



# The Bergh Apton Newsletter

February - March 2017

Issue No. 149

## Editorial Comment

*We are now well into another year, firstly I would like to thank the many and several of you who generously responded to my request for financial support, indeed some of you very generously, I worked out that each copy of the Bergh Apton Newsletter costs between 40 & 50 pence, which with your support and those organisations which are helping with their sponsorship we are able to once again supply a free copy to each household and some besides, thank you. Also, thanks for the many and varied articles which we have to put in each issue, on your behalf I would like to thank our graphic designer, thanks Keeley, our best wishes to you all.*

Milton Harris (Editor)  
Keeley Harris (Graphic Designer)

## Letter to the Editor

*Dear Editor,*

*Bergh Apton Christmas Lunch*

*Tom and I were so disappointed that we were unable to attend the Christmas Lunch this year.*

*Through the News Letter we would like to thank all the lovely people who prepared and brought the lunch to us instead.*

*We appreciate the time and effort that everyone puts into this event each year.*

*It was a lovely meal, and we enjoyed it so much.*

*Lynne and Tom Jermy*

## Shoebox Service – November 2016

From Poundland to Gucci and much in between. The children of Novi Sad will get a present from us this year – thanks to Operation Christmas Child, about which we watched a short film showing how the boxes are transported to their destinations – by camel, donkey, helicopter & truck, on the head, on the back, under the arm. So many in the village as well as from Alington & Bergh Apton School had worked hard making, buying, packing, decorating the boxes – the first stage of their journey.

Kevin Gotts took a couple of lovely pictures, which show not only the height of your generosity (104 Shoeboxes) but also some of the children who participated in the service at Bergh Apton on November 20th.



54 people filled the church with their presence and their voices. And the din was wondrous to behold, especially with Jon Brompton playing his heart out at the organ. Katie and Maddy Hamilton read a specially selected piece from the Bible, about love and the need to “impress it on your children and your friends” and even “write it on your doorframes”.

Then a trio, Lizzy Hartley, Ruby Hemmant and Ollie Headen dedicated the boxes by praying for the children of Novi Sad, Serbia, the babies of Sanyu, Kampala & the youngsters of Bergh Apton. And at the end of the service Rosanna Stephens appealed to us to commit ourselves to the cause of peace and the relief of want and suffering in the world.

There was exercise too. A long line snaked its way from the back of the church to the chancel, where the boxes were piled high; and then again to carry them all out to the waiting vehicle. And so, they were on their way! A full and eventful send-off.

## **SANYU BABIES HOME, KAMPALA, UGANDA**

**Favor Birungi:** (1 month old) arrived on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016; He had been thrown into a pit latrine near a Kampala Church, retrieved, taken to Mulago Hospital for medical checkup and referred to Sanyu. The Kawaala Police investigated.

**Benjamin Kakuru and Modesai Kato:** (2 weeks old) arrived on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016; these twins were referred to Sanyu by the Probation & Social Welfare Office - Kawempe Division. They lost their mother shortly after delivery.

Two recent arrivals at Sanyu. There were another 10 abandoned babies taken under the Sanyu wing over 3 months. Many of you know that the villages in the Bramerton Group have been supporting Sanyu for some 20 years. At the moment, we fund the Home's medical support, its bi-weekly doctor's visit and its two resident nurses, helping improve health, keep disease at bay and minimise hospital costs.

Ruth and John Everett of Rockland 'Applebee' have been selling plants in aid of Sanyu. You can improve your gardens whilst helping the Babies. Please visit them in Rockland. In 2016, they raised the amazing total of £1,500. Any gifts of plants too, are welcome.

For those of us that have been to Sanyu, they are always delighted to see visitors and to house volunteers; will be so pleased to learn that Barbara, the Home's director, has herself just had a baby, Sean David. We send our very best wishes to her and her family.

Please do think hard about joining the stalwarts who regularly give to Sanyu. One of the good things about our relationship is our monthly remittance incurs no admin charges; so, whatever you give, goes directly to help the lot of these abandoned babies. We are not alone, as there is also much support from Ugandans.

