



eLEVEN SAYS

DECEMBER
2025 /
JANUARY
2026

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE BRAMERTON GROUP OF CHURCHES COVERING 11 PARISHES

ISSUE 316

Come

Casting our minds back to storm Amy in early October, we were on holiday in the Outer Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland. We paid a visit to the village of Howmore on South Uist and saw the welcome notice inside the church.

The welcome to us was warm because it was not just from the local church family, but an invitation from the God of all of us. Life may be difficult right now, or things might be going very well. Most likely it will be somewhere in between. We may be strong, we may be whole or we may feel guilty, we may feel a failure or none of these. The invitation is inclusive and everyone can take part. Whatever state we are in we are invited to Come.

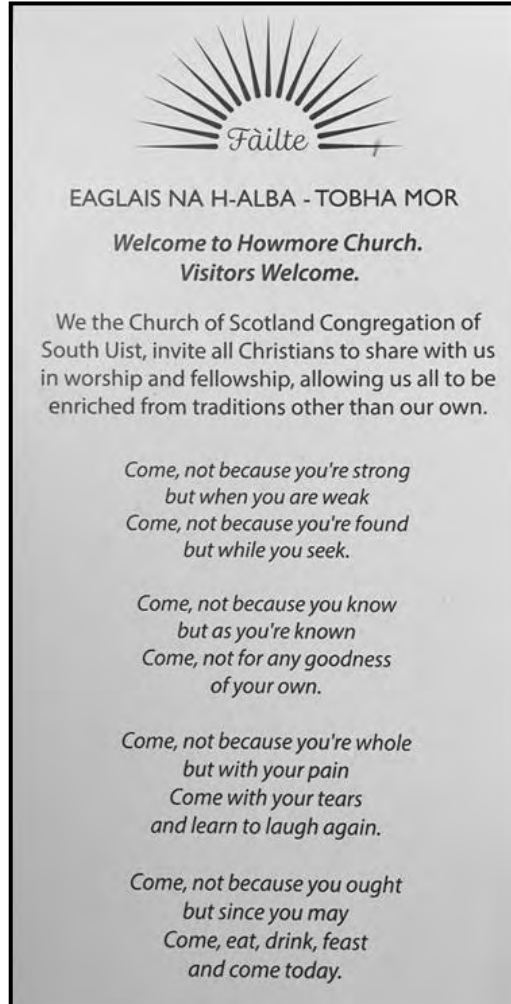
One of the Christmas stories describes how three wise men made a long journey trekking across the middle east following a new, very bright star. These wise men studied the stars so when they saw this new star, they knew it was incredibly important so they set off to discover what it meant. They were invited to Come to Bethlehem and believed they would find a baby who was also a King and that is the reason why they brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

When I look at this photograph taken on North Uist it reminds me of the three wise men trekking across the beach.

The real truth is that we celebrate the coming of the baby Jesus at Christmas. We can love God, not because of anything we have done, but because He first loved us.

So when we read or hear the word "Come" how do we respond?

Are we willing to set off on a journey?



Or do we say to ourselves I'll think about it in a while, when I have got time. Maybe when I have got this issue sorted out. Maybe when I have recovered from this illness. Have you ever asked God to help you in these situations? Then perhaps we wouldn't need to spend so much energy trying to sort things out for ourselves.

Jesus said "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me". This is not the promise of a distant deity, but more a revelation of a God who loves each one of us. Why wait for Christmas, why not just respond to the invitation right now?

May Jesus be the light of your life and the love of your world in 2026

Chris Limbach



Howmore Church, South Uist, Scotland

What a friend we have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

This old hymn is the basis for the word search on Page 5. We have been thinking a lot about prayer in church recently and this hymn helps to sum up lots of the reasons for prayers, and of course, it is always good to give thanks in prayer too.



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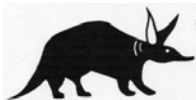
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New Archbishop of Canterbury



I was delighted by the recent appointment of Dame Sarah Mullaly as 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

Archbishop Sarah was one of the first women bishops in the Church of England, becoming Bishop of London in 2018.

She comes to the role following a distinguished career. She went into nursing after leaving school and was appointed England’s youngest ever Chief Nursing Officer in 1999. She was awarded a Damehood for services to the NHS, before leaving to become a stipendiary curate.

Archbishop Sarah is the Church of England’s first woman primate, the first to be educated in a comprehensive school, the first to have been a nurse. In her first statement as Archbishop, she said

"As I respond to the call of Christ to this new ministry, I do so in the same spirit of service to God and to others that has motivated me since I first came to faith as a teenager. At every stage of that journey, through my nursing career and Christian ministry, I have learned to listen deeply - to people and to God's gentle prompting - to seek to bring people together to find hope and healing.

I want, very simply, to encourage the Church to continue to grow in confidence in the gospel, to speak of the love that we find in Jesus Christ and for it to shape our actions. And I look forward to sharing this journey of faith with the millions of people serving God and their communities in parishes all over the country and across the global Anglican Communion.

I know this is a huge responsibility but I approach it with a sense of peace and trust in God to carry me as He always has."

Whether she wishes to be or not, she will inevitably be a pioneer in a Church that faces many challenges. At home, there is a pattern of slow decline and fallout from the safeguarding tragedy that led to her predecessor’s resignation. In the Anglican Communion, where she is senior bishop among equals, her appointment has been met with joy in some provinces and rejection from others on the grounds of her gender and theology.

Archbishop Sarah’s installation took place in Canterbury Cathedral on March 25th. Please pray for her and her family as she prepares to take up this great responsibility. Please pray too for all who will support her and those who oppose her, that God’s transforming presence may be at work in us all.

