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# Bergh Apton Broadcast

Issue 207 Dec/Jan 2027



It's the final newsletter of 2026 which bridges into the new year and is always, for me, a time of reflection. A time to look back and see what you have achieved, reflect on the new relationships you have made, and to remember those who are no longer here to see the transition into a new year once more.

I am sure you will have your own moments of reflection over the Christmas period; to remember loved ones but also to enjoy the company of friends and family and celebrate the festive period with your own traditions and celebrations.

As there are a number of Christmas events coming up, I have gathered a few of these together on P3 to aid your memory, although the full diary is on the reverse of the newsletter as usual. One of my favourites is the village carol singing, an evening of camaraderie which always reminds me of singing carols at my High School service. Our music teacher (sadly no longer with us but whom I have very fond memories) would spend many hours polishing the 'special choir' for the annual trip to Chelmsford Cathedral for our Christmas Carol service, which optimistically followed the format of 'Carols from Kings'.

We can't promise that level of singing around the village, but we will try our best, and be raising money for local charity EACH, so if you would like us to call, or feel you wish to make a donation, do listen out for us (we also respond well to glasses of mulled wine)!

The run-up to Christmas and all the events and things on our 'to do' list sometimes feels exhausting, and Father Chris reminds us in 'Rambling Rector' on P2 that amongst this endless list of activities, we should remember to find a period of stillness away from the gadgets and chaos, to remember the love and peace that IS Christmas.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2027!

With best wishes,

*Jenny, Marti and Noah Lovatt*

*of Giants Wood*



## Come Along and Join in the Village Carol Singing!

Be part of an ancient Christmas tradition and join in with some festive carol singing for charity (EACH) around the village on Monday 21st December.

Everyone is welcome – whether you love to sing or just fancy joining in for a bit of Christmas cheer!

Meet at the Village Hall at 6.00pm, ready to set off on foot around the village.

Please bring a torch and consider wearing something high-vis (and Christmassey if you wish). Carol sheets provided.

Would you like the carol singers to stop outside your house, or like more information? Please contact Rebecca on 07564 061917.






Once again, can I say a HUGE thank you to everyone who has contributed to the content, production, distribution and financial support of the Bergh Apton Broadcast and to all those involved in the groups, societies and organisation of events and institutions in Bergh Apton. Thank you for all you do for Bergh Apton.

*Have a very Happy Christmas!*

Any contributions for the Feb/Mar 2027 edition of the Bergh Apton Broadcast, should be e-mailed to the Editor at berghaptoneditor@gmail.com by 10th January. All contributions welcomed.

## 'RAMBLING RECTOR' with The Reverend Chris Ellis



A former colleague of mine once called me a 'luddite', a term which has its origins in the 19th century and referred to textile workers who protested against labour-saving machinery andnowadays is used to refer to anyone who opposes new technology. I am not sure the term strictly applies to me, but I must admit that there are aspects of modern life that I find bringmore work rather than time saving benefits. As someone who was in high school in the late1970's and early 1980's, I remember being one of the first students of 'computer studies', a laborious subject involving long hand-written computer programmes which had to be transferred onto 'punch' cards and frequently went wrong due to human error in either part of

the process. However, I do remember a teacher boldly stating that computers would change the world and in particular give us more leisure time. He predicted that the time saving benefits of computers would reverse our working week and result in two days at work and five days off. Not sure that has materialised. I do also have an issue with gadgets which appear to make things more long-winded than necessary. My son-in-law is a coffee aficionado, but I find it almost frustrating to watch him prepare a coffee with much grinding, banging and hissing. Five minutes to produce something I can manage in ten seconds with a spoon, a kettle and a jar of instant!

A further frustration is the fact that gadgets come with either a bigger manual than Neil Armstrong had to operate Apollo 11 or no manual at all requiring a trawl of the internet just to find how to turn it on, let alone learn all its features.

Looking back at what I have written so far, perhaps my colleague was right – I am a luddite!

My problem, of course, as for so many of us these days is time. Getting to grips with new technology takes time and patience, both of which I am frequently short of.

Perhaps this is why I ended up as a priest not a computer programmer. Much of what I do (apart from writing articles for the Bergh Apton Broadcast and responding to emails) requires little technology. My working week is shaped around God, his people and the places where they are much as the week of parish priests have been for centuries.

The Church year contains a framework in which are called to be aware of the changes in the seasons and significant moments in history which have not been - and will not be - shaped by changes in technology.

We are now approaching Christmas, but I doubt many of you when reflecting on The Christmas Story imagine it much differently than Christians have done for generations. The carol 'O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie' evokes images of Mary and Joseph, the stable and the baby Jesus lying in manger which is unchanging. It is, perhaps, the perfect antidote to the fast changing, pressure filled, gadget filled world most of us feel caught up in. We are told that Bethlehem was very busy and chaotic on the night Christ was born, yet in its midst we imagine this calm and peaceful scene as God chose to enter our world and offer us a new way of thinking, living and hoping. The message of the angels passed down through the generations – of God's love for us and His desire for us to love Him in return.

In all the busyness of Christmas and as even more gadgets wait to be unwrapped under the Christmas tree, may you find your oasis of calm in the true Message of Christmas and the love, peace, calm and hope of the Christ child.

With every blessing,

Fr Chris.

## DODGERS LANE, A BRIEF HISTORY

We are lucky to have a few villagers with long-standing knowledge of the history, people and stories of our community. Here, Kevin shares his local knowledge...

At the recent village quiz (Oct 24th), well up to the standard of which we have become accustomed, a question was asked from where to where does 'Dodgers Lane' travel...of course it all depends where you start from...

The answer being from 'The Street to Cookes Road' or vice versa. This prompted a query as to how it came to be known as Dodgers Lane?

Let me take you back to those olden days early last century when Pond Farm (halfway along Dodgers Lane) was owned by a character called Mr Arthur Wright. A photo of Arthur in 1926 shows him as an elderly gentleman with a snowy white beard and my mother as a young lady sitting astride one of his horses in the harvest field. Arthur Wright was known as Dodger Wright, so when streets and lanes were named by the Parish Council in the late 80's/early90's, Dodgers Lane seemed an appropriate nod to one of those long gone but not forgotten individuals of this community.

*Kevin Parfitt of Dodgers Lane.*

If you have any events, notices or contributions for the Feb/Mar 27 edition of the Bergh Apton Broadcast, please e-mail berghaptoneditor@gmail.com by 10th January. All welcomed!