(For more info & details of how to give, do contact [lizmeynell@gmail.com](mailto:lizmeynell@gmail.com))



**Do help the Babies in 2017. Please.**

## **BACAT**

### **TWO WORKSHOPS:**

#### **WOOD ENGRAVING AND WOOD CUTS**

**with**

**DIANE GRIFFITHS**

**on**

**SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY**

**at**

**BERGH APTON VILLAGE HALL**

**1000 - 1600**

**£15.00**

#### **MAKING LANTERNS IN CLAY**

**with**

**GEORGINA WARNE**

**on**

**SATURDAY 15 APRIL**

**At**

**BERGH APTON VILLAGE HALL**

**1000 - 1600**

**These lanterns will be made to resemble fossils and will be used in our next production in February 2018.**

**The tutors used in BACAT workshops are professionals. Numbers in a group are kept small so the tutor has plenty of time to spend with each person taking part.**

**Places must be reserved so to book or for more information contact Pat Mlejnecky  
01508 480696 or  
[p.mlej@btinternet.com](mailto:p.mlej@btinternet.com)**



# BINGO

## Bingo Nights at Bergh Apton Village Hall.

Held on the 1st Friday of every month  
(Excluding December).

There will be cash prizes  
and any profits from refreshments  
will be donated to the village hall funds.

Doors open 8pm.  
Eyes down 8.30pm.



Ray Wharton, dressed for the season, welcomed a full house to the Christmas bingo night at Bergh Apton village hall on 9<sup>th</sup> December. This enjoyable evening raised funds to meet some of the annual running costs of the hall.



## Community Singing Group

Every Thursday at 7.30pm  
at the village hall.  
We're now into our 4th year.

## Carol Singing

A big thank you to all who supported the Carol Singing on the evening of Dec 19<sup>th</sup>, to Derek Harvey for the use of his Tractor, those who came along to sing led by the ladies from the Poringland Singers, to those who provided refreshments at the start, along the way and at the end of the evening. Many thanks to all who gave generously to help raise £150.00 for Action for Children.

## New Year Breakfast

Although the day was rather dull, grey, and wet many folks again turned out to support the NYB. The full menu was available with the Eggs Benedict (Parfait) becoming more popular, poached eggs cooked to perfection by resident chef John Bolingbrooke. Many thanks John. Thanks to Derek & Jill Harvey and Green Pastures Farm Shop for giving Eggs, Mushrooms & Tomatoes. Kip & Alison Bertram for the Champagne.

Thanks also to all who helped on the day especially the young people taking & delivering the menu orders. £505.00 was raised to go toward the Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch. Yum, Yum!!

## Christmas Lunch

Beki Rachel & Johnny would like to thank all who contributed donations of food, wine, gifts of money and their time to making a successful Christmas Lunch for the Older Folk of the village last 4<sup>th</sup> December.

## Candlelit Service



Nearly 200 people attended the candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols in Bergh Apton's parish church on the evening of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December. As has been the tradition for over a quarter of a Century now, the church was beautifully-decorated and furnished with a splendid Christmas tree donated, this year, by Anna Guy of Rose Cottage farm on Langley Road. Our thanks go to all who played a part in making this annual family gathering a most meaningful prelude to Christmastide.

## Country Diary

### RUIS

'If the medicinal properties of its leaves, bark and berries were fully known, I cannot tell what our countrymen could ail for which he might not fetch a remedy from every hedge.'

*John Evelyn (1620 – 1700)*

The English summer begins, so it is said, with the flowering of the elder and ends with the ripening of the berries. With the impudence of any weed it springs up anywhere, its stems straight as organ pipes, neither tree or shrub really. At the moment the leaf buds are firmly furled but will open into little purple fans of leaves, as these grow they become pinnate resembling those of the ash. In summer, like a plate juggler, it holds aloft white dishes of tiny flowers. Wine and champagne can be made from these, open a bottle of elder flower wine in midwinter and the smell brings back all of summer. As summer ages the flowers turn into berries, black and full of light like a wood mouse's eyes and held on dark red stalks. These too can be made into a rich wine but the winemaker has to race blackbirds and thrushes who gobble the berries almost before they ripen. On a winter's night drink a toast to these birds.

Elders are not only spread by bird sown seed, they are grown commercially. There are orchards of elders grown by Bottlegreen and Belvoir such is the thirst for elderflower cordials and champagne all over the world.

The pith is easily removed from the stems and these can then be made into whistles, pipes, flutes, chanters and 'bellows'. Elder is an ancient plant, a scrawny shrub, it was a camp follower and where early man settled it grew too. The tree's name possibly originates in 'eller' which means 'kindler of fire', once early men discovered fire he could blow down the tube to encourage it to burn. I have a whistle made from a slim tube of elder years ago, I keep it in a small wooden box with a pattern of inlaid wood on the top. When I blow it I wonder if its whistle travels through the centuries to mingle with the whistling of the elder pipes of hunter-gatherers.

The elder has so many healing powers it is called 'Queen of Herbs'. Lotions and potions made from the berries are used to cure flu, headaches, sore throats and snake bites. It can be bought under its generic name 'Sambucus' in any health shop or pharmacy. Grow an elder near your house and it will repel witches from bothering you and by stables it will stop goblins from riding off with the horses. Such was its benefit to mankind acknowledged that a botanist and physician in the 1600s always raised his hat to an elder when he saw it.

