



The Bergh Apton Newsletter

February - March 2016

Issue No. 143

Editorial Comment

Legend has it that February is the month of love, hope that several of you, mainly children, will benefit from a visit and gift from Jack Valentine which is a traditional Norfolk custom. Also, we should be aware that this is a leap year and all eligible young men must remember that for centuries women have had the right to propose on the 29th of February. If you refuse

you must buy her gloves to hide her shame of bearing no ring.

On a lighter note we would love to hear from anyone born on February 29th who are Leaplings. How old are you in leap years? Do tell us of any unusual celebrations or events linked to the date.

Milton Harris (Editor)

A Happy New Year from Green Pastures!

Phew! What a year it's been at Green Pastures! Not only did we manage to complete our building project and open our new garden shop, restaurant and post office, we also managed to squeeze in an additional member of the Debbage family too! This all made for an extremely busy end to the year in this neck of the woods!

Our final event of 2015 was our Christmas Food and Drink Market on 25th November and we are enormously grateful to everyone who came and supported us. Visitors couldn't move for free food and drink samples being thrust upon them; Mr Parravani was a particularly busy gentleman that day! The event even saw the debut of Father Christmas at Green Pastures (who we suspect hasn't made a "daytime appearance" in Bergh Apton for some time?) who was positively mobbed by the youngsters when they turned out of school!

Our Christmas meals proved a massive hit and we were staggered to be welcoming groups from all over Norfolk. We were particularly delighted to host locals from our doorstep too including the Bergh Apton Society!

As if our year hasn't been eventful enough we finished on a high with a couple of pieces of great "news". Our final awards entry of the year was rewarded with confirmation of Green Pastures being a shortlisted finalist for the national Garden Retail Awards (best Business Project category). The winner of this award will be announced at a gala dinner in London next month. We also had a surprise appearance in the national media on New Year's Eve when the Telegraph and the Guardian ran a story about the post office network on Sundays, highlighting Green Pastures as an example.



With our alcohol license now in place we've swiftly compiled an exciting collection of local wines and beers. We're enormously blessed to have the award winning Winbirri vineyard less than 3 miles away to head our wine list and our brewers include fellow Norfolk Food Award winners "Redwell Brewery" from underneath the bridge at Trowse and the highly acclaimed "Grain" beers from the lesser known village of Alburgh (pronounced "Ar-brer") near Wortwell. Maybe one day we'll be serving a "Vino Bergh Apton" too?

With all that excitement behind us we're now planning a whole new year of activity and events to look forward to. Following many requests from our customers our restaurant will be staging a series of themed dining evenings where we'll mostly be fetching out the table cloths and candlesticks for a more "intimate" atmosphere! We start with a "Seafood Celebration" on Friday 29th January to be followed by a Valentines Evening on Saturday 13th Feb.

Once again we'd all like to thank everyone for their amazing support over the last year and wish you all the very best of health and happiness for 2016!

James and Michelle

Christmastide at St Peter & St Paul

The high points of the Christmas season in our parish church were, as ever, the traditional trio of Carol Service, Christmas Eve Crib Service and Holy Communion on Christmas Day. For these services and, indeed, for the whole Twelve Days of Christmas, the church was resplendent with its magnificent Christmas tree, with pew-end candle poles that stood like colourful sentinels up the aisle, and flower arrangements that bedecked every windowsill. A holly-and-ivy swag, reminiscent of a Victorian Christmas card scene, festooned the front of the gallery and even the organ screen had its own small but exquisite swag, lit by tiny pea lights that, with similar pea lights on the tree and the gallery swag, were the only electric lights throughout the church.

Other light for the carol service - on the evening of Sunday 20th December - came from over 150 candles spread throughout the church to help the congregation that was itself more than 150-strong and who sang with gusto at this service that, for so many people, marks the real beginning of Christmastide.

As they sang or listened to the lessons they can have had little idea of the work that goes into preparations for the scene before them: a small army of flower arrangers works for a whole day to create the magnificent scene; at the same time the members of the tree team (who, a few days earlier, had cut down the tree provided by kind donors) cart it to the church, manhandle it through doors that are barely wide enough for its breadth, set it up (no mean feat with a tree about 17 feet high!) and finally rig it with its many hundreds of fairy lights.