## BERGH APTON & DISTRICT SOCIETY

by Jennifer Hall

### WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2027




To open its 2027 programme the Society will be hearing from Nigel and Paris Back who will share their experience of travelling to Lviv in a convoy of 23 4x4 trucks with the charity Convoy4Ukraine. They went in February and again in October realising how much they were needed to return to this seemingly never-ending war. The trucks were filled with pre- ordered emergency medical equipment which was delivered directly to the Unbroken, University and Military hospitals in Lviv. On each occasion, a day was spent being shown round Lviv visiting hospitals, The Field of Mars cemetery and churches. They were also able to attend a talk by Andriy Zholob and Oleksii, two members of The Veterans Association and Dr Adriana Hayduk, Professor at Lviv University hospital.

£4.00 pp at the door 7.30 pm start

Tea/coffee with biscuits

# Out and About in Bergh Apton




## CHRISTMAS BINGO

**FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER**

BERGH APTON VILLAGE HALL

Families welcome – BYO refreshments

Doors open 7.00pm for 7.30pm start

## CHURCH FLOWER DECORATION

**Join us to decorate Bergh Apton church for Christmas**

**18th December from 9.30am**



We need help throughout the year too...

Could you spare time once a year and join the small band of volunteers on the flower rota who decorate our church?

If so, please contact Hilary Ling, who will help, advise and set up as needed:

hilary.ling@btinternet.com / 01508 480439 / 07900 553420




Bergh Apton Local History Group Dinner

## Do you remember 1977?



## Saturday 23rd January 7pm

Commemorating fifty years ago.

An evening of all things 1977.

Come in your flares, platform heels punk or disco outfit to take part in a fun-filled evening.

Vegetarian, vegan and gluten free catered for.

Bring your own tipple to accompany your meal.

**£15.00 for Members £17.50 Non members**

**To book your place contact suzanne@gravelpitfarm.co.uk**

Bergh Apton's

## Candle-lit Carol Service

**Sunday 20th December at 6pm**





## News and Updates from Bergh Apton Church

### LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE IN 2027?

**Calling any actual and/or wannabe bell ringers...**



Bell ringing is a team activity that stimulates the brain and helps keep you fit - and makes a glorious sound.

If this is something you used to do and would like to pick up again – or you'd like to try as a beginner, do get in touch and we can link you with a trainer and a band of ringers.

Call 01508 480576 or email bachurchwarden@outlook.com



All other church news this edition appears in 'Out and About' and our event reviews in 'Community News'.

Please note there will not be a Crib Service at Bergh Apton church this year, so we hope you will be able to join us at the Carol Concert or Christmas Morning service instead.



### Quiz 'n' chilli

The autumn quiz on Halloween night was a tremendous success – it was the best turnout since before COVID! Eleven teams ranging in size from 4 to 8 pitted their wits against questions from quizmasters Sue Hill and Lorie Lain-Rogers.

In a good-natured contest with groans and cheers erupting as answers were announced, Kevin Parfitt's team were the ultimate victors. But it was a close-run thing, with several teams finishing within 8 points of each other.

Thanks are extended to all who contributed to the success of the evening: Sue and Lorie for the questions, to the chilli makers and washer-uppers, to Hilary for coordinating the food and baking 80 potatoes, to raffle donors and the Doers of Essential Details. When expenses had been paid, the quiz and raffle contributed a much needed £717 to the church resources.

Thank you to all who supported it. We enjoyed your company and hope you enjoyed the evening – perhaps we'll see you for a return match in the spring.




### Coffee/Stall Morning at Washingford House on Thursday 1st October 2026

Enormous thanks for your help to ensure our annual coffee morning was a success! From putting up and taking down the village tent, running the entrance, tombola, raffle and cake stalls, teas and coffees, cake making, washing up, car parking, donations from those who were unable to come and some of you kindly staying on to ensure the house was sparkling clean!

With Gift Aid included on the majority of the proceeds, we ALL raised £2167 which is split between The Brooke and St Elizabeth Hospice with £200 to our church.

With appreciation as without you, it wouldn't happen!

Liz Lester and Paris Back

### EXTEND exercise classes designed for 60+

CLASSES include a mixture of dance, standing and seated exercises. A selection of apparatus is also used, including stretch bands & weights.



MONDAY's at Bergh Apton Village Hall

10.15(registration from 10.00) – 11.15

£6.00 per class

Payment in 4 wkly blocks

Aiming to increase mobility & independence, improve strength, co-ordination & balance whilst counteracting loneliness & isolation.

## An Evening at the Greyhound Races!

*by James Crabtree*

On the evening of 21st October, we enjoyed a fantastic trip to Yarmouth Stadium for an evening of greyhound racing, attending an event organised by the Berghapton and District Society.

There was plenty of excitement trackside, and we were particularly delighted to have sponsored Race 5. It was wonderful to be involved in the evening in this way, with our organisers, Ray Wharton and Lynton Johnson with others from the group, having the honour of presenting the trophy to the proud owner of the winning greyhound, Fashionably Late.

As you can see from our photograph, Ray and Lynton were on hand to present the trophy and congratulate the winning owner. A lovely moment and a great way to mark our sponsored race!

Of course, it wasn't all about the racing. We also enjoyed a lovely meal, making it a thoroughly enjoyable evening out.

The trip was organised by Ray and Lynton, who made sure everything went smoothly. And, as those who know Ray will expect, the entertainment started long before we even arrived! He kept everyone laughing on the coach journey, ensuring the evening got off to a great start.

A big thank you to Ray and Lynton for organising such a lovely outing. There were plenty of smiles, laughter and memories made along the way.

And congratulations once again to Fashionably Late and its winning owner - Mr DM Cook.




*Ray Wharton and Lynton Johnson present the trophy to the proud owner of Fashionably Late, winner of Race 5 – the race sponsored by our group.*

## Bergh Apton Conservation Trust – 2026 and beyond

*Steve Whitby*

Bergh Apton Conservation Trust (BACT) started 2026 with digging a long-planned new pond on Wellbeck Marsh (across the river). Things became tricky, with a near disaster when the contractor got his large digger stuck crossing back to Valley Marsh. Happily, the resultant deep (and un-planned) pond on Valley Marsh has been a welcome addition and has recently been "landscaped" ready for next season's new growth.

