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WYMONDHAM Magazine

ISSUE 79 | WINTER 2023



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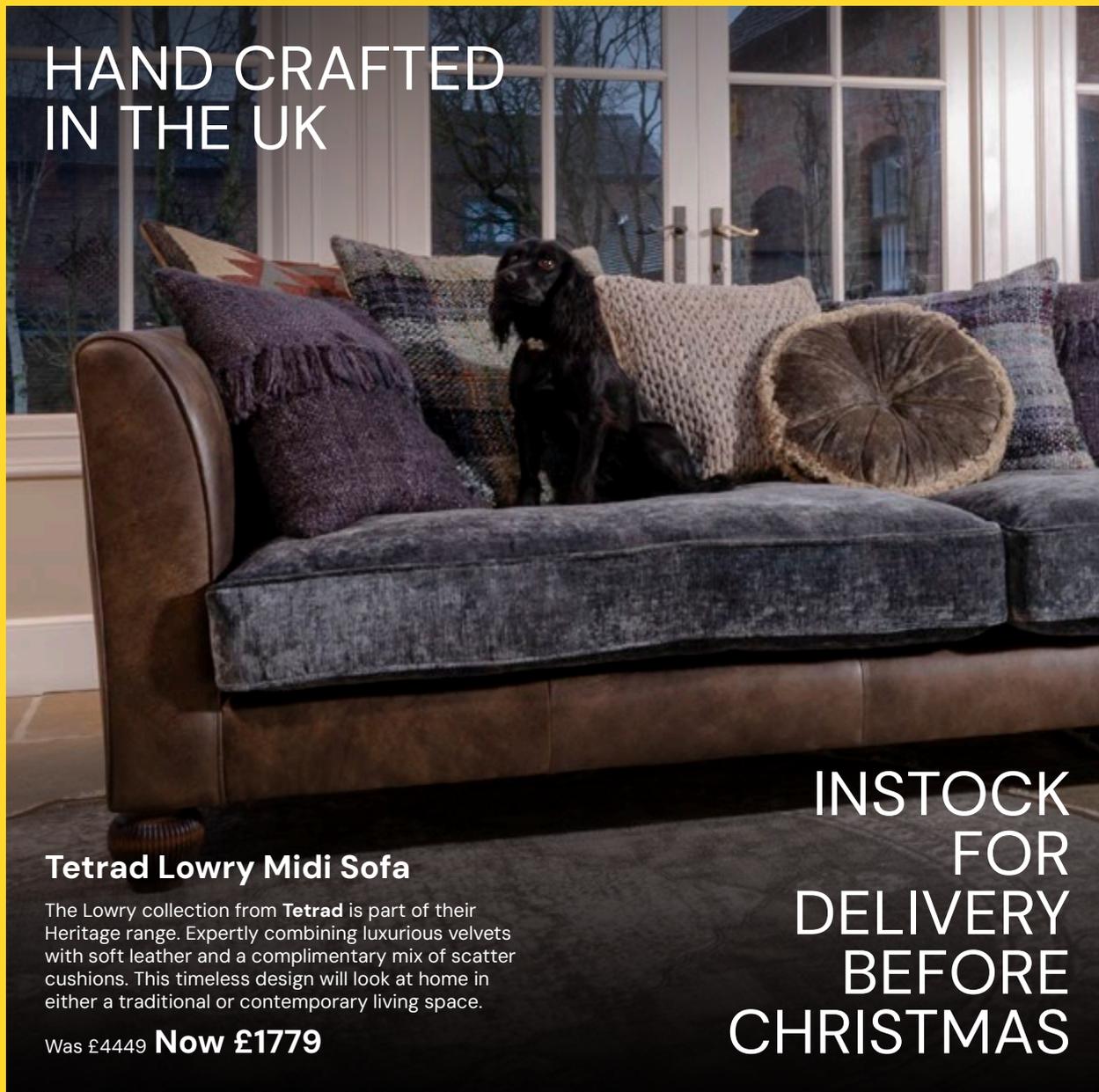


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EX-SERVICES CHARITY GIVING PRESENTATION

By Stephen Witt

Last month Wymondham Ex-Services Club hosted a fundsgiving event in the Regal Lounge, to present cheques to the two charities they have been supporting over the last 12 months.

Star Throwers and Wymondham Dementia Support each received a cheque for £825 from monies raised from donations and fundraising events.

Present were: members

of the local Women's Institute, representatives of Star Throwers and Wymondham Dementia Support, Mayor Suzanne Nuri-Nixon and Sam Diamond, Mary Hall and Steve Witt for the Club's Charities Sub-Committee.

Over the past year the Ex-Services Club has also raised money for Macmillan Cancer Support and the armed forces charity SSAFA.

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WHITE HART LANDLORD & LADY TAKE ON GREEN DRAGON



Photo: Kieran Bullen, Facebook

A new chapter in the Green Dragon's long history will begin this month, with Kieran Bullen and fiancé Kayleigh stepping in to manage the cherished pub, after its previous occupants decided not to extend their initial 6 month contract with owners, Admiral Taverns.

Announcing the move on Facebook, Kieran said: "The Green Dragon is such a key part of the community and Wymondham's history, making us incredibly lucky to have the chance for us to run such a beautiful and outstanding pub. The charm and character of this pub is something that we intend to preserve and carry forward, maintaining its community spirit and reputation."

The pair will continue to run The White Hart, which has seen a rebirth in popularity under their management.



NEW COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT AT WYMONDHAM HIGH

By James Michie

With the start of the new school year, we see new and old students returning to Wymondham High School to continue their academic studies. Students' return to school brings the ever-increasing pressures of school life, with tougher academic studies, higher work expectations and responsibilities, all of which make England's teenagers experience the third-highest rate of pressure from schoolwork out of 45 countries, according to a World Health Organisation Study. (TES, 19/05/2020)

Therefore, this year we are offering more Extra-Curricular Activities than ever before and are very excited to announce that from September we have been working with the local educational charity The Papillon Project, who are supporting students with creating and developing a new school allotment. Our ambition is shared with the charity, to support and improve mental wellbeing, to inspire young people to grow their own food and be taught crucial and highly valuable life skills.

As part of our allotment project a new club has been formed with the help from our first 10 student allotment champions who will be meeting on a weekly basis in school and getting their hands dirty creating the initial layout of the allotment with Matt Willer from The Papillon Project. Students' first session with Matt saw them laying out the first growing beds, building a compost site out of pallets, and making a Pallet bench to relax on while having a break. While the allotment is the clubs initial focus, students do have future plans to create a herb garden near the food tech, wildflower areas and a wellbeing garden.

The Charity has worked successfully with many schools around Norfolk and hopefully with the support from staff, parents, and the local community we can also be one of their success stories.

With the above in mind, students have named the allotment project "Wymondham High Academy Community Allotment" (WHACA).

We are off to a good start with The FRIENDS of Wymondham High School supporting the project with a donation, which will go toward a new Polytunnel, Wymondham Plotters have kindly dropped over packs of seeds, and we have a large selection of trees coming from the Woodland Trust.

However, we still require basic equipment and supplies and we were hoping that anyone who has anything that is no longer required may wish to donate to the allotment project.

Items we are looking for are: shovels, Shovel/spades, garden forks, rake, watering cans, pruning shears, garden trowels, hoe, wheelbarrow, wellies, gloves, seeds, compost.

Any donations can be left at the Site Team & DoF office which is in the Bungalow next to the North Gate on Folly Road.

For more information about the allotment project please email allotment@wh-at.net and for The Papillon Project visit www.thepapillonproject.com.

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JORDAN (JORDI) MURRELL

By Tony Holden

It's every parent's worst nightmare to be called home from work and met by a solemn-faced police officer who tells you that your child has died. But that's exactly what happened to Jordan's mum on 8th October.

It's not possible to put into words the pain his passing has caused for his family and friends, who still don't know what caused the death of such a well-loved, apparently healthy young man with everything to live for.