Revd Nick Garrard

Worship in Stillness is held at 9:30 am on Monday Mornings at Cherry House, Wheel Road, Alington. Half an hour of praise, silence, meditation and prayer followed by tea and coffee for those wishing to stay.

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The Norfolk Shepherd by Lorraine Mason


| | |
|--|---|
| Now listen to me mawther I'll tell you why I'm late You might not believe me And me tea will 'ave to wait | I'll have to go tomorrow To Bethlehem to see The son of God who's born there I'm wondering why me ? |
| Well me and Bill was watching of our flocks and by and by These blokes all dressed in flimsy white Came down from up on high | So now you know why I am late I've not been in the pub I'm sorry that you had to wait So now I'll have my grub |
| You see that star up yonder The brightest one up there They said we had to follow it Now listen to me dear | With peace and goodwill promised To all the human race I'm off to Bethlehem tomorrow Now go and pack my case. |



Crib Service
4pm Christmas Eve
Bergh Apton Church



Come along to take part in the retelling
of the wonderful Christmas story
- or just to watch and listen to the
telling



Gentlemen, you are cordially invited to a

Mid-Day Mardle

An opportunity for men to quench their thirst for good company and conversation, share good food and, perhaps, to enjoy a glass of something.



New members are always given a warm welcome.

Ferry House, Surlingham

Wednesday: December 3rd, Jan. 7th, Feb. 4th
(every month, normally 1st Wednesday)

Any time between 12 noon and 2 pm

Any questions, please contact David Fairbourn on
01508 538437 or email
surlingham.midday.mardle@gmail.com

Wednesday Fellowship is a meeting for all people in the Bramerton Group and beyond! Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month 2 - 4 pm at Alington and Yelverton Village Hall.

We have Christian and secular speakers followed by tea / coffee, cake and fellowship. All are welcome.

December 10th - Christmas Meeting with entertainment from local schoolchildren.

January 14th - 'Cool Conifers'. Speaker Fay Jones

February 11th - Display of Textiles. Speaker Clare Spender

For more information please contact Pat Barter on 01508 493570.

Rockland St Mary Benefice Update

Warm Welcome Mondays at the Barn, 11.30 am - 2.30 pm. Warm Welcome at the Barn continues every Monday in December until our Christmas lunch on December 15th with carols, festive food and a special visitor! We hope you will join us for a warm atmosphere, drinks, snacks and lunches - all free, all welcome! In the New Year Warm Welcome Mondays will restart on January 12th and continue weekly until March 23rd.

Carols, Cribbs and Christmas services. It is wonderful to see how our communities gather each year to celebrate Jesus' birth. Please look out for details of our services and events on the back page of this issue, village websites, the Rockland Church FB page, posters, A Church Near You website and church notice boards.

Tree of Light in Rockland Church. As the festive season draws closer, we often find ourselves thinking about those we have loved and lost. The Tree of Light will stand in Rockland Church until January 5th bearing the names of loved ones we remember on stars. You're welcome to visit on any day during that period and add further stars if you wish. Please contact us for more information.

Rockland Christmas Tree Festival. On December 6th and 7th Rockland Church will be transformed by creative displays of Christmas trees, with refreshments and stalls in The Barn. Please see posters for more information.

Come and See. From December 15th - 21st come and see an almost life-size nativity scene in Rockland St. Mary Church that will be from 9 am to 7 pm daily, beginning at the Rockland Carol service at 5 pm on the 15th. Come and spend some time sitting in the scene, exploring the wonder of the story and creativity of local makers.

Advent and Christmas Video Services. These will be published on Helen Garrard's You Tube Channel after December 8th. Please contact us if you need assistance in finding the links

Christmas Communion at home. If you or someone you know is unable to come to church through illness or mobility issues and would like to receive communion during the Christmas period, Helen and I would be happy to bring you communion at home. Please contact us on 01508 538014 for further information.

Blessing the Waters. Epiphany begins on January 6th and is a time when we celebrate all the ways in which Jesus became known to the world. January 11th is the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. One way that we celebrate this is by blessing the waters of the River Yare that flows around our Group and pray for the safety of all who travel and find recreation on the water. We're gathering outside the Surlingham Ferry House at 2.30 pm for this short and moving service.

Wassail at the Green Lane Community Orchard. The orchard in Rockland St. Mary has enjoyed a fruitful year, and is going to be blessed for the year ahead with a Wassail celebration, beginning at 3.30 pm on January 31st. Wear warm clothes and bring something to sit on if you wish.

With season's greetings and warmest wishes, Revd Nick and Revd Helen Garrard

***** Café Church - All Welcome *****

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SUNDAY 7th DECEMBER

Theme: "ADVENT"

Drop in any time between 10.30 am-12 noon

Future date: TBC

For details, or possible help with transport, please contact
Nick Garrard 01508 538014 or Mandy Ansell 01508 538654

***** Café Church - All Welcome *****

Thurton Benefice Update

Bergh Apton Gift Day: On behalf of the PCC, may I say a very heartfelt thank you to everyone in the parish of Bergh Apton who contributed to the Gift Day appeal on the 4th October. I have written personally to those whose details I have, but to anyone who gave anonymously please be aware of how grateful we are for your support.

Christmas Services: The full range of Christmas services are in place as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ once again. You are warmly invited to join us as we celebrate the Christmas Season together. ***Please see the separate table on Page 5 for details of Carol Services and other services this December.***

The New Organ has finally been installed in St Ethelbert's Church in Thurton. After nearly a year of waiting due to the permissions required and the availability of Mr Richard Bower the organ builder, the new pipe organ was played for the first time by David Catchpole at the Harvest Service on the 19th October. The previous organ had served the church well since it was installed in the 1960s but the new organ offers greater scope for recitals etc and there are plans to hold one to celebrate St Ethelbert's Day in May 2026. Our thanks to the Friends of Thurton Church for organising and funding the new organ and its installation.

