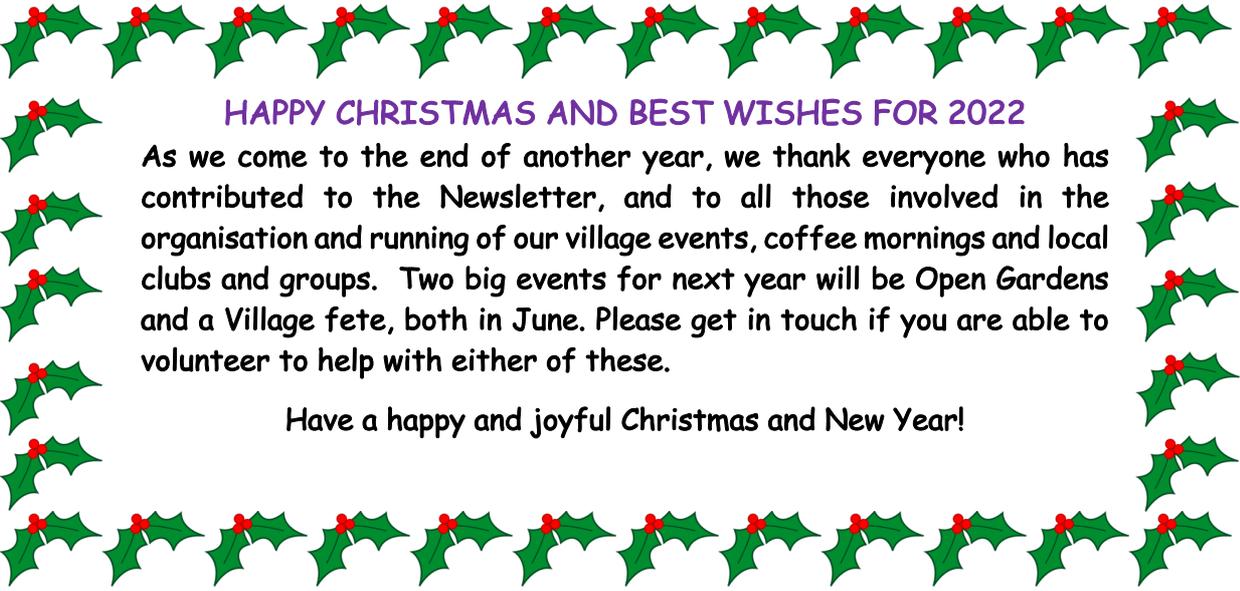


Raynhams' Newsletter - December 2021



HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2022

As we come to the end of another year, we thank everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter, and to all those involved in the organisation and running of our village events, coffee mornings and local clubs and groups. Two big events for next year will be Open Gardens and a Village fete, both in June. Please get in touch if you are able to volunteer to help with either of these.

Have a happy and joyful Christmas and New Year!

Dates for your diary

- **Friday 17th December** from 6 to 11 pm - 60s, 70s & 80s disco and potluck buffet
- **Saturday 11th & 18th December** from 10 am to 12 - Knit and Natter
- **Friday 24th December** from 6 to 10 pm - Village Hall bar open
- **Thursday 6th January** from 5:30 pm - Raynhams' Book Club
- **Friday 7th January** from 6 to 10 pm - Village Hall bar open
- **Saturday 22nd January** from 10 am - Coffee morning and school memories
- **Thursday 27th January** from 6 pm - Raynhams' Gardening Club

Church services and coffee mornings

- **Tuesday 14th December** from 10 am - Coffee morning in Helhoughton
- **Sunday 19th December** from 6:30 pm - Carol singing in the ruins of St Margaret's
- **Friday 24th December** from 6 pm - Traditional service of lessons and carols at St Mary's

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



**Have you
heard ...?**

**Village Xmas Party
Night**

Friday 17th December



Bar Open 6pm-11pm

Disco 7.30pm – 8.45pm



Buffet 8.45pm – 9.15pm

Disco 9.15pm – 10.30pm

Bring a Plate Buffet

**Please join in by bringing something to
add to the table**

The End of an Era

Prominently displayed above the porch of the school in West Raynham is the date 1854. It was built, along with another in Helhoughton, by Captain John Townshend, later the fourth Marquess, and Revd. Richard Phayre, Vicar of East Raynham, for the benefit of children on the Estate and in nearby villages. The school opened in January 1855.