Jordan started working for Williams Lea while still at college, and worked his way up to the position of warehouse supervisor before moving on to a similar role at Fairfax and Favor in Snetterton. He was about to take on a management role at Natures Menu also in Snetterton. He enjoyed talking about politics and was a Wymondham Town Councillor until May 2023.

With a smile that brightened up the room, Jordan lived life to the full, cramming more into his 29 years than many of us manage in 3 times as long, and he left his mark wherever he went. He would go out of his way

to help people, either by encouraging them to achieve what he knew they were capable of, or organising fundraising charity events. He was particularly keen to help the air ambulance, and had started to raise money for this vital local service, and his family have said that they will carry on raising funds in his memory.

He was a keen supporter of Norwich City FC having attended matches with his dad from the age of 8, and was given the very unusual honour of a clap by supporters at the recent game against Leeds, while his picture was shown on the stadium screens. Jordan also enjoyed having fun, roast dinners, long dog walks and going to the gym with his sister.

Jordan's mum Sam said "if there is one thing that Jordan's passing has taught us it's how important it is to live your life for today, spend time with family and friends, and don't assume that there will always be a tomorrow."



Ruddy Muddy's tribute to Jordan ▾



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LOCAL AUTHOR PUBLISHES TWO NEW BOOKS

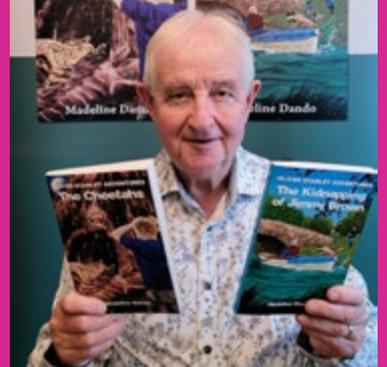
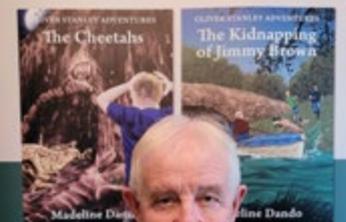
By Martin Wanger

Hello Wymondham, I am Martin Wanger, but I write under my mother's name, Madeline Dando. I have lived with my wife Brenda in the town for 30 years.

Writing stories is the hardest and the most rewarding thing I have ever done. Having published two novels, I thought I would turn my attention to children's books. I draw my inspiration and ideas from my childhood in the East End of London. As a child, I remember food rationing, bomb sites and playing football in the street. In those days, there were no computers or mobile phones and few televisions. Like most people, my parents struggled for money.

LOCAL AUTHOR MARTIN WANGER

WRITING UNDER THE NAME OF
MADELINE DANDO



On Friday, 17th November I'm launching my first two books in the Oliver Stanley Adventure Series: 'The Cheetahs' and 'The Kidnapping of Jimmy Brown'.

I will be at the Christmas Fair in Wymondham Abbey on Saturday the 2nd of December. Please come and say hello and ask me about my stories, which are suitable for children between 8 and 10 years old. You can also visit my website madelinedando.com.



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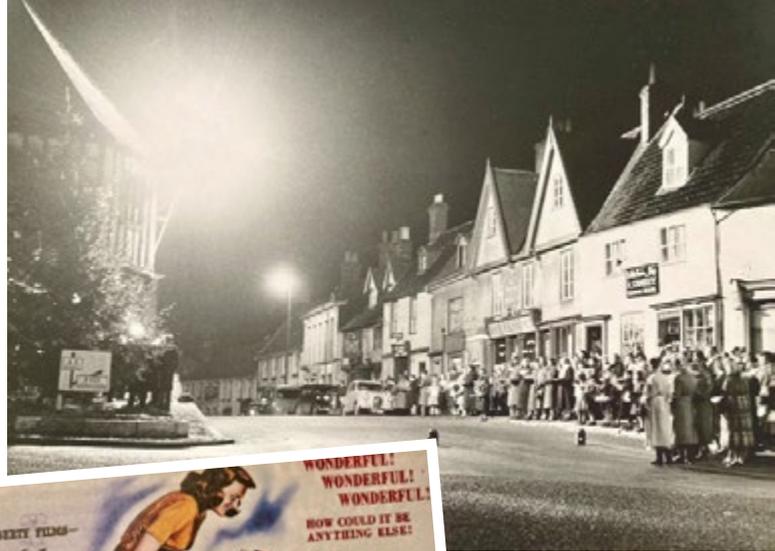
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▲ Carol singing round the Market Cross in the 1950s



▲ "It's A Wonderful Life" poster

CHRISTMAS FILM SHOW 17TH DEC

By Philip Yaxley

There will be an entertaining Christmas film show in the Regal Lounge at the Wymondham and District Ex-Services' Social Club on Sunday 17th December at 2:30pm (doors open 1:45pm) in aid of The Royal British Legion. The main feature will be the highly acclaimed and much loved festive movie "It's A Wonderful Life", starring the popular James Stewart and Donna Reed. An inventive comedy-drama, the film is arguably director Frank Capra's best work.

Supporting will be "The Night Before Christmas", a Tom and Jerry cartoon with their amusing cat and mouse antics, as well as a look at celebrations of "Christmases Past In Wymondham", through the 20th century, which has been put together by Richard Hitchins. There will also be a display of memorabilia and photographs relating to James Stewart's movie career and his service in World War Two with the US Army Air Force at Tibbenham, Old Buckenham and Ketteringham Hall. Some rare memorabilia will be on view amongst the exhibits. The show is open to all and entrance is £5, which is payable in cash on the door.

CAITLIN HUTSON JOINS BIONIC SQUAD

By Maria Hutson

Wow what a year we have had... it is hard to believe that in just less than a year since we first contacted Open Bionics to register our interest, Caitlin has now become the youngest person in the UK to receive an Open Bionics Hero Arm and is now part of the Bionic Squad!

During the journey Caitlin has become a national TV, radio and newspaper star, featuring on Steph's Packed Lunch, BBC Look East, CBBC Newsround, Radio Norfolk and Radio 4. She has been in the EDP, The Evening News, The Sun, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail, The Mirror and numerous online news feeds (including hitting New York City). But of course not forgetting *Wymondham Magazine*,

which started this all off in the first place, which we will always be eternally grateful for! Try googling "Caitlin Hutson Bionic Arm" to see how quickly and far the news spread.

None of this would have been possible without the amazing support of friends, family and the local community and we wish to thank every single person, company and Ashleigh School for the invaluable support you have all shown to Caitlin by either donating directly, helping to fundraise money or simply sharing her story.

One of the things Caitlin has dreamt about doing for herself was to brush and dry her hair on her own like every other girl and well what a day that was!





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▲ The completed public garden at Chandler's Hill

The Queen on a visit to Wymondham in 2002
Photo credit: Corrine Barrett ▶



QUEEN ELIZABETH GARDEN COMPLETED

By Kathryn Cross

Norfolk's first garden in memory of Queen Elizabeth II has opened in Wymondham.

The tribute to the country's longest reigning monarch saw a small garden on Chandler's Hill, in the town centre, transformed with new paving, lawns and planting and a statement tree in the centre.

It was funded by Wymondham Town Council and a plaque dedicating the garden to Queen Elizabeth was unveiled on Friday, October 27 by deputy mayor Annette James. The event was attended by town and district councillors, the contractors M&N Landscaping, designer Lesley Clarke, town council grounds staff, members of Greening Wymondham and Wymondham in Bloom.

The idea for the garden was presented to the town council two years ago by former town and current district councillor Kathryn Cross with the plan for it to be a Jubilee garden.

But in the time it took for a design and funding to be approved and contractors sought for tender, sadly the Queen passed away and therefore it was decided that it would be a memorial garden.

Cllr Cross said she was delighted with the transformation.