The Churches of our benefice belong to all parishioners and far from being a clubhouse for members, they are available at any reasonable time for private prayer and reflection which is why they are kept open during the day. They serve as focal points for important life events and have been used for generations for baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as for community events of fundraising and celebration. I am always available for an informal conversation with anyone considering being married in church or having a child baptised. Confirmations can also be arranged either in one of our churches or at the Easter Vigil at Norwich Cathedral. ***Please contact me by phone or email if you would like to know more.***

Midweek Communions: usually take place on Wednesday mornings at 10.30am on a rotating basis in Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton, Framingham Pigot and Thurton and on the first Thursday of each month at Yelverton. ***Please see the separate table on Page 5 for details of locations and dates.***

The service is from the Book of Common Prayer and lasts for 30 minutes. I am usually available after the service to meet with anyone who would welcome the opportunity to speak with me in confidence in a church setting.

Norwich Foodbank: The Thurton Benefice has supported the Norwich Foodbank for several years and there are collection boxes at the back of each of our church buildings. The amount donated has continued to be very generous in a couple of our parishes but has rather tailed off in others. As we enter the winter months when pressure on many families increases with rising heating and fuel costs, now is a very good time to try to reinvigorate our support for this essential charity. If we all managed to donate just one or two items each month, it would make a huge difference. Thank you for your support.

Safeguarding: The churches of the Thurton Benefice are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our Church community. PCC members and all volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults have completed or are undertaking the appropriate safeguarding training and the PCCs are adopting formal safeguarding policies to ensure we comply with all current legislation. If you have a safeguarding concern please contact our Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Leo Smith, 01508 493695 or me on 01508 484174. Where a child or adult is at imminent risk do not delay: call 999.

Home visits and Home Communions: I am very keen to visit anyone who is unwell or feeling isolated or lonely, either simply for a conversation or to share Holy Communion in their home. ***If someone cannot make it to church, the church comes to them!*** Please do contact me if you, or anyone you know, would like a visit. I am particularly keen to hear if a parishioner has been admitted to hospital; I would rather be told several times than not at all!

Revd Chris Ellis:
Telephone: 01508 484174



From the Registers

BAPTISMS

MARRIAGES

FUNERALS, BURIALS, CREMATIONS, INTERMENT OF ASHES

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 11/09/25 | Rosina May SKIPPER | Rockland St Mary |
| 07/10/25 | Trevor Robert HOWARD (85) | Yelverton |
| 08/10/25 | Lorraine Susan CASON (née ELLIS) (52) | Claxton |
| 16/10/25 | Mark Jonathan POLLARD (67) | Ashby St Mary |
| 24/10/25 | Pamela Rosemary CARTER | Claxton |
| 27/10/25 | Alexander William Magrath KING (95) | Framingham Pigot |
| | (Interment of ashes) | |
| 31/10/25 | Christine Mary EBBENS (73) | Yelverton |
| | (Interment of ashes) | |

Confirmation at Bergh Apton



It was a great pleasure to welcome **Izzy Stephens** and her family to Bergh Apton Parish Church on the 2nd November for a service of confirmation with Bishop Ian, Bishop of Thetford.

In the Anglican tradition, confirmation is the second sacrament of initiation which completes the process of membership started with the candidate's baptism and allows them to make a personal, mature decision to affirm the promises made on their behalf through infant baptism. Through it the affirming believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands and anointing with the oil of Christ, and strengthens their relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

We pray for Izzy and offer her the love and prayers of the Church as she begins this new stage in her Christian journey.

Melanie Ellis

What a friend we have in Jesus

Why not take a break from all your Christmas activities to relax and enjoy this word search.

It relates to the old hymn featured on the front page.



SORROWS
SHARE
FRIEND
LORD
NEEDLESS
TRIALS
GOD
GRIEFS
PAIN
PRAYER
TEMPTATIONS
PRIVILEGE
JESUS
SINS
FAITHFUL
WEAKNESS

Midweek Communions

December 2025 - January 2026

All Services at 10.30am

December

Wednesday 3rd - Ashby St Mary

Thursday 4th - Yelverton

Wednesday 10th - Bergh Apton

Wednesday 17th - Framingham Pigot

Wednesday 24th - No Service

Wednesday 31st - No Service

January

Thursday 1st - No Service

Wednesday 7th - Ashby St Mary

Wednesday 14th - No Service

Wednesday 21st - Framingham Pigot

Wednesday 28th - Thurton



All are very welcome to this said service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer. Services last 30 minutes.

Thurton Benefice Christmas Services

Ashby St Mary

Sunday 21st December: Carol Service at 6 pm

Bergh Apton

Sunday 21st December: Carol Service at 6 pm

Christmas Eve: Crib Service at 4 pm

Christmas Day: Christmas Communion at 10 am

Framingham Pigot

Sunday 14th December: Carol Service at 4 pm

Christmas Day: Christmas Communion at 10 am

Thurton

Sunday 21st December: Holy Communion at 11 am

Christmas Eve: Carol Service at 4 pm

Sunday 28th December: Holy Communion at 10 am

Yelverton

Christmas Eve: First Mass of Christmas at 8 pm

Christmas Day: Parish Team Service at 9.30 am

Please join us to celebrate the joy of the Christmas Story

Celtic Daily Prayer at St Mary's Church, Surlingham

This is the lovely view seen from inside Surlingham Church porch as we sit together to pray and meditate on a Bible reading and a reflection for the day. We meet at 10 am for approx half an hour on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday mornings of the month.

