



Bergh Apton Broadcast

Issue 190 Feb/Mar 2024



Welcome back to the second newsletter of 2024.

I hope that you have had a positive start to the year, unfortunately 'The Lovatts' are all just recovering from winter illnesses, but it does at least give me the time to sit down and do a little planning for the year - and hopefully you have had time too; whether that be events, holidays

or reviewing the seed catalogues!

The theme of 'use it or lose it' which John Ling raises in his article on P5 resonated with me when I read it. So often we hear people talking fondly of a shop or an event that they now miss, but these often disappear in plain sight. Only then do we realise what we had.

As a village, we have a small number of societies, regular events and traditions and many of these are holding on by a shoe string. Residents may think their presence does not make a difference...but in a village, **everyone IS** the village; the very reason that we love to live here. It takes **a very small contribution of time from everyone** to keep the church services, the clubs, the quizzes, the carol

singing, the arts events, the village hall, the speedwatch going. We can't leave it only for our neighbours to attend because we desperately need new faces to appear...without it village life will begin to become a faceless place where there is no community and nothing going on. So, if you haven't yet made a New Year resolution, then I ask that you put it in your planner for this year to attend an event, donate a spare hour or two or find a way to get involved. It's a great way to make new friends and find out just what Bergh Apton is all about....and you'll be glad you did!

On a positive note, I would like to offer thanks and welcome Bridget Hemmant Eye Surgery Ltd to our existing sponsor group; without this financial support, The Bergh Apton Broadcast would also disappear. Many thanks to Bridget and all those who have contributed already to the 23/24 newsletter.

You can e-mail me on this, other ideas or news on berghaptoneditor@gmail.com. I just need it by 10th March for the next edition please.

Wishing you a great start to 2024.

Jenny Lovatt

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to the merry band of singers who came out on a dark December night to carol sing their way around the village raising funds for charity. The group, comprising Claire, Rosalind, Carrie, Nigel, Diana, Jenny, and myself, had travelled from near and far (Bergh Apton, Alington, Poringland, and Thurton!) to take part.



In the midst of our busy lives, it's wonderful to keep up the old carolling tradition and reconnect with neighbours at this special time of year.

We're grateful to everyone who opened their doors to us and donated. Together, we raised a fantastic £130 for EACH.

Many thanks to Kip and Alison Bertram for inviting us in to enjoy a glass of mulled wine as we sang with them and their visiting relatives.

Special thanks also to Gill and Andrew Waters for welcoming us into their cottage at the end of the night for delicious refreshments and good company. Singing together beside their twinkling tree, with the nativity babe looking on from His manger, marked the perfect end to our evening and a moment that signified the start of Christmas for many of us.

Rebecca Hartley

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WITH COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Bergh Apton Community Speedwatch

As many of you know, Bergh Apton and Alington have been operating a Community Speedwatch for quite some time now. This initiative is fully supported (and overseen) by the County Constabulary, but entirely run by volunteers.

Due to a string of unrelated events we now urgently need some new volunteers to get involved in the running of the Speedwatch.

Speedwatch sessions are typically conducted for an hour per week on a rota basis, meaning most volunteers support a minimum of 2 sessions per month fitting in with other commitments.

We are also looking for somebody willing to help administer the scheme, which involves completing a weekly spreadsheet return as well as receiving and circulating emails, information and training requirements, which takes no more than an hour per week.

if you think you would be interested then please get in touch with Steve Whitby in the first instance (steve@gravelpitfarm.co.uk). This is your chance to contribute to the safety of Bergh Apton's roads...

Steve Whitby

One of the things I love about compiling the newsletter is that it enables people in the village to have a voice. I was contacted after Christmas by Aleksandra Zinovieva (Sasha) who, until recently, had been residing in the village with her family. I enclose the e-mail as received, which gives her opportunity to express her thanks....



"My name is Oleksandra (Sasha). I came from Ukraine and have been in Bergh Apton village for one year and 3 months.

Probably you all know my story, but I will briefly tell it again.

My daughter Arina and I came to Great Britain on July 2022. We came here because my friend Kateryna Shreeve has lived in Norfolk for 7 years and she been helping with visa applications for a few of her friends to come here. She registered on a website that was kindly made by Mark Meynell and his friends for Ukrainian people to find sponsors in UK. Katya found for me Christopher and Elizabeth Meynell who generously opened their home for me.

When I came to Bergh Apton I was mentally broken, devastated and felt helpless. Only what I can do for my destroyed homeland - is to save a Ukrainian generation - my daughter, and to earn money and send part of it over to help soldiers and my family, who stay in Ukraine.

At the house of Christopher and Liz I have healed every day, because of their care for me and my daughter, because of their focus on me in a positive way. Christopher helped me to find a job, meet people, helped with documents, insurance, tax, forms, forms, and more forms, and all practical things that was very new for me, and if not for Christopher's help I could be only half way to what I achieved in these days. I have joke - that Christopher my manager and only he and I know how big a mountain we climbed too for me to feel very independent and successful.

Liz healed my broken soul. I loved our "kitchen" conversations, she always knew what to say to support me, and mentally help. I knew she see me very clearly and see my soul very deeply.