There are many tales told of the elder. It is not only Our Lady's tree, it is said it was the wood from which the True Cross was made and that Judas Iscariot hanged himself on an elder. A very old carol, 'The Twelve Apostles' has a verse:

The twelve Apostles\* they were standing by,  
Their roots in the river and their leaves in the sky,  
The beasts-all thrive wherever they be  
But Judas was a-hunged on an elder tree.

\*Any group of trees was known as the Twelve Apostles.

It is considered unlucky to break or cut a branch or twig from the elder without first asking the Elder Mother's

permission. One tale tells of three brothers who go hunting for rabbits with their three dogs, Bran\*, Coll and Meg. The dogs run off and one of the boys breaks a twig from an elder tree to make a whistle with which to call back the dogs. The Elder Mother appears, old and bent and wearing a gown of moss, she holds the three dogs by their collars. She tells the boys they must get her the magical whistle from the Golden Elder Tree so she can summon the Prince who will make her young and beautiful again. The brothers ask where they can find this elder tree.

'That's for me to know and you to find out,' she replies.

In their search the boys have to answer riddles and perform certain tasks but all ends well, the Prince restores the Elder Mother to a beautiful young Elder Maiden and the boys get their dogs back but have still to hunt rabbits to take home for the pot!

\* This name to be said with a long vowel, it means 'crow' or 'raven'.

The story echoes the form of many folk tales, there are often three young men who have difficult tasks to perform before winning the hand of the Princess. It echoes the Frog Prince who has to be kissed to restore him to his true form and also Beauty and the Beast. J.R.R. Tolkien who wrote 'Lord of the Rings' knew folk tales and there is the battle of wits in this story between Gollum and Bilbo each asking riddle after riddle. There is nothing new under the sun.

The elder is among the first to come into leaf, it is a giver of food, magic and music, these trees are not weeds but givers of wonders.

Why did I choose to call this 'Ruis'? That's for me to know and you to find out!

*Pat Mlejnecky*

## Lardal Kantori



On 25<sup>th</sup> November, Kjell Haakestad brought his choir, from Lardal in Norway, to sing in Bergh Apton church. These annual performances by *Lardal Kantori* have begun to establish themselves as the village's harbinger of the Christmas Season, and we welcomed many of our old friends for whom this was the fifth year that they have sung in our church.

Lardal (it means "river valley") is a township of 2,500 people located about 45 miles south east of Oslo, in the county of Vestfold. Some forty of its inhabitants, both singers and their travelling companions, came to Bergh Apton from Great Yarmouth, where they were to perform another concert later that weekend, in the Minster of St Nicholas.

## Parish Council News

### **Please note.**

Parish Council meetings are now starting at 7p.m. not 7.30p.m.

We are pleased to welcome Karen Myhill back onto the Parish Council. Her previous experience as a councillor will be much appreciated. We still have one vacancy to fill so if you are interested in joining us please contact our parish clerk Philippa Fuller email [clerk@berghapton.org.uk](mailto:clerk@berghapton.org.uk) or phone 01508558280

### **CIL payments**

As many of you are aware, we have received some money from the community infrastructure levy for the new properties being built on Ber 1. What the parish council would like from you is some thoughts on how you think this money should be used within the parish to benefit all of us. We have received a couple of suggestions already, these are, improving access to and maintenance of footpaths and installing a flashing 30mph speed limit sign on Mill Road to encourage people to slow down in our village. Please have a think about how you feel this money could be spent and then these ideas can be discussed at the annual parish meeting.

### **Community Governance Review.**

This is a 25 year rolling review of the whole country in areas where there are independent parishes and this year it is South Norfolk District Councils 'turn'. I am not an expert on this but I should be going to a meeting later in January to learn more about it. The idea of the review is to look at how parishes have changed or may change in the future because of population movement and building development. South Norfolk's consultation period will be from March to June 2017 and will come into effect in 2019. I have asked our District Councillor John Fuller to come and talk about this at an extra Parish Council meeting which should be on the 22nd February. I have put 'should' because as of copy date for the newsletter I am not sure that all the councillors are free that evening so if you would like to come and hear what he has to tell us, please check the parish notice boards or contact one of your councillors or the clerk nearer the date for confirmation.

### **Annual Parish Meeting.**

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on April 19th this year. The two annual meetings have in the past got closer in date so much so that it has been known for people to come to the annual Parish Council meeting by mistake, it is always nice to see people at Parish Council meetings, but it is annoying for them if they turn up at the wrong event, especially so if they have had no food and were hoping for a cup of tea and a slice of cake!

