



THE BEACON

Beck Row, Holywell Row and Kenny Hill



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February – March 2024

Hello Readers

It's springtime – although as I am writing this – the weather forecast is threatening some nasty snowy stuff coming this way. Let's hope the wind has a change in direction and it misses this area.

The Christmas season soon came and went and unbelievably in this issue of the Beacon we will be celebrating Easter. It really does seem to be early this year – Good Friday is 29th March and Easter Monday 1st April. You will notice an Easter Egg Hunt poster inside, dates to be confirmed on social media platforms.

We have some wonderful celebrations – Topsy Bacon receiving the British Empire Medal, 2 local ladies celebrating their 90th birthdays and the 90th Anniversary of the MacRobertson Air Race – RAF Mildenhall to Melbourne, Australia in 1934.

Congratulations to Jane Spenser – Clerk to the Parish Council on achieving her CILCA accreditation (Certificate in Local Council Administration). Well done Jane.

Whilst looking forward to what is within this issue, massive thanks must be given to everyone who took part in making Santa's Sleigh the huge success that it was on 22nd December. Santa and his helpers felt that this was by far the best year yet and look forward to 2024.

As always grateful thanks to all who help putting the Beacon together and the volunteers who deliver around the village.

Sue French

What's Going On Locally...

St John's Church

Sunday Services 9.30am

2nd Sunday of the Month: Service of the Word

4th Sunday of the Month: Holy Communion

Refreshments served after every service.

2nd Monday of the Month:

Ladies Bible Study – 10am

3rd Sunday of the Month:

Lightwave Breakfast Church – 10am

St John's Church Hall, Community Events

1st Tuesday of the Month, Lunch

– 12 noon for 12.30pm. Booking required.

Contact Kathy 07963 958017

2nd Tuesday of the Month, Soup & Bingo

– 12 noon. No booking required.

3rd Tuesday of the Month, Coffee Morning

– 10am. No booking required.

4th Tuesday of the Month, Soup & Chickenfoot

– 12 noon. No booking required.

Revs David & Caroline Butcher 07747 816038



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

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For any other information or if you would like me to call and see you for an informal chat please contact:-

Laura Prentice

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Email: laura@suttonservicesltd.co.uk or office@suttonservicesltd.co.uk

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Gardening Tips

In January, days start getting longer and boy do we need longer, brighter days after a wet December.

So what can be planted now, without any hassle and we can start to see results quickly? We can't plant outside yet, but we can actually plant carrot seeds in pots and have them inside an unheated greenhouse. Get a pot, put in potting compost and mix with a small amount of sand. The seeds are to be put in about one to one-and-a-half inches deep, water, then cover with a piece of glass to get them to germinate and then remove the glass.



Use early growing carrot seeds and these will be the best tasting carrots of the year before anyone else's.

The glass can be taken off after germination and carefully select individual carrots to pull out as each matures.

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St John's Church in Beck Row will be leading a Lent Bible Study Course which runs for 6 consecutive weeks from 20th February at 7.30pm on a Tuesday Evening at St John's Church Hall. The course will be based on the TV Series 'Broken' starring Sean Bean and Anna Friel. 'Broken', written by Jimmy McGovern was first shown in 2017. The series focuses on the life and ministry of Father Michael Kerrigan, a Roman Catholic, priest who, despite past trauma and anxiety

about his own inadequacies, attempts to bring the light of Christ into the lives of the people amongst whom he ministers.

The series portrays real life at its most gritty and unvarnished, and in doing so raises many questions along the way about how to live faithfully when life is very hard. This series contains some disturbing story lines. It is not for the faint-hearted. It is 'gritty' but real... it contains swearing, themes of death, suicide, abuse, violence etc... There will be someone available to talk to if you need to.

A total of 6 sessions form the basis of this Lent Study, using the Bible to reflect on the issues raised. Each week during Lent there will be one episode to watch. We will then take time to discuss the issues raised and faced by the characters portrayed in this challenging drama.

Each session starts at 7.30pm in the Church Hall:

Session 1 – Poverty and Morality	20th February 2024
Session 2 – Suicide and Gambling	27th February 2024
Session 3 – What is Truth?	5th March 2024
Session 4 – Theft or Lying?	12th March 2024
Session 5 – Reconciliation	19th March 2024
Session 6 – Justice and Forgiveness.	26th March 2024

If you think you might find these discussions interesting please do come along and see.