With that done - and the tree (almost as high as the Chancel arch) a-glitter with its lights, quite a few "ooohs" and "aahs" might well have been heard from others in the church busy with their own parts of the preparations.

In this recitation of helpers we must include the toilers who, all the work done, got to work with vacuum cleaner, dustpan and brush and duster to remove all traces of the honourable debris created by all that work that prepares the scene.

As to the Carol Service itself, high praise must go to the readers of the Lessons for their clarity and interpretation and, to repeat earlier congratulations, to the congregation who sang the nine carols either lustily or with sensitivity according to their content and tradition.

The whole of this scene was captured in a photograph published in the EDP the following week, taken by Kevin Gotts, and we are delighted to publish another of his photographs here with thanks to him for his permission to show it to you.

We must not forget the other unsung heroes of the evening, the car park team. They managed to pack in

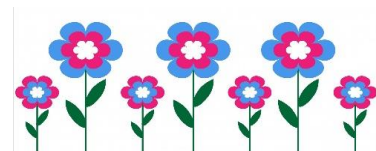
all the cars - and to help them all safely out again - despite the appalling conditions under foot and tyre that were the result of the unremitting rainfall of the past ten weeks or so that turned the Church Field into something akin to a First World War battlefield in Flanders!

In closing, we must make mention of Christmas morning when, to the surprise and delight of everyone at the communion service that morning, a beautifully tuneful but impromptu choir burst forth with the descant of the carol "O come, all ye faithful". This delight, as we discovered after the service, came from friends and family of the Diamond family, John and Alison Freemans' recent successors at Holly Farm on Loddon Road. Thank you, Diamonds - we can definitely tolerate more of that in future years!

John Ling



Our thanks to photographer Kevin Gotts for this unusual view of Bergh Apton church's Christmas tree and organ taken at the Carol Service.



DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR EASTER

*Please come along to church on
SATURDAY 26th MARCH
to help decorate the church with
spring flowers.*

*We will be there from **9.30am** – or
just come for a cup of coffee.*

Romance at The Rectory

I was particularly interested to read the interview with Ellen Yallop as it mentioned Levi Lord as being a gardener at the rectory as this was the name of one of my Great Great Grandfathers on my mother's side. I think that it was more likely to have been my Great Uncle Levi Dye who was a gardener under three or four different rectors there.

The story that I was told was that he fell in love with one of the maids there, Elizabeth (Libby) Wilson but the families disapproved of the friendship as they were cousins and Libby was packed off to London to work in service there. However, the rector at that time gave them his blessing so Libby returned and they were married and a reception was held for them at the rectory.

I can remember them living in a cottage in Mill Road now known as Blackbirds Nest which at that time was next door to where I was born. They had a daughter Clara who married Reg Rackham and they lived in a number of properties in Bergh Apton including Cherry Dene and Orchard House. They had a daughter Wendy and a son Robin who lived in Thurton for many years.

Levi and Libby also adopted Dudley Wilson who married Cicely Windross and they ran the Red Lion pub before the Watkinsons, before moving to The Street. It was there that they raised two sons, Philip who lives locally and Brian who moved to Australia but has been known to contact the Bergh Apton Newsletter from there.

Bob Debbage

Parish Council

After a difficult start to the election year, the parish council is now up to full strength with the co-option of John Ling and myself at the meeting on 18th November.

I have agreed to take the chair until one of the elected councillors feels able to take over the role.

Your parish councillors are:

Liz Robinson Chairman,
Chris Bewick Vice Chairman,
Elaine Horn,
John Ling,
Hugh Porter,
David Skedge,
Janet Skedge.

Your parish clerk is: Philippa Fuller
(contact clerk@berghapton.org.uk
or telephone 01508 558280)

If you have any queries about what is happening in Bergh Apton please speak to one of your councillors or contact the clerk and we will do our best to resolve them or ensure they go onto the agenda for future meetings.

Parish council meetings are normally held every two months although this year we have had to adjust them slightly.

The next meeting is on 24th February 2016. All members of the public are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings.

Liz Robinson

As we start a New Year thanks are due to all those who supported the village coffee morning each month in 2015.