## The Dance

Our sculpture on Scop Hill has been given a new coat of paint and is looking much better for it. I would like to say a big thank you to Hugh Porter who organised for people on the community rehabilitation scheme to come and do the work for us. He not only organised them he also organised the paint, brushes and the portable toilet facilities, being a Parish Councillor is such a glamorous thing to do! Thank you Hugh.

*Liz Robinson.* Chairman.



## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHYARD

### – RESTORATION OF FREEMAN DENNY'S TOMB

Over the last few years the impressive tomb of Freeman Denny and his wife Thomasina, that lies a little to the south of Bergh Apton's church porch, has come under serious threat of collapse. Elements of its sidewalls have fallen away resulting in the destabilisation of the six pillars bearing the heavy weight of its recumbent memorial stone.

In law it is the heirs of an occupant who are responsible for the restoration or removal of any individual churchyard grave-marker. But in the case of Freeman Denny, who died in 1715 - over 300 years ago - the search for heirs might be expected to be a bit of a challenge, especially as almost 45 years has passed since the last member of the family resident in the village, Betty Denny-Cooke, had herself been borne into the churchyard in June 1972.

You might think that a family who had lived at Bergh Apton Manor for over four hundred years might have maintained links with the village, even to this day, and you would be right. It was through John Fryer, grandson of Thomas Henry Denny-Cooke and now, at the age of 93, the senior member of the clan, that we alerted the family to the condition of the tomb.

Within a very short time they, mostly now resident in Australia, had agreed to share the cost and had commissioned the work that was successfully concluded in September last year.

The work, carried out by Abbey Memorials of South Burlingham, has returned the tomb to a condition that should see it through another 300 years. Interestingly, the work on the tomb also revealed a regular series of holes drilled into the plinth on which the tomb stands. They may remind older residents of something that us younger ones will not know - that the tomb was originally surrounded by metal railings (see footnote 1).

The Parochial Church Council, the Village Hall trustees and the Bergh Apton Local History Group all made financial grants towards these restoration works as a contribution to recognise the support that they have been given by the family over many years (and, in the case of the Local History Group, as recently as three years ago).

In June 2016 one of our family history highlights was a visit from Sally Cohen and Nicky Moreton, daughters of the late Lady Moreton and, through Lady Moreton's mother Joan Fryer, great-granddaughters of Thomas and Jessie Denny-Cooke of Bergh Apton Manor. They came partly to revisit the scenes of childhood memories in and around The Manor but also to have a look at Freeman Denny's tomb so they could report first-hand on its condition and the proposed works to restore it. That inspection resulted in the family's agreement to commission and pay for the work.

This project maintained our contact with one of our ancient village families and, with its help, resolved a serious problem that might have led to the destruction of one of our important monuments and an impressive feature of Bergh Apton's churchyard. A good result all round.

*Footnote 1: This evidence that railings once surrounded the tomb is supported by an entry in the PCC minute book for the period February 1937 to November 1975. On 19<sup>th</sup> July 1965, Churchwarden John Henry Lester reported; "a sum of £15 had been obtained for the churchyard railings which have now been removed". This sum probably included the value of railings removed from the adjacent tomb of his brother Richard. It, too, has marks indicating that it was surrounded by railings. The scrap iron sale date of 1965 also tells us that these railings were not, as was true in many cases, used in the manufacture of armaments in the Second World War, when iron ore was in very short supply.*

*Footnote 2: Sadly, contact with families with forebears buried in our churchyard is not a "given". Take the case of the Ketts (once of Brooke House and Seething Hall and related to the rebel Robert Kett hanged in Norwich in 1549); today we have no knowledge of anyone of this family who might be interested in the fate of one of their ancestor's tombs that is now in dire need of restoration to prevent its total loss.*



Freeman Denny's tomb before restoration, with collapsed wall panels and displacement of its pillars.



The same view post-restoration, with all parts now safely carrying the load of the heavy recumbent memorial stone.



Sally Cohen (r) and her sister Nicky Moreton (with John Ling) visiting the grave of Freeman Denny who was their 4 x Great Uncle.

## JOHN HENRY LESTER

**(29 November 1932 – 7 December 2016)**

John Lester died at home in Bungay on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016, just a week after his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. Though a naturally shy man he will be familiar to well over 1,000 people who have read *The Book of Bergh Apton* and noted the handsome man illustrated on p.16, studying part of his collection of archaeological finds that he had amassed over more than fifty years of walking the fields of Bergh Apton.

