

WETHERINGSETT
-CUM-
BROCKFORD
NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023- JANUARY 2024

Inside -

Details of help for flood victims

Local athletics Champion

Christmas story

Christmas Tree festival

Community Lunch

Pre-Christmas Quiz

School news

Church Services

And much more...



USEFUL CONTACTS

Parish website;
<http://wetheringsettcumbrockford.onesuffolk.net/home/>

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PARISH TREE WARDEN ~ Elizabeth Aldred	01728 860482
TOWNLANDS TRUST ~ Lynne Cockerton	01728 862001
PARISH FOOTPATH WARDEN ~ Elizabeth Aldred	01728 860482
RSPCA Suffolk Central ~ Ian Hendry	01449 767747
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MENDLESHAM HEALTH CENTRE	01449 767722
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The newsletter is produced in good faith but errors and omissions may occur during the process of production. Please let us know if this is the case so that any errors may be corrected in future editions.

DECEMBER

Welcome to the
December 2023 and January
2024 issue of your Newsletter

JANUARY



...containing details of many diverse things going on in the village. Woofles continues to impart his wisdom! And we have a seasonal tale for you to enjoy - in place of the usual Christmas ghost story. Read about Aiden's achievements on p.9 - and wonder at some Victorian choice of Christmas cards!

The latter part of this year has been especially hard for those who have suffered due to their homes being flooded. Hopefully life is returning to normal for you.

I hope your Christmas is warm, dry and happy and that 2024 is all you wish it to be

Cally (Editor)

Support for those affected by the recent floods.
See pages 13 and 26 for details

Thank
you

Newsletter Distribution

This will be the last newsletter of 2023, and it is time to say a special thank you to all the volunteers who have delivered the newsletter over the last 11 months.

The recent flooding was a challenge for all, and several members of the team had direct experience of the damage caused. Despite this, the newsletter was delivered, so once again many thanks to :-

Des and Angela, Gerda, Sue M, Sue S, Linda, Elizabeth A, Lesley, Andrea, Tim and Jo, Fiona, Mike and Angie, Shirley and Elizabeth P.....and to Nigel and Isla who have helped out with holiday cover.

There are no more deliveries until the end of January, so thank you all, and enjoy the festive break.

Sue and Eddie Payne

01449 767794



Contributions from the village community for inclusion in the newsletter are welcomed

Deadline for copy 15th of every month

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It's a Dog's Life

Hello everyone and Merry Xmas!
I'm looking forward to enjoying the festivities and I've already started my list for Santa- I think I've been a good boy(hopefully they've

forgotten dad's new socks that I accidentally chewed up - the temptation was just too great!)

I'm hoping for a new squeaky. I have quite a collection: space hoppers, pigs, pheasants and my latest - a green dinosaur that squeaks all over! Now that's what you call a squeaky toy!

Treats are always welcome but mum and dad are always saying I have too many. I don't see them hanging back when the Quality Street gets opened.....

No doubt bits of turkey will be coming my way plus the odd pig in a blanket, so that will be nice. And I expect there will be lots of walks to walk off all that food – theirs, not mine!

Frankly, I think I'd rather be snoozing in front of the fire!
Have a lovely time everyone and see you next year!

(more from Woofles a little further on)

Woofles of Wetheringsett

Dates for the Diary

December

Saturday 2nd

Christmas Crafts & refreshments in the Church 10am

Saturday 2nd

Pre-Christmas Quiz - 7pm Village Hall

Friday 8th

Community Lunch & Wreath making 12pm Village Hall

Sunday 17th

Carol Service All Saints Church 6pm

January

Wednesday 10th

Internet Café meeting 2 - 4pm Village Hall

Friday 26th

Stand and Deliver - Open Mic Night Village Hall

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**Followed by a wreath making session
Friday 8th Dec. 12 until 3:30pm
£7.50 per person
to inc. lunch and materials for wreath**



**For more information / to book
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Sue Stannard on 01449 767752**

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The Anne Robson Trust Helpline

If you or someone close to you is dying, you can talk to us
'No one deserves to die alone'

The Anne Robson Trust has launched a telephone helpline to provide support to people who are struggling with the imminent death of someone they care about.

Our telephone helpline is manned by specially trained volunteers to support people across the UK.

The Anne Robson Trust Telephone Helpline 0808 801 0688

Lines are open: Monday to Friday 12-6pm

Calls are completely free from all UK landlines and mobiles

To find out more please visit our website www.annerobsontrust.org.uk

Do you have anything 'to say'? Any thoughts you would like to share with the rest of us— or just something you would like to 'get off your chest'

Please send your thoughts about any of the articles in the newsletter - or any other matter, to wetheringsetnews@gmail.com

(Please refer to Disclaimer on page 2)

CELEBRATING A SUCCESSFUL 2023 SEASON ON THE OUTDOOR ATHLETICS TRACK.....