"It is exactly how I envisaged it two years ago," she said. "It took a long time to get from idea to completion but I feel it is a very fitting tribute and I hope residents and visitors to Wymondham will enjoy spending time in it. It was very important that it was accessible to all and the pathway through the middle should mean everyone can enjoy it. I'm looking forward to next spring when the central tree blooms as it is a Magnolia Elizabeth and I think it will be stunning."

Town Mayor Suzanne Nuri-Nixon thanked all those involved with the garden and explained that permission had to be obtained from the Royal Names Team in the Cabinet Office to allow the town to call it the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden.

In a letter from the Cabinet Office the town council was told: "Permission to use the title Royal and other protected titles is granted by His Majesty The King on the advice of His Ministers."

In further guidance issued in July this year it states that the protected Royal titles are sparingly granted and strict standards are applied. The full title of Queen Elizabeth II will continue to be closely protected and only be granted for applications with strong Royal connections.

HUB COMMUNITY FOOD SHOP OPEN

By Debbie Rose

Wednesday 1st November saw the official opening of Wymondham's Community Food Shop. The Shop, run by Hub Community Project, provides free and discounted food to anyone in need in the community.

The shop was formally opened by the Mayor of Wymondham and amongst those attending were representatives from: Morgan Sindall who donated the groundworks, access ramp and railings, Norfolk Community Foundation who provided the majority of the funding, Morrisons, One Stop, Waitrose, Silfield CO-OP and Lidl who donate some food supplies, the team of volunteers who serve selflessly Hope Community Church who have supported the project in many ways.

The shop is one of 25x food hubs in Norfolk operating under the banner of Nourishing Norfolk and is open 9.15

– 10.45 am on Tuesdays and 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm on Thursdays. Shoppers have access to free fruit, vegetables, bread, items for babies and ladies' sanitary items. All other food (chilled, frozen and shelf life) is 50% cheaper than average supermarket prices which enables families to stretch their budgets. Cash and card payments are accepted.

On Tuesday mornings there is a warm space for shoppers to have free coffee & pastries, chat to friends and access further help from the friendly team of volunteers.

Joining as a member brings additional benefits including free birthday cakes for children, priority consideration for a free Christmas lunch hamper & free Christmas toys, access to grant funding (subject to availability and qualifying conditions).

For more information email info@hubproject.org.uk or call 07736 725708.

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WHAT NEXT FOR WYMONDHAM MAGAZINE?

By Kim Carsok & Jimmy Young

It's been a great year for the Magazine. We've had some brilliant new contributors pop up alongside long-standing favourites. Our great community-minded advertisers made it possible and you've returned the favour by turning up and using their services. Our company even received a Business Award for supporting the community. Our actual day job is running a comparison website (who knew?). So how can 2024 top all that?

We Always Want New Contributors

Wymondham Magazine is a community effort. Everything you read on these pages is submitted by volunteer contributors. Anyone can write in.

Our small company puts it all together into a (hopefully) professional-looking package, finds advertisers to fund the whole thing and arranges printing and delivery, so everyone in town can enjoy it all - for free.

We're always on the hunt for new people to take part. We'd love more stories for our News and Sports sections. Has your son or daughter won a prize you're proud of? Has your school team had a great start to the season? Tell us about it!

We can see from Facebook groups that there's so much going on in the town but time-wise covering it all ourselves is sadly impossible. Are you a budding reporter craving some experience, who could package things up into tidy articles? Get in touch: news@wymondhammagazine.co.uk.

For our Features section, we've had some brilliant regular pieces this year. Alex Perry's 'Ted Talks', Anne Bealing's short stories and Gill Harle's Q&A interviews all come to mind. If you've got a story to tell which might be interesting and relevant to people in Wymondham, we'd love to hear from you. Maybe you fancy yourself a local tourism expert or restaurant/music critic? Maybe you've got some great photos, poetry or art you want to share. Don't hesitate to send it over.

Advertise With Us!

We can't say this enough: Advertisers are our only source of funding to print the magazine and get it delivered to houses in Wymondham for free. If your business has some advertising budget available, please consider using it to support us in publishing the community group updates and local stories you see on these pages. And you'll reach thousands of potential customers too - a true win win!

New Digital Experience

Next year we will have four, seasonal print editions in March, June, September and December. From February, there will be a new version of the monthly digital e-edition which will make it much easier to flip through the latest month's articles on any device.

Thank you to everyone who's got involved this year and you the reader! We wish you all a Merry Christmas.



With Jamie Collingwood

A revamp has changed the way bus services in Wymondham operate. First Bus Norwich have effectively introduced a new bus service for Wymondham in addition to the existing 13 service to Attleborough and 14 service to Wymondham Cross. The new service, numbered 15/16 (depending on whether the service is going to Blofield Heath or Lingwood), goes to the new housing developments in Silfield via Harts Farm estate and Wymondham railway station.

The service is half hourly during the day and does not serve Tuttle Lane or Hethersett estates, but instead runs straight along Norwich Road from Wymondham Cross, following the same route as the 13 route from Attleborough. This provides residents of Silfield and Harts Farm with a direct bus service to Norwich. This adds an extra two buses per hour to Norwich from Wymondham Cross operated by First Bus, meaning there are now 6 buses to Norwich per hour, alongside the hourly 6 service from Watton to Norwich. In the evenings, an hourly service via Wymondham and Hethersett operates. For weekends, a similar service to that of Monday-Friday operates on a Saturday, and there is an hourly service on Sundays.

Introduction of this new route has led to the renumbering of the existing bus routes. Previously, the 14 and the 15 ran from Wymondham Cross and went via housing estates in Wymondham and Hethersett before continuing to Norwich. Now, the service patterns from Wymondham Cross are as follows:

- 13 - direct to Norwich, every 30 mins
- 14 - via Tuttle Lane and Hethersett, every 30 mins
- 15/16 - direct to Norwich, every 30 mins

Those living in a residential area served by the 14 will not notice any difference in the frequency of their buses, as despite the 15 no longer going through the estates, the 14 now runs every 30 minutes.

The fact that the 15/16 does not serve housing estates in Wymondham and Hethersett means those living in Silfield and Harts Farm get a quicker connection to Norwich, with a typical daytime journey to St Stephens Street taking 40-45 minutes.

Jamie Says: This is great news for those living in Silfield and Harts Farm, who finally get the bus service that other areas of Wymondham have long availed of.

TOWN TEAM HANG NEW XMAS LIGHTS

By Jimmy Young

It was beginning to look a lot like Christmas on 11th November as the Town Team's 'Light Up Wymondham' volunteers feverishly made their way up and down ladders to spread magic and cheer to our high street.

It was the first outing for the town's new Christmas lights, which were approved for purchase by the previous Town Council back in April, and can be turned on remotely, all in unison.

Long-standing Christmas lights organiser Doug Hodges had long warned that the previous lights were on their last legs. Mr Hodges this year handed the organisatory baton over to former mayor, Kevin Hurn.



Photos by David Wainwright of Wymondham Town Team.

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Over the Mooney - Joe Mooney (right) receives award

COUNCIL HONOUR FOR FORMER MAYOR

By South Norfolk Council Communications Team

Six of South Norfolk's finest former public servants have been enrolled as Honorary Aldermen after giving years of notable service to the community.

On Monday 16th October South Norfolk Councillors assembled in their Council Chamber for a special meeting to hold only their fifth ever Honorary Aldermanic service.

South Norfolk Council voted unanimously on 16th October to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on: Yvonne Bendle, Vivienne Clifford-Jackson, Christopher Kemp, Jeremy Savage, Florence Ellis and Joe Mooney (former Mayor of Wymondham).

Each former Councillor received a framed certificate and their name will now be included in the Alderman book recording their honour. They also received a badge of office.

Chairman, Councillor James Easter said: "This is our way of saying thank you

to each and every person for their public service, and more widely it is our way of underlining to our community that self-sacrifice and service without prejudice are not empty words, but values we live by and uphold."

When receiving his certificate, Joe Mooney said "I really enjoyed my time on the Council. We worked with some great Councillors and great officers. By working together, we achieved great things for our district. One final point, I will not sell this on eBay as I want to keep it!"