With his keen eye, a considerable knowledge of history and self-taught geology, John had a skill by which, from several paces distant, he could tell the difference between a small shard of shattered flint and a Bronze Age flint arrowhead. One example of this skill, cited in the book of BA, was his identification of what looked to be an insignificant piece of stone lying on the churchyard path - but was actually a Neolithic-period (4,000 to 2500 BC) animal skin scraper. He would have been surprised to learn that this skill, developed over the years by reading and interest in self-education, was out of the ordinary.

This quiet self-effacement was, perhaps, the key characteristic that endeared John Lester to the many that knew and respected him. It was that, with his love of the countryside and the ways of nature, that made him the well-rounded man he was. At his funeral in Bergh Apton the congregation in a packed church, as well as to mourn his death, was able to nod and smile at some of the stories told by his daughter Louise and his grandchildren that illustrated his wit and gentle humour.

John was the elder son of Henry (always known as Harry) Lester and his wife Edith, née Tolver. On the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the family was living in Seething but, when Harry was called up for service in the RAMC soon afterwards, Edith took John and his younger brother David to live in Wrampingham near Wymondham. Harry was to serve in the RAMC until past the war but Edith and the boys returned to Bergh Apton in the latter stages of the war and John remembers watching from the garden of their new home at Holly Hill on Sunnyside as USAF Liberator bombers flying in and out of Seething airfield.

The cottage had been secured for the family by John's grandfather (also John Henry Lester) from the estate of the late Viscount Canterbury who had died in 1941. It was to be Harry and Edith's home for the remainder of their lives.

John attended Bergh Apton school until he was 15 (at that time the school-leaving age) when he went to work for market gardener Charlie Carver at Hellington Corner. His working life there was to last until his retirement in 1997. It began in the memorably bitter winter of 1946/7 in which, to give an idea of its ferocity, a temperature of -20 °C (-4 °F) was recorded on January 21st 1947 at Writtle in Essex. Deep snow lay right across the country - even in the balmy Scilly Isles it lay 7" deep until late March.

There were no other winters as harsh as this one in John's employment with the Carver family on their market garden at the north-west corner of Bergh Apton. The weather would have been distinctly better when, at the Royal Norfolk Show of 2000, he received an award from the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Society for over 50 years unbroken service with the same employer, presented to him by Gillian Shephard, MP for SW Norfolk and a Cabinet member in John Major's post-1992 election government.

John married Joy Gooch, the daughter of Lily Scarles and her first husband Charles Gooch, on 16 September 1955 in Bergh Apton church. Though they had lived in the same village as they grew up it was not until 1951 that they met. In the best traditions

of romance, that meeting began a friendship that led to love, a love that led to a happy marriage of 61 years broken only by John's death.

On Boxing Day in 1955 John and Joy moved into the bungalow just to the south of Hellington Corner that had been vacated by Reggie and Alice Frost when they moved to the old Carver home at Hellington Corner where they lived until 2006 when they moved to Tower Mill Road, Bungay. It was in the bungalow that they raised their three children John, Michael and Louise. In turn, the children have given them ten grandchildren; John's Ben, Rys, Megan & Beverley, Michael's Sarah & Bob, and Louise's Danie, Emma & Joseph. The grandchildren, so far, have given John and Joy three great grandchildren; Rhys's Alesha and Mia and Sarah's Frankie.

Joy received over 50 cards and letters of condolence from people to whom John was a friend, loved, liked and respected according to each person's relationship with this kind and humorous man with a deep knowledge and love of the countryside and its ways.



*Joy and John, in a romantic studio portrait during their courtship that began in 1951 and led to marriage in 1955.*



*Gillian Shephard, MP for SW Norfolk, presents John with his Long Service award at the Royal Norfolk Show in 2000 AD.*

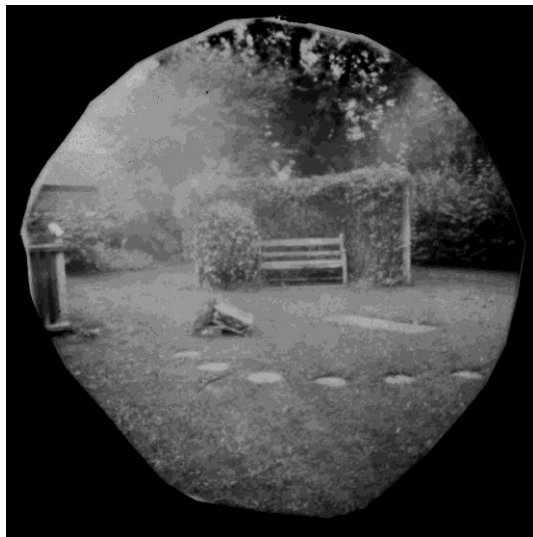


*A photograph published in the Book of Bergh Apton (Halsgrove, 2005) of John at home on Hellington Corner, with some of the archaeological artefacts he found in his many years of field-walking.*



## Pinhole Photography

Due to technical issues when putting together the last issue of the newsletter, we were unable to include examples of photographs created at the recent pinhole photography workshop organised by BACAT. However, the technical problems have been resolved and here is a selection of images captured using the pinhole cameras built at the workshop.