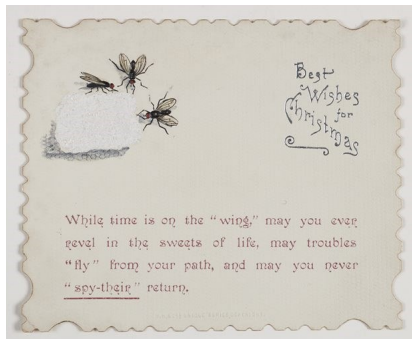


Earlier in the year we celebrated Aidan Wright's success of reaching the U15 300m final of the England Indoor Championship's and coming 3rd in the Eastern Championship's. His hope was for success on the outdoor track and he certainly did not disappoint..... In May, Aidan became the Suffolk Champion in the 100m, 200m and 300m. In the 100m, he equalled the Championship best performance time of 11.8s, a record that has been in place since 1994! He then progressed to become the East England Champion and the Southern England Champion (U15 and over 300m distance)

The highlight of the season though, was representing Suffolk at the English Schools Athletics Championships, (U15, 300m) held at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games track. This was an awesome experience for him. Aidan qualified for the final with a time of 36.67s and was given the English National Standard Award for achieving this time. In the final, Aidan came second, and we are all so proud of him achieving this silver medal at a national event. Now on to winter training with Ipswich Harriers to get ready for next seasonwell done Aidan



**Victorian
Christmas
cards!**



The Recent Flooding: 20 Oct 2023

Firstly, a correction on last month's facts. The last big flood was August Bank Holiday, 1956 not 1953! I called to see Julian Palfrey about a motoring matter and he showed me his father's dated photos of the occasion. They might have been taken this October!

Much has been spoken about the recent floods which was localised between here, Debenham, Earl Soham and Framlingham as the worse hit path. We cannot do anything to stop the rain; it came suddenly and it was mostly gone by the following morning. The houses opposite the church have been there for hundreds of years, so must have seen this a time or two before... but little consolation to the current residents.

One was pleased to see the human aspect of helping those in difficulties: the boat ferrying people through the worst area!

Now we hear of the other aspect: the insurance companies... wriggling?!

AJA

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We are pleased to announce that

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Anyone interested in performing should contact Stand and Deliver on

milhouse123@btinternet.com

SAVE THE DATE
- Friday 26th January

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More details to follow on the village website.

All proceeds to the Village Hall fund

Raffle



INTERNET CAFÉ UPDATE

Wetheringsett Village Hall

Work has been continuing on the idea of an Internet Café to be run on a sessional basis in Wetheringsett Village Hall. There has been interest from several villagers and there will be an initial meeting in the village hall, between 2pm and 4pm on **Wednesday January 10th**. The aim is to explore what is needed in terms of content and equipment. All are welcome. Please check the village website and/or the Facebook page for more detail. If you are interested please let us know, either by email -

internetcafe@wetheringsettvilleagehall.org.uk

or by dropping a note with your contact details in the letter box on the village hall wall.

More details to follow.

Village Hall Committee

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VILLAGE FETE 2024

We were sorry that no one was able to attend the meeting on the 20th November to talk about the possibility of holding a Village Fete next year

As a Village Hall committee we are always trying to think of community events that villagers might enjoy, and which would also raise funds to support the maintenance and running costs of the Hall.

We will hopefully be back with alternative ideas next year, thoughts and ideas from local residents would be appreciated.

Storm Babet - flood recovery information

You can apply for up to £500 to help with immediate costs .

To access government support you need to contact the local council first:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

If you need to contact the council on this or other issues: -

contact the Suffolk County Council on [Ipswich - 0345 606 6067](tel:03456066067)

Mid Suffolk District Council on [Ipswich - 0300 123 4000](tel:03001234000) (closed Mondays!)

[Mid Suffolk District Council](#): Out of hours emergencies, including housing issues, please phone 0808 168 7794



Wetheringsett Manor

Wetheringsett Manor School News

It had been a busy year for all at Wetheringsett Manor School, as we have seen children sit their GCSEs and move on to further education and also welcomed new pupils in September.