Church Plantation also saw some rather drastic alteration early in the year with the culling of some large sycamore trees to bring in light for the bluebells and other ground flora, and the opportunity to plant a more diverse woodland.



Volunteer workdays have had a major boost in 2026 with the advent of a new WhatsApp group (ask Tim Tidswell if you would like to join it - tim@tidswellchilds.com). We have invested in new tools and some better equipment to support the very successful Pond Dipping event at the end of May. We had a Spring visit from experts of the Norfolk Fungus Group, which yielded 93 new species for the site and one new to Norfolk (in addition to the ever-popular Fungus Foray in October). We provided "green hay" to Norfolk Wildlife Trust to be used on the restoration of meadows at Langley to increase biodiversity there.

With the support of Henry Gribble from Hillside Farm we have continued to have cattle conservation grazing on Wellbeck Marsh, this has been very successful and is something we have even more plans for in 2027 (if it works for Henry!).

Most recently (as alluded to earlier) we have had ditches and ponds re-dug/ landscaped as well as improving access into Valley Marsh at the bottom of Gravel Pit Lane, so we are very much looking forward to 2027 when all of that "beds in".

As well as the social interaction of the workdays we enjoyed a Summer BBQ and the Christmas Party, as well as a very informative talk at the AGM in September. BACT is friendly, welcoming and inclusive (as well as being an extremely worthy cause, supporting biodiversity and habitat for wildlife). If you would like to join (for the princely sum of £10pa) then there is a form on the website at https://www.berghaptonconservationtrust.org/contact .



## Ukrainian Refugee Family

Couple with 6 children urgently seeking 4 bedroom house in Norwich (or close to!)

Presently living in impossibly cramped conditions

They have very limited financial resources.

Children aged 7-15, schooling in Norwich, so, location critical

Any suggestions?

***PLEASE HELP***

Contact
c.m.meynell@gmail.com

**Some of you may have noticed activity on the land opposite Washingford House on Cookes Road, which was recently purchased by Jake Weatherill.**

He contacted me to introduce himself and his plans for the land.

I am sure the village would all like to welcome Jake, Anna and family to Bergh Apton. We hope to see them at our activities and events to feel part of our wonderful village.

"Hi everyone,

I thought I'd introduce myself and explain a little about what we're doing with the old overgrown land on Cookes Road.

My name is Jake, and my wife Anna and I recently purchased the land. We've already met and spoken to a few local people about our plans, but thought it would be nice to put something here too, especially as there's been quite a bit of activity recently.

We've also recently moved from the Attleborough area to Loddon to be closer to the land. With all the A47 chaos expected over the next few years, the thought of battling that every day wasn't particularly appealing either!

I have two young children, with our third on the way, and part of the reason for taking this on is to create something we can enjoy together as a family, learn new skills and hopefully one day pass down to the children.

Firstly, I wanted to put people's minds at rest, as I understand there have been a few conversations locally about whether houses are going to be built on the land. We're certainly not planning a housing estate or multiple houses. Our intention is to use the land for its agricultural purpose and hopefully turn it into a productive little smallholding.

From speaking to a few people locally, we understand that much of the land has been left largely untouched for several decades. It's been quite an eye-opener just how much work has been involved in clearing years of brambles, scrub and overgrowth, with large parts of the site previously almost impossible to access.

We've also uncovered and reopened some of the original access points and tracks that had become overgrown, and put down some basic hardstanding so we can get around the land throughout the year without everything turning into a muddy mess over winter.

Thankfully, most of the heavy clearance work is now behind us, so hopefully things will start looking a little less like a building site!

I've been running my own catering and events company for the past 15 years, and our main ambition is to establish a small agricultural enterprise alongside the business.

We'd love to eventually grow and produce as much of our own food as we reasonably can, both for ourselves and to supply some of the ingredients used in the catering company. I think it would be a lovely selling point to be able to tell our customers that some of the food they're eating has actually been grown and produced by us, while hopefully reducing food miles, packaging and waste along the way.

We're hoping to establish an orchard with lots of different varieties of fruit trees, grow a wide range of vegetables and herbs, put up polytunnels so we can learn to grow throughout the year, keep bees for honey and eventually introduce a small amount of livestock and poultry.

We'd also love to learn how to make our own apple juice, cider, preserves and whatever else we discover we can produce along the way.

Neither of us comes from a farming background, so this is all a completely new adventure for us. We've always liked the idea behind River Cottage, learning to grow and produce your own food, becoming more self-sufficient and making better use of what's around you.

We're actually in the process of setting up a YouTube channel, taking some inspiration from that idea, to document our own journey from buying a completely overgrown piece of land, clearing it and learning everything from scratch, through to hopefully creating a productive little agricultural enterprise over the coming years. I'm sure there will be plenty of mistakes and lessons along the way!

Once things are established, we'd really like to have a little produce shed near the entrance where we can leave any surplus fruit, vegetables and other produce for local people to help themselves to, completely free of charge.

Hopefully there will be times when we grow more than we can use ourselves or within the business, and it would be nice for others in the village to benefit rather than anything going to waste.

We've also cleared out what I've been calling the 'roadside swamp' along Cookes Road. I've been told this area has caused flooding onto the road in the past, so hopefully opening it back up will help with that.

We also intend to gradually tidy up some of the roadside scrub and overgrowth, as I understand there have been issues with trees and branches falling over the years.

We're also lucky enough to have woodland and two ponds, which we'd love to look after and improve, while encouraging wildlife and keeping the natural feel of the land.

Ultimately, we're hoping to bring a neglected piece of agricultural land back into use, create something productive and environmentally friendly, and build something our family can enjoy for generations.

If you see us down there, please feel free to come over and say hello. We're always happy to have a chat, and if anyone has experience with growing, farming, orchards or livestock, we'd genuinely welcome any advice!

Hopefully, over time, we can create something that benefits not just our family and business but the local community too.

Thanks for reading!

Jake & Anna"

***The village fete planning kicks off in February*** when we will sit down to discuss first thoughts on ideas for stalls and to begin to plan who is available to assist in making it all happen. This year it will take place on ***Saturday 10th July*** (early warning to get it in your diaries).