*Village Hall grounds, by Lizzie, aged 9.*



*Village Hall gardens by Rebecca Hartley.*



*Natural study, by Peter Lyle.*

## The Churchyard

Life is full of blessings: some of them rather mixed - and our churchyard is one such. We hope that visitors to this rather lovely space will find it a source of peace and reflection, and a place to enjoy the diverse populations of plants and wildlife to be found on Bergh hill. The down side is that it is a huge space to maintain. A large expanse of grass is a fairly easy matter – an hour or so with a sit and ride – job done! However..... when you add multiple gravestone-shaped obstacles, a number of trees and bushes and several areas of rather lovely wild flowers, the task becomes a challenge rather beyond the scope of our dwindling band of village volunteers.

For some years now, the cavalry riding to our rescue has arrived in the high-vis orange vests of the Community Payback Teams. These are the men and women serving their hours of community service. With their supervisors, they have absolutely worked their socks off for us. In return we've plied them with refreshments, homemade soup and cake, and tried to make sure they know how much we appreciate their efforts. We never ask what they've done to be serving their hours, although they sometimes volunteer their stories. With very few exceptions, they have been courteous, pleasant, good humoured and very, very helpful – often bringing their own expertise to the tasks we set them. So, over the eight Saturdays they were with us in 2016, how did we use their time and skills?

Opinions differ whether our churchyard should be kept mown or become a wildflower meadow. The answer seems to be 'a bit of both'. I'm sure everyone appreciates how much work is involved in strimming and raking the conservation areas after flowering, and regularly mowing the grass – cue the folk in the orange vests. They did some of this on every visit, as well as numerous other ad hoc tasks.

The lilacs, which give such a lovely display in the spring, had become badly overgrown – a lot of dead wood was cut out, along with some truly anarchic brambles and briars. Some 'lost' gravestones were rediscovered and, when the lilacs have regenerated, we can look forward to another wonderful spring spectacle.

The turf was levelled around the newly-repaired tomb opposite the porch door, removing a nasty tripping hazard. Paths were raked and tidied, ivy cut out of the churchyard walls, new shingle spread on tombs and paths, and the gate from the church field to the churchyard now swings freely, unhampered by mud or vegetation.

Some time ago, with the help of the Community Service Teams, we erected rabbit fencing around the church field. Seven year later, the wire mesh had suffered badly - our high-vis heroes cleared away all the scrub around the fence and replaced the mesh.

That miserable autumn and winter of 2015 deposited enough rain to turn our church field into a veritable jelly. Not being able to park on the field presented a real problem when planning the services, concerts and other performances that helped to brighten the dark months of winter. What to do to avert a repetition? Grass reinforcement matting for a trial area of 120 square metres arrived on three rolls, each weighing forty-eight kilograms –



that's nearly a hundredweight in old money! Without the Community Service teamwork and muscle to manoeuvre it into position and hammer in the nearly 600 steel pins needed to secure it, the task would have been beyond us.



The mowers and strimmers are quiet for now; the chat and banter ceased when the teams left; the work done for another season. Next to the porch is a wooden bench that faces south and is just the spot to enjoy some peace and quiet while catching a little spring sunshine. It's a perfect place to appreciate the blessing that a country churchyard can be!

## Going Slowly Round the Bend - 2016

It's a quiet spot where we are heading; three or four dwellings at the end of a narrow lane which slopes downwards from the road towards the marsh and the river beyond. If you happen there in daylight, the windows in the big house, opposite where the lane branches into two, watch as you pass and around the bend to the left the lane continues a little further, past the place we want, before opening into a quiet farmyard. Here, in this narrow passage, entrancingly, nature rests undisturbed – a woody copse on one side and a tangled Hawthorne hedge on the other, almost hiding Flint Cottage and its garden from view. There is birdsong and wind rattle and a feeling of being at the edge of something; something lost in time, waiting to be rediscovered.

In the purple-brown darkness of this late December evening however, with no moonlight, the lane is wrapped in silence and takes on a different character. The farm gate is drawn across the pathway, like a pair of folded arms, preventing further passage. You pause for a moment. There is an air of absence, a vigilance within the stillness, as if the chthonic land is holding its breath, protecting its sleeping creatures. A wholesome smell of mouldering leaves pervades the damp air and not a soul is stirring – not even a mouse – nor a December moth. We are almost at the end of advent and anticipation is building.