Easter Services

Palm Sunday – 24th March 9.30am at Beck Row – Holy Communion
– Revd Caroline

Maundy Thursday – 28th March 7pm, Group Service at Tuddenham – Revd David

Good Friday – 29th March 2pm, Group Service at Eriswell
– “An hour at the Cross” – Revd Caroline

Easter Day – Sunday 31st March 9.30am, Beck Row and Eriswell
– Holy Communion – with Revds Diane Grano and Dan Mullin respectively

If you have any Church related questions, or I can assist in any way, please contact me: Revd David Butcher 07747 816038 or: revdavidbutcher@gmail.com

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Beck Row Methodist Church

**Thursday
5.30pm & 7pm**

**Friday
7am & 9am**

With Terri 07725 761922

Spotlight on this edition's Advertiser

– Beatrice Carter Property Ltd



Beatrice Carter Property Ltd is a family run business from Mildenhall. It was founded by Carol Jaggard and her daughter Helen in 1994. They were unsure of what to name their new business, and, as Helen's great grandmother "Beatrice Carter" used to rent out her cottages to the farm workers in the town of Mildenhall in the 1930s, they decided to name the business after her.

Some background...

Beatrice Cornell married James Carter who was a local man in Mildenhall, he owned a horse and cart and worked on roads for the Council. He purchased land on Field Road, Folly Road and other areas in Mildenhall from the Trinity College in Cambridge which he farmed. Later, some of the farmland was compulsory purchased by the Council who then built Mildenhall Industrial Estate on it, naming a road after James, securing his place in the history of Mildenhall forever.



Local businesses would also hire James with his horse and cart, which allowed him to make a good living at the time. The couple had 7 children, of which still survives, Beryl Williams (Carter) who married the artist Harold Williams. In the 70s Harold was commissioned to paint a portrait of the actor Bob Hope which still hangs in the Bob Hope Community Centre on RAF Mildenhall. Beryl has just turned 98 (in January 2024).

Beatrice lived on Field Road (in a row of cottages since demolished - bungalows have now been built there – near Field Walk) Beatrice kept cows as she supplied the town with milk. The cows would be walked through town every day to graze on the Jubilee Fields and then walked back in the evening – you can still see the rings where the cows were tied on the garden wall to one of the bungalows.

The owner of the business, Carol Whetton married Richard Jaggard in 1965 (also known as Burt, grandson of James and Beatrice) Richard was a local bricklayer who started work at Cocksedges

in Mildenhall. He went on to have his own building firm Jaggard & Matthews. Carol and Richard have three children and four grandchildren. Carol and Richard were already landlords, renting a small 2 bedroom bungalow to USAF personnel in the 1970s.

Carol had previously been a sales executive for Eastern Electricity but took early retirement in 1994. Carol and Helen – inspired by the legacy of their ancestors and fuelled by a deep-rooted passion for real estate and property development, embarked on a journey to establish Beatrice Carter Property as a local family run independent business. Over the years Beatrice Carter has flourished offering a tailor-made service to its clients, not only specialising in the rental requirements for the USAF, now also



including a unique sales experience for the Vendor.

Following the diagnosis of a brain tumour in 2001, Carol decided it was best to step away from the front line. The next few years Helen ran the business until 2004 when she moved down to Cornwall to raise her family. Angela Lynch (Carol's sister) then managed and continued to grow the company until her retirement in 2021. The Beatrice Carter team is now led by Terrie Jaggard (Carol's daughter) who has been with the company for over 24 years, also joined by her daughter Alex Stimpson who has been a vital member of the team since 2011 and who now runs the Lettings division of the company. Terrie's son Brad Jaggard also works at Beatrice Carter, he joined in 2020 following the completion of his University Degree in Cambridge. Elsie Palmer who is the only non-relative employee to be part of the current team has been a rising star since the completion of her Distinction level Apprenticeship, through Beatrice Carter.

The team work with Landlords across the globe, looking after their investments and continuing the legacy of Beatrice Carter.

Beatrice Carter Property provides a personal service and are proud of the awards they have gained from the The Estas Awards which highlight the UK's best agents delivering outstanding services of which Beatrice Carter has won 5 years running.