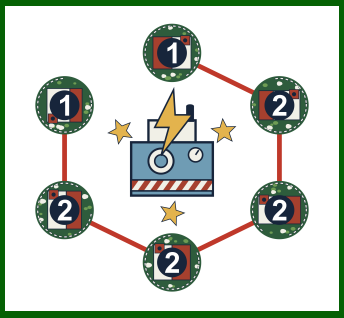


We would very much like to see some new faces, so if you think you may be able to help in any way (not just running a stall, there are many other ways to help), then please come along to ***our first meeting at the village hall on Thursday 4th February at 7.30pm.***

If you can't make the date, but would like to help, please contact berghaptoneditor@gmail.com.



## A Christmas puzzle for our group of villages.




An Alpington resident has created 'Well Connected Villages', a free, printable booklet of 11 Christmas logic puzzles featuring our own villages. The rules are simple, the puzzles get trickier as you go, and they're ideal for a quiet hour over the festive break. Download and print it at alpingtonwithyelverton.com/puzzles. There's a QR code at the end if you'd like to share how you got on. The creator would love to hear from fellow puzzlers.

**In our last edition, Suzanne Whitby provided an article from the archives of the Bergh Apton Local History Group. It related to interviews which took place in 1998, when the group had interviewed some of the long-standing residents, to preserve their memories.**

**As we all know, history is largely an account of what is remembered and subsequently documented, and this can be subject to discrepancies due to fading memories or misunderstandings in translation or the recording of documentation.**

**One of our long-standing residents, Bob Debbage, wrote to me regarding the article and some discrepancies that he thought would be good to correct for posterity, which is appreciated, and has been passed on to the BALHG to store with the article. He was also able to add his own memories and some photos:**

"Dear Jenny,

I would like to point out one or two inaccuracies in your last edition.

As a member of the Dye family I can say that there was no such person as Violet Dye living at Kent Cottages. It would have been Violet Jermy.

The Locks ran the Post Office from the house that became the home of the Hubbards now the home of Renate. See 'The Book of Bergh Apton', page 50. It crossed the road when it was run by the Savorys until it moved to Cooke's Road. I visited all three but my favourite Postmistress was Grace Cushing who was a lovely lady and her husband Walter was a true gentleman. They were a wonderful family including the boys Barry and Richard and their Auntie Joyce.

Captain Symonds farmed at Town Farm, now the home of Milton and Ruth Harris, and not Church Farm which was and still is, the home of the Parfitt's. Symonds grew high value crops including blackcurrants. His key members of staff were Albert Burgess, Gilly Littlewood and Walter Talbot. Albert Burgess drove the Ferguson Tractor.

Church Farm got its name from St Martins Church which stood on Kevin Parfitt's land. See The 'Book of Bergh Apton' pages 26 and 27.

Valley Farm belonged to the Freestones, Mr Waters did not arrive until about 1960 but his son Robert is still there.

Tubbys smallholding became Debbage's where I had a fantastic upbringing. The Riseboroughs became our very good neighbours when they moved into the smallholding next door vacated by the Glasspools. The two small holdings were amalgamated when we moved out in about 1958 and a new bungalow was built for the Riseboroughs on the footprint of the one that had been lived in by us and the Tubbys. Andrew Riseboroughs is still there.

Unfortunately one of Mr Tubbys cowmen, Reg Carpenter father of Jenny Daniells, was kicked by a cow and lost his sight. His wife Marjorie worked hard to bring up the family. The modern day herdsman , as they call themselves, earn really high salaries these days. The milk at Green Pastures comes from the Burroughs family at Wheatacre Dairy in the Waveney Valley where three herdsman milk over four hundred cows. What would Mr Tubby have thought about that?

Mention was made about Bloomfields bus service. I have been told that my grandfather Charles Dye would hire Nips Bloomfields bus to take his family to Yarmouth but they had to get off while he crossed the wooden bridge at Haddiscoe. How about that after a few pints of Lacons!"



*Photos from Bob Debbage:*

(left) One of Bloomfields coaches

(right) retired fishmonger and WWI veteran Harry Sayer on the left in the photo, with Jimmy Buller of Poringland on the right





## REMEMBRANCE DAY 2026

***by John Ling***

More than 100 people attended the service of Remembrance at Bergh Apton's parish church on Sunday 8th November to honour the fifty-two men whose names are on the village Roll of Honour.

In the absence of Rev'd Chris Ellis, who was indisposed, the service was led by Christopher Meynell, a member of the lay Parish Team.

At the point in the service where the Rector would have addressed the congregation, John Ling, Francis Meynell and Nicola Hale (great-niece of Harry Hale who died in Italy in 1944) gave the congregation an opportunity to reflect on bravery, loss and sacrifice in war a portrayed in the works of poets Laurence Binyon, John McRae, Eileen Mahoney and Rudyard Kipling, concluding in the exhortation to remember those who died, and to keep their flame alive.



We're grateful to Miranda Soto of Sunnyside Stables for her photographs of Piper John Innes and Drummer Robert Innes preparing to lead the congregation out to the war memorial, and of the poppy crosses planted at the memorial by members of the congregation as the Rolls of Honour were called. For Miranda and her husband Michael, and for their daughters Sienna and Sophie, this was their first Bergh Apton Remembrance, having recently arrived from Pasadena in California. Sienna and Sophie planted the poppy cross for William Tolver, the brother of the late Edith Lester of Holly Hill just to the west of their new home, who died in Normandy in 1944.

The presence of a significant number of children was a feature of this years' Service. Joining Sienna and Sophie were Isaac and Ruby Kerry of Bussey Bridge Farm, Bertie and Teddie Hunt of May Cottage at Bussey Bridge and the youngest person in the congregation this year Olive Annis, whose great-great-great uncle Arthur Annis died in 1916, in the Battle of the Somme. A new generation destined, in due course, to take on the mantle of Remembrance.






The newsletter returns again in 2027, thanks to the financial support provided by individuals, groups and societies in the village. I am advised that very few of the local villages have continued to maintain a village newsletter so thank-you to everyone involved in the production and distribution of ours. It continues to be a vital link to keep everyone advised of news , events and community support in a geographically challenging village for communication! Please continue to provide your news and updates; whether they be focussed on the village or the interests or achievements of its inhabitants. Send your info to :berghaptoneditor@gmail.com

## Bergh Apton Local History Group Archive

While sorting through the archives I found the following article written by John Ling. Out of interest I also went to the Norfolk Archive Centre where the original documents are held. Looking closely an Act of Parliament was passed allowing the consortium to purchase the land either side of the proposed railway within five years. At the end of this period another act was requested to extend the period by five years but there is no record in the archive of whether this was granted. The area included the land in Bergh Apton in the Chet valley, Hillside Farm, Valley Farm, Gravel Pit Farm and Bussey Bridge Farm amongst others. What a difference it would have made to the village if it had been built.