The two schools ran alongside one another for many years. Children under seven attended their local school and then boys aged eight to 14 moved to Helhoughton, and girls to West Raynham, passing each other as they walked back and forth along Helhoughton Road each day.

In the 1960s though, after Blenheim Park School in Sculthorpe had opened to take children from the local airbases, Helhoughton School closed and both boys and girls attended West Raynham until they were 11 years old, moving from there to secondary school, usually in Fakenham.

Sadly, earlier this year West Raynham school closed, seemingly for good; the children have left, the building is empty, and the playground is silent.

A special coffee morning to mark this end of an era will be held on **Saturday 22nd January** in West Raynham Village Hall from 10 am until 2 pm, open to village residents and anyone else who attended the school or had connections in any way.

There will be a display of school photographs and of children's work and past events, but we are keen to collect more and would like to create an archive of photographs and other memorabilia.

Many people locally, some still living in the village, have fond memories of their time at the school and if you have any photographs or stories that you would be happy to share, please bring these along.



Pupils and teachers in 1987

US Air Force bomber crash in West Raynham - Tony Myers

Since 1942 the United States Air Force has been part of the local community and to this day uses RAF Sculthorpe airfield for tactical training. However, during the early 1950s the huge base was America's premier nuclear armed facility to deter aggression from the Soviet Union and protect its interests in Europe.

To achieve this the 47th Bombardment wing was housed at Sculthorpe equipped with a large fleet of North American B45 Tornado bombers, these being America's first jet powered bomber capable of delivering nuclear weapons deep into Soviet territory.



Training flights by un-armed Tornadoes took place constantly to achieve operational proficiency, and it was on the evening of 20th September 1957 that such a flight took off from the easterly runway at Sculthorpe. Major Torino V. DiSalvo, the commanding officer of the 84th Bombardment Squadron, piloted a B45 Tornado with serial number 47-083.

Shortly after take-off a fire broke out in the left engine bay, and it was decided to land as soon as possible. DiSalvo attempted to fly towards the south westerly runway of RAF West Raynham, which was closer than returning to Sculthorpe given the urgency to get back on the ground.

A witness, who at the time was 13 years of age and still lives in West Raynham, remembers the aircraft flying low over Raynham Hall with the left wing engulfed in flames. Shortly after the aircraft passed West Raynham village it plunged into the edge of Langton Green wood, killing the crew of three. A USAF salvage team subsequently removed the wreckage of the aircraft or should I say - 'most of it' ?

Shortly after moving into our new home this summer at The Bowling Green in West Raynham, and being a lifelong aviation enthusiast, I researched some of the aviation history associated with both RAF West Raynham and Sculthorpe. So, whilst out walking our dog with my wife recently we passed Langton Green wood, which is the first woodland on the left as you leave West Raynham going towards East Rudham. As I was describing the 1957 crash to my wife, she noticed some mangled metal sticking out of the ditch very near where the aircraft had crashed 64 years previously!



Further examination revealed it to be aviation grade lightweight aluminium and the pieces appeared to have experienced a high-speed impact. Additionally, and importantly, the items were painted red, albeit very faded. The conclusion that the items came from the stricken USAF aircraft was made by Ian Brown, the curator of the RAF Sculthorpe Heritage Centre.

He said he had no doubt it was DiSalvo's aircraft given the location, material type and type of damage, and very importantly the faded red paint - 84th Squadron aircraft had red paint on the nose and engines.



We were lucky to spot the aircraft parts- it seems the salvage team recovered the larger bits of the plane and tossed smaller insignificant debris into the ditch, something that would never happen these days when investigating aircraft crashes. It seems to me that in the recent past the hedge may have been removed or other work had disturbed the buried aircraft pieces.

The three largest items are now on display at the Sculthorpe Heritage Centre, along with a full account of the accident and a letter written by Major DiSalvo to his family in the United States just days before the tragedy.

The RAF Sculthorpe Heritage Centre is well worth a visit and opening dates are online at www.rafsculthorpeheritagecentre.org.

