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ASSINGTON GREEN CLARE COWLINGE THURSTON END and WICKHAMBROOK

PARISH PUMP

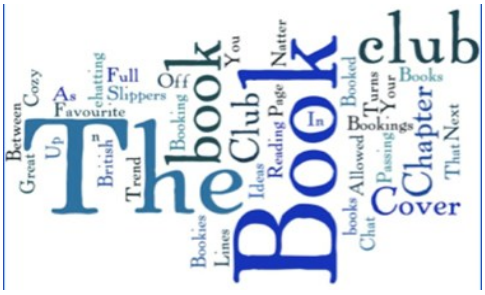
No 393 parish.pump@gmail.com March 2026

We all welcome Spring with pleasure!

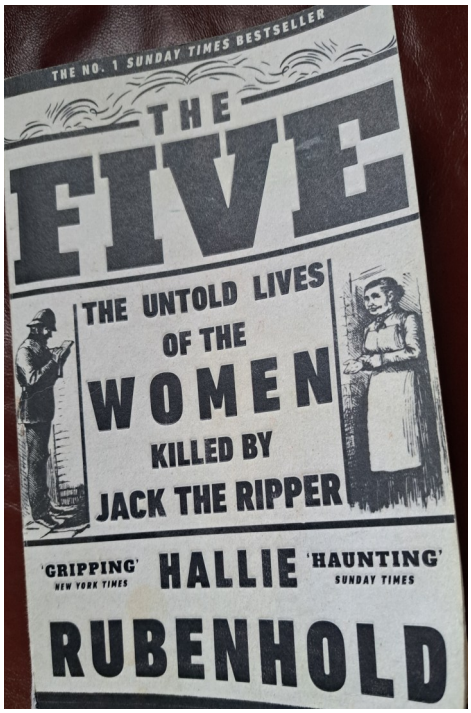




We wish to state that all articles are accepted in good faith and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Team and we do not accept any liability for the content



It's not often we have a non-fiction to read for book club and The Five, by **Hallie Rubenhold**, proved an excellent choice. This is a book dedicated to telling the true histories of five unfortunate women who were all murdered in 1888. Their murderer, known as 'Jack the Ripper', was never identified, but scores of books



have been written about him and his crimes. In this important work of historical detection, the author takes a radical new approach. She makes no space for the murderer or his crimes, but instead pieces together the untold lives of the women he killed. We found The Five as gripping as any good novel, and written in haunting and eloquent prose.

It begins with a tale of two cities in the year 1887. The first tale is the one that appears in most history books. It is the story of London during a summer of celebrations to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The second tale reveals a darker side to that London summer, as large numbers of the homeless and poor congregate to sleep rough in Trafalgar Square. This is history at its most vivid, as we learn about what it meant to be impoverished and down on your luck in Victorian London.

There was no sympathy for the poor, being seen as 'lazy and degenerate' and as women had 'no voice and few rights', to be both poor and a woman was 'one of the worse possible combinations'. In this context, we are introduced to '**The Five': Polly, Annie, Elizabeth, Kate and Mary-Jane.** All were born into deficit and would suffer great hardships but Rubenhold is also at pains to describe how varied their lives were too: they came from Fleet Street, Knightsbridge, Wolverhampton, Sweden and Wales, they lived on country estates, on farms, ran coffee houses, wrote ballads, travelled the country from end to end, had respectable jobs in service to middle class families. The author sets out to break through the web of 'assumptions, rumour and unfounded speculation' which has surrounded the victims for decades. Through her meticulous research of the facts and by writing about them with such compassion and generosity, each of the women comes alive in the imagination- we hear them, see them and feel for them and we felt she more than succeeded in giving 'back to them that which was so brutally taken away with their lives: their dignity'.

One idea which has fed the myth of **Jack the Ripper** is that his victims were all prostitutes whom he had lured into dark streets and yards for sex. Based on all the information Rubenhold uncovers there is no hard evidence to suggest that three of the women had ever worked as prostitutes and only one self-identified as a prostitute. Neither is there evidence that the Ripper had sex with his victims. With no signs of struggle, no reports of any screams and all being killed in the reclining position the obvious conclusion is 'that the Ripper killed women while they slept'. This must all be much to the ire of Ripperologists who have long embraced 'the Gothic tale of… suspense and horror, and an element of sexual titillation'.

Something they did all have in common was being working class women living against the odds. In the end they all succumbed to alcohol to dull the pain of their daily existence,whether it was suffering the harsh conditions of the local workhouse or lodging in filthy 'doss houses' or at worse, spending the nights 'tramping' the streets and sleeping in alleyways.

The final chapter is devoted to listing the personal effects of the victims as found on their bodies by the police. It is an intimate picture of 'what each woman valued and what they felt they could use to assist them through their uncertain days'. Seeing how little they owned was extremely poignant and really brought home the meagreness of their lives.

The Five is a fascinating social history revealing the underbelly of Victorian society and also a powerful feminist critique which challenges the misogynistic attitudes and behaviours surrounding the 1888 Whitechapel murders**. Rubenhold** argues the Victorian notion that the women were 'only prostitutes' suggests that those who deviate from acceptable female behaviour are fit to be punished, at the same time exonerating the men from wrongs committed against such women. Seeing them as 'just prostitutes' not only robbed them of their biographies but also obscured the police investigation into their murders.

Whilst some said it was hard to say they actually enjoyed reading about the social deprivation of the Victorian poor we all agreed it was an intriguing, important and innovative response to the myths perpetuated by 'Ripperology' for well over a century and awarded it 4.5 stars.

For our next meeting we are reading Educated, by Tara Westover. Book club meets once a month in and around Stansfield and we welcome new members. If you would like to join us please contact annedennis1@live.co.uk or 07557357362.

Louise/Anne

Wickhambrook Women's Institute

This month saw members





revealing their artistic side with an evening of art inspired and led by committee member Michelle Parsons. Michelle introduced us to the artist Elizabeth Blackadder whose paintings of flowers and cats were well known. We were given a short task to draw outline of a flower without removing pen from paper. We then chose our best result to colour in with poster paints. For half an hour or so there was complete silence in the hall as we all concentrated on our works of art. The results were all very pleasing and it was the quietest our members have been in a long time

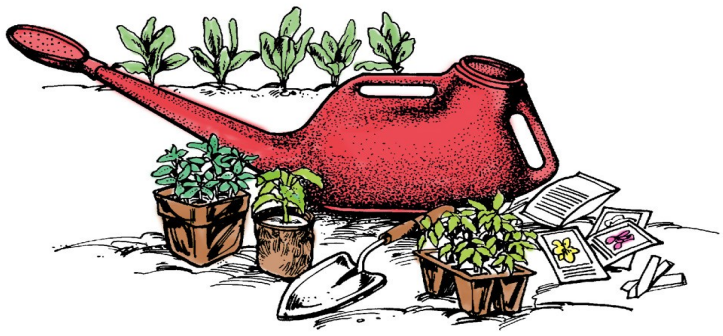
From: Wendy Mansfield
<wendym05@btinternet.com>

Gardeners Get Ready!

donations wanted for

Stansfield Plant Sale

Saturday 16th May



* Calling All Growers *

Could you raise some extra plants this spring to support the Village Plant Sale

Herbs, flowers, fruit and veg - all gratefully received.