The Aldermanic Review Panel reports to the Council with no more than six names recommended for conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman in each four year term of the administration. An Honorary Alderman is entitled to be addressed in that way, to wear the Badge of Office of Honorary Alderman on Civic occasions and when they die, to have the Council Flag flown at half mast in their honour.



MORLEY FESTIVAL FUNDRAISER TOTAL ANNOUNCED

By Corinna Pharoah

We are so incredibly proud to announce that this year's Morley Festival raised a whopping £20,981 for our 2023 charities: Norfolk and Waveney Mind, Cup-O-T: Wellness and Therapy Services and Morley Village & Sports Hall.

We would like to start by thanking our wonderful visitors from the bottom of our hearts for your incredible support. Without folks like you, we wouldn't be able to stage such an awesome event and raise such a fabulous amount for charity. Morley Festival's success

is also down to the incredible volunteer organising team and festival volunteers who generously give up days and days of their own time, our exhibitors, artists, suppliers that together bring it all to life and our absolutely amazing sponsors.

We had a blast and we're already counting the days until the next one on 21 - 22 June 2024!

For a limited time only 2024 Morley Festival Tickets are on sale now for the same price as last year and kids go free - remember tickets are advance only.

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TOWN COUNCIL WATCH

Hygge* Special

Local Democracy Sketch

By Jimmy Young

The days are getting shorter and so too are Wymondham Town Council's meeting agendas. At their November full council meeting, the main new piece of business was an item to change the font used on written proposals. But the Danes don't sit around and mope in the face of the barren winter ahead and neither does TCW. So switch on some fairy lights, make yourself a Sports Direct mug of mulled wine and snuggle up with your better half or a hot water bottle, it's a Town Council Watch: Hygge Special.

What do you mean I'm scraping the barrel for themes?

MINUTE'S SILENCE

The meeting began on a serious note though, with a minute's silence held to mark the passing of former town councillor Jordan Murrell, who had died unexpectedly in October. The 29-year-old had been one of the council's youngest ever representatives when elected in 2021. His stepfather, Cllr Tony Holden, sent apologies for not attending the month's meeting.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY MEETING?

We didn't have to wait long for the council to get back to form though. A monthly Finance Committee had been cancelled and it had spoilt Cllr Michael Rosen (Lab)'s snugly mood.

Donning his barrister's wig, he went about calling various witnesses to the stand to find out what had happened.

First to be grilled, the Town Clerk. "There was actually so much business to be transacted, I'd like an explanation of how that decision was reached," demanded Mr Rosen.

"Well," testified the Clerk. "the decision was made in conjunction with the chairman of the committee. I don't know whether the chair would like to explain?"

So then the committee's chairman, Cllr Julian Fulcher (Lib Dem), was invited forward for cross examination:

"I was told there was no business to discuss," Mr Fulcher told the court.

"And could I ask you who told you that?" probed Michael Rosen KC.

"The Clerk," said Mr Fulcher.

Deary dear. Still, plenty for them to talk about next month at least. Every cloud.

HYGGE AND MAKE UP

Next, councillors were to discuss plans for upgrades at Browick Rec that could exceed £800,000. But the convivial atmosphere soured after members highlighted other projects requiring money too, like making the town centre more accessible:

"I was getting *confused* here," ruffled Cllr Lucy Nixon (Lib Dem) "as to whether the suggestion was that we, as a new council, should possibly go back on that £250,000 project which was agreed to revamp Browick Park. And I was just *confused*, because only two months ago we had a motion from the [Labour] councillors to my right here saying that the parks required urgent attention so I'm just a little bit *confused* if what you're suggesting is we row back on that decision."

Tsk. Resorting to sarcasm's a real mood spoiler. You'd never catch TCW doing it.

Cllr Roly Frosdick (Lib Dem) urged a bit of level-headedness about it all:

"I think we're getting ourselves all in a bit of a tangle here and we don't need to," he soothed, lighting some scented candles: "There are a lot of competing things for our money and I think we need to decide which ones we're going to spend it on and which ones we aren't"

Cllr Alex Perry (Lab) was in relaxed, jolly form. He told the group he'd been inspired by a coffee advert on the telly:

"These children are just playing football in the streets, and I'm sure you've seen it, someone comes along nicely and puts a bit of paint and does a bit of decoration on the local park and the children are playing again."

For the North Wymondham representative, there was a lesson there in keeping things simple and not letting massive, lengthy projects get in the way of getting the basics right:

"Those smaller sums of money can make a big difference...it's just a bit of money to paint some rusty play equipment and it's just a bit of money to clear up some vandalism and that makes people feel safer in the area...if the coffee people think it, then it must be okay across the political spectrum and it can all be done and [the Clerk] Trevor can have a nice warm drink."

Councillor Perry is a man who understands the ways of Hygge.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Next, a member of the public noted that the council votes on its outgoing payments every month but the public never saw anything about its income. "Is that normal?" he asked into the mic.

"It's normal for this council," responded the Clerk.

Well, what further reassurance could anyone need that best practice is being followed?

A NEW ADMINISTRATION, A NEW FONT

If anyone had worried nothing much has actually changed in the 6 months since May's local elections, Cllr Joe Barrett (Green) had a proposal that would make them eat their words. And those words would now be in a sans serif, minimum size 12 font. The serious point behind the proposal was to make council documents more accessible to more people. The welcome move was unanimously approved.

Next up, stop putting photocopies of printed-out agendas on the website that people with screen readers and search engines can't read. There's no joke here. Just good old TCW doing his civic duty.

SOMETHING HOT, BROWN AND SOFT IN THE MIDDLE

Before the end, we just had time to hear from Cllr Dave Roberts (Lib Dem) who'd been donning his waders and helping out residents on Norwich Road who had been caught up in flooding. But with overflowing sewers, it hadn't been the most-pleasant of experiences:

"I've got to say, at the time of my election," recalled the new South Wymondham Town Councillor. "I did not feel I would be wading through all different colours of water."

Oh I don't know... dealing with a constant slew of brown stuff flying at you from all angles? Sounds like the perfect preparation for life in local politics.

Dirty Laundry



Facebook users on the *Wymondham Ways Uncut* group this month were treated to a bizarre comment section battle over parking, between two users purporting to be a permanent member of the Town Council's office staff and a disgruntled ex-contract groundskeeper.

The root cause of the issue seemed to be groundstaff not being allowed to park in the same ample car park as office staff, at the council's new £2million+ office, 'for safety reasons'.

If true, the fracas paints an unhappy picture of historical inter-staff relations at the council, with the contractor signing off: "I don't work for the council any more thankfully, please continue your mediocre work in the office."

Other users questioned the wisdom of the permanent office staff member publicly engaging with workplace tittle tattle, describing their conduct as "absolutely shocking", "rude" and "hardly professional". The user refuted that.

The spat comes just weeks after the new council voted to avoid setting up a formal group to look at staff conduct and annual performance appraisals.



If you're reading this then it's likely you have some interest in buying a nice bottle of wine or two for the Christmas holidays. As the years go by we cherish more and more the time we can spend with family, friends and loved ones. This is matched ever increasingly by the pleasure a glass of the good stuff can provide, particularly when your visitors stay for longer than expected.

Vineyards around the world supply into the UK so we're fortunate to have available something to suit most palates, pockets or pairings. On this basis I offer the following suggestions for novice neckers or qualified quaffers to consider for their Christmas table this year.

White Wine - VOUVRAY

I have all year to select a suitably chic Christmas hat. Instead, I think about appropriate festive crowd pleasers. Vouvray ("voo-vray") is made from Chenin Blanc grapes grown in the Loire valley, France, and there's one to suit everybody from dry to sweet. Off-dry, meaning just a little sweetness, gives an aromatic and very fruity white wine that can complement the tapestry of big flavours on a Christmas lunch plate. Pear, honeysuckle, quince and ginger are all likely tastes in

a classic which should cost in the region of £15-20. Serve really cold, sit back, and love the hat you're in.