Future dates are: January 13th and 27th.

Everyone from the Group is very welcome to join us. If you are unable to come but would like to receive the chosen material for the day, please email mandy.ansell44@gmail.com and I will send you a copy for your own reflection time.

Rev. Mandy Ansell, 01508 538654



Bishop of Norwich Annual Ecology Award

Research into nesting curlews has won student Caleb Stradling the Bishop of Norwich's annual Ecology prize. The £1,000 prize is awarded to the University of East Anglia student achieving the highest marks for a masters dissertation in applied ecology and conservation.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Revd Graham Usher, said: *"As a Christian it is my calling to care for God's creation, and it is a privilege to be able to support this kind of research. Caleb's work is giving curlews the best chance of survival and helping make it possible that generations to come will be able to delight in the beautiful curlew call."*

Bishop Graham studied ecology at university himself and is the lead bishop for the environment for the Church of England.

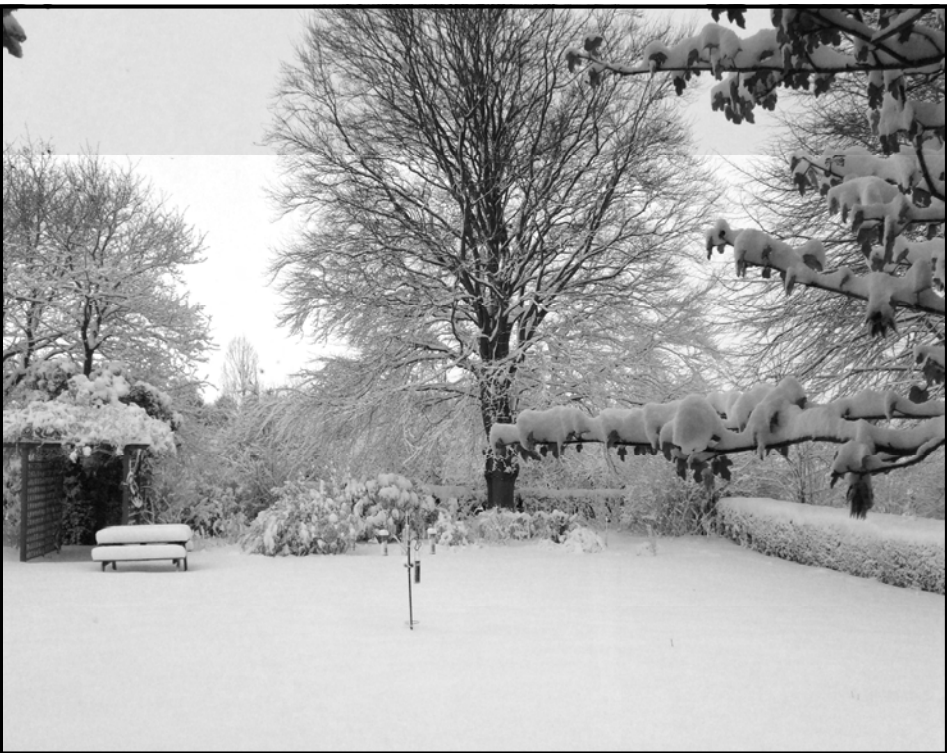
Caleb, 34, said he was surprised and grateful to win the prize. *"A love of birds and ornithology brought me to Norfolk and I had the pleasure of meeting and working with many brilliant ornithologists at UEA"*. He chose to study curlews after working with an organisation dedicated to saving the birds from extinction.

"I became enchanted by the curlew and its evocative bubbling song" he said. *"Land-use change has led to habitat loss and degradation, putting additional pressure on the already-perilous saga of their breeding cycle, meaning that in many places curlews are not fledging enough chicks to sustain the population"*.

He is now working full time for Curlew Country in Shropshire and the skills he gained in his MSc, analysing how vegetation and agricultural practises influence curlew survival, are already having an effect. *"Happily, we have had a successful year all round for the project with five chicks fledging in the wild, in addition to releasing 37 head-started curlews to reinforce the population. I also caught the bird ringing bug whilst working on the project so I've been training for that as often as I can manage"*. He plans to spend some of his prize money on equipment for bird ringing.

Professor Simon Butler, course director for the MSc in Applied Ecology and Conservation at the University of East Anglia said: *"The award is a really valuable recognition of our students' hard work. It means a lot to students who often put themselves into quite challenging financial positions in order to progress in this kind of career"*.

The prize is sponsored by the Anne French Memorial Trust which supports the ministry of the Bishop of Norwich, clergy in the Diocese of Norwich, and projects across Norfolk.



A Winter scene at Applebee, Rockland St Mary

South Yare Wildlife Group

The 'State Of Nature' report for the UK, which came out in 2023, made for gloomy reading, outlining the serious loss of natural habitats and the decline in biodiversity happening in our precious countryside. There has been a 19% decline in terrestrial and freshwater species across the UK, 54% decline in the distribution of flowering plant species, 13% drop in distribution of invertebrate species, 24% decline in the abundance of important seabird species, and on top of that, 16% of all our species are threatened with complete extinction. This is serious, not just for our natural environment, for the flora and fauna that is under threat, but also for ourselves, and our own well-being.

Another recent study, (from the Journal of Environmental Psychology 2024), reported that the UK is one of the least Nature-Connected countries in the world; 55th out of 61! The top 3 countries were Nepal, Iran and South Africa and the UK is teetering near the bottom, along with Israel, Japan and Spain. Access to the natural world is vital to people's sense of well-being, for good mental health, as well as spiritual awareness and a well-balanced lifestyle.