Stansfield Village Hall Charity No 304939



Another blast from the past but once again I can't remember what it was for. Possibly something to do with Queen Elizabeth and a warm outdoor swimming pool. I think!

Hawkedon Church

The following services will be held at St Mary's Church, Hawkedon during March:
8 March 9am BCP Holy Communion
22 March 11am Morning Prayer followed by refreshments
All very welcome.
Many thanks and best wishes, Heather
Heather Tilbury Phillips
htapr@dircon.co.uk
01284 789 250/07774 275656



Additional Publicity: SPECIAL COFFEE MORNING!
When: Saturday the 14th of March from 10am
Where: Hawkedon Village Hall.

It will be of special interest to anyone who knits or does craft work because there will a bin- end sale of good quality knitting wool and silk squares as well as some really good nearly new ladies' clothes and other crafted items.

Why: Hawkedon has suffered an expensive blow as a section of the rather special old flint wall round the churchyard has collapsed and needs specialist builders to make it whole again!!!

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Rector's Ramblings – March2026 (Season of Perseverance and Grace)



As the last traces of frost (hopefully!) begin to yield to the first green shoots of March, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable display of human spirit we witnessed during the Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina last month.

There is something profoundly moving about watching athletes navigate the literal and metaphorical "slippery slopes" of life. Whether it was the precision of the skaters or the sheer courage of those hurtling down the Alpine runs, we were reminded that greatness is rarely achieved in a straight line. It is forged through discipline, often in the cold and the dark, and through the resilience to pick oneself up after a fall.

In many ways, the Olympic journey mirrors our own walk through Lent. We are currently in that "middle distance" of the season - a time that can feel a bit like a long-distance cross-country ski trek. The initial enthusiasm of Ash Wednesday may have cooled, and the celebration of Easter still feels a long way off. Yet it is precisely in this quiet, steady perseverance that our faith finds its depth.

This month, our Lenten journey brings us to a joyful "halfway house": Mothering Sunday on 15th March.

Historically, this was the day when domestic servants were given leave to return to their "mother church" and visit their families. Today, it remains a vital moment to pause and say thank you. We celebrate not just our own mothers, but all those who have "mothered" us - the grandmothers, aunts, teachers, and neighbours who have offered us a sanctuary of care.

In a world that often feels as competitive as an Olympic arena, the unconditional love of a mother-figure provides the ultimate "safe harbour."

Looking further ahead, the month draws to a close with the dramatic shift of Palm Sunday on 29th March. *(And if any readers have a donkey or two available for a procession around the church – please do get in touch!)*



We move from the warmth of family appreciation to the stirring scenes of the Triumphal Entry. As we hold our palm crosses, we recall the crowds in Jerusalem who cheered for Jesus, only to fall silent or turn away just days later. It is a sobering reminder of how quickly "gold medal" acclaim can vanish.

Palm Sunday marks the start of **Holy Week**, the most sacred time in our calendar. I invite you all to walk this path with us. From the shadows of the cross to the light of the empty tomb, it is a journey that promises something far more enduring than any earthly podium: the gift of new life.

May this March be for you a month of steady hope and renewed strength.

With every blessing,

Mark The Revd Mark Woodrow (Rector)



Beautiful cakes for your pleasure



The hare has just eaten the cake



Does anyone know what species the lovely flowers are?

Monthly rainfall mm 2024/2025 (Please note the change in units: inches to mm)

2025	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nick Burton- Stradishall	55	31.5	11	22	20.5	23	39	25	47	60	118	41
Tina Lee- Stradishall	45	32	9	25	19	27	30	33	46	63	101	46
Sam Slater- Stansfield	46	30	5	23	21	20	54	24	41	54	99	45
Rod Taylor- Stansfield	64	35	13	25	26	29	59	26	48	59	114	43
Jay Gridley-Hundon	59	26	11	21	26	29	22	25	38	77	122	54
Victoria Pakenham -Fenstead End	73	33	8	21	30	32	32	20.5	43	58.5	98	52
Elaine Plumpton - Great Saxham	63	42	6	23	17	38	51	26	60	58	119	49

2026	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nick Burton- Stradishall	91											
Tina Lee- Stradishall	81											
Sam Slater- Stansfield	100											
Rod Taylor- Stansfield	96											
Jay Gridley-Hundon	116											
Victoria Pakenham -Fenstead End	90											
Elaine Plumpton Great Saxham	94											

Jonathan Dabbs - formerly Stradishall Service Station

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Wickhambrook Local History Society February Report

Sarah Doig's talk to the History Society was called Travellers' Tales and was a trip through East Anglia over the centuries . When we want to go on holiday these days we look up places of interest on the internet but in past times a guidebook was the thing.



The very first of these ever produced was Britannia by **William Camden**, published in 1586. **Camden** was a contemporary of **Drake and Raleigh** and while they were exploring overseas, he travelled around Britain following the maps which had just become available. In 1578 he described East Anglia as 'pastures, woods and estates with fertile soil and game', not much different to what we see today.
In the 1680s, **Celia Fiennes** made journeys on horseback to all counties of England with her mother, sister or a servant. She commented on food, houses and new buildings and complained about the state of the roads. She liked Bury St Edmunds but there were lots of visitors which made produce scarce and put prices up! Daniel Defoe came to our region in 1720 and was interested in ordinary life , commenting on the weavers of Norwich and the baize trade in Ipswich as well as the Suffolk turkeys being taken to London in vast numbers.
Eighteen year old Francois de la Rochefoucauld spent a year in Bury St Edmunds in 1784. He found that agriculture was held in high regard but the local youths were badly brought up, whistling, humming and putting their feet on chairs, and had no taste in music!
Willaim Cobbet's Rural Rides of the 1820s tells of his journey from Norwich to London where he saw 'excellent farmers, quick and smart, neat and trim fields and diligent workers'
White's and Kelly's Directories became the model for later guidebooks, giving practical information about inns, stables, market days and opening times.
The King's England, a series by Arthur Mee, written in the 1930s and 40s is a particular favourite of Sarah's and she ended her excellent talk by reading from one of the volumes and recommended further reading to us.
Dorothy Anderson

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Thursday: Coggeshall Market Hill 1.30 to 4pm
Long Melford1.30 to 4pm
Friday: Clare Market 7.30 to 10am
Lavenham 11am to 1pm
Depden 2 to 3pm

St Nicholas Hospice Care's Sunset Walk and Cycle Ride

The sunset walk returns to **Bury St Edmunds** on Saturday, 20 June, bringing together families, friends and colleagues for an evening of remembrance, reflection and community. Walkers can choose between 10km and 15km routes, or take part virtually from anywhere.