St Margaret's Conservation Group - Alan Forsyth

It has become evident that the ruins of St Margaret's, which were restored 20 years ago, will need further work soon to ensure that future generations are able to enjoy them.

The initial advice we have received is that the Tower and the South Nave Wall should be roped off, simply as a precaution against flints which can be dislodged and fall due to bad weather. The installation of a rope barrier is underway to do this, and an explanatory sign will be added.

A more detailed study of the state of the ruins is being undertaken for an application to The Heritage Lottery Fund. Updates on the restoration project will be provided as progress is made, and in the meantime if you have any queries, please do get in touch via westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Recycle your crisp packets

We now have a recycling point for used crisp packets in the Reading Room.

News from Raynham Estate - Abbie Panks

The farming team are currently busy with harvesting of sugar beet on the estate and doing all they can to keep the roads clean. Please be aware of the road conditions, and an increase in traffic from lorries hauling the sugar beet to the factory at Wissington. We can only apologise for any inconvenience this may cause whilst we complete the harvesting.

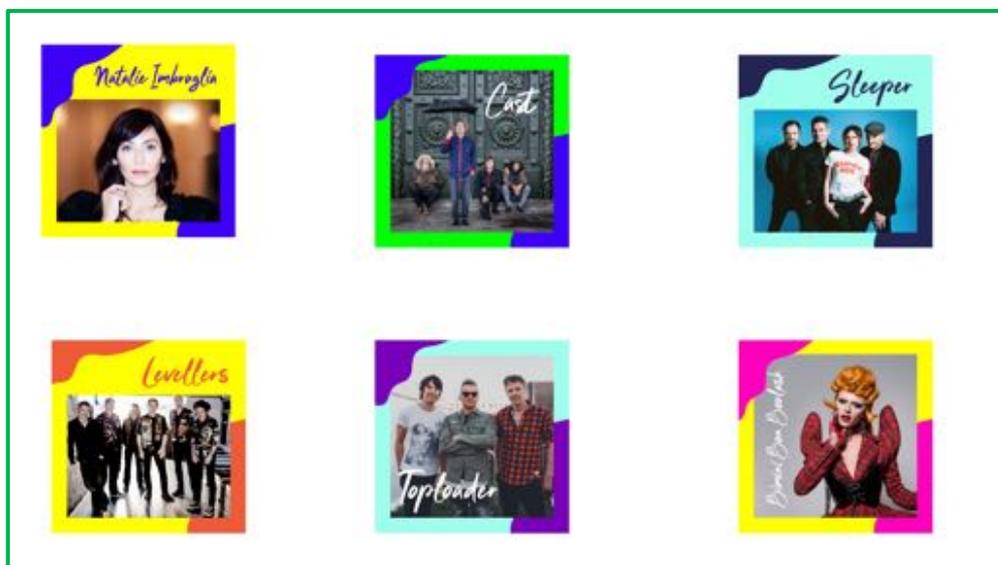
Thank you to those who attended Bonfire Night last month, this was a new location for the fireworks which presented some challenges on the evening, and these will be remedied ahead of our 2022 display.



More acts have now been announced for Wide Skies Festival including Grammy nominated and Brit award winner Natalie Imbruglia who will head to Raynham to join us at Wide Skies festival in August 2022. Having sold over 10 million albums worldwide, Natalie's hits include 'Shiver', 'Big Mistake', 'Wrong Impression', and the ultimate anthem of the 90's, 'Torn'.

Natalie joins Cast, The Levellers, Toploader, Sleeper and Bimini Bon Boulash as artists announced so far. Keep your eyes peeled as there are over 40 artists and performers still to announce.

With Wide Skies, we are delighted to offer Raynham residents a 45% discount for the event. Please contact abbie@raynham.co.uk if you would like a code to book tickets online.



Our season at Wild Meadow glamping is now closed for winter. However, the team is working hard to get the site ready for April 2022. We are delighted to tell you that over the coming months we will be building four additional yurts. Two of the new four will be ensuite and all four will have widened doors to accommodate wheelchair access.

In-keeping with our wildflower names, the four new yurts will be named Clover, Corncockle (both ensuite), Poppy and Foxglove - all named after the wildflowers which grow on the site. The four new yurts will take our site capacity to 40, making it a great option for those who are looking to holiday in Norfolk with a group of friends or family.