I love you Christopher and Lizzie and very thankful for all your help. You my English parents.

It's an honour to be a part of your family.

I have enjoyed staying in Bergh Apton. I have been surrounded by wonderful people, and it's time to move forward and become more independent.

From December 2022 my family and I moved to a rented house at Loddon!

I would love to say Thank you to Francis and Anna Meynell - who helped my family a lot. And specifically to my daughter Arina.

I would love to say Thank you very much to Paris Back, who I definitely can call my Godmother, she came imperceptibly with her massive help to me and my daughter, and particularly to my husband Yury.

We love you, Paris.

I would love to say Thank you to Pat Mlejnecky who open to me world of craft art, what is become my hobby and her generous help to me and my family.

I would love to say Thank you to Kip Bertram who allows to visit swimming pool at his house. It's one of my daughter's favourite activities.

I would love to say thank you to the anonymous sponsors who continue to provide payment of rent for Bergh Apton village hall, where I run my ballet classes.

I would love to say Huge Thank you to all Bergh Apton people who did help my family and me.

Even after I moved and my flat been bombed in Ukraine on 29th December 2023, I don't give up and one of the reasons is the people from Bergh Apton village who support me and my family very much.

I can't call Bergh Apton my Homeland. But I definitely can say its my Home village at UK. I have been "quickly raised" there.

I don't say goodbye, I say thank you and see you around.



With love Ukrainian Family Zinoviev's Oleksandra, Yury and Arina"

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF CHURCH FARM



This photograph dates from circa 1926 and it shows my mother Florrie Westrup as a 17 year old driving her father's (Jonathan Wilfred Westrup) Model T Ford. This vehicle was used daily to transport the milk produced by the Friesian herd at Church Farm to the Co-op dairy at the top of St Stephens street Norwich. This particular Model T had a back seat (I believe known as a chummy seat) that could be removed to transport goods, produce or even livestock.

The reason for my Mother driving came about by a curious incident. My Grandfather felt that he was able to drive the Model T, however it seems that the position of brake, clutch and accelerator pedals caused him some confusion so instead of accelerating, he applied the brake pedal firmly which resulted in the churns of milk in the back tipping over covering him with milk, which was unfortunate but his main concern was the lack of revenue from the spilt milk! I understand that he did very little driving, if any from then on.

My sisters, brother and I were very fortunate in our Mother being able to drive so whilst Father was busy on the farm we could go on summer trips to the seaside, Gorleston-on-sea being a favourite destination often accompanied with our Aunt and three cousins from Seething all piled into a small Austin or was it a Morris? Reg number ENL 34 but that's another story.....

Kevin Parfitt

Getting creative for Christmas!



December's annual wreath-making workshop run ably by Tiff Porter with attendees proudly showing off their 'makes': (pics l-r) Lucy MacLean from Thurton with sister Amy Enskat from London, 'yoga' Gemma and Anna Guy.



BERGH APTON's Best Nature Photograph

FOURTH & FINAL CALL to all photographers.

There's STILL time to take a wonderful pic, but only JUST!

DO join in and enter

'The Green Pastures

Nature Photography Competition of the Year'

Green Pastures has generously offered a prize for the best nature photograph taken at any time before the end of April 2024.

Photographs of anything of the **NATURAL WORLD**.

Entries will be judged anonymously by a carefully selected panel and will be published in the Bergh Apton Broadcast.

Those interested please

contact

Christopher Meynell on

c.m.meynell@gmail.com for

further information and criteria.

The Competition is open to

any **Bergh Apton Broadcast**

reader.



Here's another offering - just

received – we've so far had a

bit of most things, but it's the first fungus with a 'Touch of Frost' – great variety everyone.

Bangers 'n' Brains!

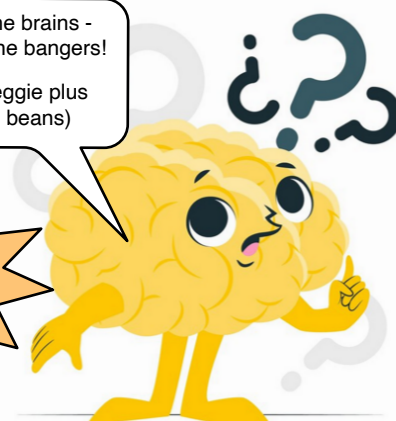
Saturday 23rd March

7 for 7.30pm

You bring the brains -
we'll supply the bangers!

(Pork or veggie plus
chips and beans)

£8.50
per player



Contact Milton Harris on 01508 550473 for details or to book your team in & confirm dietary requirements



Centuries slip by in the wink of an eye when Hugh Lupton with his friends, the Onlie Begetters, Wordsmiths, Readers, Singers, Rude Mechanicals, Gate Keepers, Lantern Painters, Maker of Masks, Poster Designer, Dragon Dreamers, Grass Dolly Weavers and Portrait Painters lift you out of the everyday and into some magic.