Fortunately, we live in an area blessed with a beautiful natural environment, and it is essential that we all cherish our valuable landscape and the wildlife that lives within it. We can all try to reverse this decline and there have been notable success stories; otters have returned to our rivers and broads, the red kite is breeding in our area again, and our own local conservationists have re-introduced the Large Marsh Grasshopper successfully into the Yare Valley. It is important that we all do what we can to help nature in our own "wild patch" and support all those who are striving to protect the environment for the future.



Upcoming event

Winter Walk – On the North side of the Yare Sunday 7th December

Meet at Buckenham Station car park (NR13 4HW) at 2.00 pm for walk to bird hide to view winter wildfowl and then the large Corvid roost. Then on to the Shoulder of Mutton pub (NR13 4NT) at Strumpshaw at 4.30 pm for Mulled Wine and Mince Pies.

Cost £7.50

Prior booking essential by email info@southyarewildlifegroup.org

See SYWG website for further details, and for events in 2026

www.southyarewildlifegroup.org



Loddon Flower Club

The Festive season is upon us and we wish you all the very best, enjoy your celebrations.



Our next meeting will be our Christmas Open Evening, everyone is welcome to join us for a fun and relaxing evening. Come along and enjoy a glass of Punch and some festive nibbles while listening to the Chet Valley Voices and browsing the stalls. There will be raffles for a Christmas Hamper and the arrangements that our demonstrator, Wendy Goodliff, will be doing for us,. There will be a Tombola stall, a quiz for a garden voucher and a number board to win a Christmas Cake. Bring your friends and family. Doors will be open open at 6.15 pm, the demonstration starts at 7 pm. Members free, visitors £12.

There is no meeting in January. Our February meeting will be Tuesday 3rd when we have a talk on 'Plants for Summer Colour' by Rosemary Ward. Doors open 6.30 pm for a 7 pm start.

All our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month in St John's Lecture Hall on George Lane, Loddon.

For further information call Tricia on 01508 480522 or Jenny on 01508 520254, or email loddonflowerclub@gmail.com. We also have a website -www.loddonflowerclub.co.uk and a Facebook page. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Poringland Community Centre Overtons Way, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7WB

Poringland Community Cinema

Friday 12th December - The Penguin - Lessons (12A)
Comedy/Drama. Stars Steve Coogan, Jonathan Pryce

Tickets are £5 on the door (includes tea or coffee).

Doors open at 6.45 pm.

Films start at 7.30 pm

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Friday Film Night December 5th

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or Carol on 01508 492630

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Village News




Alpington & Yelverton

Apologies to Mary Fewster for not acknowledging her Front Page article in the last issue which proved to be very interesting to our readers.

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Bergh Apton & District Society
Bergh Apton Village Hall, Cooke's Road,
Bergh Apton NR15 1AA
Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 7.30 pm
Our first meeting of 2026 is
Ray & Lynton's evening.
Ray provides the entertainment following which
Lynton serves up one of his sumptuous buffets.
£5 pp
As usual there will be our Raffle and the
opportunity to both learn of proposed events
or the new year and suggest places we could
travel to.
We look forward to seeing visitors, old and new.
Season's greetings everyone.

Bergh Apton

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to a donkey's ears, beautiful girls become stars, spilt blood changes
to flowers and a warrior is suddenly a swan!
Tickets from Eventbrite: <https://www.berghaptonarts.org/metamorphoses-2026>

Bramerton

Bramerton Church Gift and Open Day 12th July

As usual all residents and other supporters were warmly invited by letter to come along to our annual Gift and Open Day to celebrate the work we had been able to complete with the funds raised by last year's Roof Appeal. On the day there was someone to show and explain the work that had been done, combined with a tour of the church and to explain its history.

The day was well-attended and was rounded off by a choral celebration in the Church by the Sine Nomine Choir who kindly performed for us "Songs for Spring and Summer", an absolute delight. The combined sum raised on the whole day was £3,438 for Church funds.

However, like all properties there are annual running costs which are paid from our general income, which leaves little available for any maintenance work. This year our electricity and insurance amount to £2,065 and there is the Diocese Parish Share request of £8,513 for which our budget is only able to include a payment of £2,880 at this stage. Therefore, our annual Gift Day donations are an important source of funding for building repairs, and this year is no exception.

Since completion of the Roof Repairs project, we have had the Lychgate ridge thatch renewed, the remaining thatch tidied and covered with new wire netting, the organ retuned, permanent ventilation provided in the Vestry windows to reduce dampness and all the long grass and wildflower areas cut and cleared. We have also ordered Automatic Timekeeping Regulation for the clock which once completed will be reported in a future article.

So once again we give heartfelt thanks to all who donated towards the preservation and upkeep of the Church.

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Village News

Claxton

St. Andrew's Church

A team from St Andrew's Church will once again 'take over' the community café in Claxton on the **3rd December**, from 10 am until 1 pm. There will be lots of festive fare (including a soup lunch), as well as stalls selling seasonal items.

On the **21st December** between 3 pm and 5 pm, at Claxton & Carleton St. Peter Village Hall, there will be carol singing (inside and outside), as well as a selection of Christmas readings. Refreshments will be available. Plenty of parking.

There will be a service at 9.30 am on Christmas Day. Do please come and join us.

Sarah Carter

Claxton and Carleton Village Hall.

It was with sadness that we wished Rosie and Adrian Gidlow farewell on 31st October as they left Claxton to move back to Derbyshire. In the nine years they have lived in the village they have contributed greatly to the community.