Suzanne Whitby

**Bergh Apton's "Railway that never was".**

Have you ever wondered why the pub on Framingham Earl's roundabout is called "The Railway"?

There's no railway line within five or six miles of it!

I asked about it in the pub once and learned that there was once a plan to run a railway past it, but nobody knew any details. I heard from somebody else another time that a railway was planned to run through Bergh Apton. But no one knew any details about that either.

Recently I was glancing through a schedule of NRO (Norfolk Record Office) files that refer to Bergh Apton and saw one called "The South Norfolk Light Railway" (SNLR). It seemed worth following up as a potential answer, if only to the query about the Bergh Apton line.

The file contained a magnificent portfolio of plans and specifications that answered both questions. The railway that was to run through Framingham Pigot and Poringland was the same one that was proposed to run through Bergh Apton. Not only that; if it had been built it would have run within a very short distance of my own house. Imagine the pleasures of rail commuting from your doorstep!

The plans dated 1898 were part of a prospectus to seek legislation that would give SNLR rights to purchase land and build a light railway having a gauge of 4'8". Scale drawings showed the line starting at Trowse station and ending at Beccles station. A map defined the route of the line; the cuttings and embankments needed to achieve the right gradients; its road and river crossings; and the curves that would be required to maintain the general direction of advance but keeping to radii laid down for railway lines.

Its course was to take it across the River Yare above (west of) the mill at Trowse. There it ascended quite a steep incline to pass to the north of Arminghall church then turn south to run parallel and to the west of the B1332 to Framingham Earl and Poringland. A little further on, of course, is where it was to come to The Railway Inn. The drawings show that it was to turn away from the pub to put the crossing of the Stoke Holy Cross road a safe distance from what must have been, even then, a busy crossroads.

From there the line ran due south (through what were then fields) to the bottom of the hill at the Dove. Below the pub it turned east, crossed the B1332 and ran parallel to Dove Lane until its junction with Reeders Lane, where it turned a little south to skirt the south side of Kiln Wood. From there it followed the line of Bergh Apton's boundary with Brooke down to the bridge at the sharp corner where Welbeck Road crosses over the Welbeck.

Here it entered Bergh Apton territory proper to run along the south side of the Welbeck, passing Hillside Farm before entering Seething parish to pass south of Bergh Apton Hall and thence along the southern edge of Long Wood (or Seething Wood). Crossing Mill Lane a little to the south of Bussey Bridge it followed the line of the river on a contour that took it just to the north of Poplar Farm in Sisland and thence to meet what is now the course of the A146 Loddon bypass.

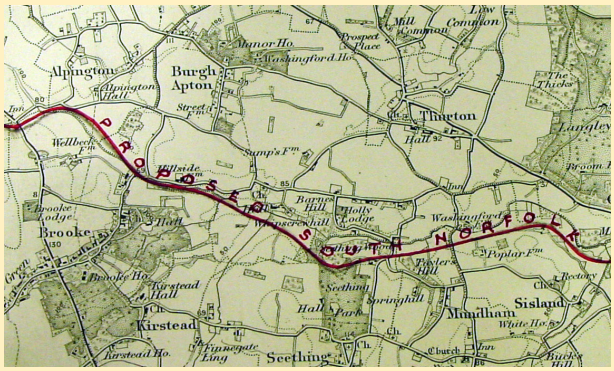
The only difference was that it would curve slightly closer to Loddon centre to create a station on Kittens Lane close to the site of the new indoor sports facility at Hobart School.

Crossing High Bungay Road just north of its junction with Low Bungay Road it then re-joined the route of the modern Loddon bypass to Hales and thence, via Stockton and Gillingham, to link into the former Waveney Valley railway that ran from Harleston, east through Ditchingham, to Beccles station.

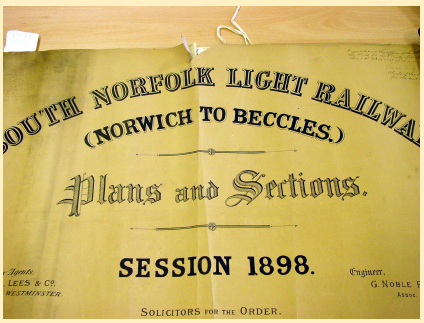
So there it was . . . a railway line that never was, but that had been so carefully planned that it was priced down to the last (old) penny at £75,939 10s 6d. In modern purchasing value that is equivalent to close on £5,700,000.

And what happened to it? Nobody knows! Beccles-based railway expert John Brodribb tells me that there were many such proposals in these latter days of railway development. The names of the Directors of SNLR indicates that local landowners and businessmen including the Colmans of Bixley and Bacons of Raveningham were involved in the venture. . . but one must presume that the prospectus attracted insufficient funds, or maybe the shareholders realised that the venture was flawed, or maybe Parliament denied them the necessary Act to begin the work. Another puzzle also remains concerning "The Railway" pub at Framingham Earl because, speaking of this story to someone recently, I was told that it had been called "The Railway" for many years before 1898. So was there another, earlier, plan for a line to run on that same route? . … does anyone out there know the answer to these points?

But good did come of the venture. Soon afterwards Great Eastern Railways, that ran the other lines in this area, must have recognised that Loddon deserved a good public transport service and established a bus route that connected our market town with Norwich and Lowestoft. It survives to this day – in the guise of First's X2 service that passes through Bergh Apton at Prospect Place and Hellington Corner. So we got something out of it after all!




*Map of the route*




*Cover of the plans*



*The Railway Tavern, Framingham Earl*

## COUNTRY MATTERS

### AN IDLE WEED

**'…….and all the idle weeds that grow'*

This particular idle weed, nettle, was known to the Anglo Saxons as 'wergula', to botanists it is known as 'urtica dioica' and to the Common Man as 'nettle'.

In Shakespeare's play 'King Lear', he is beset by cares and worries and has lost his wits. His daughter, Cordelia, sees him not with his kingly crown for he had woven a wreath of what she calls 'idle weeds', 'furrow weeds, burdock, hemlock, nettle, cuckoo flowers,' and wore it as his crown. Cordelia had included 'nettle' as an idle weed but had she misjudged this plant? Let us count the ways.