BERGH APTON ARTS

27 - 28 JANUARY & 3-4 FEBRUARY

in

BERGH APTON CHURCH

7.30pm

Tickets: £10.00

<http://berghaptonarts.org> or

01508558440

Come and be immersed in tales which have been charmed out of this village. They are woven in with a lantern procession, song, sound, shadow and light. This is a unique and intimate offering following in the long and rich tradition of Bergh Apton Arts.

Seating is limited so book now!

Bergh Apton & District Society Film Show

What a splendid evening it was on January 10th when over 50 people attended the film show of Norwich in the 1950's, with so many of the landmarks remaining as part of the current landscape of Norwich, but I realised, as the film reel turned oh how so much has changed during the past 70 years, not least of all fashions and vehicles.

One thing that has not changed is Lynton's excellent table of feasting to round off the evening, although we were unable to have choc ices and popcorn we were treated to the most tasty of cheeses including Baron Bigod from Bungay to Wensleydale and Stilton all accompanied with fine wine from various provenances.

Thanks Lynton & Ray for all your efforts that made this a most enjoyable evening.

Kevin Parfitt

Ten Years of the La La's in Bergh Apton



On 9th January the La La's singing group celebrated the 10 th anniversary of their first meeting.

After we'd sung a few of our favourites, Brian Bugg regaled us with a 'thesis' on the benefits of singing to health and wellbeing – it appears that on Tuesday evenings, in addition to the fun and laughter, we've actually been doing an aerobic workout. Who even knew?!

All those endorphins (nothing to do with the smaller cousins of the blue whale) coursing through our veins as a result, are the reason we all go home feeling better than when we arrived!

It's thanks to Karen Bonsell's inspiration, backed up by Barrie Hutchings, that we now meet every week. Jacquie's awesome 'Ode of thanks to Karen' was very well-deserved.

Over the years, the group have run 4 fund-raising concerts, benefitting Cancer Research, The Firefighters Charity, and two for EACH.

The group meets for 2 hours from 7pm on Tuesday evenings, in Bergh Apton Village Hall. We sing from a hugely mixed selection: The Beatles, Monkees, Carpenters, ABBA, Elvis, Buddy Holly, Elton John, The Animals, Beach Boys, Adele, and, and, and there must be 400-or-so titles in the songbook.

It's completely relaxed and unpressured, a sort of 'group karaoke'. Just turn up, give it a try – and get your share of those endorphins.

Shirley Rimmer

Good example of Men NOT Behaving Badly!



Well done all the men who washed up after the Quiz and Chilli.

FREE PARKING IN LODDON - USE IT OR LOSE IT

by John Ling

Just before Christmas Hilary talked to a parking warden on Church Plain. Their conversation reminded me why we all need to display a (free) local shopping ticket when we park there and on the staithe car park by the river. Because the ticketing process can certainly (and especially when doing a five-minute shop) be a bit of a pain, we might all be tempted to chance it. Why not? Well, for one reason, and at any time, there may be a warden sitting in a parked car or van just waiting to pounce with a £50 fine.

But here's another reason; it could mean the loss of our 'two-hour free parking for local shopping' dispensation!

To explain - This dispensation is the result of local pressure way back in the early 2000s, when South Norfolk Council decided to levy a charge to offset the cost of improvements to and future maintenance of these car parks. No one had a problem with charges for people, for example, using them for long periods or, for example, to park there and catch a bus into Norwich for the day.

But Parish Councils from the surrounding area including Bergh Apton (for which I acted as representative) put the case that such a charge would be an unreasonable imposition on people coming to Loddon to shop. The loss of trade if the shoppers stopped coming was another issue put forward both by the Councils and Loddon's shops and service business owners. SNC understood the argument and agreed to institute the 2-

hour free parking period to meet such needs.

There is, however, an important caveat; any future squeeze on SNC's expenditure may well focus on cutting services or charging more for them and free tickets for car parking would be an easy target. The best case to be put forward for their continued availability is that they are still needed by local residents, and the evidence for that is the number of free tickets issued. The greater the number of free tickets we register the greater will be the case to keep the service.

Thus my headline '**use it or lose it**'. Please, every time you park, just take that little bit of extra time to get your free ticket.



Don't be intimidated by the challenge of the ticket-issuing machines! Follow this guide – it really is easy if you know how.

There are four simple steps:

1. Press the second yellow button from the left.
2. Press the green button on the far right.
3. Collect your ticket from the dispenser at the foot of the display panel.
4. Display the ticket on your car's dashboard.

Our newest sponsor, Bridget Hemmant provides expertise on a common question asked of her...

Having worked for the NHS for the last 36 years I've just reached an "arbitrarily defined milestone" (as described on one of my recent birthday cards), so I'm looking forward to an exciting new phase of my life as I retire from regular NHS work and offer locum support.



As a semi-retired person. I will be continuing to look after people's eyes at Spire and occasionally as an NHS locum, but also I'll finally be spending time doing some of the things that I enjoy – hurrah! I've loved teaching medical students, trainees, optometrists, GPs and running patient educational teaching events throughout my career and will now provide periodic articles on eye problems.

To start with, I am answering one of the most common questions at this time of year:

"Doctor why do my eyes water?"