The site had a refurbishment over summer of the sports hall and factory, which has allowed us to start teaching mechanics, construction and music. To end the school year, the pupils will be doing Christmas hampers, which we give out in the community, and are taking part in the Christmas Tree Competition at the Church. There will be many trips planned too, like a tough mudder! We would like to thank the community for all of the support during the year, from buying our apple juice to helping out during the extreme weather.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

Wetheringsett Village Hall pre-Christmas Quiz

Saturday 2nd December 2023

7.0 pm

Tickets £10.00 per person
– including a light supper

*Teams of up to 6 people, or come along
and make a team with others*

Please bring your own drinks

Raffle for festive prizes



All proceeds to the Village Hall Charity

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Sue Stannard on

01449 767752





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6.30pm start

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Amanda Wearing. Telephone: 01449 711674;

Email: atwearing@yahoo.co.uk

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Wetheringsett cum Brockford Parish Council

Report of meeting held 6 November 2023

Storm Babet/Kieran – the Parish Council extends its thanks to the twenty plus parishioners in attendance at the meeting affected by the recent flooding, members appreciate the devastating impact on affected households and would like to thank parishioners and volunteers for coming together to support each other during such a traumatic time. County Councillor Andrew Stringer was in attendance to listen to parishioners reports with a view to gathering information on the way forward with the three bodies responsible for the Suffolk waterways, Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council and Landowners. Pending this information and how it will be dealt with, government grants will be available to households affected and parishioners are urged to view information on the Suffolk CC website via www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk or the Mid Suffolk District Council website via link [Storms Babet and Ciaran](#) for advice or please do contact a parish councillor or clerk if you are unable to access the websites. Another very useful website mentioned at the meeting Floodmary.com

The Parish Council will be setting up a working group to review its own emergency plan, please do contact a councillor or clerk if you would like to be involved with the working group. This will need to include a list of local people able to offer emergency help including transport at short notice, please do let us know if you if you are able to offer any emergency help at short notice.

Parish Council Vacancy – there is still one vacancy to fill. It is important all areas of the village are represented. Please do contact a councillor or the clerk if you would be interested in joining the council. We would be very pleased to hear from you.

Village Sign – the renovation and reinstatement of the sign is now complete. Many thanks were recorded to Mrs Sally McKenna for repainting and repairing the sign to its former glory.

Date of next meetings: Monday 4 December 2023, Monday 8 January 2024, Monday 5 February 2024, Monday 4 March 2024. Meetings are held at 7pm at the Village Hall, Wetheringsett. ALL WELCOME

Parish Council Members take the opportunity to thank parishioners for their support over the last year and sends wishes for a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.



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All Saints Church Wetheringsett

Christmas Tree Festival

If you would like to take part in the festival by decorating a tree, big or small, please contact
Emma Morris

Emma.morris@wvcpschool.com

The theme is your favourite Christmas character.
It could be someone for the Nativity,
Santa Claus, Jack Frost, The Nutcracker etc

Please join us from 10.00am-12.00
On the 2nd of December for refreshments and
Christmas crafts, when the festival starts.

The church will be open every day throughout
December from 9.30-4.00pm for you to visit.

We also look forward to welcoming you to
the Festival and Carol Service
on the 17th of December at 6pm followed by
mince pies and mulled wine.

South Hartismere Benefice



December Newsletter 2023



'All is strange, all is journey, and at the same time all is well'

These were the words that a recent writer used to describe a 17th century painting of *The Flight into Egypt* - that moment at the end of the Christmas story when the Holy Family (Mary and Joseph and the infant Jesus) escaped the murderous fury of King Herod. The picture, reproduced here, is by Adam

Elsheimer (1578-1610): half of it shows the night sky and its reflection in the water below; in the centre is the Holy Family, lit by a single lantern; on the left is the welcoming glow of a shepherds' fire.

The words seem to me particularly appropriate to the whole Christmas story. The elements in that story are certainly *strange*. We have angels, we have virgin conception, we have shepherds leaving their sheep to look for a baby, and we have wandering magicians following a star. And there is *journey*. Joseph's journey of acceptance of what has happened to him and his intended bride; the long hike to Bethlehem for them and the Magi; the desperate escape to Egypt. And underlying it all, the sense of the long and difficult road that lies ahead for this child.

It is because the Christmas story has all these elements that it speaks so powerfully to us. We certainly live in strange times: we have wars that we never thought would happen again; we are more than ever aware of our vulnerability to pandemics; we see only too clearly the fragility of our beautiful world. And what a journey we are on, technologically and in so many other ways: assumptions, certainties, expectations, all changing inexorably. The Holy Family were on a journey into the unknown, and so are we

How can we be sure that, at the same time, all will be well? We cannot know how it will work out, but we *can* trust that we are in safe hands - that the pain and the cruelty in the world will not have the last word. Kindness, compassion, and love are somehow truer: they *feel* more how things are meant to be. In the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, we catch a glimpse of reality, a sight of the God who made us, and will love us to the end. In his company we can say, in the words of the old hymn: "It is well, it is well with my soul".