Red Wine - PINOT NOIR

Classic lunch on the big day is turkey, but there are so many meat, veggie and vegan choices eaten throughout the UK it's a tough ask for a single red wine to suit everybody. From Flint Vineyards in Norfolk comes a Pinot Noir satisfying this demand. Beautifully fresh, fruity and smooth but with enough tannin to complement a huge range of punchy food flavours. Pinot Noir is a brilliant go-to recommendation when you're unsure what to serve with a meal - it tends to go with anything! This bottle is £25 and won't disappoint.

Sweet Wine - TOKAJI

Not on everyone's radar is a sweet wine for the Christmas meal; it's one of my great pleasures to have a dessert wine ready for the after lunch come-down. Pinny off and tins towering in the sink this is the moment to let the morning's efforts be rewarded with a small glass of grapey nectar. Hungarian Tokaji is a magical liquid. Expect honeyed aromas of fruits like fig, plum and apricot and maybe baking spices and vanilla. High in sweetness and acidity Tokaji can be transformational

FESTIVE TIPPLE TIPS

By Chris White,
Reno Refills



when you drink it alongside blue cheeses, fruity puddings or dark chocolate. Usually in 500ml bottles costing £15-25.

Myself and my friend Matt Taylor are currently about 40-something episodes in to presenting a light hearted series about wines, Two Men In A Bottle, on local station South Norfolk Radio. Will a TV producer somewhere hear a fragment of our entertainment gold and offer us a paid trip to explore the wines of earth?

Almost certainly not. Are we likely to enjoy drinking some wine over the Christmas holidays and cherish how lucky we are? Yeppa.

For advice on wine pairings visit Chris at Reno Refills, 15-17 Market St. Two Men in a Bottle airs on SNR fortnightly on Tuesday from 8-10pm. Follow them on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/twomensinabottle>.

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WHAT'S IN A PHOTO?

By Philip Yaxley

A Candy Parade Eighty Years Ago

It was exactly eighty years ago in December 1943 when American Army Air Force personnel from a local base distributed goodies to Wymondham children as they filed past the open front of Alf Harvey's fish and chip shop in Damgate Street. Military police controlled the traffic and looked after the long queue of the town's excited youngsters, whose treats like sweets and biscuits were limited during World War Two.

The popular and generous Yanks also held a party that Christmas at the Senior School, now Wymondham High Academy, for over 300 pupils from Browick Road Infant and Junior Schools. The pupils were addressed by Father Gerald Beck, the Catholic chaplain of the 389th Bomb Group's Hethel base. Children from outlying districts and some surrounding villages were entertained at nearby air bases.



▲ The "candy parade" filing past Alf's in December 1943



◀ Alf and Gertie Harvey outside their Damgate fish and chip shop in the 1940s

More from this series at:
wymondhammagazine.co.uk/whats-in-a-photo

By Alex Perry

TED Talks



Family Matters

Violet May Dorothy Barham had already given birth to two boys, Reggie and Jimmy, and she very much wanted her third child to be a girl. Instead, she got Ted. "When I was a baby my mother dressed me in girl's clothes, perhaps to pretend that she had a daughter," recalls Ted with a chuckle.

However, Violet came to terms with having another son and young Ted remembers being dressed as a boy when he shared the sidecar of his dad's motorbike with his elder brothers.

Ted had two grandmothers, Granny Barham and Granny Wigham, but his grandfathers had passed away before he was born. These grannies made a fuss of him and bought him sandals, socks, and teddies. He has fond memories of visiting each of them.

Ted travelled by himself on the bus to visit Granny Barham who lived near Eaton Park in Norwich. He remembers that this grandparent owned a pram with a false bottom that she removed to store food. Indeed, there were occasions when she was transporting babies and vegetables at the same time! She was a good cook, and Ted loved the puddings that she made for him, and the seven pence she gave him for his bus fare home. Granny Wigham lived in Wicklewood, and Ted used to ride his bike to see her. Tea and sponge cakes were always waiting on the table. And after feeding him, they would go for walks in the countryside.

Ted had relatively less contact with his aunts and uncles as they had mostly moved out of Wymondham; he would see them at Christmas and Easter. His Aunt Roselee lived closer and would sometimes help his family out with shopping and laundry.

Sadly, today most of Ted's relatives have either moved away or passed away. Ted's mother, Violet, died at the age of only 42, and one of his cousins was killed in a traffic accident in the USA. Fortunately, he does have one cousin, Gwennie Jones, who still lives in Wymondham.

Ted considers himself to be blessed for having had a long life with good health, which he enjoys as much now as when he was a youngster.

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Advertorial

A time for giving, receiving, and... moving?

By Rebecca Mills, EweMove Wymondham

I don't know about you, but as soon as December sets in, something tells me to cosy up early with warm drinks, be mesmerised by the twinkles of Christmas lights, and enjoy the comforts of home. The holiday season has many traditions, pomp, circumstance, and annual events that fill out our calendars. From having to spend time with that family member (we all have one), dealing with retailers promising that their Black Friday offers are amazing (mostly, they're really not!) to the joy of watching your nearest and dearest draw open that special gift. What is it about this festive season that inspires you, OR that you simply can't stand?

That exact question can also be applied to estate agency. To think of an Agency as inspirational may initially be a stretch, but when you view that property that fulfils your dreams and ticks all the boxes, and the agent is there enhancing the experience and answering every possible question fielded, what other word can there be? If you are willing to share your thoughts, I would love to hear from you!

Within my world of being an agent, I regard my role as substantive, representative, and above this, giving. A continuous equation of time, conversation, thought, and attention to detail to mention a few. My day does not end at 5 pm or 6 pm, nor when an offer is accepted, or an exchange has taken place – quite often, that's when the real work begins.

For those of you with plans or thoughts of moving, there is currently a window of positive activity that will gradually slow down as we get closer to Christmas. Following this, Boxing Day is known for record-breaking online activity, therefore can be an excellent launch opportunity. Then, as we move into the new year, the market will pick up again generally seeing an increased number of properties coming to market and buyers looking.

So, my gifts to you this Christmas are time, sharing of knowledge, and the willingness to work above and beyond to bring your dreams into reality. And with all this – hopefully, just a little sprinkle of inspiration.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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WYNTERFEST

Sunday 26th November

Noon - 5pm, town centre

By Julie Briggs

The Christmas countdown will start in style in Wymondham this year, with another spectacular Wynterfest welcoming Santa to town on his sleigh alongside music, stalls, a lantern parade, Zumba, a ceilidh, a children's funfair and much more.

The event, on Sunday 26 November, from noon until 5pm, will host more than 80 stalls with bespoke Norfolk produce, perfect for unique Christmas gifts. Visitors can meet the makers as they browse the indoor market at the Methodist Church and Town Green Centre. Road closures on Fairland Street, Market Street, Middleton Street and Town Green will allow the shopping experience to extend all the way through town, offering a feast of delicious food, sweet treats, mulled wine, and crafts from around the region.

Team Rachel Zumba will be firing-up the festive fever at noon as they perform at Town Green to greet Santa and his elves as they glide into town. The dancers will lead Santa's sleigh in a procession to the Market Cross where the WHAM Theatre Group will be ready to perform and sing a variety of much-loved Christmas numbers.

Mayor of Wymondham, Councillor Suzanne Nuri-Nixon, said: "Wynterfest is such a special occasion that brings businesses, groups, and visitors together to enjoy a warm, welcoming family day with something for everyone. Wymondham is gifted with a wealth of amazing groups and creative, innovative people. When they join forces to create such accessible, uplifting occasions, it really showcases the drive and community spirit we have in Wymondham that makes me incredibly proud to be Mayor."

Councillor Nuri-Nixon will meet and greet Santa and the Zumba dancers at the Market Cross as they assemble around the Christmas tree, before welcoming the young WHAM dancers on stage. South Norfolk Radio will keep visitors up to date with activities between live music acts throughout the day.