Interestingly there are two main causes of watery eyes and its possible to tell a lot from listening to the story. If the watering is constant, and worse in wind and cold, but the eyes are not uncomfortable it is most

likely to be due to a tear drainage problem. If the watering is intermittent it can be due to a variety of problems including dry eyes and blepharitis. Dry eyes are generally worse towards the end of the day, with feelings of stinging, burning and prickling often going alongside the watering which don't occur with blocked tear ducts.

Why do my eyes water towards the end of the day? This is most likely due to dry eyes, we all produce less tears towards the evening time and overnight so the surface of the eyes can dry out and then this causes discomfort with itchiness and stinging resulting in reflex watering. Using tear drops that you can buy over the counter from the chemist can help soothe symptoms and stop the watering.

Why do my eyes water in the autumn and winter? Watering in the cooler months of the year is most likely due to a lacrimal drainage problem as the tears that are made in the tear gland cannot drain away from the eye.

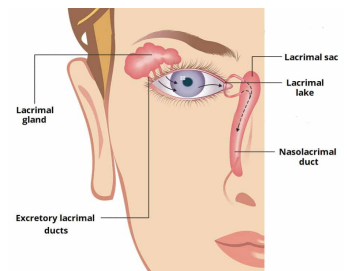
In the warmer months of the year some of the tears evaporate from the surface of the eye but this is much less in the winter and so watering can result. A tear drainage problem can be investigated further by your ophthalmologist, an eye doctor.

The watering can result from narrowing or blockage of the tear drainage system or from weakness in the lower eye lid muscles which can occur with age.

Tears are produced in the lacrimal gland, they wash across the surface of the eye to

moisten and protect it and then are pumped by the eye lid muscles towards the drainage tubes in the corner of the eye and lacrimal lake. The tears then drain into the lacrimal sac through the nasolacrimal duct and into the nose and the throat.

Why do my eyes water in the



Spring? In the earlier months of the year around May/June time the tree and grass pollens are carried in the air as these are wind pollinated. Some people are allergic to this pollen and can suffer with hay fever with red, itchy, watery eyes. Oral antihistamines or antihistamine eye drops can be bought over the counter to help with these symptoms.

I sometimes get little bumps or blisters on my eyelids. What are these? The little bumps are likely to be blocked meibomian glands which can often occur with blepharitis which can also cause watery eyes. If the glands become completely blocked then a sty can result causing a lump on the eye lid.

Treating blepharitis involves using warm compresses and massage to keep the oils flowing correctly in the eye lids and stopping the glands from becoming sludged.



Bergh Apton Church
Easter Lilies
 If you would like to donate lilies in memory of relatives or friends, you can order from Hilary Ling on 01508 480439 or hilary.ling@btinternet.com
 The cost this year will be £4 each.

We are arranging spring flowers and the lilies in the church on Saturday 30th March. Do come and help.
 Thank you

Crib Service 2023



To everyone who came to the Crib Service on Christmas Eve...

Huge thanks for participating in our mayhem; your enthusiasm makes it all worthwhile.

Special thanks are due to all cast and helpers

Finn Nicklin: our stalwart narrator, who held it all together.

Raff Nicklin: who played the angel.

Suzi Loades: who prompted, guided, and sorted out the costumes despite my best efforts to confuse everyone!

Sam O'Farrell: who played Joseph

Asher O'Farrell: his brother, who played the star carrier

Ruby Kerry: who played a really cute Mary,



Sabrina Skedge: whose flute played 'Little Donkey' to accompany Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, and then rounded of the afternoon by wishing us all a Merry Christmas



Jon Brompton: who played the organ

Lorie Lain-Rogers: who led the worship, handed out service sheets and helped in ways I didn't even know about.

To all the shepherds; sheep; innkeepers; magi & their pages, to the donkey; horse; ox and camel –

THANK YOU all for stepping up, and WELL DONE ALL.

Shirley



Andy Nicklin (half) Fran Kerry (back) Ruby Kerry (front), unidentified child (pixelated) Finn Nicklin, Sabrina Skedge, Raff Nicklin, Ian Ratcliffe (back), Asher O'Farrell (half hidden), Milton Harris (back), Sam O'Farrell, Erica Crome, Will Crome, unidentified child pixelated.

Thanks also to Shirley Rimmer for her part in continuing this important Bergh Apton tradition.

EASTER COMMUNION



followed by
Refreshments
and an Easter Egg Hunt



BERGH APTON CHURCH



Sunday 31st March
10.00 am



Carols by Candlelight 2023



Kind Thoughts...

"How are you?" Three little words that can sometimes feel too huge a question. My friend with cancer said she has been withdrawing from company lately, because she finds that simple greeting too overwhelming and challenging to respond to. Especially when you have put all thoughts of your illness to the back of your mind.

I suggested that she ask her friends to say instead "it's good to see you" or "hear you" if on the phone, and let her take the lead on whether to give an update or not. I think this is a simple act of thoughtfulness we could all adopt with friends that we know are going through a tough time.