All is strange, all is journey ... and all is well

Alan

News from the Parishes:

Welcome to: Swanley Crisp baptised at Thorndon

In Loving memory:

Keith Pawsey (Yaxley); Eileen Philips (Gislingham)



South Hartismere Benefice

DECEMBER 2023



Saturday 2nd	Wetheringsett	10.30-12.00	Christmas Tree Festival CONNECT with crafts & cake
	<i>Wetheringsett church open daily for viewing until Epiphany</i>		
Sunday 3rd <i>The 1st Sunday of Advent</i>	Gislingham	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion <i>Benefice Advent Rings to be blessed & lit</i>
	Stoke Ash	11.00–4.00	Christmas Tree Festival
	Thorndon	4.00pm	Christingle Workshop
	Thorndon	5.00pm	Christingle with Carols
Wednesday 6th	Gislingham	7.00pm	Carol Service
Sunday 10th <i>The 2nd Sunday of Advent</i>	Mellis	10.30am	Holy Communion
	Stoke Ash	3.00pm	Carol Service
Tuesday 12th	Mellis	7.00pm	Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 17th <i>The 3rd Sunday of Advent</i>	Thorndon	10.00am	'Together at 10' <i>Advent Informal service</i>
	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Holy Communion
	Yaxley	10.30am	Worship for All
	Thornham Magna	3.00pm	Carols <i>with the Gislingham Silver Band</i>
	Wetheringsett	6.00pm	Carol Service
Friday 22nd	Thornham Parva	7.30pm	Carol Service
Sunday 24th <i>The 4th Sunday of Advent</i> <i>Christmas Eve</i>	Gislingham	3.00pm	Crib Service
	Yaxley	4.00pm	Crib Service
	Thornham Magna	11.30pm	First Holy Communion of Christmas
Monday 25th <i>Christmas Day</i>	Gislingham	9.30am	Morning Praise
	Wetheringsett	10.30am	Holy Communion
	Thorndon	10.30am	Family Service
Sunday 31st <i>Sunday after Christmas Day</i>	Yaxley	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion



Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am

Contact



Reverend Canon Susan Loxton
Rural Dean of the Hartismere &
Hoxne Deanery
revloxtton@gmail.com
01379 388493

Reverend Debbie Nicholls
Curate
rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com
01379 678753

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthHartismereChurches/>



South Hartismere Benefice

JANUARY 2024

Saturday 6th January	Wetheringsett	10.30am	CONNECT
Sunday 7th January <i>Epiphany</i>	Gislingham Thorndon	10.30am 10.30am	Worship for All Holy Communion
Sunday 14th January <i>The 2nd Sunday of Epiphany</i>	Mellis Stoke Ash	10.30am 10.30am	Worship for All Holy Communion
Sunday 21st January <i>The 3rd Sunday of Epiphany</i>	Thornham Parva Gislingham Thorndon Thorndon	10.30am 10.30am 10.30am 4.00pm	Worship for All Holy Communion Worship for All CONNECT
Sunday 28th January <i>The 4th Sunday of Epiphany</i>	Yaxley Wetheringsett Thornham Magna	10.30am 10.30am 10.30am	Worship for All Worship for All Holy Communion

Contact:



Reverend Canon Susan Loxton
Rural Dean of the Hartismere & Hoxne Deanery
revloxtton@gmail.com 01379 388493

Reverend Debbie Nicholls – Curate
rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com 01379 678753

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SouthHartismereChurches/>





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Did you know?

In the 1300's, Christmas pudding was called 'frumenty'. It looked like a soup and was made from beef and mutton, fruit, wine and spices. People used to eat it before Christmas so that they weren't too full up before the main meal on Christmas day.





Dawmisk

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Friends of Debenham Library

Suffolk Libraries

Suffolk Libraries has teamed up with BBC Radio Suffolk to launch a 'Be Kind to a Kid' appeal for donations of new toys which can be donated to any of our 45 libraries. The appeal will run from 13 November to 8

December and the toys will then be passed on to families who might be struggling during the cost of living crisis and would benefit from an extra Christmas present this year.

Did you know....?

Warm spaces – Anyone is welcome to visit the library just to keep warm and find someone to talk to. You don't have to take part in an activity or be borrowing something, it's ok just to come in to get out of the cold and be around people.