For those who want to keep dancing, the Christmas community ceilidh, led by the Whirligig Ceilidh Band and their dance caller, will offer 90 minutes of fun for all generations. Tickets for the Ceilidh are £5 for adults and £2.50 for children.

Wymondham Business Group and Town Team, sponsors and organisers of Wynterfest, are inviting everyone to light up Wymondham at the Wynterfest finale. A lantern parade will leave Wymondham Abbey at 4pm and travel along Vicar Street, Middleton Street, and Market Street, gathering around the Christmas tree at Market Cross where Invidia Voices' 40-strong choir will be singing Christmas favourites. There will be an opportunity to make a lantern, which includes a light, in Wymondham Abbey from 2pm.

Stephen Green, a Director of Wymondham Business Group, said: "We delight in seeing the town bustling with residents and visitors. Occasions such as Wynterfest, Vintage Day, the Farmer's Market, and the Food and Drink Festival, are so important to connect residents with the town, its businesses, and each other. We depend on volunteers and goodwill to create these events, so we are hugely grateful for the community groups, venues, and individuals who devote their time and energy. We



hope everyone enjoys the activities and celebrate our dynamic community as well as Christmas."

The Wynterfest treasure hunt will give children a chance to win a personalised shopping experience at Ketts Books to help them select five free books. Clue sheets will be available from Ketts Books.

To support residents joining in the festivities, East Anglia Transport Museum is running free vintage bus rides departing from The East Anglian Motor Auction on Copper Smith Way and arriving at Fairland Green every 15 minutes between 11.45am to 2pm, and 3pm to 5pm. Limited parking for cars will be available at the auction site.

Car Parks will be open and free of charge at Town Green, Back Lane, Cemetery Lane, and Market Street accessible via Friars Croft Lane. Disabled parking allocation will be increased in these car parks to support Blue Badge holders. The vintage bus has no disabled access.

This year's Wynterfest is being managed by ClearCompany CIC*, a social enterprise that nurtures and supports local community projects. Having hosted pop-up events for the last five years, the organisation will be opening its first shop and studio space at the Schoolrooms on Church Street later this year.

For tickets to the ceilidh at Fairland Church, visit <https://wynterfestwhirligig.eventbrite.co.uk> or email info@clearcompany.org.uk.

Programme of events

Team Rachel Zumba at Town Green

Procession taking Santa and his elves from Town Green to the Market Cross led by Team Rachel Zumba

Lantern Parade: Leaving Wymondham Abbey at 4pm, heading to the Market Cross to join Invidia Voices.

Wymondham Abbey: Lantern making, choir, and Meccano attractions, and Robert Kett School 2pm to 5pm.

Gray's Funfair: Middleton Street.

Abbey Grounds: Wymondham Alpacas, Centre Paws best dressed dog competition, and Browick Road School Christmas activities.

Methodist Church: The Makers' Market, 12-5. The church will be open as a 'still place' for reflection and prayer.

Fairland Church: Christmas Community Ceilidh led by Whirligig (by ticket only) from 2pm to 3.30pm. Graceful melodies playing flute during intervals. Tickets available from <https://wynterfestwhirligig.eventbrite.co.uk>

Vintage shuttle bus from East Anglian Motor Auctions (Copper Smith Way NR18 0WY) to Fairland Green from 11.45am to 2pm, and 3pm to 5pm.

Queen St Baptist Church: Donkeys and children's Christmas crafts. Refreshments available.

Town Green: Professor Philips Punch & Judy Shows at 1.30pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm. Christmas music and stalls.

Santa's Grotto: Money Properties from 1pm.

Treasure trail: Forms available from Ketts Books.



Market Cross Stage Running Order

South Norfolk Radio introduces:

- 12:00** Conner Hockins - solo singer
- 12:30** Robert Kett School Choir
- 13:00** Wham Theatre Group
- 13:45** Wymondham Rock Choir
- 14:15** 5 Day Rain - country band
- 15:00** Invidia voices - 40-strong choir singing Christmas favourites.



Food & Drink Line Up:

Bella Ciao: Delicious, fresh wood-fired pizza straight from the oven

Superburger: Burgers & hotdogs from vintage, bespoke pop-up burger stand

Natural Rise: Range of paninis, pancakes, cakes, and coffees.

Society Alive: Authentic African curries, jerk chicken and Jollof rice.

Flippin Marvellous: Sweet and savoury pancakes and waffle sticks.

Currylicious: Aromatic Indian Curries
Lilwalls Hog Roast

Rambling Roots: Yummy plant-based street food

HG Catering: Divine sweet churros

Verrecchia: Sweet and savoury crepes

Owies: Rare breed pork sausages, bacon and pork and apple burgers

Chocolate Bar Baker

M&M Sweet Treats

Kate's Bakes

Baking Addict

Mr Frosty Ice Cream

Drip Drop Bake Stop

Craftily Bar

Circus Head Coffee

Q&A

George Squires of C.C. Clements & Sons

By Gill Harle



Many shops have come and gone in Wymondham over the years, but still going strong after almost 150 years is Clements ironmonger's on Fairland Street. Affectionately known by local people as 'Fork Handles' (or 'Four Candles'), Clements offers a helpful, friendly, and knowledgeable service with a personal touch to its customers. We sat down with George Squires to talk about the nuts and bolts of running the oldest shop in Wymondham.

Can you tell us about the history of Clements and your involvement?

We still trade under the original name, but we're not related to the Clements. My surname is Squires although many people call me Mr Clements. We're a Wymondham family and the third family to own the business.

It was established in 1875 by the Clements family. C.C. Clements (Cornelius Cuthbert) died quite young at 44 years old, and his wife took over and then the son, Jack Clements, who ran the shop until about 1942. He then sold the shop to the Oldfields family who had an established ironmonger's shop in Dereham, and they held the business until my wife and I took over in 1981. I started here as an apprentice in 1957



when I was 15 years old. I then moved away, did more training, and managed a shop in Lowestoft before returning four years later when I was invited back by then manager, Mr Sidell, who was retiring. Then in 1980 Mr Oldfield came over and asked if I was interested in taking over the shop as his sons weren't interested. So my wife and I decided to take on the challenge and purchased the business in 1981. As the shop enjoyed a good name, reputation and loyalty base we saw no benefit in changing the name, so it remained Clements.

How has Clements changed over the years?

The shop has always been an ironmonger's but has changed somewhat over time. This area is very agricultural and Clements used to sell ploughs, combine harvesters, etc. Even when I started in 1957 we had a high turnover with farmers, selling cattle and chicken feeding equipment, agricultural machinery and scythe blades. I always remember my first job was taking delivery of scythe blades and I was told: "Be careful, they're very sharp!"

We used to have two shops, the other one was on the corner of Bridewell Street and Market Place and is now a nail bar. They had that for 20 years, until about 1920. There used to be a display area for harvest machinery where the Ex-Service's Club is now. As well as the sales ground, Clements owned other buildings in Brewery Lane where the stables, hayloft and the delivery cart were kept. We still have a warehouse

on the corner of Friarscroft and Brewery Lane.

Apparently, we were also a wholesaler for retailers at one point. I've spent most of my life here and collected quite a bit about the history: photos, receipts, etc. That painting on the wall is of the other shop and is dated 1907.

We've come away from the agricultural side and nowadays we sell decorating materials, tools, domestic hardware, ironmongery (screws, etc) and LPG gas canisters for heating - last year that was 10% of our sales. Products change, obviously, and perhaps we are more a plastic monger's now than an ironmonger's!

We've got a good, loyal base of customers and we offer a personal touch, which larger places don't. For example, we sell odd nails or screws whereas other places sell pre-packs of everything. Another element to the trade is key cutting and locks. My son, David, is a very practical person and he trained as a locksmith. We also do engraving next door - that was a storeroom when we bought the business and we converted it into a shop to let. It was a cycle shop, then a video hire shop, and then it became an engraver's which my wife took over and ran. We still run it as an engraver's and Colin does that. It's been quite successful - we do trophies and brass plates for doors. During the Covid period when club activities ceased we closed it down, but we've gradually got it going again. So key cutting, locksmith and engraving all add to the services we offer.