The Plant Stall in West Raynham - Bryan Welton

Following on from my article last month, here are some more of the plants that will be on the stall next year for you to buy. I will explain a bit more about them including their hardiness, best planting position, soil preference and so on.

HELLEBORUS CORSICUS

A lot of you will know *Helleborus niger* as The Christmas Rose, and the many *H. orientalis* hybrids which are stunning. But this Hellebore is both bigger and different. *Helleborus corsicus* has green flowers, like the Stinking Hellebore *H. foetidus*, but they give off a much nicer scent than *H. foetidus*!

The flowers of *H. corsicus* come at the end of a long branch around a foot long and are green in colour. The plant itself starts small but if it's happy it will grow into a sizeable bush. It remains evergreen all year, though every so often parts of the plant need trimming to tidy it up, especially the flowers by the summer. It flowers from January to June depending on the mildness of the winter, but the flowers often show up as a tightly bunched cluster by late autumn.

I have grown it in a light open soil and the flowers can self-seed around the parent plant. You can see this at the base of the wall behind and along from the plants stall itself, where it has liberally seeded.

The hint to where it comes from is in its name, as it is found in the wild on the islands of Corsica and Sardinia up in the mountains. It grows in scrub and in dry grassy glades amongst bracken and by streams and roadsides.

I would try to give it some sun but it thrives at the base of an east facing wall on The Street in a very windy position! In my garden I gave it a more sheltered sunny position and the original plants there are about 12-13 years old now and have been cut down a couple of times when they got too large. They have come through severe winters 2009-10 and the Beast from the East, though the books claim they are short lived and are only hardy to -10 degrees C.

I have been growing *H. corsicus* for close to 30 years; first in mid-Wales, then 750 ft up in Snowdonia and now in West Raynham, so it's a very flexible plant. There are some plants of it already available on the stall at the moment.

LIGULARIA DENTATA 'DESDEMONA'

This plant I have again been growing for at least 25 years if not longer. It ideally likes sun and a damp soil to thrive. In my garden in mid-Wales it struggled - the soil was very free draining and even in the dampest spot I found it grew and flowered but wasn't brilliant. I then moved to 750 feet up in Snowdonia with a high rainfall and a free draining soil and it did a bit better. Then we moved to Norfolk, surely it would struggle with our low rainfall? Well the opposite, it has never been so good as here! The most rainfall we get normally falls in the summer which is the time this plant needs it! Then I put it in a south facing bed at the back of the house, which was originally clay soil but much improved with fairly good drainage which suits it. The area also gets an overflow of moisture from a small pond too.



The plant dies down in the winter and in the spring pushes up the most beautiful purple leaves which open up with a dark purply green underside to them, and then in late summer it sends up tall purple stems on top of which clusters of small yellow daisy flowers emerge and flower in August into September.



A perfect plant if you can find the right conditions but very worth trying different places in your garden. Just one downside is that slugs and snails love it. At both our previous gardens in Wales they enjoyed the leaves, but here in West Raynham I never get any damage. I probably have to thank our resident frogs for their help!

Desdemona is a hybrid of *Ligularia dentata* and the plant originally comes from China and Japan, where it grows in scrub, forest clearings, by ditches and in mountain meadows. Hardy to -25 degrees C. In our garden it also frequently self-seeds in the soil and gravel.

At the moment there are some plants of Desdemona available on the stall and there should be new plants next spring too.

TIP: If you have a problem with slugs and snails and don't have hedgehogs or frogs to help you, get a yoghurt pot or similar and put in a mixture of about 50/50 milk and water and stir in a nice spoon of sugar! Then place in the soil with the lip of the pot level to the soil, and the slugs and snails can't wait to taste it and end up falling into the pot saving your plants. OK it's vile to empty but does the job!

VERBENA BONARIENSIS

Some years ago I visited the National Trust property of Stoneacre near Maidstone in Kent. It's a tenanted property with a medieval farmhouse, and the tenants look after the garden not the National Trust. It was a very nice garden, but one thing stays in my memory after all these years: the approach to the house was via a path made up of local Kentish Ragstone, a type of limestone. Either side of the long path there were lawns, but beside the path was a wide border 2-3 feet wide. In the border there was only one type of plant - *Verbena bonariensis* and it was stunning! Being a good metre in height if not more, the long stems with their purple flowers just swayed in the breeze as you walked up the path.