Books, DVDs, WiFi, Computers, Printing/photocopying/scanning, CDs and audiobooks, downloadable films/music/audiobooks/ebooks, free reservations. The room is available for hire outside opening hours.

www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/visit/locations-and-times/debenham-library

Opening hours:

Tuesday: 0930 am –1300 pm Wednesday: 1500 –1930 pm
Saturday: 0900 am –1300 pm
Sunday: 1200 –1600 pm

School Corner, Debenham IP14 6PL

Email: debenham.library@suffolklibraries.co.uk

Facebook: DebenhamLibraryAndFriends

Tel: 01728 861940



I am a single parent with two kids and I'm really worried about how I'll afford to pay my energy bills when I have to start putting the heating and lights on more now winter is here. At the moment I just about have enough money to cover my bills but there is nothing left over. The

thought of getting into debt keeps me awake at night but the idea of my children being cold and possibly unwell as a result is just unbearable.

What can I do?

You are not alone - a record number of people came to Citizens Advice with energy debt in the first four months of 2023 (32,400) - a 112% increase on the same period in 2020 (15,200).

There are things you can do to feel in control when it comes to your energy bills. These tips won't cover all the extra costs, but they can make a difference:

- Check your thermostat: A room temperature between 18°C and 21°C is ideal for most people. Try turning your thermostat down by one degree within this range – it could save you around £115 a year. If a medical condition means you need a warmer home, ask your GP what room temperature you should aim for.
- Keep the heat in: Check your home for any gaps in the doors, windows and floors. Blocking any holes where you could get a draught could save you around £30 a year. It is important to allow for some ventilation as without it mould and damp can form.
- Turn off anything you're not using: Turning your appliances, like TVs and washing machines, off instead of leaving them on standby could save around £60 a year. Turning off lights when you're not using them – even if it's just off for a few seconds - could save around £25 a year.
- Consider using LED lightbulbs, which cost less to run.
- Watch your water usage: Cutting your shower time by just one minute can make a difference. If everyone in a four-person household with a water meter did this, they could save around £75 a year.

If you're struggling to afford your energy bills, you don't have to deal with it alone. Get in touch with Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk and you can get free advice on the help available to you.

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide advice on this issue and much more, including debt, finances, employment, benefits and family/relationships. You can contact them by phone on 01449 676060, visit in person at Milton House, 5 Milton Road South, Stowmarket IP14 1EZ or use the contact form at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us. Our opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm.

The Wetheringsett-Cum-Brockford Church and Town Estate

**TO ALL RESIDENTS WHO WERE IMPACTED
BY THE DEVASTATING FLOODS LAST MONTH**

We know that many of you will have lost furniture, carpets, contents and other belongings. We wanted to let you know that Church and Town Estate was set up to help the church, school and those in need living in the Parish of Wetheringsett-Cum-Brockford and if you were affected, you are eligible to apply for funds from our charity.

You can apply for funds in writing to:

Clerk of Wetheringsett Townsland Trust,
23 High Street,
Debenham,
IP14 6QL

Or via email to: wetheringsettctrust@gmail.com

If you can give a brief outline of how you were impacted by the flood and what the financial impact is likely to be for you, along with your name and address we can then review each application on a case-by-case basis. If you have a specific need for replacement of certain uninsured items and you know their value, please provide a quote (and a link to that item from the internet if you are able). We may not be able to cover the whole amount, as the funds need to be divided equally, but we may be able to contribute towards replacing some of your damaged items.

**Please send applications for funding in by the
17th of January 2024.**



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Collective Worship Theme: Trust

Harvest

It was a fantastic turn out for Harvest Service at the church. The children enjoyed having so many parents turn up and there were so many generous donations sent to the

Remembrance service

The children went to church on Friday 10th November at 9am. We had a short service. KS1 laid a poppy wreath and KS2 presented short Prayers. It was great to see so many parents attending to pay their respects.



Bikeability

Years 5 and 6 had a fantastic time learning skills on how to stay safe on the roads. All children participated and were rewarded safety on the roads certificates.

Breakfast and after school clubs

It has been great to see the uptake in our out of hour's clubs. We were able to begin clubs last summer.

The children have so far this year enjoyed a range of sports, dance, cooking and games clubs.



Continued on next page ..



Police visit

EYFS and KS1 thoroughly enjoyed PC Harvey's visit. They were able to ask lots of questions, try on a range of uniform and explore the van.

**Kind regards
Ms Wallis**



Church Street, Wetheringsett,

Christmas Crackers!

How does Santa keep track of all the fireplaces he's visited

He keeps a logbook

Who hides in a bakery at Christmas? A mince spy

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? ...Tinsillitis

What did Cinderella say when her photos didn't arrive?

"One day my prints will come!"