Adrian has been Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees and his practical skills have been invaluable in maintaining and improving the Village Hall. He was also a Parish Councillor, a member of the Pit's Trust and both he and Rosie have been keen supporters of all community activities. Rosie has been a key player in the Community Café team so their absence will be keenly felt.

We are delighted to have found one new trustee for the Village Hall but are still keen to welcome others who would like to help support this important village amenity.



Claxton Community Café.

As usual, our October Café was held in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. Unfortunately, road closures began that day and we had far fewer customers than normal, resulting in greatly reduced takings. A raffle and a produce stall raised some funds and we decided to add to this from our reserves. This meant we were able to send £100 to Macmillan.

We are extending our **December, January and February opening times** so they will run from **10 am to 1 pm**. Please note the **Christmas Café on 3rd December** will be in aid of St Andrew's Church and will have our now traditional craft stalls. A great opportunity to purchase some Christmas gifts. We will be offering a simple lunch of homemade soup in addition to our usual bacon/egg rolls and other savoury and sweet fare. All at our usual low prices. Come along for a delicious and sociable lunch.

Claxton Social Club at Claxton Village Hall.

Come and enjoy a very reasonably priced drink from the bar on a Friday evening between 8 pm and 11 pm.



Village News

Rockland St Mary



Rockland St Mary & District Gardening Club

On Thursday 23rd October members, who braved the very wet and windy weather, enjoyed a very fascinating talk given by Ian Bedford. The subject was 'All you might ever need to know about slugs', which, including some snails too, are sure to be some of the main enemies of most gardeners! We learnt that not all slugs are 'bad' and that a number of them are actually beneficial to our gardens. Hard to believe isn't it? However, Ian Bedford went on to prove this fact while showing us slides throughout his detailed and interesting presentation.

On **Thursday 27th November** Annette Hurt will be our speaker. Her talk is called 'Gardening Naturally, Moving Away From Chemicals' which is sure to be of interest to gardeners who might be considering ways to help protect wildlife, the environment, and our countryside in general by reducing the use of harmful chemicals.

There is no meeting in December.

A meal at The Old Feathers is to be arranged for January. More details to follow soon.

Also, our popular garden visits, enjoyed during the spring and summer months, are about to be confirmed. Watch this space!!

The Gardening Club meets in the Rockland Parish Room on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7.30 pm. New members are always welcome.

Please contact Ruth Everett, 01508 538231 or email everettapplebee@hotmail.co.uk for details.

Rockland St Mary & District WI

Thanks to all those who came along to listen to Rob Spray (who trains amateur divers to survey marine wild-life) speaking on the "Chalk Reefs of North Norfolk". It was a brilliant and entertaining talk enjoyed by us all.

On December 9th we have our Christmas Party. Then looking into our New Year 2026 programme, on January 13th we will enjoy a "Sharing" amongst members evening, when we bring along an object that means a lot to us, perhaps some craft work, a book, or a favourite recipe, (and the results!) for us all to enjoy. In February we will be entertained by members and friends putting on a Murder Mystery play.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Margaret Mack Hall. If you would like to join us please contact Ruth 01508 538231 or Sandra 01508 538100 for details. We are a friendly group and you will be made to feel very welcome.



Surlingham

Strong winds have brought down a large branch from the ash tree in the churchyard which may mean that the tree needs to be felled. Also, heavy rain and high tides have further eroded the footpath by the river. Please be aware.

There are some new, beautiful war memorials in the Church. They were made by John and Phyl Reeves, and Alison and Alan Gilbert. With the curtain of hanging poppies and the poppy cross it is a very moving scene.



At the end of the October half term Surlingham and Rockland Primary Schools said farewell to a very long standing, loved and well-respected member of staff, Vickie Bayliss. She has worked across both the schools for 14 years. During her time with the schools, she switched between full and part time teaching at both Rockland and Surlingham, before becoming interim head of school at SPS 3 years ago, then head of school 2 years ago and deputy head for her final year. Vickie had an incredible work ethic and resilience. Past pupils from Rockland remember her fondly for fixing their uniforms when buttons came loose, she was a dressmaker before becoming a teacher. At Surlingham, she's been a calm and steady presence through many changes, and a real stalwart of the school. Always keen to show her intellect and being a

big fan of a good pub quiz, Vickie was the key reason the staff won the wonderful Quiz and Chips trophy this year, something she was particularly pleased about before saying her goodbyes!

The children are making drawings of how they see Christmas and from them a wreath will be made which will be hung in the church throughout Christmastide.

On **13th December**, Friends of Surlingham School (FOSS) invite you to their Christmas Celebration, a Festive Evening being held in the village hall from 5 pm - 8 pm. With lots going on and festive goodies on offer it should be a fun night for all. See the poster on the right for more details.

More festive cheer will come when our enthusiastic hand bell ringers join the Yare Village Voices carol singing at Rockland Stores on **19th December at 5 pm**. They will also be at the **Carol Service** on **21st December**. Then on **22nd December**, the bell ringers will join the Yare Village Voices at the **Ferry pub**. Also, another important date for your new diary: **The Group Quiz on 25th April 2026**. It's to be held in Claxton Village Hall and is bound to be a fun challenge, fired by a chilli supper!

Pippa



Village News

Thurton

Thurton (CofE) Primary School latest news

Thurton (CofE) Primary School completed its Ofsted Inspection in April 2025 which highlighted the school's strong Christian ethos and deep sense of community. The report praised the school for providing a good standard of education with outstanding ratings in behaviours and attitudes, personal development and early years provision. Leadership and management were also assessed as good, reflecting a dedicated, professional and forward thinking school team.