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Brownie Bites – our recipe for Easter

INGREDIENTS

- 175g butter (chopped)
- 150g dark chocolate
- 250g light brown sugar
- 85g self raising flour
- 50g cocoa powder
- 3 large eggs
- 100g milk chocolate chips or chopped chocolate
- 24 mini chocolate eggs plus extra to decorate (24)
- (tart tins or mini muffin tins)

METHOD:

- 1 Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C and line 24 holes with paper cases.
- 2 Put butter, dark chocolate and sugar in a pan and heat it gently, stirring all the time until the butter and chocolate have melted.
- 3 Remove from heat and leave to cool for a few minutes.
- 4 Meanwhile sift the flour, cocoa and a good pinch of salt into a large bowl. Stir in the warm chocolate mixture and the beaten eggs until combined well.
- 5 Divide the mixture into the cases putting one mini chocolate egg into the middle of each, pushing it down gently.
- 6 Bake for 12-15 minutes until cooked but still gooey in the middle. The warmth will continue cooking as they cool for 10 minutes in the tin.
- 7 Melt the rest of the chocolate chips/chopped chocolate in short bursts in the microwave (don't burn) or in a bowl over simmering water, stirring frequently.
- 8 Leave to cool until quite thick then dot a little of this on each brownie and stick an egg on each.



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If you are interested and would like to know what is involved,
please contact engs@mildenhallmuseum.co.uk

We would love to hear from you.

Mildenhall & District Museum Society Talks

Members £2 – non-members £4

Annual Membership £10

Talks are held at the Museum 7.30pm

Thursday 7th March – Daniel Morgan – History of the Toy Theatre

Thursday 4th April – Danny Pearson – Mildenhall Workhouse – the Lives of Paupers

Thursday 2nd May – Dad's Army Museum

Refreshments available. Please come along, you will be assured a warm welcome.

**The Museum will re-open after the winter break on 1st March.
Opening times are:**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Friday 10.30am – 4.00pm**

FREE ADMISSION – DONATIONS WELCOMED

ADVANCE NOTICE – Later this year marks the 90th anniversary of the Great Mildenhall to Melbourne Air Race and the commissioning of RAF Mildenhall in October 1934.

The Museum together with the Base, local councils, library, National Gallery and Mildenhall Register are hoping to have a series of events building up to October.

We hope you will be able to enjoy some of the activities and events that are organised.

Stephanie Palmer – Chairman of Trustees, Mildenhall Museum.

STOP PRESS – DURING THE EASTER SCHOOL HOLIDAYS THE HISTORY HUB PRESENTS AN EGGSTRAVAGANZA AT THE MUSEUM, FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY. PLEASE CHECK WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS.

News from the Parish Council

Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill

December 2023 & January 2024

Telephone: 01638 501623 – Email: beckrowparishcouncil@gmail.com

www.beckrowparish.com

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday 8th June 2024. It will be a day to enjoy activities with friends and family. If you have emailed the Clerk to volunteer to help – thank you. This event will also kick off the local celebrations regarding the 90th anniversary of the MacRobertson Air Race.



The Parish Keeper will be carrying out some improvements and maintenance to the bollards and Beck Row village sign area at the junction of St John's Street. The potential addition of colour from some flowers are also planned.

Beck Row Sleigh made its annual appearance in December. The Parish Council would like to thank Paul and Louise Canham for their huge effort once again in putting the sleigh and procession together.

The budget for 2024/2025 has been approved. The Parish Council have taken the decision to place a 0% increase on the precept. It was agreed by all council members.

You may notice an increased police presence in the local area. Back in November Mr Tim Passmore, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk attended the Parish Council meeting to discuss the plans for more community style policing and at January's meeting Community Police Sergeant, Pete Maxfield

attended to introduce himself and explain further. Suffolk Constabulary have recently had a major re-shuffle in its provision of community policing with the intention of being much more visible, involved in many more local engagements and in working together with other agencies and stakeholders in order to tackle community issues such as Anti-social behaviour much more effectively.

Reporting local crime: www.suffolk.police.uk, select option "Policing in your area", go to Community Policing team and follow correct procedures.