In August 2011 a grave on Dartmoor was excavated and it held the body of a young woman dating from the Early Bronze Age about four thousand years ago……

A young woman walked on Dartmoor, she had a necklace of amber beads and ear rings of turned spindle wood. She carried a bunch of meadowsweet and a beautiful basket woven from moor grasses. She saw a buzzard flying high in slow circles and the pipits flying from rock to rock and she echoed the cuckoo's call. Four thousand years passed and her grave was found on Whitehorse Hill. She still wore her necklace of amber beads and ear rings of spindle wood, she had a sash made from nettle cloth and it was studded with tin beads and had a fringe of horse hair. Unlike flax and hemp which were grown to make cloth, nettles were not a cultivated crop so would have been picked especially. She had been lovingly wrapped in the skin of a bear fastened with a bronze pin. Meadowsweet was strewn over her grave and the moor mists and winds and the call of the cuckoo had guarded it through the long years.

In Denmark a grave was found and in a large bronze urn were cremated bones wrapped in fine cloth. Tests showed that the cloth had been made from nettles and it was described as fine and soft as silk. The bones were those of a man and, for a cremation and the bones to have been wrapped in 'prehistoric silk', he must have been of some standing. So nettles, that stinging plant, had been used rather than cultivated flax to make the shroud to protect and guard his bones for nearly three thousand years.

Thomas Campbell, a Scottish poet in the later 1700s wrote that the sheets on the bed and the tablecloth were made of nettle cloth.

Cloth made from flax is known as linen and cloth from nettles is 'rami'. Flax is prepared by soaking in water, this is known as 'retting', the outer skin is softened and scraped away so the inner fibres are used and the same is done with nettles.

Occasionally I buy cheese called Cornish Yarg. The recipe was found in the attic of an old farmhouse and dated from the 1600s. The Gray family make the cheese. The rind is made of nettles which are gathered in May and steamed so they no longer sting. The rind is black and can be eaten.

In the Spring the rind is made from wild garlic. Can you see how the cheese got its name?

Nettles are used to make dye, luminous green in the Spring and darker green as the plant ages and the roots make yellow and brown dyes. Ink and paper can be made from nettles. Nettle soup, tea and seeds can be bought ready for use, they are nutritious and are regarded as super foods. The new leaves at the top of the nettle are used to make wine.

Nettles are made into a salve to soothe aches and pains. Not content with all that the nettle is also used in heraldry:

Or, a chevron *gules between three **nettle leaves proper : a gold background with an inverted V shape surrounded by three natural nettle leaves.

Argent, a saltire gules between four nettle leaves vert : a silver background, a cross like a St. Andrew's cross and four green nettle leaves.

There is the story of the girl who had eleven brothers and the wicked stepmother turned them into swans. To break the spell the girl had to make each of her brothers a shirt which was to be made from 'wool' made from nettles.

Hiders and seekers, creepers and crawlers, spinners and weavers, a patch of nettles is a busy place. Some come with airy grace, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma and the Painted Lady and then there are the midnight visitors, Burnished Brass, the Magpie, Beautiful Golden-Y and one called the Nettle-tap and, even a Tiger! All of these butterflies and moths choose to lay their eggs on nettle leaves and when these hatch the caterpillars fatten on the leaves. Some caterpillars roll their leaf round them, just like a sleeping bag and others fold the leaf over them like a little green tent to keep safe from sharp eyed and sharp beaked hunters. In Spring aphids suck the sap from the stems and ladybirds come to eat the aphids and ants come for the honeydew.

Spiders spin their nets, guy roped from stem to stem and catch visiting insects, the lace fly, the scorpion fly, hover flies and crane flies. Bluetits come to snatch a stolen meal. In Autumn, finches, green, gold and chaff crack and crunch the ripened seed. Snails leave their silvery path over the nettles and hedgehogs, frogs and toads forage through the stems to find remains. The Whitethroat, a shy bird, keeps out of sight among the nettles and was known as the 'nettle creeper'.

Nettles provide food, homes, a nursery, and shelter for many creatures and those who study and take an interest in creatures and plants have said that nettles are vital to at least one hundred species.

The nettle, an idle weed, Cordelia?

** 'gules' is the heraldic term for red.*

*** in the language of heraldry the adjective usually follows the noun eg*

*'nettle leaves proper' and 'four nettle leaves vert'*

*'vert' is green.*

***Pat Mlejnecky***





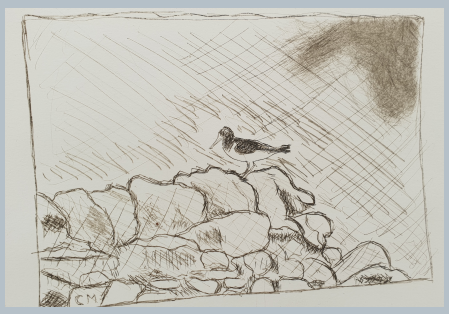


## BERGH APTON ARTS
## INK & PAPER

Scritch, scratch, a whisper of sound and only those with the hearing of an owl would have heard it. Eleven people, heads bent low but, not a word from them just this whispering scritch, scratch. It was not mice but the sound of sharp pointed tools scratching into sheets of Perspex, the drypoint printing workshop had started!



Karleen: I enjoyed it tremendously! Georgina's teaching style is relaxed and supportive and well suited to both the total beginner and the more advanced student. It was so good to learn a new skill and I would love to attend again if Georgina returns in the future.



Christopher: A selection of sharp instruments, a pack of plastic sheets, a table and a chair. What more did we need to spend the day scratching, scraping, sandpapering? Oh yes! And indubitably. We needed guidance.

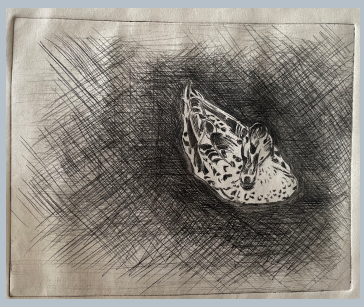
And there stood be-aproned Georgina Warne, one of our favourite artists from Bergh Apton's famous Sculpture Trails, gently steering us to produce prints of nature in all its glory.