We were early perhaps. There was only one other car in the lane when we arrived. The lighted candle lanterns, lined up like glow worms along the path to the house, guided our testing footsteps through the gate and to the door. As soon as the door was opened and we stepped into the lobby the aroma of delicious food, the creak and pop-thud of bottles

opening and cheerful, animated conversation was the welcome we had been looking forward to and, as for other times we have been invited there, it did not disappoint.

The Christmas bash held by the Davys is usually the start of our Christmas celebrations. It has become a tradition for members of BACT and is, for us Bramertonians and poor cousins of Bergh Apton, part of the fabric of Christmas and a privilege to attend. It's not just the laughter (there is always lots of that), the hugs, the catching up with old friends, making new acquaintances and sharing of stories. We are always humbled and inspired by the dedication of this small community to everything that it undertakes: the conservation work and social events arranged by BACT committee, the Sculpture Trails, Mystery Plays, History Group and BACAT. The list is long but the memories of excellent entertainment, endeavour and generous welcome remain steadfast.

This year at the party we celebrated the gift of a wonderful oak bench in memory of Phyllis Ride who was a founder member of BACT. Phyllis was a loyal supporter of BACT and her executors generously donated the bench, made by a specialist from North Norfolk, 'in memoriam' of Phyllis for the conservation area. It was put on show in the conservatory and everyone was encouraged to try it out. Beautifully constructed and finished it is amply accommodating. We remarked on the depth of the seat, shaped for ultimate comfort – no cushions required! At one point, at least three or four of us sat on it together, side by side, like stray starlings on a wire, murmuring appreciation, flashes of iridescence from customary adornments of Christmas plumage catching the lights. We also raised a glass to a birthday boy – Dennis – a longstanding member of BACT and a regular at BACT gatherings and workdays.

A conversation celebrating the new pond raised hopes of encouraging amphibian and other diverse pond life to take up residence in the conservation area. About 2000-3000 years ago, before our ancestors started to drain the land, at least a quarter of Britain would have been wetlands, including natural ponds. Wetlands are now some of our most damaged habitats and nearly half our floodplains have been corralled and separated from their rivers by Man's interventions, fragmenting many of our most enigmatic species. What a thought to take home with us for Christmas: the anticipation of Spring, new life beginning and the panorama of the seasons ahead.

Well, there was chat about families, book clubs, dancing, farriers, leather artisans and no end of other topics to be sure. The food, wine and most of all the company was inspiring and huge thanks go to the Davys for their generosity in kind and in spirit. Christmas has come and gone for another year. The warmth of friendship and neighbours, of passions shared and commitments to conservation will see us through another year. How lucky we are to share this captivating place of trees and hedgerow and earth and sky.

The pleasures of friendship are exquisite,  
How pleasant to go to a friend on a visit!  
I go to my friend, we walk on the grass,  
And the hours and moments like minutes pass.  
(Stevie Smith)

*Penelope Riches*



Reg Charity No 1048271

**Join us to help clean up our village**

Bergh Apton Conservation Trust are running  
their annual Litter Pick on:

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**March at 2pm**  
**meet at the Village Hall**

**Everyone is invited to attend for a  
worthwhile afternoons exercise!**

**For more information call Bob Kerry on  
01508 480661**

## Service 86: Beccles-Thurilton-Loddon-Alpington-Norwich

Timetable valid from 13th February 2017

Towards Norwich	M-F	M-F	M-F	M-F (Sch)	M-F (NSch)
Beccles, old market	--	--	1155		
Gillingham, Village hall	--	--	1159		
Aldeby, Green	--	--	1205		
Burgh St. Peter, Old School	--	--	1207		
Wheatacre, White Lion	--	--	1209		
Toft Monks, Lion	--	--	1215		
Maypole Green		--	1219		
Thurilton, College Rd	0658	0958	1223	1403	1403
Thurilton, Queens Head (arrive)			1225		
Thurilton, Queens Head (depart)	0700	1000	1230	1405	1405
Heckingham, Norton Rd, Adj Briar Lane	0704	1004	1234	1409	1409
Loddon, Church Plain	0708	1008	1238	1415	1415
Mundham, opp. Garden House	0712	1012	1242		1421
Seething, War Memorial	0714	1014	1244		1425
Seething, Mill Lane Council Houses	0716	1016	1246		1427
Bergh Apton, Church Road/The Street	0721	1021	1251		1433
Bergh Apton, Mill Road Crossroads	0725	1025	1255		1437
Alpington, Cherrywood	I	1027	I		I
Alpington, opp. Village Hall	0727	1029	1257		1439
Norwich Bus Station, Stand K	0745	1045	1315		1457