PLANNING MATTERS

DC/23/1910/TPO - TPO 048 (1963) tree preservation order - 50 Poplar (G1 on plan, within A1 on order) up to 80 Poplar (G2 on plan, within A1 on order) fell Location Aspal Close Local Nature Reserve St Johns Street Beck Row Suffolk. Councillor Haylock noted that this work is important - as the Poplar trees grow old, they will fall if not removed.

DC/23/1922/HH - Householder planning application - a. two storey side and front extensions, b. render to all elevations. De Creke Farm, The Common, Beck Row. SUPPORT

DC/23/2009/TPO – TPO 048 (1963) tree preservation order – two conifers (T1 and T2 on plan within A1 on order) – fell. 13 Parkside, Beck Row. (information purposes)

DC/23/2086/OUT – Outline planning application (means of access to be considered) – two dwellings with associated access. Land south of St John's Street, Beck Row. SUPPORT





After the unseasonably wet weather the rain has stopped enough for the land to dry out.

Many thanks to Lakenheath Football Club led by Richard Horrex for attending to the pitch and we wish all the youngsters good luck for their matches here. It is a thriving set up and the many youngsters who come are a pleasure to host. I really don't need to remind you that anyone is welcome to come and watch and enjoy the refreshments available during match days.

A lot of interest was shown in the old photo published in the last edition of the football team at the time, and if anyone has photos they could lend for publication we would be pleased to publish them. The latest one was taken 10 years ago when players from years back came together for a match in memory of David Gee. He was chairman for many years and was a much-respected man who devoted a great deal of his time and interest in BRFC. The years have not dimmed his memory! There are no names attached to this photo and we would be very grateful if anyone recognises themselves, their children or anyone else in the photo. Please text any information to 07481 407694. Thank you in anticipation!

Meanwhile any Beck Row, Holywell Row or Kenny Hill youngsters who want to take the opportunity to join in with Lakenheath Youth teams, you are more than welcome.

Contact details are Philip Haylock: philiphaylock@btinternet.com, mobile 07860 316748 or Richard Horrex: richardhorrex@gmail.com, mobile 07540 201223.



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News from Beck Row Methodist Church

Since our last magazine edition we have had four successful events in the chapel and hall.

The early December Christmas coffee morning saw the hall filled with people from surrounding villages who gathered in the Methodist Church Hall. Many thanks are due for their patronage and their generosity because a sum of £612 was raised and of course many thanks for all those who cooked or gathered up raffle prizes or ran stalls. A true community spirit all round.

The next event was the Christmas sing along with Bryan Roy. Carols and well-known Christmas songs were sung with gusto by a congregation from all around.

The following week hosted the Mead Singers along with some youngsters from Stagecoach and what a delight they were. For those regulars who wouldn't want to miss such an evening it was the usual pleasurable occasion and for those of you who have never been you missed a treat. See you next time hopefully.

Finally, before Christmas was the usual Carol Service which starts off the Christmas celebrations to put a smile on everyone's face.

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 3rd February and 6th April – Coffee Mornings

We wish you all a very Happy New Year !

Beck Row Ladies Club

After forming the new Ladies Club last summer, there has been a great response to the monthly meetings, which take place on the second Monday of each month, 2pm, at St John's Church Hall.

Apart from a good excuse to get together again after Covid, there have been some interesting afternoons, including a wonderful display of handmade quilts, a rescue dog turned Therapy Dog with her owner who has written books on the subject, and a history talk on the Fens.

Meetings last for approximately 2 hours, and the entry of £4 includes the talk, refreshments and a raffle. All ladies are very welcome. The next meetings are:

12th February 'That Rings a Bell' – Mike Wabe, Thetford Town Crier

11th March 'Bury's American Connections' – Terry O'Donaghue, Blue Badge Guide

8th April 'Work of the War Graves Commission' – Mac MacDonald, ex-RAF

There are also three outings planned for the summer, which will be self/shared driven, further details at the next meeting.

Please join us for a very sociable afternoon.



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Managing our Habitats at RSPB Lakenheath Fen

Winter gives us an ideal window to carry out much of the habitat management work at Lakenheath Fen, as it is outside of the breeding season for the wildlife here. Between the months of October and February, we shouldn't encounter any nests, young animals or disturb any hard-working parents trying to raise their families.