For those who have never been, it is an opportunity to catch up with old friends, meet and make new ones, enjoy homemade refreshments in the comfort of the recently refurbished village hall.

It takes place every third Wednesday each month from 10.00am to 12.00md and you can be sure of a warm welcome. Transport can be provided if needed.

The dates for each month are as follows:

20th January, 17th February, 16th March, 20th April,
18th May, 15th June, 20th July, 17th August,
21st September, 19th October, 16th November



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BERGH APTON CHURCH EASTER LILIES

*If you would like to donate lilies for Easter, in
memory of relatives or friends, you can order
from Hilary Ling on 480439.*

The cost this year will be £2.50 each.

*The lilies will be arranged in the church on
SATURDAY 26TH MARCH - Do come and help.*

Thank you

The Black Poplar Lives!

In April 2005 the Bergh Apton Newsletter told of the sad loss (felled by a storm) of the magnificent Black Poplar that had stood for a hundred years and more on the boundary between Bob Debbage's land and the Mere Farm estate just to the south of the Langlands Way footpath. Now, eleven years on, we have good news of its

successor that was grown from a cutting taken by Bob Kerry before the tree was lost and planted in 2006. This photo, taken in early December 2015, shows a strong and healthy young tree that stands close to where its parent stood. With luck and time it will grow to the same great size as its venerable predecessor.

John Ling



Pruning at the Chet Valley Vineyard

Two contrasting images of the Chet and Waveney Valley Vineyard on Loddon Road: **Left:** Vineyard owner John Hemmant and Lisa Flatman, a trustee of the Bergh Apton Conservation Trust, take advantage of the clement

January weather to begin the task of pruning vines to produce good grapes for the 2016 vintage. **Right:** During last year's vendange (the French term for the grape harvest) Anna Guy (l) and Hilary Ling (r) pick grapes on a sunny day in September.

John Ling



Country Diary Mass Dials

Stand facing the south porch of Bergh Apton church and then turn and take three or four giant strides to your right and you will reach the north wall of the transept. The wall is made of flint and the quoins of limestone. A wall built of flint and rubble would have an uneven edge at the corner and wet and frosty weather would soon erode, so quoins, which are cut blocks of stone, were used to give stability and protect. Today quoins are largely merely decorative. About four or five feet up on one of these quoins are grooves, a few inches in length and radiating from a central point where the gnomon used to be, this would probably have been a nail and is long gone. The right hand side of the quoin was broken at some point so the lines on that side have nearly disappeared. I used to think this was what is sometimes known as a scratch dial, a simple sun dial. I am reading 'Medieval Graffiti' by Matthew Champion and I now know these are correctly called Mass Dials. The early ones were generally just straight lines but later ones included numerals and quite complex decoration. There are several thousand of them to be found in churches all over England. One theory is that they were used to show the approximate time of church services. In Mediaeval times life was planned between the rising and the setting of the sun and dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Prayers were said through the day beginning at Matins which was before dawn and then Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers which was at sunset and Nocturnes after sunset. As in our day church services were announced by the tolling of a bell so there was no need to put aside whatever task was in hand and hurry to the dial to see if it was time for a service. Some of these dials are found on the north wall of a church so of little use there. Dials were usually scratched near the porch of a church but some are found inside which would indicate the porch was a later addition. In some cases there are several of these dials scratched into the stonework and close together, why would several be needed? There is no real answer as to what these dials were really used for.

As far as I know no other examples of graffiti from six or seven hundreds of years ago can be found in Bergh Apton Church. So, in other ancient churches who scarred the walls? Was it perhaps the ploughman who scratched a fire breathing dragon

on the wall in the nave? Did bored choir boys scratch demons and devils in the chancel? Perhaps the Lord of the Manor used his knife to write a love charm just inside the north door? Heraldic shields, knights, birds, fish, music, architectural plans all can be found. With the passing of time these graffiti now are worn but in Mediaeval times churches were brightly painted and must have been a joy to eye and mind and imagination and any angels and coats of arms and knights in armour and plants scratched through the paint to show the stone beneath would have been clearly visible and appear to have been respected and in some cases added to. Modern graffiti is generally a kicking of the voiceless against what is seen as an uncaring society, it is seen as undesirable but the graffiti of hundreds of years ago were perhaps a devotion, drawn and scratched by a people far more at home in their churches than many of our generation.