From Norwich	M-F	M-F	M-F
Norwich Bus Station, Stand K	1320	1620	1820
Alpington, Village Hall	--	1335	1635 R
Alpington, Cherrywood	--	R	R R
Bergh Apton, Mill Road Crossroads	--	1337	1637 R
Bergh Apton, Church Road/The Street	--	1339	1639 R
Seething, opp. Council Houses	--	1345	1645 R
Seething, memorial	--	R	R R
Mundham, Garden House	--	1350	1650 R
Loddon, Church Plain	900	1356	1656 R
Heckingham, Norton Rd, Adj Briar Lane	904	1409	R R
Thurilton, opp. Queens Head	908	(1405)	R R
Thurilton, College road	910	(1403)	R R
Maypole Green	914		
Toft Monks, Lion	918	--	-- --
Wheatacre, White Lion	924	--	-- --
Burgh St. Peter, Old School	926	--	-- --
Aldeby, Green	930	--	-- --
Gillingham, Village hall	936	--	-- --
Beccles, old market	940	--	-- --

R = Served on Request only for passengers already on board

M-F = Operates Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays

M-F (Sch) = Operates on school days

M-F (NSch) = Operates in school holidays



## Dates for your diary 2017

### FEBRUARY

1 <sup>st</sup>	19.30	B.A. Village Hall Management Committee meeting at Village Hall
8 <sup>th</sup>	19.30	B.A. Society talk 'Lost & Found' by Anne Bridge in Village Hall
11 <sup>th</sup>	14.00-16.00	Jumble Sale in Village Hall
15 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 – 12.00	Coffee n Catch Up at the Village Hall
18 <sup>th</sup>	10.00-16.00	BACAT Workshop on wood engraving and woodcuts
18 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
23 <sup>rd</sup>	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
28 <sup>th</sup>	12.30	Tuesday Friends lunch at Church

### MARCH

8 <sup>th</sup>	19.30	B.A. Society talk by Melita Rouse 'An Evening of Stories'
15 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 – 12.00	Coffee n Catch Up at the Village Hall
15 <sup>th</sup>	19.00	Parish Council meet at the Village Hall
18 <sup>th</sup>	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
23 <sup>rd</sup>	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
25 <sup>th</sup>	09.00	11 Says stuffing at Bergh Apton Village Hall
28 <sup>th</sup>	12.30	Tuesday Friends lunch at Church

### APRIL

5 <sup>th</sup>	19.00 for 19.30	B.A. Village Hall AGM
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## Regular Activities

<b>Monday</b>	17.00	<b>Dog Training</b> Village Hall
<b>Tuesday</b> (Alternate)	10.00 - 13.00	<b>Painting Class</b> Village Hall
<b>Thursday</b>	19.30	<b>Sing-a-Long</b> Village Hall
<b>Friday</b>	10.00 - 11.45	<b>Yoga</b> Village Hall

## Activities Contacts

(BACAT Workshops) Pat Mlejnecky: 01508 480696  
 (Conservation Trust) Stephanie Crome: 01508 480573  
 (Local History) John Ling: 01508 480439  
 (Village Hall) Hilary Ling: 01508 480439  
 (Painting Class) Barbara Fox: 01508 550168  
 (Singing) Karen Bonsell: 01508 480018  
 (Bergh Apton Society) Lynton Johnson: 01508 480629

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Bergh Apton Community Arts Trust  
 Bergh Apton Conservation Trust  
 Bergh Apton Local History Group  
 Bergh Apton Village Hall  
 Bergh Apton Parish Council  
 Bergh Apton Parochial Church Council  
 The Bergh Apton and District Society

## BERGH APTON & DISTRICT SOCIETY

### 2017 PROGRAMME

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January  
 "Messing About in Boats" by Rev. Chris Ellis

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February  
 "Lost & Found" by Anne Bridge

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March  
 "An Evening of Stories" by Melita Rouse

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April  
 "The Red Dragon and the Tylwyth Teg" by Jon Read

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May  
 "The Lady Molecatcher" by Louise Chapman

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September  
 "Antarctica" by Sue Sursham

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October  
 "Marie Curie" by Clive Evans

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November  
 "Marko"



**The Copy Date for the next issue is 10th March.**

Please send articles to me  
 Milton Harris [Editor] at  
[town\\_farm@btinternet.com](mailto:town_farm@btinternet.com)

*Thank you*

## Welcome

*We would like to welcome  
 Simon and Sarah Pointer and  
 their dog Nell (a beagle) to  
 Cooke's Road.*