So far this winter, then, much progress has been made in transforming our new land north of the river from intensively farmed arable fields into a wetland home for wildlife. For those readers not familiar with this project, in February 2023 the purchase of an additional 54 hectares was completed, thanks to a grant from the Morgan Sindall Construction Group. Hundreds of years ago our ancestors began to drain the Fens to turn the fertile but waterlogged peat soils into something dry enough for arable farming. However, wildlife lost out and the peat is now disappearing as it slowly dries and blows away in the breeze. By adding in sluices, dams and new ditches we are helping our piece of land to hold more water once again.



The photograph is of the view from Joist Fen viewpoint, across the reedbed that has just been cut by the digger on the distant right. It was taken by our warden, Katherine Puttick, on 10 January 2024.

As I write this in mid-January, our excavator driver is working on the new land now and is making good progress with creating new ditches on a very large, square field that made up a good chunk of the land purchase. As he works, the water table is rising, and we hope that the un-grazed wet grassland this work is creating will attract breeding Redshank, Lapwing and Snipe. Work is ongoing but hopefully this spring will see our first positive results. Every day the excavator is keenly followed by Great White Egret, Little Egret and gangs of Pied Wagtails and Starlings after an easy meal!

Elsewhere on the reserve, the annual process of reedbed cutting is well underway. Each year, different areas are cut on rotation – allowing us to keep the habitat varied. The longer we leave an area uncut, the denser it becomes, and these dense patches are favoured by birds like Bearded Tit, Bittern and mammals like the Harvest Mouse for nesting in. However, birds also like more open areas to forage for food in, as the small pools created in the cleared areas support small fish, frogs and aquatic insects (see photo). Whilst cutting the reeds themselves, we will also remove sapling willows and cut back mature bushes. Willows are very happy growing in waterlogged ground and without intervention, they would dry out the reedbed and begin a process called 'succession'. This is where the habitat gradually reverts to woodland. Centuries ago, the Fens were wetter and would have resisted this change better, but now they are drier and more isolated, the reedbed needs our help to stay as it is.

All this work would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers on our weekly work parties. Whilst we have six members of staff, we have dozens of volunteers so hopefully you can imagine the impact they have on what we can achieve.

With best wishes for the weeks ahead,
Heidi Jones, Visitor Experience Officer
RSPB Lakenheath Fen,
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Santas' Sleigh



Despite the cold, the wind, the drizzle, hundreds, perhaps thousands of residents turned out to greet Santa and his friends whilst they toured our villages!!

If it was cold on the sleigh, there was a warm welcome from all that greeted the procession.

This year Santa in his brightly lit sleigh was joined by five decorated tractors, a dancing Lada and the SARS car all being serenaded by Christmas music – if you couldn't see us, you could hear us!!

The look on the children's faces (and the adults) when they saw Santa in his sleigh and then to see the snow that the snow machine produced was amazing. One little boy shouted for Santa at the top of his voice and when Santa went to see him, he insisted many times "I've been a very good boy" – and Santa told him that he would visit him shortly.

The evening was a great success and it is hoped that the 2024 Sleigh will be as good – if not better!!

The Sleigh doesn't just happen. A big THANK YOU to all of those who gave up their time to make the Sleigh and Procession the success it was.



One bird you might be lucky enough to see at this time of the year is the brambling.

Arriving during cold spells from Scandinavia to feed on beech masts, the small seeds scattered along the ground under beech trees.

The call of a brambling has a nasal quality to it and can be recognized with the trained ear.



Brambling

The orange on the breast and black on the wings of the male make it stand out in the drabness of winter. Precisely the same size as a chaffinch, both birds can be found in flocks together. Get the binoculars on the flock and you can soon tell the difference. I've seen them recently in areas where there are beech trees but they could easily move on to bird tables once they've finished in the woods. Seeds can be put on a raised stone and this

may attract other species and then bramblings could come in.

It's worth bearing in mind that the brambling is designated a Schedule One species by the British Trust for Ornithology, and while it's great to look for them now you shouldn't go searching for them between April to September so as not to disturb a nest. They are rightfully protected.

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Birthday Congratulations!

Congratulations are in order for two of our life long residents of the Parish who recently celebrated their 90th birthdays.

Mary Butcher celebrated her birthday with an afternoon tea for family and friends. Mary came to live in Holywell Row when she married Peter Butcher in 1958 and they moved into their new bungalow which they named "Clovelly" and where she still lives.