What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back? ...A stick

What did Adam say the day before Christmas? "It's Christmas, Eve"

What did the farmer get for Christmas? A cowculator

What do you get if you lie under a cow? A pat on the head

Which side of a turkey has the most feathers? The outside

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?

"Freeze a jolly good fellow"

What's the most popular Christmas wine? "I don't like sprouts!"

Why is it getting so hard to buy Advent calendars?

Their days are numbered

Who is Santa's favourite singer? Elvis Presley

What kind of music do elves listen to? Wrap

Merry Christmas

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**SANTA SPECIALS AT THE
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2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th & 17th December



A magical Christmas treat for children up to 10
Steam trains from Brockford Station to 'North Pole Halt'. Each child meets Santa at his Christmas Guards Van and receives a present.
£15.00 per passenger; advanced booking only.
Tickets from the Middy website from mid-October
www.MSLR.org.uk/SantaSpecials
Or call 01449 766874



2023 December SANTA SPECIALS

Dates: 2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, 16th, 17th
8 trains per day, first train 10.00

For a magical Christmas treat for children
up to 10 years old

Steam trains run from Brockford Station to 'North Pole Halt', for an individual visit to Santa at his Christmas Guards Van and each child receives a present. The Stations, Brockford and 'North Pole Halt' and the Museum and cafe, will all be decorated in full 'Christmasy' style. Returning from the Santa visit there will be Christmas crafts, hot drinks and festive finger food available to buy.

Compartments for 2 - 8 (minimum 2 people) £15.00 per person.

To book visit www.mslr.org.uk/bookings or call **01449 766874**

NEW YEAR'S DAY STEAM & LIGHT FESTIVAL

Join us on January 1st for your first steam train ride of the year and visit to the Historical Lighting Association's display of fascinating vintage oil lamps dating from the Mid-Victorian era. You will be able to ride the trains as often as you like in the genuine Great Eastern Railway Victorian four-wheeled coaches are a historical experience for any passengers, especially children.

Our Tea Room will be open for tasty New Year treats and beverages and the museum which tells the story of the old 'Middy'

Tickets are available on the day but cannot be pre-booked



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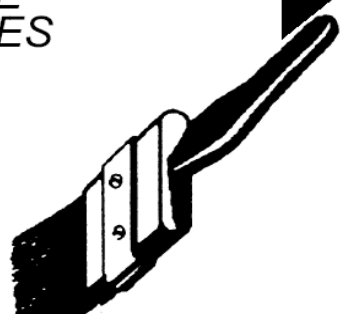
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Public Consultation—Library Services in Suffolk

Suffolk County Council has recently launched a public consultation encouraging Suffolk residents to tell the council what they want from their library services in the future.

This consultation ends on Friday 26 January 2024.

This consultation is being run by Suffolk County Council and not Suffolk Libraries.

It's part of the county council's process to shape the future of the library service, which is their statutory responsibility, and is not a consultation on how Suffolk Libraries has run the service over the past 12 years. Suffolk County Council's contract with Suffolk Libraries comes to an end on 31st May 2025, with a new contract set to begin in June 2025. The council is therefore seeking views from the public about what is important to them, ahead of awarding the new contract.

To find out more and to have your say visit

www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation



Public Affairs 2003

Carol Service

And Christmas Tree Festival



Sunday 17th Dec. 6pm

Followed by mince pies and
mulled wine



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Each year, in the newsletter, we print a Christmas ghost story. This year we have veered away from the traditional eerie tale and we have in its stead a truly seasonal narrative weaving the modern world we know with fairy tale tradition.

The Letter, written by Colin Weever, starts on the next page. Enjoy!

The Letter –

My Dearest, Darling Mary,

By the time you read this, I shall undoubtedly be far, far away, though my thoughts and wishes never ever leave your side. This will be my last trip, I think, and one from which, I am convinced, I may never return.

I am so sorry to burden you with my sorrows, especially since you are the one person that deserves least to be so treated, but I really have nowhere else to turn. For many years now, I have come to believe more and more that my existence has less and less meaning. My role has become totally marginalised - alluded to, but, all too rarely, truly acted upon in the spirit intended. The ideals that I believe in seem to have been swept away in an orgy of totally conflicting ideas.

Oh, the festival is still there, but both our part and the more sacred aspect seem to be further away than ever from people's consciousness. And it seems to me that . .

As she read the daunting words, the woman's spirits sank further and further. Didn't she see this coming? Had she been so blind, so taken up with her own duties, that she'd failed to notice how depressed he was getting? Guilt mingled with bewilderment as she read on, wondering where the letter was finally leading to.