Before heading out, participants gather in the Abbey Gardens for entertainment, warmups and refreshments and creating a lively festival atmosphere. Along the route, live music, supportive volunteers and thoughtful moments of reflection make the evening one of laughter and remembrance. Many walkers honour loved ones by decorating remembrance hearts, which are displayed at the Hospice, a reminder of why the event matters. Sponsored by Greene King, the walk supports the Hospice's mission to ensure no one faces dying, death or grief alone. Sign up at: stnicholashospice.org.uk/news-community/events-listing/sunset-walk/



Cyclists invited to support St Nicholas Hospice Care

St Nicholas Hospice Care is welcoming cyclists of all ages and abilities to take part in two special fundraising challenges this year: the St Nic's Cycle Ride and the London to Paris Bike Ride.

The St Nic's Cycle Ride, taking place on May 10, brings together riders from across West Suffolk, Thetford and local villages for a friendly and community-focused day out. With routes suited to families, casual cyclists and more experienced riders, it's a much-loved event that continues to grow. Every mile cycled helps fund important services offered by the Hospice. Registrations open on February 20, and the event is kindly sponsored by Atkins Dellow, with support from Maglia Rosso Cycling Centre.

For those looking for a bigger challenge, the London to Paris Bike Ride offers a memorable journey from capital to capital, organised in partnership with Discover Adventure. There are three opportunities for you to take on this incredible challenge in 2026, 10 – 14 June, 22 – 26 July and 9 – 13 September. Pick the July date and you will be arriving in Paris the same day as the iconic Tour de France. Registrations for the London to Paris Bike Ride close about three months before each ride and places are limited. Find out more and register for either event here: https://stnicholashospice.org.uk/event_categories/cycling/

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FOR HOSPICE CARE IN EAST ANGLIA





Recent history and reflections of changes in Stradishall.

This is a rather sad reflection on how Stradishall has changed over the years. In one sense we can't change history but we at Parish Pump are aware of this situation and being people-centric are doing what we can in showing people, who now live in Stradishall, how people in Suffolk used to live. We hope our publication in a small way helps our community

A lament for a lost community by *Martin Hurst*

At the outset I will state that I appreciate that Stradishall is not alone in this problem. However, I was born in **Stradishall** and have lived here most of my life. I am very sad about how as a village we have lost our community spirit.



When I was young, Stradishall was a close knit predominantly working-class village. Villagers all knew each other, many being related. Many worked for Justin Brooke or locally elsewhere.
There was a strong sense of community and people looked out for each other and their families.
If there were village events put on everybody helped out and attended the events.
There used to be bingo in the village hall and yearly fetes. There was a youth club for a time as well. There was also a cricket team over the years which was quite successful at times and played at 3 different locations, namely opposite Woods' in the 30's, in the grounds of the manor in the 50/60's and on the playing field in the 80/90's.
There was a pub, **The Hound**, until the 80's and I remember when villagers used to help cut the churchyard and Bill Stamp, the landlord, used to bring a crate with beers and Vimto for the volunteers.
We had a parish council, and in those days we all knew who was on it, and a village hall committee.
There were celebrations for the Queen's Coronation and Silver Jubilee which the whole village turned out for. Later there were smaller events for other jubilees.
Recently however things have changed, and with a few honourable exceptions, most newcomers to the village arriving appear to have no interest in village life.
A few years ago, one family even complained about the rural tradition of keeping chickens and people had to have their cockerels killed or removed.
Now in 2025 people are complaining of horses neighing in Farley Green.



Most newcomers seem very insular and are never seen around the village. Those honourable exceptions have been very good especially towards the church and it's a pity more people don't attend events to help the church.
The church needs much work done and so few in the village care about this historic building, which with some help could be used as a village community hub for other events.
There are very few original Stradishall people left now and it's such a shame that events that are organised are poorly attended by people in the village.
We used to be a small close-knit village with predominantly working class families and a wonderful community spirit but now we have wealthier people but no community spirit and the village is poorer for it.
Dedicated to Terence and Val Hurst, Daphne Smith and Donny Haygreen. In Memory of David Lee, George and Viv King, Roy Cutts, Maurice Cutts, Albert Hurst, Arthur King, Tony Smith, Alby Cutts, Audrey Hurrell.

The Bansfield Benefice

The Bansfield Benefice is the collective name for the Parishes of Cowlinge, Denston, Lidgate, Ousden, Stansfield, Stradishall and Wickhambrook in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Suffolk, United Kingdom.

Services for March 2026 DRAFT

https://www.bansfieldbenefice.org.uk/services/

Date	Time	Church	Details
01 Mar	10:00 am	Stansfield (Second Sunday of Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [CM] Liturgical colour:
08 Mar	10:00 am	Stradishall (Third Sunday of Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [KI] Liturgical colour:
15 Mar	10:00 am	Lidgate (Mothering Sunday | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [KI] Liturgical colour:
22 Mar	10:00 am	Denston (Passion Sunday | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Barbara Sherlock Organist: [] Liturgical colour:
29 Mar	10:00 am	Cowlinge (Palm Sunday | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [] Liturgical colour:

Year A

*Next to Wickhambrook church.

HC = Holy Communion; CW = Common Worship Order One; BCP = Book of Common Prayer; SOP = Songs of Praise. MP = Morning Prayer; CWOT = Common Worship Order Two
[Organist's initials]
Elder: PB = Paul Bevan

AN ODE TO SUFFOLK

WE CAME FROM THE NORTHERN LAND
SOON WE WERE ENTICED BY SUFFOLK'S SOFTNESS
BEWITCHED BY THATCH AND FLINT
RESERVE OF LOCALS SOON TURNED TO FRIENDSHIP
A WELCOME FROM GREAT PEOPLE.
ROLLING VIEWS SOON CAUGHT US
AND AMAZING CHURCHES SUFFERING,
SO OLD BUT SUFFERING.
SUFFERING NEEDS CARE SO-
TILES ADDED, LEAKS PLUGGED
PAINT ON WALL LICHEN,
OIL ON ELEGANT POPPIE PEWS
SAT ON FOR CENTURIES.
SOON BEAUTY STARTS TO RETURN
THEN PEOPLE COME TO SWEEP AND CLEAN
THE COMMUNITY STARTS TO BE REBORN
THE CHURCH IS ADMIRED
HOW SATISFYNG, WE LOVE IT!

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT OUR CLUB SECRETARY TELEPHONE: 07824 309738

Response to two difficult emails to Parish Pump

In January we received two emails accusing us of publishing false defamatory information. This was not true and here is our considered response to the sender of these emails

"We regret having to send this reply for reasons that will become obvious from our words below. We are, however, genuinely sorry that you were upset by what we printed. Our ethos is to communicate both with our readers and our advertisers, so that they are pleased or satisfied with our content. This obviously has not happened here.
You asked us to put our response in our next edition. I presume you realise this will not be until the beginning of March. I am not certain where we go from here, but failing any changed response from yourself, the following paragraphs (with explanatory context) will be published in next month's issue of the Parish Pump.
Yours sincerely **Dr Peter Thompson"**

This is our response to the two detailed emails you sent to Parish Pump citing: ***"the grossly inaccurate and potentially defamatory article published in your latest newsletter regarding the January 2026 Stansfield Parish Council meeting"***. You state that if we do not withdraw the article, you will consider seeking legal advice.
We totally refute the content of this allegation and believe that you should pursue this with Stansfield Parish Council if you feel so moved. We contacted them, and the following is their response:
"Planning Authorities put all planning applications in the public domain so that people can comment and give their views. It is a prime duty of a parish council and councillors to represent residents and their concerns.
The report from the Stansfield Parish Council Meeting in January, which was submitted to the Parish Pump, February issue, was an accurate report of the discussion and views expressed in public at that meeting. These are also recorded in the draft minutes of that meeting, now also on the Parish Council's website 2026-01-07-Draft-Minutes-of-Parish-Council-Meeting2.pdf."
Although the above is self-explanatory, we believe it should be read in conjunction with the Parish Pump's position below:
Parish Pump's role, as with many parish magazines, is to inform people of local activities. Like most other similar magazines, we take no responsibility for the content of material that is sent for publication. This is the responsibility of the contributor.
Each issue of the Parish Pump contains 28 pages containing between 5,000 and 10,000 words. To obtain the truth and validity of these words is totally impractical with an editorial staff of two volunteers. In this case the PC also have an audio recording of the meeting and the phrase ***"a new house-in-waiting"*** that you objected to was the view of a member of the public.
The Parish Pump publishes the accounts of Parish Council meetings of any of the 10 villages we serve, whenever they submit them. The Parish Pump team are not able to attend all of the 10 PC meetings; therefore, they have no means of judging the validity of the reports. Also, the quantity of material you require is untenable.
The Parish Pump sincerely apologises for any offence that is taken as described in your emails
It is noted that you appear to have made this demand to another publication, as there is **no description** in this current Parish Pump magazine of the death of the previous owner who you refer to. We do attempt to be accurate in the articles we publish. We note that you believe this report contains inaccuracies. If this is true, we note that none of us is immune from making mistakes,
On reflection, it appears that you are suggesting legal action because the Parish Pump published verbatim the views expressed in the Stansfield Parish Council. These are also contained in the draft minutes that are referred to above. The Parish Council is a statutory body, and one of its functions is to collect views on Planning Applications and make them available to local interested parties. The Parish Council uses the Parish Pump as a means to do that. Therefore, we request that the threat of legal action is withdrawn."





Ely cathedral and Cromwell's house

We visited **Ely** recently. The cathedral was magnificent but very expensive! Even more interesting was **Cromwell's house**. I did not know that he had spent a lot of his life in Ely. It is always fascinating for me to visit somewhere a famous person actually lived, breathed and sat by the fire, something like 500 years ago. Another point of special interest was the kitchen. It was quite similar to our living room with an enormous thick cast iron fireback which was apparently used to heat the side ovens.
A walk round **Wickham Fen** rounded the day off imagining the tremendous range of wildlife which were probably tucked up bed out of the chilling breeze.
On the whole it was Norfolk at its best.

Buck up ! Spring is here !



In his poem **The Waste Land** the author **T.S. Elliot** begins with the line, now famous, "April is the cruellest month". It is a line that has kept running through my mind during the last two dank, dreary, grey, rain filled months. It has not overall been cold, but it has been wretched and dispiriting. Surely January and February have been the cruellest ?

But along came the Winter Olympics with those stunning opening ceremonies full of Italian panache and at first there were the vistas of the spectacular mountains around Cortina and blue, blue skies. What a treat ! Then came the ice skating and the Curling which began to attract a new fan group. One afternoon I found myself watching a whole group of men slithering, sliding and falling in a relay event where these giants, mostly from alpine regions, battled it out in what here would be called a blizzard. Never having liked snow myself it chilled and depressed me as I watched the camera lenses getting snow smeared. Then a hot cup of tea and stepping away from the television made me realise one has to move on where one can in these times of gloom.

So far there is a sign of green in the fields - snowdrops and aconites blossomed in front gardens and the early daffodils have appeared. Tulips were plentiful in the shops, and all have been the visual treats of the early months. First those few sunny days when our countryside seemed to come alive, the ploughed fields began to show a first green covering, it all seemed hopeful and worth the wait.

At the Abbeygate Cinema in Bury we caught "Hamnet" from the bestselling book with Jessie Buckley giving an Oscar nominated performance. Then there was "H is for Hawk", the film of the bestselling book by local author Helen Macdonald with an outstanding performance by Claire Foy and amazing cinematography of beautiful goshawks in flight through the countryside of the Fens. Both of these were enriching so hardly "the cruellest month" from a cultural perspective.

So a glimmer of light and something one can use to cheer oneself up.
But Hawkedon has suffered an expensive blow as a section of the rather special old flint wall round the churchyard has collapsed and needs specialist builders to make it whole again. This brings the community together and we are organising a special Coffee Morning on Saturday the 14th of March from 10am in Hawkedon Village Hall. It will be of special interest to anyone who knits or does craft work because there will be a bin end sale of good quality knitting wool and silk squares as well as some really good nearly new ladies clothes and other crafted items.
Do come if you can. We need help to make sure we are not having a cruel April.
Martin

More about Cromwell: what was the domestic situation?



The food was amazing . One of the interesting features was that even in major food casseroles (cooked on the gigantic fire) eels were added, which were very plentiful in surrounding area of 'eely'

Winter Food to keep you warm with Louise Mackrill



Mad March Hare Pie!
Hares, that are plentiful in the UK and make wonderful eating, have long been thought to behave excitedly in March, which is their mating season! This month I



will be hopping along to our local gamekeeper or trusty butcher to collect my hare. In honour of this stunning species, I have updated an old recipe in the form of a succulent pie, thus avoiding the blood thing that is necessary with jugged hare.
Hare, like most game, can be tricky to cook well, as wild animals are less sedentary than farm livestock & therefore carry more muscle. For this reason, the tenderising process is of the utmost importance to prevent the meat from becoming tough & chewy
900 g hare meat cubed
150 g bacon lardons, 2 onions diced, 1 glass brandy, 3 cloves garlic, 1 bouquet garni (bay leaves, thyme, rosemary),
400 ml boiling water, 2 tbsp flour seasoned, 2 tbsp veg oil,
Ready-made shortcrust pastry
Toss the hare meat in seasoned flour and fry in hot oil to brown. Add lardons, garlic, bouquet garni, brandy & water, bring to the boil, simmer 1 hr. Remove the pie filling from the heat and drain the excess liquid into a saucepan simmer until it has reduced by half. Line a pie dish with half pastry, add the meat and half the liquid and top with the remaining pastry. Crimp the edges, cut a couple of slits in the top and brush with egg wash. Cook at 200oC/350F for 30 minutes until the crust is golden.
Banoffee pie This is one of the easiest desserts on the planet and will please the sweet-toothed among us although I cannot vouch for its calorific content! Of course, mini banoffees can be made in shot glasses which might prove fewer calories per serving
1 packet ginger biscuits, crushed well
2 ½ oz butter, melted
2 cans caramel condensed milk



3 bananas, sliced & tossed in lemon juice
½ pint double cream, whipped
Mix the crushed biscuits with melted butter & press down to line the base & sides of an 8" loose bottomed fluted flan tin. Pile the caramel into the crumb crust & spread evenly. Cover with sliced bananas followed by the whipped cream. This looks pretty topped with some grated dark chocolate

Pudding Party
Saturday 14th March
at
St Mary's Church Poslingford

Bring your favourite pudding and share with everyone

Tea, coffee & hot chocolate supplied
Contribution's to the Community Pantry are always welcome







Call Susan for the jobs you never get round to



Poslingford Valentine's Day

It began with a crisp chill in the air, but before long the winter sun broke through, casting a gentle glow over the village. It was the perfect invitation for residents to wrap up warm and make their way to the church for a comforting afternoon of hot chocolate and pancakes.
Inside, the atmosphere was as welcoming as ever. The delicious aroma of freshly cooked pancakes greeted everyone at the door, where our marvellous chefs — Dave, Corrine and Wendy — were already hard at work. They mixed, flipped and served what seemed like an endless supply of golden pancakes, much to the delight of those gathered.
Church filled with neighbours and friends catching up over steaming mugs and warm plates. Traditional toppings of sugar, lemon and syrup were generously shared, sparking the familiar debate over which combination truly reigns supreme.
It was, as always, a pleasure to hear the church alive with conversation and laughter. The gentle hum of friendly chatter was accompanied by the happy energy of a few younger villagers, whose enthusiasm and quick footsteps added to the cheer.
Events like these are a lovely reminder of what makes Poslingford so special — simple pleasures, shared company and a strong sense of community. A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who helped organise and run the gathering, and to all who came along to make it such a warm and joyful occasion

Portia in the mud

Rain and mud have been the new norm; we are very much looking forward to the spring arriving. Saying that, the piggies have had a wonderful time foraging in the mud. Calving is in full swing; we are about 1/4 of the way through with some fabulous calves, and lambing is just around the corner. We are expecting our 1st lambs in 5 weeks.

The arable side of the farm has been very quiet. The winter wheat and barley is growing well. We are waiting for a break in the weather to enable us to get the spring oats drilled. Last year's wheat fields were drilled with stubble turnips and fodder rape back in August and are now being grazed by our lambs. This has enabled us to rest some of our grazing after the hammering it's had over the summer. The fields have been electric fenced to keep the lambs on the fields. Stubble turnips are an excellent source of energy and water, a great source of protein and minerals ideal for the sheep over the winter months. Grazing the sheep over our arable land inputs a natural fertiliser onto the land rather than man made. This also enables us to reduce our carbon footprint









Wickhambrook &District Garden Club: Suffolk Hedgehog Hospital – Sue Stubley

We had a delightful evening with Sue as she told us about the care she gives to wounded hedgehogs brought to her in the hospital she founded and finances herself in Ousden. Some have broken legs, some are severely damaged by people using strimmers and not checking first for any wildlife sheltering in grass verges, some even badly burnt in bonfires, where they were sheltering among leaves and garden debris all Winter. Compost heaps are favourite places for the females to have



their babies and they get wounded or killed by a garden fork thrust into the heap. Sue has about 900 to 1000 hedgehogs brought to her in an average year, but this hot and very dry Summer dehydrated hedgehogs, who desperately need water and their numbers were down by a third. Wickhambrook and Lidgate have been very good hedgehog areas, but with badgers moving in, they have killed the hedgehogs and numbers are very low. Rat poison and traps kill many hedgehogs. Life expectancy is now about 2 years, whereas it was 14 to15 years. A healthy hedgehog hibernates through the Winter, but some wake to feed and sleep again. When hibernating, a hedgehog's heart beat goes down from 250/280 beats a minute to 18 beats, and their temperature, which, when awake is close to ours, goes down to 5 deg. If found, they appear dead, but cover them up and leave them! It takes four days for a hedgehog to wake fully! Having woken they go in search of food and a mate. They are very promiscuous and may mate several times with different mates. After 36 to 39 days, the babies, or urchins, are born blind and deaf with a membrane over their spikes, which come up as they dry out. Their mother stays in the nest for the first week, so the young can feed at any time. It's two weeks before their ears and eyes open. They are fluffy, but the spikes show when they roll up. They come in colours from blond to dark brown. The young hedgehogs, called hoglets, stay with their Mum for 10 to 12 weeks, after which, they walk off independently. Hedgehogs travel up to 3 to 4 miles in a night and eat road kill, eggs, fallen fruit, nuts and seeds and snails and slugs. Sue's hospital is now a charity. Her patients spend an average of twelve weeks recovering and her monthly medication bill is £1500 a month, which she pays for herself. She also needs more space to meet the demand, as other centres have closed.

Do please, put water out for hedgehogs in a shallow bowl, especially in dry weather. Dog food, dry or wet is good for them, or cat's food.

Don't put out bread and milk as they are lactose intolerant!

Do check piles of leaves, or, compost heaps before putting in a fork, or starting a bonfire. **Do leave holes** in fences and walls, so hedgehogs can move freely searching for food.

Ruth



MYSTERY
Has anyone got any idea what this is? I found the picture in the depths of my junk folder

Problem Page

with Carol Reay-Glover



CAROL is a trained counsellor living locally who can offer advice on personal problems, such as relationships, divorce, child issues, employment, depression - or general worries. Email her in complete confidence at carolreay1@icloud.com

Dear Carol,
I have been seeing this man for 3 years now. He's lovely and we have a very strong relationship. Now he wants us to move in together which all my friends see as great thing. But I'm seriously unsure. I really am. Firstly why spoil something that's working so well already? Then I was happily married for more than 25years before losing my husband and it took me many years to gain the independence I have now. In fact, it was hard to see someone else at all when I first met my current man friend. So, it feels like there's more to lose than gain. On the other hand, I am very happy with my partner. The grown-up children really get on with him and he's kind, unselfish, caring and good fun. I would not want to lose him. He knows exactly how I feel, I don't have to disguise my doubts at all which is another of his great strengths. He just feels we'll be happy living together which may well be true. I'm stuck not being able to decide.
F

Dear F,
You put the case for both sides of the argument so well here.
I am sure you will know if you read my column here at all that I cannot tell you what to do. I can only notice what you have told me here and help you find your path to knowing what you'd like to do; what would be right for you.
In your email printed here the case against moving forward shows all the things you fear to lose. The status quo of your relationship and your hard-won independence. Independence is to be highly valued but it's possible to be independent within a relationship just as you are now. Make a list of what your independence comprises. The case against is the more fearful one but fear is perfectly alright to feel.
The case for moving in together according to your email is largely based around your positive feelings for your partner and how he seems to fit within your family.
I am going to suggest respecting your doubts and possibly experimenting before you take the leap. Why not try staying a couple of weeks together and seeing how it feels? Or staying together each week for part of the week. Taking steps to see if it feels right for you. Always taking care to stay open and honest together about how you feel. That's so important.
I am sure you will find your path F. And move forwards whatever your decision with confidence**. Carol**



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Denston Village Hall 100 Club Quiz night STEFAN, TREASURER 01440 820675
the next one is in 2026. Thanks Stefan

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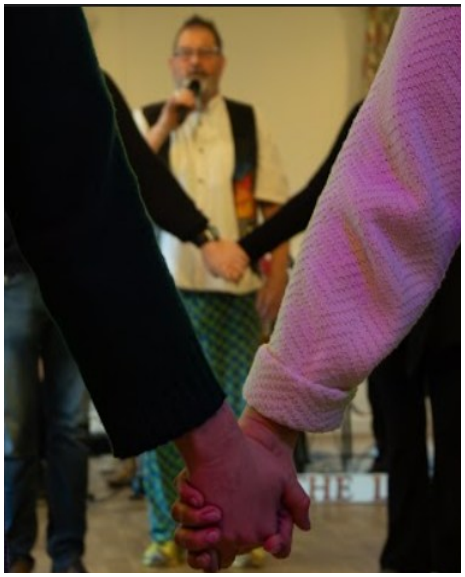
STANSFIELD Parish Council

Village Coffee Morning
10-12.30 on Saturday March 14th
A warm welcome and chance to chat to neighbours and make comments to parish councillors. Home-made cakes, coffee, tea, squashes etc all free, and served by volunteers.
Elsa, The Snow Queen, will host a workshop for making Mothers' Day cards (*Mothers' Day is the following Day Sunday 15th March!)* or Easter Cards.
Made in Stansfield will be a new addition to this event this year. Table sales of children's clothing, toys and home-made cakes, preserves etc, all hand-made in the village.
Village Tidy Up
Volunteers are being sought to help with the annual village tidy up in March. Would you be willing to walk a small stretch of the roads through the village in mid-March and pick up litter? Guidelines and picking sticks, bags and tabards, will be available from Cllr. Andrew Pallett on 01284 789434 or the **Good Neighbour Helpline 07827 128511.**

Village FUN DAY
Saturday August 15th 12noon - 3pm
Welly Wanging, Egg and Spoon Races, Table Competitions, café with home-made cakes etc.and lots more to be announced later…
Footpaths and Dog Walking Reminder: It is an offence to allow **dogs to foul** on roads, footpaths and any public place and not to clear it up after them. There is a set fine of £80, or if it goes to court up to £1000. Reports of dogs fouling footpaths in Stansfield have been received this month.
Walkers are kindly asked to report any difficulties or **obstructions on footpaths** using the handy Suffolk County Council's Highways Reporting Tool. Please also let the Landowner know (*if you know who that is)* and also the Parish Clerk, **Abbie Lee,** on 07496 851198 or clerk@stansfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk. Please include a w3w or map reference, or an exact location, so she can report it too. Photographs will also be helpful.
Next Meeting of Stansfield Parish Council is on Wednesday 11th March 2026 7pm at the Village Hall.

Family Barn Dance at Stansfield Village Hall

On the afternoon of 8th February, the village hall in Stansfield resounded with the thunder of dancing feet, howls of laughter, the skirl of the fiddle, the whoosh of the squeezebox and the bark of the caller. A barn dance was being held, with music provided by traditional folk band The Lairds.
Although **The Lairds** first played as long ago as 2008, this was the first time they had hosted a dance of their own, but what a success it proved to be! People came from all over **East Anglia** (I spoke to someone from Norwich), but what was most impressive was the range of ages I could see leaping about the hall. It truly was a family event, which small children, teenagers, adults and older folk seemed to enjoy equally well. Unusually for this kind of event, there was not one but two callers taking it in turns to lead the dances. It was interesting to see how their different styles and personalities produced results from the dancers. They each seemed able to choose dances that everyone could enjoy, even those who were new to this kind of folk dancing, and both were very clear in their instructions and made the dancers feel at ease, making it clear that the main thing they were expected to do was have a lot of fun! Certainly, the dancing continued throughout the afternoon with no let up in enthusiasm from the crowd.
The Lairds comprised Stansfield resident Otis Luxton on melodeon, band founder Richard Partridge, fiddle, and his son Mansell on guitar and bass. The callers were Keith Day and Martin Lindridge.
I hope that this event will be repeated in due course
Rodney Parker







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PARISH COUNCILS - WHO'S WHO in YOUR VILLAGE?

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Hawkedon/ Thurston End	Rotating	Rotating	David Jarrold dmj1800@icloud.com
Poslingford	Martin England martin.england@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 01787 278413	Marc Allison marc.allison@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 07958337282	Chris Turner clerk@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 07814246204
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Cowlinge	Linda Aston lindaaston555@gmail.com	Jane Nesham	John Barnett 01440 783 903
Wickhambrook	Mike Lavelle mike.lavelle@wickhambrook.org.uk	Vacancy	Hilary Workman 07508 039 810 parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk

Wickhambrook Parish Council News



Hello, I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

Spring is on its way, and if you're walking past the cemetery, you'll see that the Cherry Trees planted three years ago now have their first blossom appearing. The spring bulbs planted by the WI two years ago as part of their Big Help Out are also starting to flower!

Our first volunteer tidy morning takes place on Wednesday 4th March between 10:30 and 1pm. We'll be meeting at the Chapel of Rest and have a couple of things planned:
Cleaning down another of the memorial benches ready for another coat of teak oil
Sweeping up fallen leaves and using them to mulch around the new hawthorn hedge alongside Cemetery Road
Build dead hedge to left of compost heap & separate out branches from compost
Some levelling
Installing more paling fencing and new whips along Footpath 26 hedge line
Infilling yew hedging
We may not get all of this done, but if you would like to join us, please contact me.

The weather in February has been very wet. Don't forget to check out our report a problem page. If you have any highways or drainage/ flooding issues, please report them directly to Suffolk County Council Highways. Issues are prioritised, so the more that are reported, the higher the priority for addressing them.

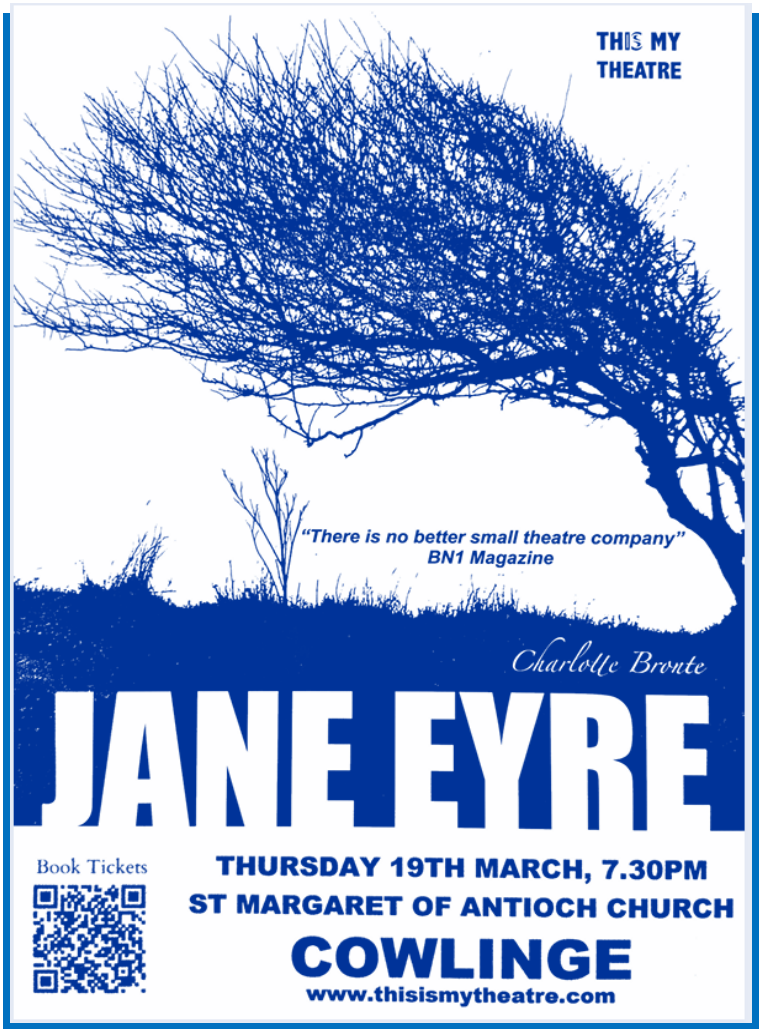
Bird Nesting season begins soon – if you are a land owner and have hedges running along Public Rights of Way or Highways, there is still time to trim them back. Please also take a look at this summary on Riparian Responsibilities for ditches and water courses, and take any necessary action.

At our February meeting, the parish council:
Authorised the clerk to renew insurance with Gallaghers'

Considered an ICT update and proposal to move accounting software to Scribe Considered the income and expenditure against budget and proposal to transfer unspent funds to earmarked reserves

Considered requests for donations to charitable organizations
You can find all the reports here. Our next scheduled parish council meeting is on 30th April 2026. If there is anything you would like the parish council to consider at a future meeting, please do get in touch with me.
Parish Council Meetings are open to the public so why not come along? If you would like to get more involved there are lots of ways to contribute, by:
attending meetings and asking questions
joining in with volunteer events (tidying the cemetery, cleaning play equipment)
joining the Road Safety Working Group
becoming a Councillor- we currently have three vacancies!
If you would like to find out more, please do call me or one of our councillors, or come along to one of our meetings. If you would like to be considered as a councillor, please take a look at the website, and complete and return a co-option application and eligibility form to Hilary. We look forward to hearing from you! Do feel free to forward this message on to neighbours, friends and family in the parish and ask them to get in touch with me at clerk@wickhambrook-pc.gov.uk if they would like to be included in our e -newsletter mailing list!

Hilary Workman
Clerk for
Wickhambrook Parish Council



A Brontë Treat
Whilst cinemagoers are swooning over Cathy and Heathcliffe in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, here at Cowlinge church we are looking forward to being spooked by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.* On Thursday, 19th March, at 7.30pm, the talented group of players, This is my Theatre, returns to delight us with Jane's story. Expect some dark moments in a tale that has a surprisingly modern heroine and ultimately an uplifting ending. Tickets are available from **www.thisismytheatre.com** Welcoming glasses of wine will be available from 7.00pm. Remember to wear warm clothes and you may wish to bring a cushion.....
We so look forward to seeing you.
Margaret Cowlinge Church Companions

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Cromwell's house in Ely

Cinema in Stansfield – Flickering into Life for 2026

Cinema in Stansfield is delighted to



announce that screenings for 2026 will be commencing this month. Audiences can look forward to a broad range of films that include plenty of interesting and unusual selections. We believe that providing variety and stimulation aside from more formulaic, mainstream features is vital to our role. To that end the Cinema in Stansfield team has spent autumn and the winter break exploring what's up and coming in independent, art-house and world cinema.

Dolly Whillens with film critic Mark Kermode

At the Cambridge Film Festival in October, we attended sixteen screenings. During our visits to the festival, we were delighted to meet the respected film critic Mark Kermode who was kind enough to give his enthusiastic endorsement to Cinema in Stansfield! Festival Operations Manager, Cristina Roures, generously took time out of her busy festival schedule to provide advice and a contact in Spain. This was to help us track down the screening rights for a very special feature which we hope to screen later this year.

Our opening film of the season will be **'I Swear' on 20th March**. Hilarious and heartrending by turns the film tells the true story of John Davidson MBE, born and raised in the Scottish Borders of the early 1970s. At age 16 he bravely participated in a BBC documentary that laid painfully bare what it's really like to live with Tourette syndrome. While the condition has shamed many sufferers into living behind closed doors, Davidson became a tireless ambassador for the condition, dedicating his life to raising awareness and helping affected families cope. 'I Swear' could easily have gone too far in the direction of comedy and making light of the condition, or too far in the other direction. Instead, it treads the line so well that viewers spend most of the film either holding back tears or trying not to laugh too loudly. Robert Aramayo delivers a pitch perfect performance in the lead role and is ably assisted by the supporting cast. "All I wanted to do was serve John Davidson's story," writer-director Kirk Jones has said. "I remember being moved and inspired by it and thinking, 'That would make a good film…'" And so, it does!

Finally, Cinema in Stansfield would like to encourage its audience to be involved in shaping our programming. If you have a favourite classic, indie or world film that you would like to see on the big screen and share with others, please let us know. All titles received by 13th March will be considered. See the April edition of Parish Pump for the shortlist and voting arrangements. Send your suggestions to friends@stansfieldvillage.org.uk

Dolly Whilems.





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Crate of Hardwood £100.00 each. Crate of Soft wood £85.00 each.

Please call Brad on 07775591799 to arrange collection/ delivery. Based in Wickhambrook



SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 11th July

WICKHAMBROOK

SUMMER FETE & FLOWER SHOW

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Mary Cleaver

Getting a Divorce If You Have Lost Contact with Your Spouse (England and Wales)

Under the current no-fault divorce system in England and Wales, you do not need to prove wrongdoing by your spouse. A divorce is granted following a statement that the marriage has irretrievably broken down. However, you must still take proper steps to ensure that your spouse (the "respondent") is notified of the divorce application. If you have lost contact with your spouse, the court will expect you to show that you have made all reasonable efforts to locate them before it allows the divorce to proceed without standard service.

Divorce applications are usually issued online through HMCTS. In most cases, the court will attempt to serve the application on your spouse by email and/or post at the address you provide. If service is unsuccessful, or if your spouse does not acknowledge receipt, you may need to take further steps to demonstrate either:

- That they have been validly served, or
- That alternative arrangements for service should be permitted.

What Steps Should You Take to Locate Your Spouse?

Before applying to the court for further orders, you should carry out reasonable enquiries. The court will expect you to have explored steps such as:

1. Contacting Family and Friends
2. Last Known Employer or Professional Body (subject to data protection limitations)
3. Online Searches and Public Records
4. Social Media Enquiries
5. Instructing a Tracing Agent

Keep Evidence of Your Efforts

It is essential to maintain a clear record of all steps taken. So, keep copies of emails and letters sent and screenshots of search results. Make notes of telephone conversations and keep any reports from tracing agents safe. If you later apply to the court for alternative service or dispensation, you will need to exhibit this evidence in a witness statement.

What If You Still Cannot Locate Your Spouse?

If, after exhausting reasonable enquiries, you are unable to confirm a valid address for service, you may apply to the court for further directions. The appropriate application will depend on your circumstances. but might involve an Application for Alternative Service, which could be permitted by the court if it is satisfied that the proposed method is likely to bring the proceedings to your spouse's attention. Examples may include: service by email; service via a messaging platform like WhatsApp or even service on a close relative who is in regular contact with them. If your spouse's last known address was in the UK, you may apply for an order requiring HM Revenue & Customs or the Department for Work and Pensions to provide their most recent address on record. Importantly, this information is provided to the court — not directly to you, and the court will then arrange service of the divorce application if appropriate.

Application to Dispense With Service

Dispensation with service is a last resort. If you can demonstrate that you have taken all reasonable steps to locate your spouse, and there is no realistic prospect of locating them, the court may allow the divorce to proceed without formal service. This requires detailed evidence and a properly prepared application supported by a witness statement.

Key Points to Remember

- Divorce in England and Wales is now a no-fault process.
- Your spouse cannot generally defend the divorce itself, but they are still entitled to notice.
- The court must be satisfied that reasonable efforts to locate them have been made.

Applications for alternative service or dispensation require proper evidence. If you require advice about divorce proceedings where you have lost contact with your spouse, it is advisable to seek specialist family law advice to ensure that the correct procedural steps are followed and delays are minimised.

Mary

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Jeff's wine



Hi Peter,
I recently attended a tasting locally and enjoyed drinking French classed growth wines from the 1995 and 2000 vintages. Serious wines which deserve serious consideration. However, there is no reason why we cannot apply the same principles to enjoying the everyday bottles that the majority of wine drinkers consume.
The simple pleasure of drinking wine is increased when considering what dish it will accompany, what grapes were used, the region it is from, how it was made, how it was vinified and so on. As the prices continue to rise, we need to know what to expect from the bottles we purchase. This will by default increase our knowledge and thereby make us better informed consumers.
Having opened the bottle, we now need to use our eyes, nose and palate to determine the characteristics of the wine. Pour some wine into a glass and tilt the glass against a white background if possible and check that the liquid is clear and bright.
Swirl the glass which slightly oxygenates the wine thereby releasing some of the aromas.
At this point you may notice streaks, or legs, moving down the glass. Wines with a high alcohol levels will almost certainly do this. Next step is to hold the glass to the nose and inhale the aromas given off. Don't rush this. Take as many attempts to confirm your view as you need. You may well find that the wine aromas change during this procedure. This is what is known as the wine's nose.
So you now have an opinion, and it needs confirming by actually tasting the wine. This is a twostep process. Take a sip of the wine and move it around the mouth so that it reaches the whole palate. Note if the wine has body to it, i.e. a more robust texture and feel. On swallowing see how long the taste lingers on the palate. This is known as the finish.
Having now formed your opinion of the wine you can confirm it, or not, with the following practice. Purse your lips and take another sip of the wine drawing air into the mouth as you do so. Swirl around the mouth as before. This time however you are aerating the wine in your mouth and in doing so more of the aromas are released, making the qualities of the wine more apparent. This may confirm your original thought, but it is not unusual to alter that opinion if the full extent of the wine's qualities become apparent, or you taste something you had missed on the first attempt. Remember that everyone's palate is different so whatever your opinion of the wine is, that is what you get from it. What other people think is irrelevant. If you enjoy the wine that is all that matters. As your knowledge increases then it follows that your enjoyment of wine will grow.

Best, Jeff

Who is who in our local church benefices?

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	LIDGATE			
	OUSDEN			
	STANSFIELD			
	STRADISHALL			
	(Assington Green)			
	WICKHAMBROOK			
STOUR VALLEY	CLARE	The Revd Mark Woodrow	01787277515	The Revd Dr Karen Smith
	POSLINGFORD			
SUFFOLK HEIGHTS	HAWKEDON	The Revd Clive Fairclough	01284 615828	Mrs Heather Phillips Mr David Taylor
SUFFOLK HEIGHTS	(Thurston End)	As Hawkedon	As Hawkedon	As Hawkedon

Puzzle Time

Puzzle 10

A Concert?

Puccini Intro

Vivaldi's 4th - Second Overture

Principal Alto

Mid Interlude - Central Choir

Beethoven's 4th - Final Movement

Verdi's Finale



Who sang the Encore?

A *Delphic's Quest* prize pen will be awarded to a randomly drawn correct entry each month. To enter, please submit your answer to **delphicsquest@gmail.com** (feedback also welcome.) The closing date for submissions is 16th March 2026.

Answer to Puzzle 9: Cupid
[The answers were Sea, Ewe, Pea, Eye and Dee - which are homophones for C, U, P, I, D]

Congratulations to **Kay T Standing** of **Stradishall** who is the winner of last month's puzzle.



Yours to win!



West Suffolk District Councillors

West Suffolk District Councillor for Denston, Stansfield, Hawkedon, Brockley, Wickhambrook, Stradishall, Clare, Hundon, Cavendish, Stoke by Clare, Kedington and others Bobby Bennett
bobby.bennet@suffolk.co.uk

West Suffolk District Councillor for Whepstead Wickhambrook Denston, Stansfield, Brockley, and Hawkedon

Sarah Pugh sarah.pugh@westsuffolk.gov.uk

West Suffolk District Council for Clare, Kedington & Hundon ward

Cllr Nick Clarke -
nick.clarke@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Marion Rushbrook
marion.rushbrook@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Karen Richardson
karen.richardson@westsuffolk.gov.uk

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Ask Questions

*

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Help tidy your village

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making Mothers' Day and/or Easter Cards

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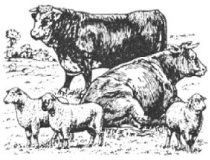


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