Doreen Stebbeds lived in Holywell Row where she was born and when her mother died moved with her father to Shrubhouse Close in Beck Row.



She went to work in a children's home in Stowmarket when she left school where she lived in, but then later came back to live in Beck Row working on Mildenhall Air Base before she retired. Recently she moved into Ashmore Nursing Home in Stanton near Bury St Edmunds.

She had her birthday celebrations in the Nursing Home with friends from St John's Church and other friends and family.

Congratulations to Topsy Bacon B.E.M.

It is with great pleasure that we record the awarding of the B.E.M. to Topsy for her services to education in our Parish. A truly deserved accolade.

She started the pre-school in Beck Row in September 1974 because of the limited provision of this kind in the area. With the backing of a group of mums they began in the Old Village Hall in The Street, now a private house. They stayed in the Village Hall until 1981 then moved to a mobile classroom in the grounds of the Primary School in Lamble Close.



Numerous village people helped with fundraising and getting things put in place so the move could take place in the September and the start of the school year. With ever growing numbers such was the success of this venture that an extension was added but eventually it was necessary to purchase another mobile classroom which is still in use today.

Shortly the Nursery School will be celebrating the 50th anniversary with Topsy at the helm all those years. She is now having the children of children she has had through her hands. There is no greater compliment than that.

CONGRATULATIONS!



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2024 Year of the 90th Anniversary of the MacRobertson Air Race

The MacRobertson Air Race was a historic aviation event that took place in October 1934 as part of the Melbourne Centenary celebrations. The race was devised by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sir Harold Gengoult Smith, and the prize money of £15,000 was provided by Sir Macpherson Robertson, a wealthy Australian confectionery manufacturer, on the conditions that the race be named after his MacRobertson confectionery company, and that it was organised to be as safe as possible. A further condition was that a gold medal be awarded to each pilot who completed the course within 16 days.

The race was organised by an Air Race Committee, with representatives from the Australian government, aviation, and Melbourne Centenary authorities. The Royal Aero Club oversaw the event. The race ran from RAF Mildenhall in East Anglia to Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, approximately 11,300 miles (18,200 km). There were five compulsory stops, at Baghdad, Allahabad, Singapore, Darwin, and Charleville, Queensland; otherwise the competitors could choose their own routes. A further 22 optional stops were provided with stocks of fuel and oil provided by Shell and Stanavo. The basic rules were: no limit to the size of aircraft or power, no limit to crew size, and no pilot to join the aircraft after it had left England. Aircraft had to carry three days rations per crew member, floats, smoke signals, and efficient instruments. There were prizes for the outright fastest aircraft (£10,000 and a trophy, £1,500 and £500) and for the best performance on a handicap formula (£2000 and £1000) by any aircraft finishing within 16 days.



The winner of the race was the de Havilland DH.88 Comet named Grosvenor House, flown by Flight Lieutenant C.W.A. Scott and Captain Tom Campbell Black. The Comet was a purpose-built racing aircraft designed by A.E. Hagg and

built by the de Havilland Aircraft Company. The aircraft was powered by two Gipsy Six R engines and had a top speed of 237 mph (381 km/h). The Grosvenor House completed the race in less than three days, despite flying the last stage with one engine throttled back because of an oil-pressure indicator giving a faulty low reading. The Comet's victory in the MacRobertson Air Race helped to establish its reputation as a fast and reliable aircraft, and it went on to set several aviation records in the years that followed.

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This year has seen an increase of rats and we are grateful for this informative article from Ian Shipp

You Dirty Rat

Rats are a serious health risk to man especially in kitchens, food preparation and storage areas and where they come into contact with children and older people.

Rats are particularly difficult to control because of the rate at which they breed and are able to colonize new areas.

In the event of an infestation, you will need to survey the area to determine the size of the colony and the most appropriate form of control.

Britain is home to two types of rats:

- The Brown Rat (sometimes called The Norway Rat or Common Rat)
- The Ship Rat which is far less common

Distribution

The common rat is the most abundant and widespread of the species and can be found anywhere that offers shelter or food, including sewers and drains. They are excellent burrowers and favour compost heaps, ground under hedgerows and sheds. In domestic properties they will live in wall cavities and beneath floor boards. Ship rats are mainly restricted to port areas where they live indoors.

