brenda, who called it a 'Nothing-to-it' cake. It's a simple recipe but delicious with a cuppa, and it can be adapted easily. My favourite is when Mum adds some caraway seeds. She's even swapped out some of the flour for ground almonds or coconut. Bake in a moderate oven - 150°C or so.



Insects in the house - Paresh Shah

During our first winter in 2018/19 we installed an ultra-violet (UV) light trap in the attic to try to control the huge numbers of cluster flies overwintering in the roof space and rooms directly below. This January - not having much to do - I counted the numbers of dead flies and other insects caught and killed in the trap since I last emptied it. A total of 148 insects were caught in seven days with the majority (122 or 82%) being cluster flies; 14% were blowflies (unidentified; feed on decaying animal matter), and the rest



of the catch contained one harlequin ladybird, four green lacewings and one brown lacewing. Out of eight common cluster fly species, I think the main species in the sample was *Pollenia rudis*, identified by the distinctive "two or more anterodorsal bristles on the mid-tibiae". Based on the volume of flies caught in this unreplicated sample, I think about 5,000 cluster flies were caught each week in the winter of 2018/19. Noticeably fewer flies were caught in 2019/20 and there has - so far - been a dramatic reduction during our third winter. Is this down to using the UV trap, or does

it reflect a natural 'boom and bust' cycle in the local cluster fly population? All of the fly species are recorded as parasites of five earthworm species. Has anyone else noticed if they have a much-reduced cluster fly problem this winter?

Greenhouse and garden - Bridget Stanley

January was a quiet month for gardening, but February is when it starts to pick up again. The 1st of February is St Bridget's Day - first day of Spring? Let's hope so! Chilli plants like a long growing season, so I have already sown my chilli seeds. They take a couple of weeks to germinate, and are kept warm indoors. I have also sown sweet peas and they have sprouted up, almost overnight!

I check my over-wintering plants in the greenhouse, the salvias and geraniums etc., making sure they are still well covered in bubble wrap, and give them a little drop of



water here and there. It is a good time now, on a half decent day, to do some pruning of shrub roses, blackcurrants, gooseberries, apples, pears, and wisteria.

I have bought my seed potatoes and set them in egg boxes in a cool room to start 'chitting' as this gets them off to an early start. I usually aim to plant them out around mid- to late-

March, weather permitting. I will plant some of the early ones, 'International Kidney', in pots in the greenhouse at the same time and they will provide some of the first new potatoes. The main crop ones are 'Desiree' this year, and I usually alternate between this variety and 'Cara'. Both seem to do well in the (normally!) drier conditions here in the East.



Raynhams 2021 Calendar

As a reminder here are the winning photos for January and February last year which feature in the 2021 calendar, and both photos are by Tracy Jolliffe.

January 2020



February 2020



We still have calendars in stock so if you would like to buy one at the reduced price of £3.99 please contact Judy or Paresh, either by email to westray.newsletter@gmail.com or phone 01582 756495.

Nature Notes for January 2021 - David Stubbs

I always try to get out early on New Year's Day and make a good start to the birding year. The 1st of January 2021 dawned with a thick fog, almost to the point where I questioned even venturing out. Fortunately I did overcome my doubts and just after 09:00 I headed through the mist towards the solar farm and airfield. Somehow, I had a hunch that it would be worthwhile.



A cold and foggy start to the year heading towards the Solar Farm

The airfield is one of the best spots round here for wildlife. Of course, you cannot go in, so apart from the Estate stockmen tending to the cattle, nobody goes there and it is wonderfully undisturbed. There are a few vantage points across the farm from Low Road, heading down towards Weasenham, and this is where I hit my first purple patch of the day. The fog had lifted enough and there was a faint glimmer of sunlight.

A small flock of lapwings alerted me by their calls and as they took off I noticed another smaller wader amongst them - a green sandpiper. A few moments later five golden plover passed overhead while, going in the opposite direction, a peregrine streaked by. Now there were two snipe in the air making their characteristic scratchy call and the fields were full of winter thrushes - redwings and fieldfares mostly, plus a few mistle thrushes.

Best of all though, scanning across the rough grazing field to where there are some grassy mounds with tall dead stems of what looked like docks and hogweed, I noticed a pair of stonechats; my first ever record for the Raynham area.

Nature is like that. You can walk for miles seeing relatively little and then everything happens at once. To find six difficult species within a few minutes was quite something.

I headed back and round to South Raynham where I planned to walk along the riverside back to Raynham Lake. Along the way I added woodcock, barn owl, cormorant and great black-backed gull; four more lucky finds and there was still another major highlight to come.

By early afternoon, I was scanning the goose flock that had settled in the pasture beyond the northeast side of the lake hoping to find the barnacle goose that had been hanging out with the greylags throughout December. There was no sign of it unfortunately, nor has it been seen at all in January. I suddenly became aware of a distant but unmistakable 'cronking' call of raven. Now this is something. Ravens are only just becoming established in Norfolk - at Holkham, Dersingham and possibly also in the

Brecks. The sound came closer and I picked up two large corvids heading towards me. They passed almost directly overhead and carried on over the lake towards West Raynham village. Bird of the day without a doubt!

I got home after six hours tramping around the lanes and footpaths of our local area with a tally of 70 species for the day. That just goes to show there is still a great variety of wildlife out there, if you have the time and inclination to look for it.

Big Garden Birdwatch

Fast-forward to the end of the month and it was the annual RSPB [Big Garden Birdwatch](#). I hope some of you took part - if so, I'd love to hear how you got on.

For those not familiar, the idea is to spend one-hour observing birds in and around your garden, counting the maximum number of individuals of each species you see during the hour. You then submit your results online to the RSPB, who tally up the nation's results.



Two stock doves busily foraging underneath our bird feeders

Counting individual birds can be really difficult. It's ok for ones and twos, but when your feeders are swarming with blue tits and house sparrows it's almost impossible to keep up. I got to 10 and 18 of those respectively, but I felt there were many more of each. We also had a large flock of goldfinches come by; again too swirly to keep up the count, but at least 25 birds. Top of the charts was a large flock of jackdaws, which I estimated at 45 birds.

More precisely, I was pleased to note six greenfinches - not often I see that many these days - and individuals of nuthatch, treecreeper, marsh tit and great spotted woodpecker.

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