At the heart of Thurton's achievements is the nurturing environment where pupils recognise and demonstrate the school core values of 'togetherness', their exemplary behaviours and enthusiasm for learning, mutual support and engagement with the wider community.

The report also commended the sense of fairness and democracy as pupils vote for 'class ambassadors' together to improve the school environment.

The inspectors were particularly impressed by the outstanding early years provision, where the youngest children thrive in an atmosphere of curiosity and experience the joy of learning through play. Staff were observed to provide and inspire imagination and empathy providing the foundations for future learning.

The school's ambitious curriculum, love of reading, and inclusive approach ensures every child - whatever their needs - can flourish.

Due to the commitment of staff, the school culture and supportive environment, pupils are enabled to develop their confidence, creativity and resilience that enables them to thrive and succeed.



Well done to all who are 'Team Thurton'.

Paul Carter
Foundation Governor

Convoy4Ukraine

Nigel and Paris Back, who live in Bergh Apton, are driving one of 15 trucks to Lviv in Ukraine in February and need to raise £18,000 to buy their truck and vital supplies.

They are part of registered charity, Convoy4Ukraine, and Nigel and Paris are paying for all their expenses including train/flights home from Lviv as the trucks are left with the Ukrainians.

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Sweet Thoughts From Local Children

"Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet and so are you." Christmas is coming and with it lots of goodies: Christmas cake, mince pies, Christmas puddings and chocolates to name but a few. All of these and more need sugar. These are the sweet thoughts, but what about the children?

In 1985, on a cold night near Christmas, local Norfolk farmer, Mike Buckingham from North Walsham, took his family to London for a treat. On returning to the train, they came across a group of rough sleepers. His daughter Annabel noticed these people and asked her father, "Why are these people sleeping on the streets?" Her father explained that some people don't have a home or money, so they had to find shelter and food where they could. His children were shocked by this. "Can't we do something to help?", they asked. That was the beginning of BEFA, Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal.

On returning home, the family gathered local farmers to help, some gave vegetables, some meat, and local shops and stores became involved. Annabel learned that sugar could be a good source of warmth and energy for the needy, so asked the Head teacher if he would ask the children to bring in a bag of sugar.



The Head teacher agreed and so the "Christmas School Sugar Collection" was born, supporting our local homeless and hungry families in crisis and those fleeing domestic



violence in East Anglia. A charity begun by children and supported by children.

Last year BEFA provided the ingredients for nearly 20,000 Christmas meals and 80,000 other winter meals in shelters. Our Christmas School Sugar Collection of nearly 4,000 bags of sugar contributed to this provision of meals and to supply night kitchens in many locations.

This year we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of collecting sugar from schools. Many schools in our eleven parishes and schools in Norfolk support this charity.

Our children and their parents show sweet thoughts of care and support for those less fortunate than ourselves at this special time of year, when it is important to be giving as well as receiving.

A huge thank you to our children, parents, carers and schools for their support and we wish you all a "Very Merry Christmas."

Sandra Barker

Singing! Yare Village Voices

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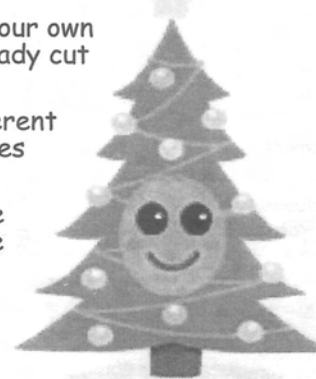


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|-------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Ashby St Mary | | 10.00 Benefice HC | 18.00 Carol Service PT | | Join Bergh Apton | | 11.00 MP | | | 15.00 HC | |
| Bergh Apton | 09.30 PT | | 18.00 Carol Service | 16.00 Crib Service PT | 10.00 HC | | 09.30 PT | | 09.30 PT | 09.30 HC BCP | 09.30 PT |
| Bramerton | | 15.30 Carol Service | | | 09.30 HC | | | 11.00 HC | | | |
| Carleton St Peter | | | 11.00 Carol Service | | | | 11.00 HC | | | | 11.00 MP |
| Claxton | 09.30 HC | | 15.00 Wassail @ Claxton VH | | 09.30 Family Service | | 09.30 HC | | | 10.00 All Age @ Village Hall | 09.30 HC |
| Framingham Pigot | | 16.00 Carol Service | | | 10.00 HC | | 09.30 HC | | | | 09.30 HC |
| Kirby Bedon | | Carols Service 17.00 | | | 11.00 HC | | | | 11.00 MP | | |
| Rockland St Mary | 10.30-12.00 Café Church in Parish Room | 17.00 Carol Service | | 18.00 Crib Service 23.30 Midnight Mass | | 10.00 Benefice HC | | 09.30 HC | | | |
| Surlingham | | 11.00 HC | 15.30 Carol Service | | 10.00 Family Service | | | 14.30 Blessing of the Waters Surlingham Ferry | 09.30 HC | | |
| Thurton | | | 11.00 HC | 16.00 Carol Service | Join Bergh Apton | 10.00 Benefice HC | | | 15.00 HC | | |
| Yelverton | 09.30 HC | | 09.30 PT | 20.00 First Mass of Christmas | 09.30 PT | | 09.30 PT | 10.00 Benefice HC | 09.30 HC | 16.00 All 4 | 09.30 PT |

Midweek Communions in December 2025 and January 2026 can be found on Page 5.
Thurton Benefice Christmas services are outlined on Page 5.