Pest concerns

Rats are a serious health risk to man especially in kitchens, food preparation and storage areas and where they come into contact with children and older people.

Rats are known to be responsible for spreading numerous, very serious diseases which can cause harm and even kill people – these include:

Weil's disease – Leptospirosis also known as Leptospiral jaundice - is transmitted via rodent urine, infecting people through contact with contaminated liquids or food.

Plague – probably the most infamous of all. Transmitted to humans from rats by the Rat Flea. Plague has not been recorded in Britain since the early 1900s but is still prevalent in many parts of the world.

Other diseases include Rat Bite Fever, Tetanus, Murine Tetanus and Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis.

Rats also carry many parasites including, ringworm, mites, nematodes, tapeworm, ticks and fleas.

Rats contaminate food, destroy building structures and cause fires when chewing on electric cables.

Top tips to help keep rats away:

- Store food, especially grains, pet food and birdseed, in rodent-proof metal or heavy plastic containers.
- Store grass seed in sealed containers.



- Put away any uneaten pet food.
- Pick up any fruit that has fallen from trees in your garden.
- Search out holes (even small ones) around your foundations, eaves and soffits and fill them with steel wool, cover with sheet metal, or fill with caulk, plaster or cement.
- Don't over feed birds in the garden – and bring food in at night.
- If you try to self-treat always follow the guidance on the product labels!!!

If all else fails call the professionals! Call a local company.

Look out for a member of a professional organisation such as The National Pest Technicians Association.

Written by Ian at 999 Pest Control Ltd
Tel: 07775 801190 for any pest issues

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FARMING DIARY

As I write this article thankfully it has stopped raining and now bitterly cold with -6°C expected tonight. This brings new challenges for a small-scale chicken farmer like me with the prospect of water freezing and hens getting cold and going slightly off lay. However, we have cold weather emergency procedures in place for water and the hens not being stupid stay in the shed and keep warm as best they can. All in all, despite the fact that my fingers are now cracked and extremely painful I think this weather is preferential to the hideous deluges we experienced in late December and early January. Certainly, both chickens and eggs are much cleaner now.

As a result of this year's wet Autumn and Winter I have decided to do some remedial work in the yard to try and alleviate the flooding of my shop which has blighted the recent past. By the time I write again I am hoping that levels will have been raised, new piping will be in place, a new soakaway will have been constructed and new shingle will be in place. Expensive, but if we don't take action, we will lose customers and there is nothing more expensive than that.

On the subject of customers, I have to report that my market stall outside Marks and Spencers in Bury St Edmunds continues to thrive. My sales have completely outpaced my targets and whilst I expected a lull after Christmas, I have not experienced one, in fact I am currently averaging close to 450 customers on a Saturday. How do I calculate that figure?



Well, you may be amused to know that I have entered the realms of modern technology on my stall – an area totally alien to my abilities but took the plunge and am managing to help my customers to use a card machine to pay me! The world doesn't seem to want to use cash much at all now. Bury really is a thriving market town on a Saturday with a great mix of local Bury people, people from neighbouring towns and villages, people of European heritage and many Americans from Bases near us. There is a fantastic buzz in town, and I consider it a privilege to be able to

earn my living in such a prime spot.

Further good news for chicken farmers is the fact that there hasn't been a case of bird flu in kept fowl since early November. This means that the policy of housing orders for kept birds and building up of natural immunities in wild birds seems to be working. This is great news as I hate housing orders as I think they are tough on hens and the public are not buying the product that they think they are. It is for that reason that I am more than a little surprised that the government has announced that if bird flu strikes again and hens compulsory housed, they will be called free range for the whole of the time the birds are kept in. The rest of Europe has a 16



week only time frame which I think is fair. I am shocked that this government thinks it is OK to tell lies to the public.

On the subject of hen contentment, I have recently been given a pair of really handsome cockerels whose crowing was keeping the neighbours awake at their previous abode. I put them in the shed with 250 brown girls who were starting to get tired and whose egg numbers were dwindling. All I can say is that 2 weeks after they arrived the hens are now laying 50 more eggs per day. As far as I am concerned these handsome gentlemen can crow as loud as they like.