Paris Beck

Bergh Apton's Tithe Map

A new enterprise

by John Ling

Bergh Apton's Local History Group (BALHG) has embarked on a project to show you what our village looked like over one hundred and eighty years ago, who owned what, and who lived where. It was a time when Bergh Apton was not much smaller than it is today, but life was ferociously harder and almost everyone in the village, in one way or another, depended on agriculture for their livelihood.

The project undertaken with the help of the Norfolk Records Office will result in a full-sized image of our Tithe Map and what is called its 'Apportionment' being on display in the village for you to look at. The map is almost 1.5 metres (5ft) square and shows every field other parcel of land and house and garden in the village. Its Apportionment is a bulky document written on vellum of the old 'Full Imperial' size (30"x22") that lists all properties against a its number shown on the map.

They exist because of an Act of Parliament, the 'Tithe Commutation Act' of 1836, that required an accurate map and a schedule of ownership for every village to be produced so that, at harvest time, the value of crops from each field could be assessed and one-tenth (*Old English*) of its value paid to the Rector as a tax to support the church. Before that, as far back as the reign of King Ethelwulf (839 to 858) and probably earlier, this tax had actually been delivered to the Rector from the field, as part of the crop.

For we twenty-first Century inhabitants the map has a different purpose because it is a snapshot of Bergh Apton in 1839 when, for any of us whose houses are older than that, it is an opportunity to find out who lived there at the time. For other researchers it is a rich trawling ground for, as an example, information of how much land was farmed by its owners and how much was tenanted.

But think of this as more than just a dry-as-dust history project; pause for a moment to survey the scene at harvest time before the monetary tax was brought in. First, in the many hundreds of years of strip-farming, imagine each man trudging up the muddy tracks that served as roads, to deliver their one-tenth yield to the local Rector. The Enclosures Acts, from the 16th Century onwards, gradually took away common land parcelled up as strip-farming and gave it to individuals many of whom became huge landowners. Try, now, to imagine the sight and sound of whole trains of wagons, loaded with a landowner farmer's one-tenth, rumbling their way to huge 'Tithe Barns' like the one at Hales Hall where the Rector's steward tallied the crops delivered and compared them with his master's assessment of what was due. No imagine the rows that must have followed when they didn't match!

Bergh Apton's Tithe Map, published in 1841, was the work of 'W D Jones, Surveyor, of Loddon' who, having travelled the length and breadth of the village with measuring instruments and having interviewed village residents for what must have taken some considerable time then (either by himself or by the work

of assistants) drew the map and its Apportionment. It must have been a real '*tour de force*'!

The map BALHG will put on display is a full-colour full-sized copy of the original Copy No 1 (*we don't know how many there were or where they are now*) now in the safe-keeping of the Norfolk Record Office. Originally, following publication and for well over a hundred years, it was the possession of successive Rectors of Bergh Apton in whose hands it had become very frail through being rolled up - with the bulky Apportionment inside - in a damp room somewhere in the Rectory. Its restoration and stabilisation in 2006, making it safe to handle it without falling to pieces, was commissioned and its cost met by BALGH in 2006, with the work itself being done by specialists at the Norfolk Record Office.

Now, with further investment using its own funds, BALGH has taken this decision to make the map available for everyone in the village, to look at and to learn from. Information on where it will be housed and how you may access to it, will be published within a few weeks as soon as those things have been finalised.



The heading of the map, with its title and creator, taken from the original in NRO.

If you are wondering what is happening in 2024 in Bergh Apton, here are the calendars for two regular groups - The Bergh Apton & District Group and the Local History Group. If you are interested in popping along, contact details are on the back page - or you can just turn up!

Bergh Apton & District Society

* 14 FEBRUARY Mary Fewster's talk on St Valentine

* 13 MARCH John Dixon "Can You Play the Saxophone?"

* 10 APRIL Gary Powell "Cases which advanced British criminal detection"

* 8 MAY Lizzie Scott -

Blickling Hall further upstairs/downstairs tales

* 11 SEPTEMBER Brian Heard - Forensic Ballistics Consultant

* 9 OCTOBER Frances & Michael Holmes on Norwich Trams

* 13 NOVEMBER Jim Stebbings "The History of English Pantomime"

Bergh Apton Local History Group

* Friday 15th March - Annual Dinner at village hall 7pm

* Wednesday 17th April - Annual General Meeting 7.30pm at village hall

* 7th June Walk around Beccles with a guide 10.30am this will be followed by lunch and a visit to the Museum

* Saturday 22nd June Joint BBQ with BACT 6.30pm

* Friday 9th August - The Hare 6.00pm - 9pm

* Wednesday 18th September Film evening

showing local archive films, 7.30pm at village hall

* Wednesday 16th October 'Who do you think they were' talk by Linda Davy on past residents of the village buried in the churchyard. 7.30 pm at village hall

The monthly Archive sessions in the village hall continue at 2pm on the third Wednesday in the month - 17 January, 21 February, 20 March, 17 April, 15 May, 19 June, 17 July, 21 August, 18 September, 16 October 20 November, 18 December. All are most welcome to come and join in whether for one session or all!