Have you seen many changes in Wymondham and Fairland Street over the

years you've been here?

Wymondham has certainly changed and one quite big change was when the one-way system came in. That was a setback for business, and we've never really recovered from it. On Fairland Street, when I first started here, we had the Woolpack Pub where Myhills now is; what was Wardrobes was another DIY shop, and there have been several shops there (now it's a delicatessen); there was the blacksmith's where the Forge is - I used to love the smell of the horses from there; there was another café and sweet shop where the Hideout now is; and there have been various other businesses come and go.



▲ Family business: George and son, David

Who else works with you in Clements?

There's my son, David, who is a partner in the business. Then we've got two part-timers: Richard and Colin who's also the engraver. Our secretary, Mary Snelling, sadly died last year. She was with us from 1965 and kept going well into her eighties. She was a wonderful lady, so committed and conscientious. After that, our accountant recommended we go on to computers. Fortunately, David is mastering that side as I'm a bit old-fashioned and non-tech - I wouldn't even know how to switch a computer on!

I've cut down on my hours and now do 35-40 hours a week. Before I did 60-70 hours, which David now does. We've had challenges with Covid and the cost of living - overheads have gone up - so I'm here to support him. He's keen to carry on with the business, which I'm pleased about.

My wife, who took over the shop with me in 1981, passed away in 2009, then my other son, Kevin, who also worked here, died suddenly in 2013. He was with us for 30 years since school and was top-notch. We made both our sons partners. David has been with us 20 years now and I'd like to see him carry on with it as long as he can.

Finally, what are the challenges and rewards of running Clements, and what does the future hold?

All businesses have challenges these days, for obvious reasons. I think the rewards are the relationships you have with customers, many who become friends, so it's a social lifestyle. And we provide a service for Wymondham. Profitwise, we'll never be millionaires, but it's an interesting trade and we enjoy it. We stock just over 5,000 lines and stock changes with new products. We can't stock everything but we provide orders to needs. We are proud to be able to serve Wymondham as we have over the years.

Christmas is almost here now and it's a busy time for us - many people buy practical presents and we usually run a Christmas promotion which is quite successful.

We're looking forward to the year after next, 2025, when we'll celebrate our 150-year anniversary, and we'll hopefully still be here!



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THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR LANGUAGE IN WILLS

SPIRE
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Advertorial

By Claire James, Chartered Legal Executive at Spire Solicitors

Three children have won a share of their father's £700,000 estate after a hard-fought case that reached the High Court in London.

The siblings took action when their father Kenneth Grizzle died, and they found they were excluded from his will. They told the court that he was illiterate, and he couldn't have understood the will he had signed but had always been too proud to tell others of the problem.

Sharing memories of their father struggling with reading, they claimed he must have disinherited them by mistake when leaving everything to his two children from a later relationship. The judge agreed, and all five half-siblings will now receive an equal share of the estate.

While being illiterate and unable to read the document offers relatively unusual grounds nowadays for disputing a will, the importance of clear language and understanding is a vital consideration when writing a will.

Research conducted on behalf of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners highlights the change to family structures in recent years, and how this leads to

increased disputes.

They describe a significant shift from traditional married couples towards a complex mix of structures, including cohabitation and same-sex relationships.

The report says that advisers are finding that this increased complexity is leading to conflict and breakdown in family relationships, giving rise to litigation. And, importantly, of those responding, 65% highlighted the problem of old-fashioned or unclear language being used in wills, trusts and deeds.

Wills, Trusts & Probate specialist Claire James explained: "These shifting family structures mean we tend to see more complex relationships, which are more likely to lead to competing interests between family units. When relationships break down, the grounds on which a family may have stayed supportive of inheritance plans can be broken too. If the fine detail in a will or trust is not updated with clear language, this can be a cause for challenge."

Generally, a will may be challenged because it fails certain grounds for validity, such as lack

of mental capacity or not being properly witnessed. A valid will may also be disputed under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975, if an individual can demonstrate they were dependent and should have been provided for.

Claire added: "A person making a will must have 'knowledge and approval' of its contents and it's much easier to show understanding if plain language is used. And even if plain language is used, a word might mean one thing in a legal or dictionary sense, but another thing in the mind of the person making the will. For example, 'child' has quite a narrow definition legally, but someone might think it could include stepchildren."

Another risk area from imprecise language is for those who have changed gender. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 includes provision for those named as a beneficiary to be recognised as their acquired gender, rather than their sex at birth, where the will was made after 4 April 2005 and the person has been issued with a gender recognition

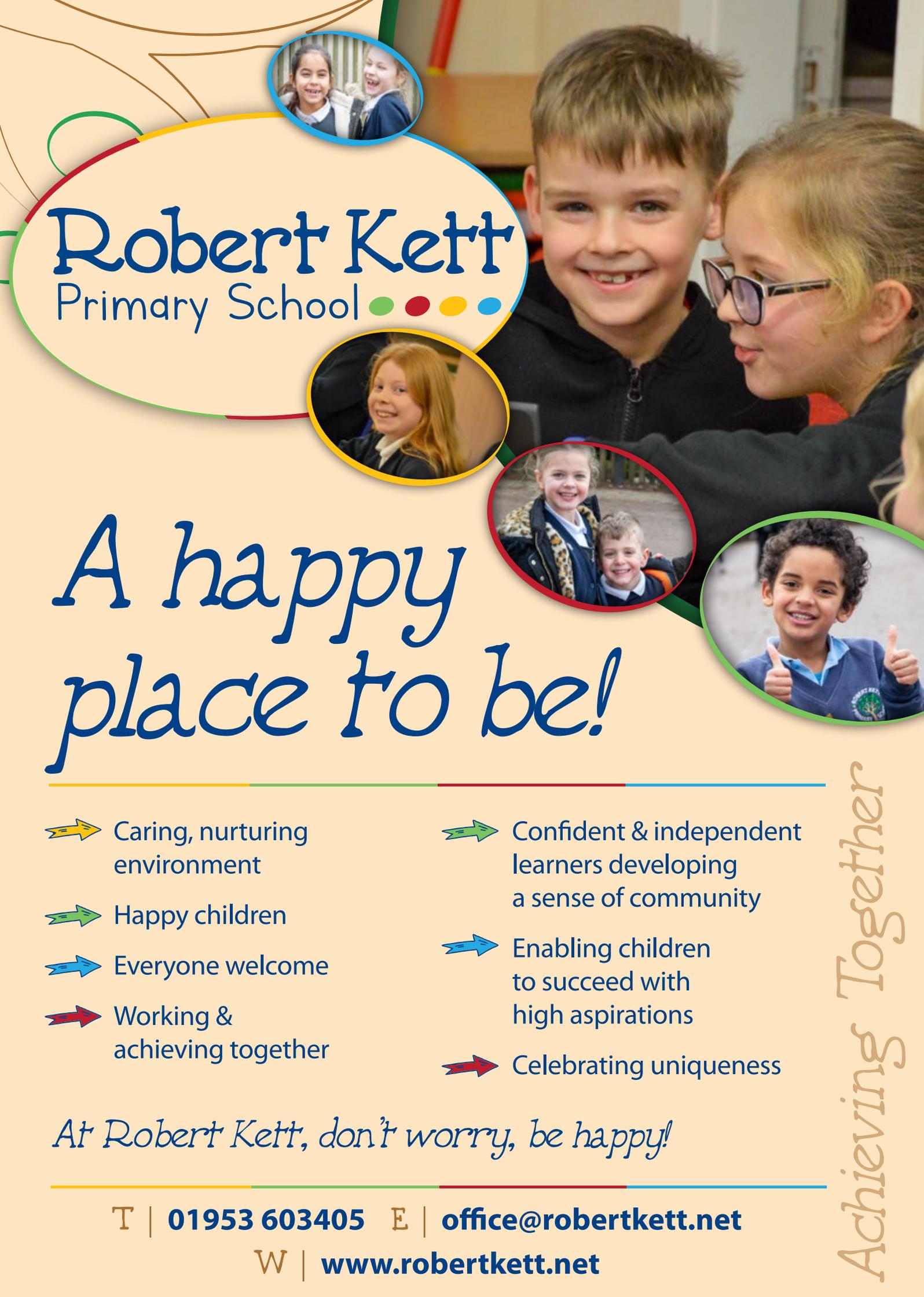
certificate.