. . . and where is the joy in giving and receiving useless items of unwanted junk whose only purpose, I feel, is to put ever greater profits into the pockets of the already rich and powerful? I ask myself these questions with each trip that I make, and every time, the evidence gives me. . .

Oh no! This surely could not be true. Had he really become so embittered and disillusioned? The picture his words painted told her quite clearly that he had. The words began to stick, and her tears to flow, as she read on.

. . . can only ask you to forgive me, my love. These must seem like the pointless meanderings of an old man whose thoughts are no longer clear. Whose mission, and purpose, in life has become clouded with the passing of the years. Quite possibly true, my dear, and I own up to it. . .

There! There was the indisputable statement that would stain her conscience and her memory for all time. He was admitting his confusion and loss of direction. He was in desperate need of help, but where would he get it? Out there, all alone, probably wandering aimlessly, cold and afraid. Not for himself, of course, but for the others. Those who would never get to know of his love and care as she did.

The Letter – cont.

Now she became truly frightened. He was the only man she had ever known, or wanted to know, intimately. They had been true soul mates. Yet here she was – helpless in the knowledge that he felt so lost while she. . ? What? Sat and cried? Gave in to despair and self pity?

. . . but amidst all this despair, I think of you, my dear one. .

‘Come on Mary!’ she thought ‘this just won’t do’. She stopped reading, telling herself that she would finish the letter later on. In the meantime, she must steel herself and prepare for the worst if necessary. At this, the tears began again and she could not stop them, though she went about her normal chores with a fierce concentration that tried to block any other thoughts.

Finally, after what seemed like an endless night, she sat down, exhausted, too tired to fight the urge to get it over with once and for all. Maybe she could find a new beginning, somehow. But she never would, unless she first faced the ending of the old one. So, with trembling hands, she began to take the letter once again out of its envelope.

Just then, the door opened, and there he stood. Sad; unspeaking; obviously unsure of himself, but with an enigmatic expression that demanded her attention.

“You came back to me, then,” she said tremulously, on the point of yet more tears.

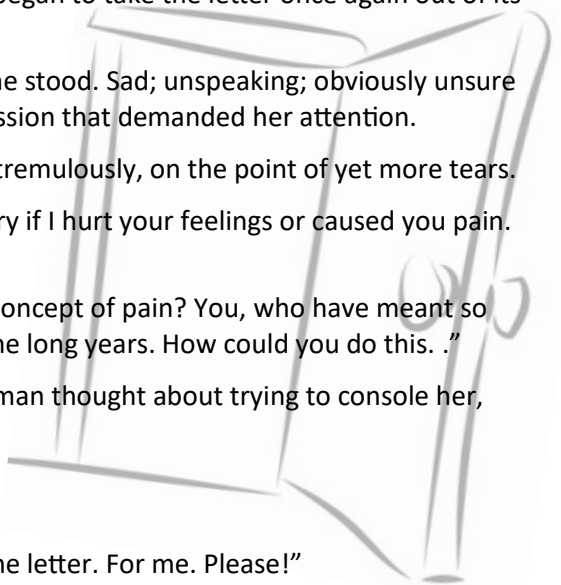
“Yes,” he replied simply. “I am truly sorry if I hurt your feelings or caused you pain. Its just. .”

“Pain?” she asked. “Have you any real concept of pain? You, who have meant so much to me and so many others over the long years. How could you do this. .”

She began sobbing once more and the man thought about trying to console her, but decided against it in the end.

“Please, my love, just read the rest of the letter. For me. Please!”

She looked at the man, with a mixture of emotions running through her mind. Finally, she opened the letter and looked to take up where she had left off before. But, incredibly, the words she’d read previously began to disappear until only the introduction was left and the letter began to write itself all over again.



... I left this evening with utter despair in my heart, intending, perhaps, to end it all. To clear away the falsehood, cynicism and hypocrisy altogether and just let them get on with it. But I was so wrong!

On my travels, I saw a nurse – herself a mother with young children – who had given up the special night, asking her husband and children’s forgiveness, before she returned to her workplace to bring comfort to a little boy. He was desperately ill, but had no-one to be with him to dry his tears and help him through what would otherwise be a desperately sad day.

I saw groups of people, all dressed in a semi-military uniform, leave their homes and go out onto the streets to gather up cold and homeless individuals, and bring them to shelters, where they proceeded to feed them, chat to them and try to bring smiles to their miserable faces.

I saw thousands of dark skinned people, smiling and shouting the praise of a pop music star who had raised millions to help ease their suffering.

And I finally saw that I had to come back to you.