COUNTRY MATTERS

Sunday 14 January

Amid the ruins of the winter landscape the robin, the Holly King, sings. Of what does he sing? It is bone chillingly cold so certainly not of 'comfort and joy'. He sings his winter's tale, it is little liits followed by a flock of notes. His bright chest like a shield challenges, his feathered coat the colour of wintered leaves. He sits in the black bony lattice of the hedge and I am so near I could touch him. Eyes dark as ripe elderberries watch me intently. His closeness to me speaks of tameness but the gap between his world and mine is as wide as the wintered landscape. I have come with offerings, his dining table is a stump of a long gone tree edged with a ruff of fungus. Back inside I watch from the window and he is already feasting.

Pat Mlejnecky



Coffee 'n' Chat

A packed coffee morning at the village hall - Coffee n Chat is held every third Wednesday from 10am to 12. It's great fun with wonderful home baking.

Getting to know you...

The Editor talks to Shirley Rimmer, Church Warden and long-time resident of Bergh Apton on how she came to the village after her travels around the world with husband Mike Rimmer.



JL: Welcome Shirley...many people will recognise you for your involvement with the church here in Bergh Apton, and also for being on the fete committee, but can you tell us how you came to the village?

SR: It's a long story...it might be best to go back to the beginning!

JL: So, how did it all begin, where were you born and raised?

SR: My parents were British South Africans who went up to the Rhodesias in 1952 when the Nationalists took over South Africa - so I was born in Zambia. When the revolution happened in the Congo in 1960 the trouble overflowed into the area we were living in, so my parents sent me and my three older brothers to stay with our grandparents in South Africa. When the British administration froze all assets, my parents were forced to leave in 1961 for the UK. We arrived pretty penniless and moved in with my grandmother's cousin in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire where I grew up in a cold, rambling old farmhouse.

JL: And how did you meet Mike?

SR: I was in my gap year and was staying with one of my brothers in Hong Kong. Mike was a helicopter pilot with the RAF on a 3 year posting when we met. I couldn't stay there as I had to take up my University place studying 'Agricultural and Food Marketing' so I left him in Hong Kong ...and came back!

JL: So obviously he waited for you?

SR: After defence cuts, the radar site there was closed and he was sent back in 1975 ...but this time to the Outer Hebrides (at a mere 21!). I graduated in 1978, and when Mike was posted to Cyprus for 2

years, I went with him and we lived on top of a mountain, spending the summers' with Mike working shifts of 2 nights and 2 days, sleeping it off for a day before we both headed off with a tent to live on the coast for the 3 remaining days. The wives at this time were not allowed to work apart from on the Sovereign base area, so I got a job teaching English and maths to get servicemen through their 'O'levels.

JL: You tell me you have had 12 moves, where did you go next?

SR: At the end of 1980, Mike came back to the School of Fighter Control at Uxbridge, West Drayton. He was working as a Fighter Controller, (a Fighter Controller's role is to guide a defending fighter onto a target invader). In 1982 the Falklands War broke out. Mike was on the list to go, but didn't in the end and at the beginning of 1983 was sent to the Isle of Wight to learn about a new radar system, and spent time on West Falkland that summer (a Falklands winter) to implement it. After that he was promoted and posted to Cornwall. During this period, we had our two children, Chris and Tim and then returned back to High Wycombe for two more years. In 1989, Mike was posted to Germany and we were given married quarters in a high rise block. which meant I was on the 9th floor with two young boys - I spent a lot of time with two pre-schoolers in a freezing park to just get them outside. Mike was away at the time but fortunately the mums set up a playground rota so we got by! Chris started American pre-school in the June of '92 and learnt a new accent, before we returned in August 1992 to Neatishead Radar station, and the boys then went to school in North Norwich. After a year, it was a new promotion for Mike with NATO and we were posted back to Germany again. There were only 17 Brits. there at this time so I got involved in socialising with the local ladies going to craft and social evenings; and in consequence my German became quite fluent then...and the boys had to attend German schools so we were fully immersed! We came back to the UK in 1996 and at the end of 1999 Mike was posted to Belgium. In 2002 I trained to teach English as a foreign language, and in 2004 we finally moved to Bergh Apton!

JL: So, did you finally get to settle here with Mike?

SR: No - he was then posted to Bristol, so, I had a weekend husband for 4 years! The boys were at boarding school in Bury St Edmunds so I started temping and threw myself into everything in Bergh Apton - The Conservation Trust, The Flower Club, WI - it was the best way to get to know people, and I've continued ever since.

JL: And did you ever get to use your degree?

SR: I worked for The Office of Government Commerce (civil service) before getting a job with Anglia Farmers. I remember applying, saying I knew my degree was thirty years old but I had continued to take an interest in agricultural issues! I worked there for eleven years on the seed and fertiliser desk, focussing on environmental crops and grass seed mixtures and advising the farmers on the best option for their situation.

JL: When did you finally get to retire?

SR: 2018. I hated the first year and missed my colleagues and the all the farmers. Mike had retired in 2008 so I had to revert to being a full-time wife although he also had a job as a River Ranger for a while before fully retiring.

JL: And did you have retirement plans?