A couple of articles ago I wrote about taking my vintage Massey Ferguson 65 (on this farm since 1963) for shot blasting. As you can see by the photos her renovation is almost complete and she is back on the farm with my son in law James putting her back together. I have so many memories of the old girl. She was stolen twice, dumped in a dyke once and mysteriously returned once. On another occasion my father was stranded in snow drifts in Isleham. He walked to a farm, rang my mother and instructed her to get me to pull him home with the 65. I duly set off wrapped up in a big Parka and I can still remember and even feel how cold I was that evening. However I succeeded in getting him home. Different days then – I was only 13 years old! I loaded thousands of tons of sugar beet into my lorry with her to take them to Bury beet factory. In the dry summer of 1976, I spent the whole summer holiday cultivating stubble, killing twitch (now known as couch grass), fishing and biking to Fen Tigers Speedway. Happy days then and I find it quite emotional that thanks to the brilliance of James and the painter John Chalk my old friend will soon be restored to her former glories.



THE THURSDAY CLUB

The Thursday Club are looking for new members (over 50s for both ladies and gents) to join our local friendly club, we have been going for over 50 years, so we must be doing something right.
Help us to keep going for many more years.

We have a variety of speakers, quiz/games afternoons and trips out throughout the year. We do have a great cuppa and biscuits at meetings and a raffle. So please come along for a couple of hours and meet new friendly people.

We meet every 3rd Thursday of the month at the Methodist Hall, Beck Row and there is plenty of parking available.

For any further information please telephone Maggie Walker on 01638 715447.

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

Winter Walking Safari

Sun 11 Feb (9:30am to 3pm)

Join our knowledgeable volunteers for a full tour of all the habitats here at Lakenheath Fen – we will try to see Marsh Harriers, Bearded Tits and perhaps our Cranes too.

Adults £16 / Children £8 (RSPB-members)

Adults £20 / Children £10 (non-RSPB members)

Treasures of the Moth Trap

29 March, 26 April, 31 May (10am to 11am)

Learn more about the amazing world of moths – join us to admire what we catch in our harmless trap.

Adults: £3 non-RSPB members, £2 for RSPB members.

Under 18's go free!

Free Entry for National Lottery Open Week

Sat 9 – Sun 17 March (all day)

As thanks for National Lottery funding, players can bring a recent lottery ticket or scratch card with them to get free entry to the reserve for the day.

Stargazing with Jonathan Shanklin

Wed 13 March (time tba)

Join us for a special evening with renowned meteorologist Jonathan Shanklin, for a fascinating talk followed by a walk if the sky is clear.

Race for Wildlife 2024

Sun 20 October (11am to 2pm)

Booking is now open for our biggest event of the year – why not join us for either a 5k or 10k circuit through this beautiful nature reserve? All profits will fund conservation work.

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The 48th Fighter Wing provides worldwide responsive combat airpower and support.



The 48th Fighter Wing – also known as the *Liberty Wing* – is located at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Feltwell. Consisting of more than 5,000 U.S. military members, over 1,500 British and U.S. civilians, and around 8,500 dependents, it is the largest U.S.-operated Air Force base in the United Kingdom and home to both F-15E and F-35A fighter jets. Current priorities for the 48th Fighter Wing include doubling our F-35A fleet by 2024 and providing balance for our people.

Historically, the 48th FW has been the foundation of USAF's combat capability and remains so today. The Liberty Wing led the El Dorado Canyon raids into Libya in 1986 and was the first F-111 fighter unit to deploy to the Gulf during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Liberty Wing also anchored NATO forces during Operations Deliberate Force and Allied Force. Since September 11, 2001, the 48th FW has played a key role in antiterrorism operations, and providing combat support in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.



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Thanks to this Edition's deliverers

- James and Katrina Bailey

I (Katrina) grew up in West Row and came to Holywell Row every Sunday as a child to visit my grandparents Bernie and Vera Parsons. Vera used to work at the old Aspal Hall and some people may remember how Bernie managed to repair most things (including the tiniest of clocks), well into his 90s.

James and I have lived in Beck Row since 2014, after moving back to England from abroad. We were supposed to have had 6 weeks to relocate and settle in before our first child was born, but she ended up arriving before the new sofa!

Since then we've also had a son and we now often deliver the Beacon as a family.

We enjoy living in Beck Row and like to get involved in community events.



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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 14th March 2024 in the following ways:

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