Though love, compassion and selfless giving are indeed becoming harder to find, yet they are still there, and the festival has real meaning for many people. And I am still their icon, their toast, their justification for doing good. I’m still needed! Though that may, indeed, change over the coming years, and the world might forget all about an old man with a white beard and a suit of red, or green, I still have some hope for them.

Yes, they may forget Santa Claus, but they will always remember and celebrate his beautiful, charming, forgiving and ever loving soul mate – Mary Christmas!

Colin Wheeler © 2022

(with acknowledgement and thanks to David Gates)



Debenham Shed



Insulation of our extension is progressing well, and when complete we'll be installing woodworking equipment with dust extraction.

Our next Craft Day is on Saturday 2nd December from 10am to 5pm. Activities will include Christmas wreaths and wood turning. For more details look at our website (details below, see the Events and Projects page).

On the first Saturday morning of each month we have a stall on the High Street, next to the Debenham Green Team. Also we'll be at the church's Christmas Market on Saturday 9th December selling hot chestnuts.

We now have a "pay as you go" membership option for those who can't come regularly: £10 p.a. plus £1.50 per session. You can join online on the website.

www.cse.org.uk/my-community/community-projects/thrive-renewables-community-benefit-programme for more details and to book.

Debenham Shed is at 2 Fields Farm, Low Road (IP14 6BJ). We are open on Monday mornings 9am-12pm, Fridays 10am-5pm and normally the second Saturday morning of each month.

Chairman: Rob Davies 07952 556152 Treasurer: Tony Hutt 07906 614328. Visit our website at www.debenhamshed.org.uk (sign up to newsletters on the Contact page) Email info@debenhamshed.org.uk. Like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DebenhamShed.

*What is Debenham Shed? A place to make things by yourself, with guidance or with others. It could be in metal, cloth, wood or plastic. We have lots of tools and sourcing materials. You may want to repair or make new—the limit is your imagination. It is also for social connecting and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter. **Debenham shed is open to all adults.***

The Cedars Pool

Although it has been as wet outside as in the pool, Regulars are still swimming without wetsuits as we keep the water at 80°F. We realise that if the Cedars front door gets flooded, the whole church would be under water! Heaven forbid.



Doggy Park

Our Doggy Park now has planning permission, having passed its ecological test but subject to a landscaping plan! It is visited as much as the pool!

tonyalston@hotmail.com for details.



It's a Dog's Life

Happy New year to you all! I hope you had a lovely festive time.

On a walk the other day we met a much younger version of me; was I that bouncy at that age?

Anyway I thought I'd offer some advice to any of my younger readers of the canine variety- after all I am an elder statesman now and have learnt a few tricks along the way!

Remember they think they are in charge, however we are of course. We dogs have developed the skill of using all our facial muscles to look as sweet or pathetic as possible, so practise at all times - very few humans can resist a cute puppy. This will come in very useful if they adopt the "not on the furniture " rule. Once you've managed a cuddle on their lap it's a short slide off onto the chair and bingo! Just remember to keep those ears cocked and the tummy offered for a tickle - believe me, they find that hard to resist. I'm sure it won't be long before you're in charge - but just let them think otherwise!

Wooles of Wetheringsett

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2023

I would like to say a big thank you to all those who helped make this year's Poppy Appeal for the Mendlesham District such a great success.

The annual Poppy appeal is when we remember those in our armed forces, past and present, who gave so much for us all and a time to raise invaluable funds for this worthy charity to help those in need. This fantastic amount is due to the wonderful committed collectors who give up their time to help with the appeal, the support of local businesses who are kindly happy to have poppy trays at their premises and to all of you who gave so generously to the Poppy Appeal.

Thank you to you all.

Wetheringsett Village raised **£145.05**

The district as a whole raised the grand sum of **£2830**

Jacque Nash. Poppy Appeal Organiser





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If you require further information please call: - 01449 703935

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A5 Quarter Page	11 Issues - £ 40.00	5 Issues - £ 20.00
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7J	<i>Wetheringsett</i>	<i>Wetherup St</i>	1430 – 1445
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Calling every 4 weeks on **Thursdays**

Next visit: Thursday 21st December & 18th January

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Cllr Mrs Rachel Leech	VICE CHAIR	rachelleech67@btinternet.com	
Cllr Charles Harvey		charles@the-harveys.org	
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Cllr Mrs June Weir		juneweir1@hotmail.com	
Parish Clerk: Mrs Lynne Cockerton		lynne.cockerton@btopenworld.com	01728 862001
County & District Councillor : Cllr Andrew Stringer		Andrew.Stringer@midsuffolk.gov.uk	01449 780339
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