SR: Well, we bought a caravan and have managed a few holidays - the West Country where our eldest son is, to Devon to visit our youngest son and Somerset, Wiltshire, Chester and Whitby. We tried to visit Lemster in 2022 but we both went down with Covid and came home again. We have still to decide whether to make some new travel plans!

JL: So, do you still keep in touch with anyone from the RAF days?

SR: I keep in touch with a friend in Norwich who was our Sponsor (the buddy type system for service families) when we went to Germany for the first time. There is a group of us (Stowmarket, Peterborough, Norwich and Poringland) who still meet up every month. We had children the same age and met in the high-rise when we were posted to Germany.

JL: Can you tell us more about what you

do now in Bergh Apton?

SR: We were lucky to come to Bergh Apton when we did. Around 1990-2010, Bergh Apton was buzzing with an influx of young active retired, with time and enthusiasm. People threw themselves at activities in village creating The Conservation Trust, The History Group, BACAT, the church was busy ...but 30 years on, many of these people are now in their 70s and 80s and without people stepping forward I can see many of these groups becoming untenable.

The current Parish Team is made up of myself, Lorie Laine-Rogers, Christopher Meynell and Pat Waters so we are often busy organising services and events as well as looking after the day to day administration and upkeep of the church. Mike helps a lot with the maintenance and mows the churchyard. When Kevin (Parfitt) was unavailable to drive the tractor, Mike mowed the parking field by hand and walked 11 miles!

In 2021 I started helping Milton (Harris) with the Horse Show planning and dealing with the bookings and I am on the Fete planning team too. All these things mean Mike and I never quite get to take the caravan on tour!

JL: It sounds like you like a challenge?

SR: Being a military spouse, I learnt to find my feet quite quickly and do things for myself although I think I have always wanted to learn and get involved. When I was a student, the immersion stopped working in our flat. I was determined to take it apart and fix it with supervision despite my flatmate (an aeronautical engineer) wanting to do the repair!

When a section of the church wall started collapsing, Lorie Laine-Rogers taught me how to do the repairs but it turned into a bigger job than it first appeared. Originally built of lime mortar and flint, the wall had been re-pointed at some stage with cement, preventing the wall from breathing. The water had forced its way inside destroying the lime mortar and leaving a shell and loose flints. As I started to clean it, it started to collapse so I ended up fixing 20 feet of it...far more than I had planned!

I have also got used to speaking in public. When I first came to Bergh Apton the thought of reading prayers in church filled me with dread, but now I find myself leading services...there has been a lot of learning.

JL: Your faith is obviously important to you...have you always had opportunity to attend church on your travels?

SR: When I was at University in Newcastle I used to go to occasional

services. Being constantly on the move, I managed to attend occasional services in Ruislip and was finally confirmed when we were living in Cornwall. When Chris (first son) arrived I was told off by the elderly congregation of my church for not bringing him to the services (he was always in a bad mood on Sundays!). After he was baptised there though things got better! Nineteen months later, we had our second son and Sunday mornings became my day off, when I went rowing on the Thames (part of a 4 and 8) before going to church whilst Mike had the boys. In Germany there was no church, but I still managed to continue attending the visiting clergy communion service which had to be held in the tower block. Back in Norwich, rugby with the boys took over for a while on Sundays, and when we returned to Germany I didn't attend as I found my language was not sufficiently fluent. I had a dormant period, ...returning in Belgium when I started doing the Alpha Course. During this time I was questioning my understanding. I understood God, the Father and God, The Son but I didn't truly understand God, the Holy Spirit.

The course leader replied 'has anything ever happened at the right time when you really needed it'...and the realisation struck me...I was hooked! I recalled the number of times people had either been in the right place for me or I had been for them.

JL: So are there any instances you can recall?

SR: When our son got his first job he was working for holiday camps as an Activity Instructor and was constantly getting moved around into unsatisfactory roles and having a very difficult time trying to decide how to move forward with his career. I happened to attend a group service where I got into a conversation with a youth leader who advised me about Connexions, a youth career service, which ultimately led my son onto finding a placement at Otley College when he really needed to find the right path for him. It was a significant moment for me in showing me the right person at the right time.

And recently, I was in Poringland, walking back from the DIY store 'Ground Hog' trying to decide which way to return when I chose to come down Long Road. I noticed a car with its hazards on and a woman trying to help an elderly man (who turned out to be in his 90s) who had fallen on the verge. He had been lying there for half an hour in the freezing temperatures but fortunately between us, we managed to get him up and into the car and back home and settled. If I had not chosen to walk that way....

The driver turned out to be a Verger at the Cathedral and I'm a Church Warden...I believe it's a clear demonstration of Spirit and it's important

to me to be able to share some of that with somebody.

JL: Many churches are facing issues with congregation numbers and finances, is it the same for Bergh Apton?