Actually some results were glorious too. My modest little attempts needed more work, I think, but the day was greatly enjoyed by Georgina's eleven 'young' pupils. Thank you Georgina for coaxing artistic results from everyone including this Philistine



Fran: Art is not usually my thing but Georgina led us gently, demonstrating the process and inspiring us with her own stunning artworks. She made time to support, advise and guide each of us as we worked on our own prints throughout the day and it was fabulous to see the wide range of work produced at the end.







Simon & Angela: The duck among waves is by Simon and the duck and swan by Angela.

The images are taken from a selection of pictures we took during a recent visit to Leeds Castle in Kent. The ducks were very obliging subjects, the swan, however, was rather too interested in trying to eat my camera. Loved the workshop, we both really enjoyed it.



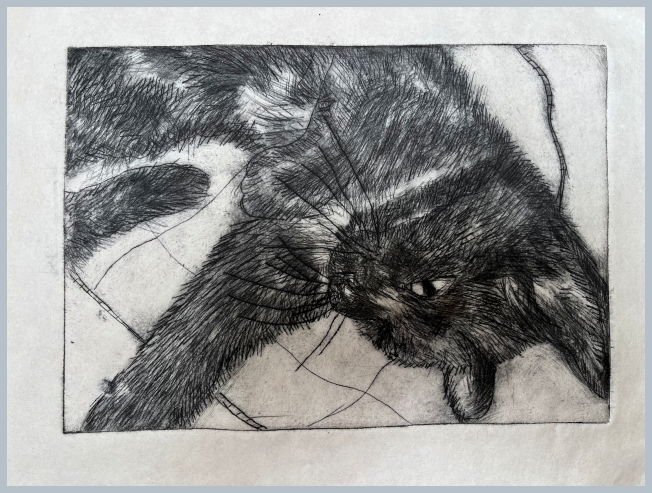
Jane: It was a wonderful day. Georgina was a delightful teacher, with such a light touch in her approach that allowed us to play and experiment. I want to do more.

*Article continued on next page.*



Peter: Another excellent workshop organised by BAA. This time a drypoint etching workshop led by Georgina Warne which involved scratching an image onto a piece of clear Perspex which was then inked up and put through a roller press to create an image on paper. The advantage of using the Perspex was that we could put our source images beneath it and trace it onto the Perspex using a variety of tools to create different kinds of marks and lines. We could even add texture by rubbing the Perspex with sandpaper. The theme of the workshop was to create an image of an animal, bird or plant native to Britain and we all interpreted this in different ways to create a wide array of prints.

Georgina was always on hand to guide us through the process and offer her expert advice.



Suzanne: A couple of years ago I took on some black feral cats. They are impossible to photograph. Dry point printing provides a way of capturing an image by scratching lines in varying intensity on the Perspex, creating a burr and using different amounts of ink in the burr to create shades of black by leaving spaces between the lines. This is a good way of making light and shade. We had the opportunity to try different types of paper which each take up ink differently and change the look of the image.

Georgina is a very patient teacher. Ready to give help and advice but able to allow her students to experiment and explore the materials. A great day out with a good group of creative people.



Rosa: As ever, Georgina was lovely, very welcoming and encouraging. She has some of her own work on display which gave plenty of inspiration.

I'm pleased with how my muntjac print turned out and it is always lovely to see the different ideas people come up with and how everyone else's prints turn out in the end. Overall , it was a lovely day.





Jenny: Once again, we met with Georgina Warne for a brilliant workshop. She guided us all with a generous spirit providing expertise ideas and reassurance as we navigated the workshop from initial ideas to finished prints. Watching everyone's ideas develop over the course of six hours added to the enjoyment of the day. Would definitely recommend.

# CHRISTMAS FUN (answers below)

BALHG are celebrating the 70s at their next event...but can you match the prices of the toys from the 1975 Autumn/Winter Argos catalogue?

## CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

| | ITEM. | COST. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | SCALEXTRIC 'C606' CAR RACING SET. | | |
| 2 | PALITOY "ACTION MAN" SOLDIER. | | |
| 3 | LEEWAY 'JACKY' DOLLS PRAM. | | |
| 4 | METTOY 'MUSIC MAKER' BATTERY OPERATED RECORD PLAYER. | | |
| 5 | TIMPO WILD WEST 'FORT DEFIANT'. | | |
| 6 | PETITE 'EUROPA' JUNIOR TYPEWRITER. | | |
| 7 | MERIT CHEMISTRY SET. | | |
| 8 | PALITOY PLAY-DOH FUN FACTORY. | | |
| 9 | HORNBY ELECTRIC EXPRESS FREIGHT TRAIN SET. | | |
| 10 | DENYS FISHER "NEW SPIROGRAPH". | | |
| 11 | EDWARD O'BRIEN 'PERSEUS' BOYS/GIRLS BICYCLE. | | |
| 12 | CHAD VALLEY BABY WALKER. | | |
| 13 | PEDIGREE 'SALLY HAPPY TALK' WALKING DOLL. | | |
| 14 | BONTEMPI ELECTRIC JUNIOR REED ORGAN. | | |
| 15 | IDEAL 'EVEL KNIEVEL' STUNT CYCLE. | | |
| 16 | LITTLE BETTY MINIATURE TOY SEWING MACHINE. | | |
| 17 | WADDINGTON'S MONOPOLY. | | |
| 18 | 2/3 SIZE ACOUSTIC GUITAR SET. | | |
| 19 | LEEWAY DESK AND STOOL. | | |
| 20 | 4 FT. ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE. | | |

THE PRICES

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| £0.99 | £1.65 | £1.95 | £2.25 | £2.75 | £3.25 | £3.75 | £4.25 | £4.75 | £5.25 |
| £5.95 | £6.45 | £6.95 | £8.75 | £8.95 | £9.95 | £12.95 | £13.95 | £14.95 | £32.50 |







Can you name the companies whose logos make up this message?

## Christmas Around The World

1.In which country is the giant straw goat known as the Gavle Goat erected annually; [a] Norway, [b] Finland, [c] Sweden or [d] Iceland?

2. How many courses are there in the traditional Ukrainian Christmas dinner; [a] Seven, [b] Nine, [c] Ten or [d] Twelve?

3. Who was the first US President to put a Christmas tree in the White House; [a] George Washington, [b] Abraham Lincoln, [c] John Adams or [d] Franklin Pierce?

4. In which country does Belfana the Witch distribute sweets and gifts to children on the eve of January 5th; [a] Spain, [b] Portugal, [c] Greece or [d] Italy?