So, I went home and tried it in my garden 750 feet up in Snowdonia. It flowered well but struggled with the very wet winters and it didn't do what it's supposed to do which is freely seed around to form new plants.

When we moved to West Raynham, I wanted to try it in the garden here and I put it amongst other plants in the borders and it looked beautiful, but after a year or two it waned and got overwhelmed by the other plants. It is not a long-lived plant, maybe a few years at best. I tried new plants of *V. bonariensis* in different situations, often in large pots or containers and it managed to flourish, so much so that it has seeded all over the place. At last!

It does best in the sun in a free draining soil but might struggle in thick clay for instance. It is supposed to be hardy to -10 degrees C but to be on the safe side I don't cut the stems back until spring when it's obviously starting to make new shoots.

I don't cut earlier mainly to keep the damp and frost from getting in the stems and killing it. It starts flowering in early to mid-summer and continues well into the autumn.

Verbena bonariensis originally comes from South America including southern Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, where it grows wild in wet fields and waste ground.



It is wonderful for pollinators and bees and butterflies love it. So, if you want more of these insects in your garden then this is the plant for you!

Currently there are a few plants of *V. bonariensis* on the stall and hopefully there will be more available next year.

I have been busy potting-up lots of plants for next year and I could really do with more medium to large sized plastic pots. If you have any you don't want, then please leave at the

stall or in the garden over the wall behind the stall. Money is still trickling in from the stall I'm pleased to say which will eventually push up this year's charity total.

The guide dog we have been sponsoring, Skye the Black Labrador, has now passed as a fully-fledged guide dog and is with her new owner.

However, we are now sponsoring a new Golden Retriever puppy in training called Kevin. So far, we have just the one picture of the puppy.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has supported the stall over the years, and your generosity has been much appreciated.



Groups and Clubs

Knit and Natter

Next dates are **Saturday December 11th and 18th** from 10 am at West Raynham Village Hall and it is open to all - just drop in with your knitting, crochet, sewing or any other craft project. Occasionally we also have special workshops as tasters for new crafts and these recently included crochet and needle felting. If you have ideas about new crafts for workshops, then please email: westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Raynhams' Gardening Club

Next meeting on the **January 27th** at 6 pm in West Raynham Village Hall. To find out more or to join the club please email: westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Raynhams' Book Club

Meeting on the first Thursday of every month in different locations, and the next book for discussion on **January 6th** is 'Matrix' by Lauren Groff and her website is <https://laurengroff.com/book/matrix/>. For more information about this group, send an email to westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Recipe Corner - Judy Pell

This month we have two recipes (printed 'on the hu' to fit them in) for traditional German Christmas biscuits. They are from my dear friend Tanja who would make them in large numbers and bring them in to work to share with all her friends. The little almond crescents (kipfels) are not difficult to make and absolutely delicious, so do have a go. If you have recipes you would like to share, then please email: westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Walnut biscuits

100g ground walnuts (or hazelnuts)
 250g plain flour
 125g sugar
 1 pinch of salt
 12-3 Tablespoons of rum
 200g butter
 some whole walnuts (or pecan nuts, etc.)



Mix and work into a shortcrust pastry.
 Refrigerate for c. 1 hr. Roll out pastry (c. 0.5cm thick) and cut out biscuits with a ^{round} biscuit cutter (or star-shaped one). Bake on slightly floured baking tray at 200°C for until light brown. Leave to cool on a rack.
 Spread some jam (raspberry or strawberry) on one biscuit and cover it with a second one. Mix some icing sugar with some hot water and some rum (1:1) and brush this on to top of "sandwiched" biscuit. Press 1/2 a walnut into the soft icing. Leave biscuits to cool. Store in airtight container.
 + repeat with the other biscuits

Vanillekipfen (Vanillekipfel)

125g ground almonds
 250g plain flour
 100g sugar
 200g butter

mix + work into shortcrust pastry



Refrigerate pastry for c. 1 hr.
 Form pastry into a long big sausage and cut it into evenly sized slices. Take a slice, roll into a ball and then into a "kipfel" between your ~~two~~ hands. Repeat with the other slices. Bake at 200°C on a ~~tray~~ slightly floured baking tray until light brown.
 Mix 1 Packet of Vanilla sugar with c. 3 Tablespoons of icing sugar. Press the warm biscuits into the sugar and then leave them to cool on a rack. Store in airtight container.