Pat Mlejnecky

Gardeners Kitchen

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Tales from the Churchyard

The most recent burial to take place in Bergh Apton's churchyard was that of Charles Flatt whom many of the village's older or long-term residents may remember as right hand man to Frances Freestone when she single-handedly owned and ran Youngs, the Loddon funeral directors.

Charles's principal responsibility behind the scenes was as carpenter but he was also a familiar sight as pall bearer at funerals conducted by Youngs until his retirement some years ago to a quiet life in Ashby St Mary with his wife Phyllis.

Charles Edward Norton Flatt was a Bergh Apton boy, born on 4 November 1933 at Gravel Pit Farm where his father Edward Norton (Ted) Flatt farmed with wife Rosa Ellen (nee Alexander) whom he had married in Bergh Apton in December 1930. He was, in fact, Rosa's second husband to farm there, her first husband Albert Hope Freestone having died on the farm in May 1927, less than two years after their marriage in October 1925 (also in Bergh Apton church).

Getting back, for a moment, to Youngs of Loddon, and to its late and much-respected owner Frances Freestone, you are right if you wonder whether there was a family connection between her and Charles Flatt; Frances was the daughter of Albert and Rosa Freestone and, thus, his half-sister.

As we made preparations for his funeral on 30th November we found that Charles's Bergh Apton connections - through his mother Rosa - went a long way back. There, in the churchyard, we found a cluster of graves belonging to at least two earlier generations of the family.

The latest, in a shared grave, were his own parents Ted and Rosa who died, respectively, in 1962 (aged 66) and in September 1980 (aged 88). On their north side is the grave of Rosa's first husband Albert Freestone and, on the south side, that of Rosa's parents Charles and Harriett Alexander who died, respectively, in May 1928 (aged 72) and May 1953 (aged 91). The grave to the south of the Alexander's is that of Rosa's maternal grandfather William Quadling who died in November 1930 aged 78.

Something interesting about churchyard practices seems to emerge from this perhaps confusing litany of dates and names; that the modern practice of filling up a churchyard in the order in which people die was not followed in times past. For here is a group of four family graves of which the first (Albert Freestone's) was dug in 1927 and the last (Ted Flatt's) in 1962.

That's a span of 35 years. Might one have cause to conclude that there was an understanding, in those days and where possible, that families be buried close together?

John Ling



In the foreground is the grave, in the form of a cross, is that of Charles and Harriet Alexander. The more unusual gravestone in the shape of an open book (like the cross, no longer a permitted form of memorial) is that of Ted and Rosa Flatt. Her grand-father William Quadling lies in an unmarked grave to the left of the Alexanders and her first husband Albert Freestone's unmarked grave is to the right of the Flatts' open book.

Dates for your diary

FEBRUARY 2016

3rd	19.30	B.A. Village Hall Management meeting at Village Hall
6th	18.30	Candlemass Play 'Midwinter Dreaming' at Church
10th	19.30	B.A. Society talk by John Read on The Soap Lady in Village Hall
17th	10.00-12.00	Coffee n Catch Up at the Village Hall
20th	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
20th	19.30	BALHG annual dinner in Village Hall
23rd	12.30	Tuesday Friends lunch at Church
24th	19.30	P.C. meet at Village Hall
25th	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field

MARCH 2016

9th	19.30	P.C.C. meet at church
9th	19.30	B.A. Society talk by Tony Brown on Wildlife in Fresh Water at Village Hall
16th	10.00-12.00	Coffee n Catch Up at the Village Hall
16th	19.30	B.A. Village Hall Management meeting at Village Hall
19th	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
22nd	12.30	Tuesday Friends lunch at Church
23rd	08.30	B.A. & Alington School Easter service at B.A. church
24th	10.00	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
26th	09.00	11 Says assembly at Bramerton Village Hall
26th	09.30-12.00	Decorate church for Easter

APRIL 2016

6 th	19.00 for 19.30	B.A. Village Hall AGM at Village Hall
9 th	TBA	Big C Spring Fayre at Village Hall

Regular Activities

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



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

Please send articles to me

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Thank you