The Thurton Benefice (Thurton, Bergh Apton, Framingham Pigot, Ashby, Yelverton) are all struggling with regular attendance numbers, sometimes just in single figures, and yet we are increasingly under financial pressure to meet our parish share, which for us means raising £16000 per year. The volunteer team do their best to hold events and fundraise to stay afloat but it means we are becoming increasingly stretched to be able to raise funds for important charitable causes which we would like to be doing more for. We try to create events people want to attend, such as our Songs of Praise which we held at the end of October. We have had special appeals for the Christian-run hospital in Gaza, the Libyan floods, the Turkish earthquake and the Salvation Army Presents appeal as well as support for The Matthew Project, the Foodbank and Ormiston Families.

People are getting older though and if we can't find ways to bring people to church, there will just be empty pews in the next ten years. Our Crib Service is always popular with around 80 people attending but these well-attended services are few.

It's a chicken and egg situation, as a Benefice, we need to meet our share to ensure a full-time clergy person can be present in the lives of the parishioners, but without the parishioners, we struggle to raise the monies to pay what is needed. There is no easy solution.

This past year has been difficult with Reverend Chris's enforced sick leave but we were extremely fortunate to have Cate and Ian with us until July and as an experienced Parish Team we can continue to hold services but we do recognise that we have our limitations.

We hope to be offering another Songs of Praise later this year with a summer afternoon tea, and we hope as many can join us as possible. If you have any other ideas though, please do get in touch!

JL: Do you have any last comments to share?

SR: Mike's has lots of stories...he's pretty amazing! You should interview him for the newsletter. (Noted! - Ed)

I am always looking for people to speak with and would love to have a chat with you for a forthcoming issue. It won't be a formal interview...just a chat over a cup of tea. Please get in touch!

Jenny

With thanks...

This newsletter cannot be produced without the generosity of our sponsors who have pledged support at this time for the print costs for the next 12 months.

Our thanks go to:

Fanny Thursby Trust, Bergh Apton Arts, Bergh Apton Conservation Trust, Bergh Apton Society, Bergh Apton Local History Group, Bergh Apton Parish Council, Bergh Apton Parochial Church Council, Bergh Apton Village Hall Trust, Bertram Charitable Trust, Bridget Hemmant Eye Surgery Ltd, Clair and the Christopher Tenwinter Trust.

Useful Contacts

BAA (art workshops)

Pat Mlejnecky 01508 480696

BA Conservation Trust

Tony Davy 01508 558453

Ballet

Aleksandra Zinovieva
07493073114

BA Local History Trust

Linda Davy 01508 558453

BA Society

Lynton Johnson 01508 480629

Church: Rector

Reverend Chris Ellis 01508 484174

Church: Warden

Shirley Rimmer 01508 480576

Dog Training

Tina Devlin 07810 158799

Family/Local History research

John Ling 01508 480439

Microscopy Group

Peter Sunderland 01508 493398

Pilates classes

moveswithemma.com

Singing (The La La's)

Karen Bonsell 07583968739

Village Hall Bookings

Hilary Ling 01508 480439

Yoga classes

Gemma Bains 07979 723914

Regular Events at The Village Hall

Monday	5pm on	Dog Training
Tuesday	9.30am & 10.30	Pilates
Tuesday	7pm	The La La's sing
2nd Wednesday	7.30pm	B.A. Society
3rd Wednesday	10-12pm	Coffee n Catch Up
3rd Wednesday	2-4 pm	Village Archive
Thursday	3-5pm	Ballet class
Friday	9.30am & 11.15	Yoga
1st Saturday	9-5pm	Microscopy Group
Saturday	9-12pm	Ballet class (not on 1st Saturday of the month)

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Do you know we have a Facebook Page?

'Bergh Apton Community Noticeboard'

and a website

<https://berghapton.org.uk/>

COOK'S CORNER

This month Liz Meynell shares her sought-after and much-loved gingerbread recipe.

(As all recipes published are family traditions, measurements are published as given)

8oz plain flour	2oz brown sugar
2tsp ground ginger	4oz margarine.
1 tsp mixed spice	1/4pt. milk
1tsp bicarbonate soda	2 eggs,beaten
4oz golden syrup	2 pieces stem ginger (chop fine)
4 oz black treacle	

Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl. Melt the syrup, treacle, sugar and margarine gently, add milk and cool. Add the eggs. Make a well in the flour and mix in the rest of the ingredients thoroughly. Pour into a 9" x 6" paper lined tin and bake at 300F. for 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours until a skewer comes out clean.

Village Diary

February

3rd 7.30pm	Unlock Uneath -at the church
4th 7.30pm	Unlock Uneath at the church
14th 7.30pm	BA Society talk by Mary Fewster on St Valentine
17th 10am	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field.
21st 10-12	Coffee n Chat
21st 2-4pm	Archiving
21st 7pm	Village Hall management meeting
22nd 10am	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field.

March

13th 7.30pm	B.A. Society talk by John Dixon on Can You Play the Saxophone?
15th 17.30pm	BA Local History Group Annual Dinner
16th 10am	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field.
20th 10 - 12	Coffee n Chat
20th 2-4pm	Archiving
21st 10am	BACT Workday. Meet at Church Field
23rd 7 for 7.30pm	Quiz
27th 7pm	Parish Council meeting
30th 9am	Decorate church for Easter
30th	11 Says assembly

All events take place at the village hall unless otherwise stated.