Nature Notes for November 2021 - David Stubbs

Every year I assume November is going to be fairly quiet and ordinary, as all the migration is over and lots of wildlife is hunkering down for the winter. Once again I am happily wrong and there has been plenty to see in and around the village.

The highlight, however, was something I heard rather than saw. On the evening of the 21st when I let the dogs out into the garden, I followed them out mainly to check they weren't pestering any late hedgehogs. I became aware of some unusual bird calls somewhere in the night sky over the village. It was clearly a small flock and I knew they were a type of wading bird, although I was not sure which exact species. I listened intently and heard them about three or four times as they passed over the garden heading north - as far as I could tell.

I had an idea they were godwits, but were they bar-tailed or black-tailed? With the calls still firmly in my memory, I rushed inside and checked on <https://www.xeno-canto.org>. This is an amazing website with numerous recordings of the songs, call, flight call and alarm calls of pretty well every bird species. If ever I'm in doubt about a call, this is the go-to site to compare what I have heard with a number of different recordings. Sometimes it can be confusing to the point I cannot remember what I heard, but this time it was easy and clear cut - they were black-tailed godwits.

These are not birds one would ever expect to see in the Raynhams, but many birds do move around at night and it is surprising what can pass over during the hours of darkness. Wildfowl and waders are probably the most frequently heard nocturnal migrants, but some song birds can also be picked out. Redwings are the most frequent and obvious of the night time in-flight callers. Some birders go to the extent of setting up recording machines to capture bird calls throughout the night - in the jargon this is called "nocmig", presumably because people are too lazy to say nocturnal migration in full.

Other highlights during this last month have included another good sighting of a little owl in the garden - this time I was alerted to its presence by frenzied alarm calling from several blackbirds and various finches and tits that were objecting to the owl being in our neighbour's plum tree.

The 5th was one of those autumn migration days when successive waves of winter thrushes pass through. The main event was large numbers - probably over 500 in total - of fieldfares, all heading steadily westwards. A few landed briefly in some tall trees by the playground but soon moved on with the rest. That was the only day I saw fieldfares this month and they have been pretty scarce over much of the country. There were also plenty of redwings and starlings passing through, heading in the same direction, along with a handful of skylarks and a few finches - probably chaffinches, but there could have been some bramblings with them too.

The 8th was also a bit of a red letter day: first I noticed a single pink footed goose with the large flock of greylag geese that were feeding on maize stubble. Shortly after I found a pair of Canada geese in the parkland by Raynham Lake. These are surprisingly very rare here and were my first sighting this year. Finally, on returning home I was thrilled to see a female marsh harrier slowly drifting over.

The wintering pink-footed geese are a magnificent spectacle along the North Norfolk coast and many thousands can be seen coming to/from their roost at Holkham. Other times large skeins can be seen high in the sky as they search out suitable feeding sites. They are less

frequent in our area, but a few days after finding the single bird, I saw a group of 11 alongside the hundreds of greylags in the recently sown field on the south side of the lime avenue.

Sheep grazing

The trial grazing of St Margaret's Churchyard has been completed for this season. During their eight week stay, the six Shetland sheep have done a thorough job of munching through the grassland, and saved us a lot of work by not having to cut and rake up the vegetation. They were also a popular local attraction for residents and visitors alike. No major problems occurred and all in all the exercise was a great success.



Depending on how the weather treats us this winter, we may get the sheep back for a few weeks in early spring. Failing that, they will definitely be back next autumn, as a regular part of the conservation management of the churchyard.

To finish, I would just like to thank again all those who helped with the twice daily checks to see that the sheep were ok: Alan and Sandra Forsyth, Andrew and Bridget Howarth, Tony Myers, Catharine Bundock, Paul Reeve, Jay Williams,

Paresh Shah, Judith Pell, Debbie Lamont, Melanie Lund, James Hickman, Françoise Walker and Jan Mata.



Before: 23 September, the day the sheep arrived.



After: 22 November, job done!

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