5. What household item is hidden on Christmas Eve in Norway to prevent witches and evil spirits stealing them; [a] Carving Knives, [b] Brooms, [c] Tablecloths or [d] Spoons?

5. Where in the World would you share an Oplatek, a thin wafer with a nativity scene embossed, before Christmas Eve dinner; [a] Poland, [b] Albania, [c] Australia or [d] Austria?

7. Who do the children in Syria receive their Christmas gifts from; [a] Mother Christmas, [b] A Shepherd, [c] The Wise Men's Camels or [d] Christmas Angel?

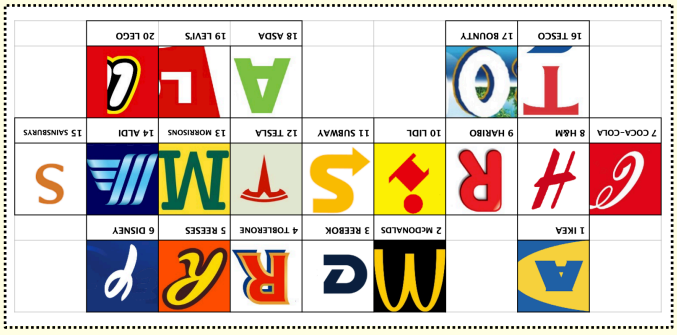
8. Where in the World do the children look forward to a Christmas treat of fried caterpillars; [a] South Africa, [b] North Korea, [c] Chile or [d] Samoa?

9. While in the UK we settle down to watch the monarch's Christmas speech on TV, what do Swedes gather to watch; [a] A Donald Duck cartoon, [b] The Swedish Monarch's speech, [c] A Laurel and Hardy short or [d] A pantomime?

10. How do children make their way to church on Christmas morning in Caracas, Venezuela; [a] On their father's backs, [b] On Donkeys, [c] On roller skates or [d] On stilts?

## Christmas Around The World

1. c Sweden
2. d twelve
3. d Franklin Pierce
4. d Italy
5. b brooms
6. a Poland
7. c The Wise Men's camels
8. a South Africa
9. a a Donald Duck cartoon




Thanks to www.kensquiz.co.uk

## ANSWERS:

| | ITEM. | COST. | |
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| 8 | PALITOY PLAY-DOH FUN FACTORY. | £0.99 | |
| 9 | HORNBY ELECTRIC EXPRESS FREIGHT TRAIN SET. | £13.95 | |
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| 11 | EDWARD O'BRIEN 'PERSEUS' BOYS/GIRLS BICYCLE. | £32.50 | |
| 12 | CHAD VALLEY BABY WALKER. | £4.75 | |
| 13 | PEDIGREE 'SALLY HAPPY TALK' WALKING DOLL. | £5.25 | |
| 14 | BONTEMPI ELECTRIC JUNIOR REED ORGAN. | £12.95 | |
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| 20 | 4 FT. ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE. | £1.65 | |

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| £5.95 | £6.45 | £6.95 | £8.75 | £8.95 | £9.95 | £12.95 | £13.95 | £14.95 | £32.50 |

## 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, Country Holiday Cottages Norfolk Ltd, and the Christopher Tenwinter Trust.

## Useful Contacts

***BAA (art workshops)***

Pat Mlejnecky 01508 480696

***Bergh Apton Broadcast***

Jenny Lovatt 07542 927630

***BA Conservation Trust (BACT)***

Tony Davy 01508 558453

***BA Local History Group (BALHG)***

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***

Lorie Lain-Rogers 07733 430681

***Microscopy Group***

Peter Sunderland 01508 493398

***Parish council***

clerk@berghapton.org.uk

***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** | 10am | Extend Fitness 50+ |
| | 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** | 10-12 noon | Coffee n Catch Up |
| **3rd Wednesday** | 2-4 pm | Village Archive |
| **Friday** | 9.30am & 11.15 | Yoga |
| **1st Saturday** | 9-5pm | Microscopy Group |


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'Bergh Apton Community Noticeboard'

or look on our website

https://berghapton.org.uk/

## CHRISTMAS COOK'S CORNER

This month Shirley Rimmer has sent us **Delia's Christmas Dried Fruit Compote**

"I bought 'Delia's Smith's Christmas' over 25 years ago and I haven't bothered with steamed Christmas Pudding since! With all the flavours of Christmas Pudding – just without the pudding, it's light, fragrant and goes well with cream, ice cream or custard"



4oz (110g) no-soak dried apricots
4oz (110g) no-soak dried figs, halved
4oz (110g) no-soak prunes
4oz (110g) raisins
2 oranges
10 fl oz (275ml) cold water
12 fl oz (350ml) tawny port

***To serve***

2oz (50g) sliced almonds, lightly toasted (flaked almonds are fine)

Rinse the apricots, figs and prunes under cold running water, then place them in a large saucepan

Scrub one of the oranges, slice it into very thin rounds and cut each round into four

Add these and the raisins to the pan.

Pour in the cold water and simmer (covered) for 15 minutes.

Squeeze the juice from the other orange and, when the fruit is cooked, stir in the orange juice and the port.

Leave the compote to cool and then chill in the refrigerator for 24 hours so all the flavours can develop.

Serve sprinkled with the toasted nuts




## Village Diary

### December

| | |
|---|---|
| 2nd 10 - 4pm | Christmas Wreath workshop |
| 9th 7.30pm | BA Society Christmas dinner at Green Pastures |
| 11th 7 for 7.30pm | Christmas Bingo |
| 12th 7pm | BACT Christmas Party at Low Common Barn |
| 18th 9.30am | Decorate church for Christmas |
| 20th 6pm | Carol service at Parish Church |
| 21st 6pm | Carol singing around village |

### January 2027

| | |
|---|---|
| 6th 7pm | Parish Council meeting |
| 7th 9.30am | Clear church decorations at Parish Church |
| 13th 7.30pm | BA Society cheese and wine |
| 16th 10am | BACT workday. Meet at Church Field |
| 20th 10am-12 | Coffee 'n' Chat |
| 20th 2-4pm | BALHG archiving |
| 21st 10am | BACT workday. Meet at Church Field |
| 30th 9am | 11 Says Assembly |

### February 2027

| | |
|---|---|
| 4th 7.30pm | Fete 2027 meeting |

All activities take place at Bergh Apton Village Hall unless otherwise stated.

If you'd like your event in the diary, please contact **hilary.ling@btinternet.com**