CODE: HC = Holy Communion; E Praise = Evening Praise; FC = Family Communion; FW = Family Worship; MP = Morning Prayer; EP = Evening Prayer; .PT = Parish Team; VM = Vestry Meeting

Bible Readings Sunday by Sunday: December 2025 and January 2026

| Date | Old Testament | Epistle | Gospel | |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 07/12/25 | Isaiah 11.1-10 | Romans 15.4-13 | Matthew 3.1-12 | Advent 2 |
| 14/12/25 | Isaiah 35.1-10 | James 5.7-10 | Matthew 11.2-11 | Advent 3 |
| 21/12/25 | Isaiah 7.10-16 | Romans 1.1-7 | Matthew 1.18-25 | Advent 4 |
| 24/12/25 | Isaiah 52.7-10 | Acts Hebrews 1:1-12 | John 1:1-14 | Christmas Eve |
| 25/12/25 | Isaiah 9.2-7 | Titus 2.11-14 | Luke 2.1-14[15-20] | Christmas Day |
| 28/12/25 | Jeremiah 31:15-17 | 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 | Matthew 2.13-18 | Holy Innocents |
| 04/01/26 | Isaiah 60.1-6 | Ephesians 3.1-12 | Matthew 2.1-12 | Epiphany |
| 11/01/26 | Isaiah 42.1-9 | Acts 10.34-43 | Matthew 3.13-17 | Baptism of Christ |
| 18/01/26 | Isaiah 49.1-7 | 1 Corinthians 1.1-9 | John 1.29-42 | Epiphany 2 |
| 25/01/26 | Jeremiah 1.4-10 | Acts 9.1-22 | Matthew 19.27-end | Conversion of Paul |
| 01/02/26 | Malachi 3.1-5 | Hebrews 2.14-18 | Luke 2.22-40 | Candlemas |

Please note: At Holy Communion, where only two readings are used, the first reading will usually be the Epistle, and the second will always be the Gospel reading. At other services where two readings are used, the first will usually be the Old Testament reading, and the second can be either the Epistle or the Gospel readings.

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Many thanks to all our
advertisers and readers for your
support throughout the year.

We would like to wish you all a
very merry Christmas and a
happy and healthy 2026!

Angie and Liz

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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|--|---|---|------------------|--|-------------------|--------|---|------|--------|------|------|------|---------------|-------|--|--|
| Thurton Benefice Revd Chris Ellis The Rectory 29 Ashby Road THURTON NR14 6AX <i>Tel.</i> 01508 484174 <i>Email:</i> <u>rector.thurtonbenefice@btinternet.com</u> Explorers and HALOS are held at Thurton Village Hall every other Friday evening. For more information please contact Gary WATSON Youth Worker Norwich Youth for Christ City Gates Centre, 30 Cowgate NORWICH. NR3 1SZ Tel: 01603 620678. 07747 471218 Email: gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk | Rockland Benefice Revd Canon Nick Garrard The Rectory Rockland St Mary NORWICH NR14 7EY <i>Tel.</i> 01508 538014 <i>Email:</i> <u>nickgarr39@aol.com</u> Revd. Helen Garrard The Rectory Rockland St Mary NORWICH NR14 7EY <i>Tel.</i> 01508 538014 <i>Email:</i> <u>broadsidecurate@aol.com</u> Revd Mandy Ansell 44 The Street,, Rockland St Mary NR14 7AH. <i>Tel.</i> 01508 538654 <i>Email:</i> <u>mandy.ansell44@gmail.com</u> | Parish Priest Fr Andrew Eburne, The Presbytery, 17 Upgate, Poringland. NR14 7SH. <i>Tel.</i> 01508 494770. <i>Email:</i> <u>frandreweburne@gmail.com</u> | | Liz Bloomfield: Editor, Treasurer, Adverts The Bloomfields, Nichols Corner, Church Meadow Lane, Alington, NR14 7NF Tel: 01508 493958 Angie Yeomans: Adverts, Contributions, Page Layout and Design 15 Bramerton Lodge, Bramerton, Norwich. NR14 7EQ. <i>Tel:</i> 01508 538131 <i>(Answerphone)</i> Kind donations may be sent to one of the addresses above either by cash or cheque payable to Eleven Says. Or BACS payment to Eleven Says 20-92-08 a/c 90137065. Contributions are very welcome subject to the Board's discretion and available space. Deadline for all material ("copy") for the next issue is 5th JANUARY 2026 Email: <u>elevensays22@gmail.com</u> Produced by: Angie Yeomans Printed by: Roberts & Son Printers, 2-6 Bridge Street, Loddon, NORWICH. NR14 6EZ <i>Tel:</i> 01508 520221 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | <table><tr><th>Times of Masses</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>Saturday</td><td>6 pm</td></tr><tr><td>Sunday</td><td>9 am</td></tr><tr><td>Tues</td><td>6 pm</td></tr><tr><td>Wed -Saturday</td><td>10 am</td></tr></table> | | | Times of Masses | | Saturday | 6 pm | Sunday | 9 am | Tues | 6 pm | Wed -Saturday | 10 am | | |
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| Saturday | 6 pm | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sunday | 9 am | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tues | 6 pm | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wed -Saturday | 10 am | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staff days off. <table><tr><td>Monday</td><td>Revd Chris Ellis</td></tr><tr><td>Thursday</td><td>Revd Mandy Ansell</td></tr><tr><td>Friday</td><td>Revd Nick Garrard Revd Helen Garrard</td></tr></table> Safeguarding Issues Leo Smith 01508 493695 | | Monday | Revd Chris Ellis | Thursday | Revd Mandy Ansell | Friday | Revd Nick Garrard Revd Helen Garrard | | | | | | | | | |
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| NEXT ASSEMBLY: SATURDAY 31st JANUARY, BERGH APTON VILLAGE HALL, COOKE'S ROAD, NR15 1AA, 9 am - 11 am (approx) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |