



THE BEACON

Beck Row, Holywell Row and Kenny Hill



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August – September 2025

Hello Readers

Whilst writing this page, the summer sunshine has been brilliant, although I don't think the gardens are liking these hot temperatures! However, by time the Beacon has been delivered the weather will probably have changed, back to normal 😊

The 80s/90s reunion held at the hub on 5th July went very well and a good night was had by all. Our thanks go to Chris Sykes for the disco, Mildenhall Cricket Club for providing the bar, Ken for cooking the BBQ, and everyone else who helped organise and set up, it is hoped to hold a similar event later in the year! However, these events do not run themselves and need support and commitment, so if you would like to be involved and volunteer to help with future events, please contact Gary on 07796 958720.

On a less cheerful note, it has come to the attention of the Parish Council that the youth shelter on the Toch H land has been vandalised. The shelter and all play park equipment is paid for with village money, we all know that accidents happen, however this appears to be an act of vandalism!

The zip wire will be out of action until September, urgent maintenance repairs are necessary and, unfortunately, the contractors are unable to get to Beck Row until September – a blow for the summer holidays!

The information from the minutes of the last Parish Council meeting is available to be read on the parish website at beckrowparish.gov.uk.

As usual it goes without saying a huge thank you to the volunteers who contribute to the Beacon and to those who deliver no matter what the weather.

Sue French

What's Going On Locally...

St John's Church

Sunday Services 9.30am

1st Sunday – Encounter Service (in hall) and follows on at 11am with Messy Church (for families)

2nd Sunday – Service of the Word

3rd Sunday – Lightwave Breakfast Church (in hall)

4th Sunday – Holy Communion



Community Events (by donation)

1st Tuesday – Lunch 12 noon
(book with Kathy 07963 958017)

2nd Tuesday – Soup and Chickenfoot 12 noon

3rd Tuesday – Coffee Morning 10am

4th Tuesday – Soup and Bingo 12 noon

Temp contact details - The best church contact is the Rural Dean, Revd Canon Chris Childs on 01638 429212 or revcchilds@aol.com

BECK ROW LADIES CLUB

2pm – 4pm

2nd Monday of each month
St John's Church Hall, Beck Row

The Methodist Church

Sunday Services

Beck Row Methodist Church 11am

Holywell Row Methodist Church 6.30pm

Rev. David McAloon - 01842 753819

The Mildenhall Scale Model Club

now meets in St. John's Church Hall

7pm - 10pm

every 1st and 3rd

Wednesday

Gary Wenko • T: 01638 714543

THURSDAY CLUB

2pm – 4pm

3rd Thursday of the month
(over 50s)

at Beck Row Methodist Church

For further details please
contact Maggie Walker
on 01638 715447



St J's

Stay and Play

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Every Wednesday
9.15am to 11.30am

at St. John's Church Hall

All children aged 0-5 and their
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Early summer saw the arrival of the Swifts that nest in the church tower. It is always a very welcome sight, as it means the good weather and long days have arrived. With swifts being in decline, it is very heartening to know that we have not had to encourage them to breed by installing nesting boxes, as they seem to manage just fine with the accommodation provided.

Even though we do not have a new vicar yet, we do have a new Church Warden. Brian Sulman decided he would take on the challenge, and was licenced on 2nd June. We thank him for this, and also for the very detailed grave register he has been compiling. When

finalised, a copy will be available for anyone to view, and it is hoped to eventually photograph all the graves and have them available online for anyone to access.

Sadly, as predicted, the Mildenhall Register Association decided to have their last reunion this year. They will continue to keep in touch online and via newsletters etc, but will no longer meet physically. Having said that, their last get together was a good one, with a lot of people making the effort to travel often long distances and to say a final goodbye. Refreshments were provided by the Ladies Committee, and a special thanks to Lisa Haylock for producing some of Peggy's famous delicacies for the buffet table. Sadly Peggy, a great stalwart of St John's, died shortly beforehand and she will be very sadly missed by us all.

VJ Day has a special significance in Suffolk, as many troops from this area fought in Japan. There will be a VJ Day Service in the Church at 11am on Friday 15th August, to which everyone is very welcome. Refreshments will be served in the hall afterwards.

Please do not forget that the Community Lunches (1st Tuesday of the month) and the Coffee Morning (3rd Tuesday) will continue over the summer months, and that Warm Rooms will recommence at the beginning of October.

Once again, the inadequacies of the Anglian Water sewerage system failed miserably, with the hall garden being flooded twice within a week. This is very unpleasant for everyone concerned, and we are indebted to those who contact a church member in such cases. We are told that there was a problem with one of the pumps that run down St John's Street, so are now hoping that it has been resolved for good.



Holywell Row Village Hall – BINGO SESSIONS

Bingo sessions are going to be held on the 4th Friday of each month in the Village Hall – 22nd August, 26th September, 24th October and 28th November.

Bingo starts at 7.30pm.

10 games for £5.
There is a prize for 1 line and a prize for a full house in each game.

*The Hall is available to hire at reasonable rates.
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News from the reserve – exotic visitors and breeding successes

Recently at RSPB Lakenheath Fen we have been treated to some more unusual birds - the first was a Caspian tern which was spotted on the Hockwold Washes on 14 June. This was only our second record of one (the first was in 2002) and usually they breed on the North American great lakes and around the Baltic and Black Seas in Europe, so it was well off course when it landed here! It is the world's largest tern, about the size of a Herring gull, with a heavy-duty red bill. It stayed for a couple of days and visitors came from far and wide to see it.

Then, on 1 July, two of our regular visitors spotted a beautiful Glossy ibis - these are getting more common as time goes by and are even beginning to breed locally, but they still look really exotic! They are about the size of a little egret, with a very long bill, downcurved like a Curlew's. In cloudy or dull conditions, they just appear dark in colour, but in sunshine you see their stunning colours - a chocolate-rusty brown body with deep purple wings. They are waders so it has been spending quite a lot of time between the Hockwold Washes and Gary's Pool. It hasn't been seen since 6 July, but we hope it will visit us again soon.

We are pleased to be able to report that we have had a pair of Cranes successfully rear two chicks on the reserve - and the family can now be seen flying as a group together around the reserve. We have two other pairs here - unfortunately these were unsuccessful in raising young this year, but it does mean we have 8 Cranes on the reserve at the moment! Our Marsh harriers have also done well, fledging at least 17 chicks which can be seen learning to fly and hunt across the reserve now. Not bad for a bird down to one breeding male - at RSPB Minsmere - in the 1990s. The youngsters spend quite a bit of time waiting in willow bushes in the reedbeds for their parents to bring them food, especially in the early days when they are not confident fliers!



Photo – Henry Cook-Warden

We were also very pleased to see success for a few pairs of Lapwing and Redshank who decided to nest on the fringes of the Hockwold Washes - included is a photograph of a fledgling Redshank chick who has just about reached adulthood - he or she still has a bit of downy fluff around its head, and quite a short tail, but it can fly and has made it through the most difficult stage of life. Redshanks and Lapwings have declined so fast due to habitat destruction and degradation that they are now on the 'Red List' of birds considered most in need of conservation help in the UK. It has been a privilege of all the staff and volunteers here to support these rare birds, and we hope that visitors continue to enjoy coming to see us to catch a glimpse of them too.

On behalf of the team at RSPB Lakenheath Fen – enjoy the rest of the summer!

By Heidi Jones - Visitor Experience Officer,
RSPB Lakenheath Fen,
Station Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk IP27 9AD

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Feta and Pea Tart

Ingredients: This will serve about 7 people.

- 175g frozen peas
- 200g crème fraîche
- 200g feta cheese
- 300g double cream
- 3 eggs
- 10 mint leaves
- handful of chopped parsley
- 320g shortcrust pastry sheet



Method

- 1 Put the pastry in a lined 23cm tart tin.
- 2 Line with baking paper or you can use a loose bottomed tin well-greased with butter.
- 3 Bake at 180°C/160°C fan. Lay baking parchment on top and put baking beans on top. Cook for 10 minutes. I use pasta instead of baking beans, save and use again! Remove beans and paper and cook for a further 5-10 minutes.
- 4 Blitz 1/3 of the peas with the crème fraîche and half the feta, double cream and eggs.
- 5 Use a liquidiser, or a food processor will do if you prefer.
- 6 Pour this into a bowl and mix in the remaining peas, feta, the mint and the parsley.
- 7 Add salt and pepper to your taste but needs a bit extra for this recipe.
- 8 Stir well, transfer to a jug then pour into the pastry case.
- 9 Put most in, then put in the oven.
- 10 Add the rest (saves overflowing and landing in your oven)!
- 11 Bake for a further 25-35 minutes until set and a slightly golden colour.
- 12 Serve hot or cold.
- 13 An odd cold slice popped into the microwave for a minute will not harm if you wish it hot the next day! Or the whole tart can be warmed in a low oven.
- 14 It is nice served with a green salad if you wish.



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Beatrice Carter Property

Hi, I'm Brad from Beatrice Carter Property.

I live locally, I work locally, and I genuinely love this patch of Suffolk.

I'd happily talk about the property market all day (and I often do), but The Beacon have only given me one page — so I've got to make it count!

Each issue, I'll be sharing what's really going on in the local market — from Mildenhall to Beck Row, Holywell Row, and everywhere in between. No fluff, no estate agent waffle — just proper insights, backed by real data, with a few stories thrown in from the front line.



Over the past year, property prices have risen in most parts of the country — but what's interesting is how that's playing out right here on our doorstep.

Recent data shows Mildenhall town centre with some of the steepest price increases in the area. But Beck Row and Holywell Row are starting to catch up. These villages, once overlooked, are now getting more attention from first-time buyers and investors alike. People are clocking onto the space, the community, and the value.

Homes that might've sat on the market a little longer two years ago are now moving quicker — and for more money.

There's more change happening under the surface than you might think — and I'll be digging into it issue by issue.

If you're curious about what your home could be worth or just want a straight-up view of the market — I'm always around for a chat.

Until next time,
Brad Jaggard

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Henry's Story

Imagine a crisp autumn morning in October 1978. Add to your imaginary scene, a dawn light across the West Row fen landscape and a milkman in a Bridge Farm Dairies truck. Teddy Quinn the local milkman was driving along, daydreaming about his next tea break, when a CLUNK and bump was felt from the rear axle. Teddy startled, immediately stops the truck to investigate. Instead of damage or a flat tyre, he finds a disgruntled tortoise! His relief at finding the tortoise moving and a shell intact despite being disturbed by milk, butter and egg deliveries.



Teddy knew of a family in that road who had a tortoise and took his new friend to their house to deliver him home safe and sound. However, their tortoise was already at home in his enclosure. After checking in with his customers, none were missing their tortoise, so Teddy took him home. His new family member was christened Henry (aka Charlie, mate, the escape artist).

Tortoise husbandry is not straight forward. As "ectotherms" these reptiles are totally dependent upon their surroundings to maintain body temperature and internal functions. This involves the environment they are housed in, such as lighting, humidity and diet while encouraging natural behaviours undertaken in the wild. Also, the breed of the tortoise dictates things like hibernation.



The Quinn family has taken care of Henry for the last 47 years. He remains exceptionally quick on his feet even by tortoise standards. The time has flown, and Hannah (Ted's wife) is Henry's primary care giver. Each day she feeds him an assortment of fresh green leaves, vegetables, followed by a drink.

Henry is still living his best life with the Quinns, getting plenty of exercise, seeking out his hiding places, and basking in the sunshine.

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The Storm Before The Calm

'Wow, we were lucky. It looks as if it's getting worse.' Julia bundled the children through the front door and then shook her crumpled brolly over the pavement before pushing the front door tight. The wind was howling through the letterbox whilst the rain bounced off the road. 'Take your shoes off both of you. Annie, go and grab a towel.' As Annie dashed up the stairs, Julia took off Jenny's coat and gave her a kiss as she wiped away the raindrops from her forehead. 'That's better,' she said as she grabbed the towel and started to rub Annie's hair whilst giving her a hug. 'Your turn Jenny and then we'll stoke up the fire and I'll put the tea on'. Julia dragged her own flimsy, soaked coat from her shoulders and realised that the rest of her clothes were sodden. 'Thank god the girls have proper mackintoshes,' she thought. She changed her clothes and placed her wet dress and coat on the clothes horse in front of the fire.

'Can we have a hot chocolate, Mum?' pleaded Jenny.

'Sorry girls but we haven't got enough milk. There's just enough for breakfast in the morning.' The wind was still increasing and whistling down the chimney causing sparks to fly from the fire. Julia was becoming concerned because the roof tiles were starting to rattle, and the lights were dimming. She went into the kitchen to peel the potatoes and peeped into the oven at the casserole which was starting to smell scrumptious.

Jenny ran in with a worried frown, 'Mum, I think there's somebody outside, I can hear some knocking on the door.'

'It's probably the wind, nobody will be out in this weather', she said as she walked to the door and listened. Yes, on top of the noise from the rattling letterbox, there was the sound of knocking and a voice calling for help. Julia opened the door which flew

in with great force. There half - laying in a puddle on the pavement was an elderly lady with blood coming from a cut on her eyebrow and the remains of her glasses propped on the side of her nose.

'Oh, my dear, what's happened? Come in, come in and I'll get you a chair.' Julia supported the stranger to the armchair near the fire as the girls stared in disbelief. 'Let's get your coat off first and then we'll sort out your cuts. Jenny, go and get the first-aid box.' Julia had taken control of the situation.

'I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry,' the lady managed to mutter. 'I don't know, I just don't know what happened really. I suppose the wind just took me off my feet and the next thing I knew I was leaning on a door; your door.' Julia took the lady's smart coat, placed it on a hanger and hung it on one of the hooks on the front door.

'Now let's have a look at you. Do you have any pains anywhere else, and do you want me to telephone for an ambulance?' Julia dabbed at the wounds with some TCP and examined the twisted glasses and broken lens.

After a few moments and after gathering her thoughts, the lady replied 'I'll be fine thanks and I'm so grateful for your kindness. My name is Kate Stott, and I live on the other side of town. I don't think I have any serious injuries and nothing a plaster and a trip to the opticians won't cure'.

'I'm Julia and these are my daughters, Annie and Jenny. You just relax. Would you like a nice cup of hot chocolate?' Jenny looked up sharply and was about to ask about the milk situation when Julia gave her a stern look.

'That would be lovely, thank you.'

Before I go into the kitchen to heat the milk, perhaps you'd like to borrow a

dressing gown and take off all your wet clothes; you're absolutely sodden through. Julia took her upstairs to her bedroom and gave the visitor a clean dressing gown. 'Come down when you are ready,' she said chirpily. Julia didn't question why tears were starting to stream down the visitor's cheeks. Julia switched on the TV and all the news was about the raging storm and the power cuts over large areas of the country. The population was being warned about the dangers of going outside with buildings collapsing and trees being uprooted. Julia found her candles and night lights and placed them beside the matches. The visitor, now in Julia's gown, returned to the fireside armchair and she and the girls were given hot chocolate. Julia stopped Jenny from asking why she hadn't made one for herself. She also brought down the wet clothing to dry.

Julia was feeling anxious about the increasing severe gales and heavy rain as the whole building shook. The banging and crashing noises outside increased. Suddenly, all the lights went out and the whole area was in darkness. The flickering firelight led Julia to the candles and night lights which were soon lit. 'Well Mrs Stott, you can't attempt to get home in this weather, so we'll have to sort out some sleeping arrangements. It's lucky that I've cooked a casserole for tea and have a gas cooker. I'll just put on the potatoes.' Mrs Stott didn't resist the kind offer and Julia, armed with candle, climbed the stairs. Whilst Julia was upstairs, Mrs Stott started to chat to the girls, asking them about their ages, their schools and ambitions and by the time Julia came down the stairs, the ice had been broken, and they were laughing and chatting with no inhibitions.

After tea, Julia let the girls stay up a bit later than normal and when they did get to bed, there was lots of giggling about the candlelight and the shared bed. Julia and Mrs Stott started to talk. They found each other good company and by the time

it was bedtime, they were both hoarse and Julia was calling Mrs Stott by her first name.

Julia explained that her husband, Tom, had been a corporal in the army but had been wounded in Afghanistan, and lost a leg and, in many respects, had lost his mind too. Tom suffered complex post-traumatic stress disorder and had long episodes of a mix of disassociation, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, anger and aggression. During his bad times he had been hospitalised and didn't have much time at home. Tom was in hospital at that time, so Julia was feeling lonely and depressed herself, particularly that she had lost both her mother and father only a few months before during the Asian flu epidemic. Kate told Julia about her life which she said had been uneventful. She had been divorced for several years because of her husband's cruelty and physical violence. She had recently downsized and moved back to the area where she was born but was finding life quite lonely.

The next morning, the storm had subsided. Julia took Kate a cup of tea and left her in bed whilst she took the children to school. When she returned with a large carton of milk from the corner shop, they had breakfast, and their chatting continued. Kate was feeling a bit stiff from the previous evening's fall but said she felt well enough to walk home. Julia said she would accompany her and they later walked arm-in-arm to Kate's house via the opticians. To say that Julia was surprised at Kate's house would have been an understatement. It was so grand in comparison to Julia's. It was in the most expensive part of the town and had a large, landscaped garden. The furnishings were so tasteful, and Julia considered that if this property had been a downsize then the previous house must have been a palace. Kate explained that she had a gardener and a cleaner who came in two

Continued over...

continued...

days per week. 'Do you mind walking around the house with me, Kate' she asked, 'I'm so frightened that there will be storm-damage'. So, Julia got a grand tour of the property; not that Kate was in any way showing off. 'Whatever must you have thought of our little house,' Julia laughingly said. 'My dear, that was the happiest evening and morning that I have spent for years, and you just don't know what it meant to me in your warm and cosy home', giving Julia a long hug.

They sat down and had a coffee which turned into a bite of lunch before Julia said she would have to go to collect the children from school. Julia had to promise that Kate could keep in touch which Julia was delighted to accept. And so, a very close friendship followed. Julia managed to get a part-time job at the main hotel and Kate picked up Annie and Jenny from school when Julia had to work extra hours. The girls loved the treats that Kate provided and the beautiful garden to play in. Kate even 'baby-sat' the girls when Julia wanted to visit Tom in hospital. It was a long train journey, and Tom was in no state of mind to see his children. As the time quickly passed, Kate became more like a grandmother to the children and a mother to Julia.

It was a bombshell when Julia suddenly received a call from the local hospital asking if she could come to visit a Mrs Kate Stott. Kate had given Julia's name and address as next-of-kin. Julia found Kate looking very ill under tubes and breathing apparatus. Julia gave her a big hug, but Kate didn't have the energy or breath to say much. As she handed Julia an envelope she managed to whisper, 'I wrote this some time ago because my doctor had been telling me to slow up. I have a heart condition, and I know I haven't got long. Please promise me you won't read it until I am gone'. Julia started to cry as she hugged her. A doctor asked

Julia to leave because she was in no state to have any visitors. Julia and the children were devastated that night when they had a call from the hospital to say that Kate had peacefully passed away.

Julia waited until the next morning, and after the children had gone to school, she plucked up the courage to open the envelope. Through blurred, tearful eyes she read,

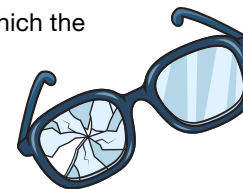
'My Dear, Dear Julia, you can probably remember me telling you that I divorced my husband because of his cruelty and physical violence. Well, there's a bit more to it. I became pregnant and he was very angry. In the past he had told me that he didn't want any brats running about in his house. In those early days of pregnancy, he started to become more violent, beating me and I feared for my unborn child and for my own life. So, I ran away to stay with an old university friend and her husband who lived in Cumbria. They lived in a remote area, and I felt safe there; I was still very frightened of my husband finding me. Well, during those early days my friend confessed that she was so jealous of me having a child because she'd been told by a consultant that she would never have children. I don't know which one thought of it first, but I agreed that they could have my child. The local maternity unit was thirty miles away, so nobody knew us and I used my friend's name at pre-natal examinations and her husband even accompanied me closer to the time of birth. There was a strict agreement that I would never disclose our secret.

Now I'll start with my confession which took me many attempts to write. I have been deceitful and imposed myself upon you and your lovely family. You see, it was not by chance that I was close to your door on that stormy night. It was not by chance that I came to live in your town. It was all a ploy to become closer. I had never forgotten my baby daughter and had

always been informed by my friends of the different episodes in her life. But when my friends died, I just felt the urge to come and live closer to that daughter – YOU.

You don't know how I have enjoyed my last few years seeing you, hugging you and loving my grandchildren. You see, you started to treat me like your own mother and that was so special. Thank you for the love that you have shared and for your children you have shared, my own dear grandchildren. Please don't think badly of me, I've loved you all my life, Mum.'

A few days after the funeral, Julia was informed by a solicitor that she was the sole beneficiary of Mrs Kate Stott's estate. The house which the children loved and a fortune which would relieve Julia from ever working again.



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During June I was lucky to see several Hobbys.

Hobbys are exceptional predators, capable of catching swallows and even swifts in flight. I saw one catch a linnet from the top of a tree. They can also catch and devour dragonflies in flight.

They look like large swifts in flight as they have a wing shape like a scythe. I rescued one once from we believe an attack by a sparrowhawk. It was covered in blood, and I retrieved it by taking it out of the

forest in my coat pocket. The Raptor Foundation helped with its recovery, and I was so proud to release it back into the wild. The two I came across this year were in an oak tree in the middle of a field. We watched them fly off and waited. Just as I was asked what the Hobby call sounds like, on queue, it called, and we watched it fly back to the tree. A memory of the hot summer of 2025 I shall not forget.



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The Story of Albert Charles King

Over the years that this magazine has been going we have often come across people in our Parish that stand out for one reason or another. Always we have been amazed that who we thought was just an ordinary member of our community has turned out to be extraordinary. This is certainly the case with Albert as you will realise as we go through this story.

Albert was born in Mildenhall in Kingsway at what was the Cottage hospital in 1932. It became a house when the hospital closed down. It is the first time that this editorial committee has met someone once resident at the hospital. His mother who lost her first husband in WW1 married Albert's father also known as Albert. She was the daughter of Charles Bullman who had built Rosewood, a cottage opposite the Half Moon in Kingsway, so as a baby he didn't move far from his birthplace. Albert had a stepsister from his mother's first marriage no longer alive. When his grandfather died the cottage was sold and the money divided amongst the family which meant that Albert and his parents moved to one of three cottages in The Street, Beck Row next to what is now Fairleigh Guest House. Then it was the home of a retired police sergeant - Mr Hurrell.

Albert had just started school in Mildenhall in the reception class housed across the road from St Mary's Primary School down the lane. His teacher was Miss Doris Sturman. His new home in Beck Row was in the half of the village which meant he went to Kenny Hill School, a wooden building in the grounds of Kenny Hill Church. The other half of the village went to school in Holywell Row Village Hall, temporary accommodation during wartime. When war finished, they moved back to the site of the present day school.

He remembers the headmaster at Beck Row School, Mr Oldman, a very strict disciplinarian and quite formidable. On one occasion when he was caught fighting with another boy the two of them were taken into the classroom and from the top of the cupboard came two pairs of boxing gloves and they were told to fight it out! He wrote on slates, some with pieces missing and foraged in the local chalk pit for something to use to write.

While Albert lived in this cottage, he remembers a damaged plane coming into land with 2 bombs on board. It crashed behind his cottage; the police arrived and told them to go into their air raid shelter as the plane was now on fire. There was a loud noise, he felt pressure in his ears and saw what he thought was mist but was dust as the bombs had exploded. Sgt Hurrell standing at his bedroom window was blinded by flying glass as the panes flew out. Debris flew a great distance, and he saw straw stacks across the road catch alight. Albert's cottage lost all its windows and its roof which meant the family had to find somewhere to live very quickly. The annual fairground was stored during the winter at The Grove, Stock Corner in Beck



Row and his father bought one of these old showman's caravans moving it on to Poplar Farm, Kenny Hill owned by some brothers of the King family. It had a double bed at the end where he and his sister were put to bed. His parents sat on the bench at the side until they were ready for bed and he and his sister now asleep were transferred to a rag rug on the carpet.

At the age of 11 years Albert went to Mildenhall Secondary Modern School (where Mr Mothersole was the headmaster) which he said had many evacuees, so much so the local children went in the mornings and the evacuees in the afternoons. He hated school and only ever wanted to drive tractors, but his father decided he needed to get an apprenticeship so got him a job with Sidney Ford at West Row in his workshop to learn engineering for the princely sum of 10 shillings in old money - 50p now - a week. His friends driving tractors were earning three times more. A local farmer Ronnie Abrey did persuade him to work for him driving tractors until he got a job on RAF Mildenhall working for a contractor there called W C French. He graduated to driving a bulldozer for them. The pay was good, and he could work as much overtime as he wanted. That was before the brown envelope arrived calling him up for his National Service. He was 19 years old and went to Egypt mostly in the canal zone and Sinai. Although he was not in any grave danger, they still had to be extremely cautious when leaving the barracks, always with an escort.

When he returned, he was greeted with much sadness. His mother suffering from Alzheimer's didn't know who he was and his friends had moved on or got married. He said how he felt quite lost. There were no jobs about, so he took up farm labouring getting up sugar beet by hand in the cold winter. Eventually he got a job on RAF Mildenhall again for 5 years maintaining and driving bulldozers as before. At one point he left that job and went to drive lorries for Stan Rolfe in Wilde Street delivering sugar beet to the factory rather than digging them up by hand! From there it was to Sam Alper's Caravan building firm in Newmarket for 7 years as a machinist. It was then that he was enticed to go back on RAF Mildenhall where he obtained a job as a supervisor on the loading and unloading of aeroplanes. One would think this a simple job, but no. This job required training in a classroom for 6 weeks. It was divided into 3 phases and entailed mathematical calculations of the



loads, how to balance them in the aeroplane and deal with safety issues, especially with hazardous materials. Tying down the loads was very important, and he readily admits the job was such a struggle sometimes he often found it very challenging. He eventually became shift foreman which carried a higher rank, and the MOD retired him at 60 but now will admit he is quite proud of the way he was able to do it.

He had married at the age of 25 years but although it provided him with two wonderful children - Steven and Sharon, it wasn't always a happy time because his wife became ill and spent a lot of time in hospital leaving him to do a full day's work at the same time caring for the children which proved very hard. He was grateful to Vic Smith and his wife Joan who looked after the children after school

continued...

until he got home from work. Eventually his wife was put into nursing care where she died. Years later when the children had grown up into two wonderful individuals, he met Jean Adams and they had many happy years together.

The next chapter in his life is the one which makes him extraordinary. He obtained some wood offcuts from Gilbert Parkinson and had seen a bird killed in the road lying there with one wing extending and using that as his idea he made an abstract sculpture in wood. Through Gilbert, who was impressed with his artistic work, he met a man called Bill Hastings whose wife was a teacher at King Edward's School in Bury St Edmunds. She was an artist too and when she saw some of his work, she wanted to show it in the Cathedral there. They shared a joint exhibition of their work with Albert providing 10-15 pieces. At this time, he was still working at Sam Alper's and making his sculptures in the evenings. At the time Mr and Mrs Norwick had a gallery in a little wooden shed in St Andrews Street in Mildenhall and he went in to see if they would like to sell some of his work. There he met John Thompson, Norah Stittle and other local artists. Through this group of people, he had several exhibitions in the Cathedral and on one occasion he sold a pair of hands to his first American, so they are somewhere back in their country now. He then became involved with Rural Industries for Suffolk when he was asked if he would like a stand at the Suffolk Show which he gladly accepted. His income from the sales of his work allowed him to give up his job and concentrate all his time to something he so enjoyed. At one time he recalls how an American, advised by Mrs Wallace who ran the post office at the time, came with a brass rubbing and asked him to make this in elm wood. He did it in black and gold leaf which was a little tricky as he had to stop the two merging. The end result so pleased this gentleman that he took on two partners and they went all over the country selling Albert's work. One piece is owned by a director of Shell, one is in Australia and one in the Seychelles. This went on for 8 years until plastic moulds came into fashion and he decided to go back to wood sculptures. Sadly, at this time his wife died.

Now at the age of 93 he has had to stop his work. His workshop contains much of his work, the family have been given the choice of anything that they want and so he is about to offer the rest to anyone who would like a piece.

He has decided to just ask for donations and the money will go to the Papworth Hospital and Alzheimer's Research. His contact details are as follows.

His website address is www.albertkingwoodcarvings.co.uk
Tel: 01638 713541, Mob: 07748 284035, Email: albertkingwoodcarvings@yahoo.com

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Gardening Tips

As it has been just so dry this summer, jobs in the garden are limited. Indeed, doing too much work could be detrimental, allowing the drought in.

However, many plants have finished flowering now and, in this heat, look like pieces of straw burnt to a crisp. So now is a good time to just cut them off and rake them up. Lift out any small weeds at the same time, don't fork or hoe too deep. Take out any dried-up leaves as well. Stand back and examine your efforts and when satisfied run a wire rake through the fine, dry soil. This will finish off the look. Sometimes less is more.

Just carry on doing this minimalist operation until such time as we have a wetter period.

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FARMING DIARY

As I write this the cereal harvest has just begun and is currently dominated by the weather. Although last Sunday 6th July we had heavy rainfall in a couple of storms and my rain gauge measured a very welcome 18mm. Many places very local to us missed these storms and measured a measly 2 or 3mm. We are therefore in a serious drought situation with every month since the turn of the year measuring below average quantities of rainfall and May and June very low quantities indeed. Couple this with the searingly hot temperatures of recent weeks and it is easily explained why harvested crops are well down in yields and with the drought situation it doesn't help that crop irrigation in our immediate area is banned in order to protect depleted water resources.

So how has the drought affected me? The first crop of the year that is harvested is asparagus with the season starting in April and running through to 21st June. We started early with a good crop of beautifully tasting, high quality, but as the season continued and the drought began to bite, quantity declined and quality deteriorated culminating with me deciding to finish the season 10 days early in order to preserve the plants for next season. I have been growing the crop since 1982 and this is the first time this has happened.

I also grow hay which I supply mainly to stables and people with horses. The grass died off early, but I cannot cut and bale the grass until 1st July for environmental reasons and last year I sold 782 bales. This year we have baled 396 so just over half - a big shortfall, but I have done better than some. A friend of mine at Lawshall near Bury St Edmunds harvested 180 last year and a pitiful 29 this year.



a different breed of chicken to brown eggs and these hens are white in colour and are called Dekalb White and are a hybrid hen with its origins from the White Leghorn. The brown hens are Lohman Browns which again are a hybrid and are a derivative of the famous Rhode Island Red. Anyway on 13th June most of my brown hens left the farm due to the fact that they had reached the end of their viable laying cycle leaving me with predominantly white hens on the farm, hence the white eggs in my farm shop.



We have spent a lot of time since 13th July mucking out the empty sheds, disinfecting and carrying out repairs. When brown hens leave the farm at the end of lay, they are generally about 80 weeks of age and have been on the farm for 64 weeks. This particular flock have actually managed 82 weeks, but by then their eggshell quality has started to deteriorate, the egg numbers have decreased to about 70% from a peak of 98%. Mortality has increased and the flock has become generally a bit tired.

When a flock of around 1000 is due to go I try to sell at least half to smallholders, allotment holders and people who just want a few hens in their gardens. They will still lay well, but maybe not enough to make them viable on a commercial enterprise like mine. It is a realistic target to move on 500 like this, but unfortunately the other 500 are sold to a dealer. Replacement stock arrives at 16 weeks of age, week commencing 14th July. White hens are very popular with farmers like me because in general they are much more profitable. There are 3 main reasons for this. Firstly, they lay a viable number of eggs for over 100 weeks rather than the 80 I have just spoken of. That works out at just over an extra 100 eggs per bird giving close to £15 per bird at shop prices. Over 1000 hens this is big money. Secondly, white chickens eat approximately 30 grams less feed than brown hens per bird per day. Over a 12-month period this equates to 10.5 kg per bird with feed working out at 28p per kilo. Over a year 1000 white hens eat about £3000 less feed than brown hens. Remarkable! Finally white hens are in general much less highly strung than brown hens. They bully each other less and suffer much less stress with weather and other outside events (like aircraft noise etc.) than brown hens.

However, there is one major downfall in producing just white eggs and it's a big one. Far more customers prefer brown than white. Some people think white are bleached by me - as if I have time for that! Some people think white eggs are created by me feeding second rate food, some think white eggs are just pale unhealthy brown eggs. But by far the majority think brown eggs look nicer in the fridge and the kitchen. I can't argue with this: a dozen lovely fresh dark brown eggs do look lovely in a bowl. But do trust me, the only difference is the colour of the shell and bear in mind white hens are better for the farmer and for the environment. Give them a try and see if you can taste the difference.



News from Beck Row Methodist Church

The usual coffee morning was a success with £281.53 being raised.

Why not come along next time as it is a great way to meet new people and many regulars from villages all around.

Our next event is a coffee morning on Saturday 2nd August at 10am to 11.30am. We hope to see you there.

Harvest Supper is Saturday 13th September at 7pm. All are welcome.


If you wish to come, please contact Wendy on 01842 860 184.

Sunday 14th September is Harvest Thanksgiving Service at 11am, taken by the Rev Steve Oliver - he always makes you smile!

Bookings for the Hall – please call Wendy on 01842 860 184.



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The Demise of the Mildenhall Register

Well, dear reader, I hope you can recall my article of last year where I related the history and the ethos behind the Mildenhall Register since its inception over forty years ago. Perversely, this year, it is my sad lot to inform you of the demise of the Mildenhall Register.

The reasons behind this sad state of affairs are many and varied, least of all is the inevitable passing of our veterans with the very few still with us unable to travel and attend the reunions. This factor, allied, to the standing down of the Secretary and the Treasurer, led to the inevitable outcome.

Our Secretary has been in post for many years but both he and his wife have suffered health problems over the last year which has strengthened their decision to stand down and pass the baton to the next generation.

As Treasurer I have been in post some 20 years and, as I approach my dotage, I felt it time to hand over my baton to a younger, more capable, person.

However, at the AGM, as no-one came forward to take over either post the assembled membership, including a member who had travelled from Canada, took the decision to wind down the Register and make this the last reunion. Sad but, as I said, inevitable.

The reunion, however, went ahead with a Saturday visit to the Bressingham Steam Museum. This was a success with the weather staying kind to us, the members enjoying recapturing their (long-lost?) youth on the Gallopers, riding behind the three trains that were running, visiting the many and varied displays on offer and, in some cases, enjoying what the vintage sweet shop had to offer (in our case toffees, wine gums and coconut mushrooms which, obviously, have long gone so a return visit is called for).

After returning to our hotels and rapidly changing into posh frocks it was all engines to flank and off to the Bury St Edmunds Golf Club for the Reunion Dinner.

Once again, Tom and his team looked after us exceptionally well with elegantly laid tables, a most friendly and accommodating staff led by Kacper and, of course, a superb meal. After the normal speeches and presentations our guest from the 100th Air refuelling Wing at RAF Mildenhall, Lt Col. Luke Reardon, gave a most interesting and informative presentation on the history and current workings of the 100th ARW.

All in all, a most pleasant and convivial, but bittersweet, evening was had by all.

Bright eyed and bushy tailed, the next morning saw us assembled at St John's church, Beck Row, for our annual 'church parade', preceded as always by a small service and wreath laying at the Mildenhall Register plaque that overlooks the Commonwealth War Graves Memorial and Cemetery.

After the service, led by Padre Dan and, thankfully, my last reading, we repaired to the church hall where the Church Ladies had, once again, prepared a magnificent buffet for our final get together. Eventually, after much reminiscing it was time to say farewell to each other and to spread to the four winds.

It just remains for me to thank all the members of the St John's congregation, the Church Ladies and all the clergy, past and present, who have supported the Mildenhall Register so well over all these years.

On behalf of the Committee and all the members past and present of the Mildenhall Register a heartfelt thank you and I close with the hope that, in the words of that most famous of wartime songs

"We'll meet again".



Places for all events need to be booked online - please visit:
<https://bit.ly/LakenheathFenEvents> to read more and book tickets.

Treasures of the Moth Trap – 25 July, 29 August, 26 September (10am–1am)
 Learn more about the amazing world of moths - join us to admire what we catch in our harmless trap.

RSPB members £5 (£2.50 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £6 (£3 for Under 18s)

Guided Pond Dipping – 6 September (11am–1pm)

Why not borrow a pond-dipping kit to see what beautiful and strange creatures live below the water? Come along to learn about the underwater world with our knowledgeable volunteers to guide you.

RSPB members £5 (£2.50 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £6 (£3 for Under 18s)

Summer Wildlife Walks – Sundays 20 July, 17 August (10am–1pm)

Join our knowledgeable guides for a tour of the reserve taking in the best of our wildlife highlights. During the summer months there will be lots of migrant birds to see as well as plenty of dragonflies and butterflies. Come and celebrate the summer with us!

RSPB members £12 (£6 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18s)

Summer Walking Safari – Saturday 19 July (2–7pm)

Our popular Summer Safari follows a route covering the full range of habitats at Lakenheath Fen. Follow our knowledgeable guides through reedbed, fen, wet grassland, riverbank and woodland on a trail to see as much wildlife as possible on this longer, 6.5 miles route.

RSPB members £20 (£10 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £25 (£12.50 for Under 18s)

Fascinating Flora Guided Walk – Sunday 27 July (10am–1pm)

A visit to Lakenheath Fen in Summer is a very colourful one with a wide variety of plants in flower. But, behind their pretty exterior lies a hidden world of folklore, poisons and medicinal properties. Join us to discover more about the secret world of our wildflowers.

RSPB members £12 (£6 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18s)

Big Wild Sleepout 2025 – Saturday 2 to Sunday 3 August (1pm–1pm)

Our ever-popular Big Wild Sleepout is back! Come and join us for the ultimate closer-to-nature experience - sleeping under the stars, a campfire, wildlife walks and stargazing. Suitable for adults and families alike.

RSPB members £30 (£15 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £35 (£17.50 for Under 18s)

Amazing Autumn Guided Walk – Sunday 17 August (9:30am–12:30pm)

On this seasonal walk we will be looking for the first signs of Autumn - dazzling ducks in their new plumages, waders passing through on migration and beautiful fungi popping up here and there! Suitable for all knowledge levels and ages.

RSPB members £12 (£6 for Under 18s); non-RSPB members £15 (£7.50 for Under 18s)

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We would like to thank all those who contributed to this parish magazine, as well as all those who have helped to deliver it. Should you wish to get in touch regarding anything in this magazine or if you wish to contribute something towards the next issue you may contact us by Saturday 12th September 2025 in the following ways:

If your household does not receive a magazine please let us know.

Cllr Sue French: sjfrenchpc4@hotmail.com • 07727 329796

Cllr Philip Haylock: 6 The Street, Holywell Row, Suffolk IP28 8LS • 07860 316748

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