Problems could arise if the will was drafted without specifying the names and grounds for inheritance of all concerned, for example if certain assets were to be shared between 'sons' or 'daughters' and the transition removes an individual from their intended inheritance.

Claire added: "Where the birth name or previous gender is included, this should not affect the validity of the gift to that person, as the legislation has provided for that situation. Problems may arise if the identity of a beneficiary is not clear. That's why language is so important."

The Gender Recognition Act came into effect on 4th April 2005. Before this, a change in gender was not recognised by the law, so an individual would still be treated as their birth sex in any will made before that date.

If you are looking at writing a will or amending an existing one, get in contact with our experienced and highly regarded wills team on 01953 606351 or email info@spiresolicitors.co.uk



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Achieving Together

SOME HAVE GREATNESS THRUST UPON THEM

Short story

By Anne Bealing Wymondham Writing Circle

'I can order you a copy, Mr Ransome. You might get it by next Friday.' The librarian looked at the young curate's face and knew that would be too late.

'I need it before then. It's for Advent. Reverend James is expecting me to lead the service at St George's. The school are bringing the Advent wreath and I need to know all about the Advent traditions. I don't seem to have covered that at college. I thought Stewart Jones' book would tell me all I needed to know.' He paused, then leaned over the counter and lowered his voice. 'I can't ask Reverend James. He told me he wants none of my "new fangled college ideas". He wants to start the festive season with a traditional Advent service.' The young curate picked up his two Agatha Christie novels. 'Cheerio. I don't know when I'll have time to read these!' he grinned as he put them in his bag.

On his walk home to his small rented cottage he caught sight of blue flashing lights ahead of him on the village green. An ambulance was pulled up outside Violet Perks cottage. He quickened his pace. The 80 year old was his favourite parishioner – a lovely lady, bright as a button, who always offered him a glass of sherry and a Mr Kipling cake whenever he visited her. She had told him only last week he was "a breath of fresh air – just what St George's needed" so he was most concerned to see the ambulance parked outside her cottage. It was then he realised that the door to the neighbouring vicarage was opening and Reverend James on a stretcher was being taken towards the open back doors of the ambulance. The elderly housekeeper, Mrs Finch, was following down the path.

'Mrs Finch. What's...'

'Possible heart attack, Simon. Came over all peculiar just after I'd served him his lunch. You'll have to take over all his duties, because even if they send him home, he'll have to rest.' Doors were quickly closed and the ambulance sped off in a blaze of blue lights, siren blaring.

Simon raised up a silent prayer for Reverend James and then added, 'Please God, give me strength to praise your name this Christmas.'

'You'd better come in,' said Mrs Finch. 'you look like you need a drink. You've gone quite pale.'

Simon sat in the familiar lounge where he and Reverend James had worked together since the summer. The vicar's chair was glaringly empty. He accepted a cup of tea, wishing it was something stronger. How was he going to cope? A knock came at the front door and Violet Perks was ushered in, leaning on her walking stick and listening intently to Mrs Finch giving her all the details of what had happened.

'Well Simon, my dear. It's all up to you now!' She lowered herself gently on to the settee opposite him. Mrs Finch joined her and for a moment no one spoke. Simon was beginning to panic. The enormity of the task ahead of him could be read on his face.

'Ladies, I don't know if I'm up to it...' he confessed.

'Simon, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them". Shakespeare wrote

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that I think,' quoted Violet.

'Twelfth Night...Malvolio, dear,' added the housekeeper. 'Any way young man, you must give St George's a Christmas like it's never had before – one we won't forget in a hurry. And it certainly won't be dreary old hymns and long sermons. We need jolly carols and Christmas fun. We'll help you, won't we Violet?'

'Yes dear. We know what the village wants and we'll help you deliver it.'

Simon saw the sparkle in their eyes and warmed to the way these two characters had such faith in him. He felt a glimmer of confidence begin to grow inside him. Maybe he could do it.

A month later, in the peace between Christmas and New Year, the three met again in the same room at the vicarage. Reverend James was upstairs in bed convalescing, having given Simon his blessing for taking over all his duties and admitting that perhaps it was time for him to think about retiring in the coming year. Simon was slumped on the settee exhausted after so much work. The two ladies seemed as bright as usual.

'How did we do it?' Simon asked, then added, 'I couldn't have done it without you. Four Advent services, one midnight mass, two on Christmas Day – that was epic... but you,' he pointed his finger at Mrs Finch (whom he now knew as Bridget) 'you organised a service for all the pantomime cast... and you,' he pointed at Violet, 'you set up the pets' service which the children just loved. And the church was full every time. I just don't know how it all happened.'

'Best Christmas ever,' the two ladies agreed.

'Keep up the good work Simon. What shall we do for Easter?' Violet added with a wry smile.

Are you a writer? Prose or poetry? Beginner or published? Wymondham Writing Circle would welcome you at their monthly meetings held in the upstairs room at The Feathers pub in Wymondham. For more information contact Anne on 01953 571425. Come and join us.

TURNING THE DREAM INTO REALITY:

Life as a business owner

By Sharon Wray

In my heart, I always harboured the dream of being a business owner. It was a desire that had been ingrained in me by my family, who had a legacy of entrepreneurship. I yearned for the freedom that comes with breaking free from the 9-to-5 corporate world, and honestly, I was just plain bored with it all. However, it wasn't a decision I made lightly.

It took me until the age of 53 to gather the courage to take the plunge and establish Sharon Wray Accountancy Services. I was leaving behind a well-paid job with an enviable pension plan and a whopping 43 days of annual leave. But in March 2017, I embarked on this new adventure.

From the time I initially qualified in 2003, making a career shift

from retail management to accountancy, I had kept my practising licence. Even while working as a full-time business analyst, I dedicated my evenings and weekends to provide accountancy services to the few clients I had at the time.



Challenges

Throughout this journey, I encountered several challenges, each of which became an opportunity for growth:

Imposter Syndrome: The feeling of not being good enough often crept in, but it also pushed me to improve.

Growth: Knowing when and how to expand the business was a constant question.

When Was the Right Time to Employ Staff: Balancing the need for help with limited resources was a challenge, get the best workforce you can find who will have your back and help you grow.

Limited Time with Family: Striking the right balance between work and family became a daily challenge, it's crucial for your own wellbeing to take time out to spend with family and friends.

Cashflow: The lifeline of any business, know your numbers, budget and don't overspend. But, amid these challenges, there were remarkable accomplishments.

Accomplishments

My Team: Having a dedicated and talented team of professionals who share my vision.

Xero Silver Partner: Achieving recognition as a Xero Silver Partner, a testament to our commitment to excellence.

Client Growth: From just 9 clients to a thriving portfolio of 270 clients today.

Finalist for the Norfolk Small Business Awards: A proud moment for our business and a testament to our commitment to excellence.

Being a Cloud-Based Practice: Embracing modern technologies, we transformed into a cloud-based practice to provide digital services such as receipt data capture and direct links to banks to better serve our clients.

It's Never Too Late

As I reflect on my journey, one thing becomes clear: it's never too late to turn your dreams into reality. If you're a business owner or someone considering venturing into entrepreneurship, remember that the path may be challenging, but the rewards are worth the effort. If you're

seeking professional accounting services or advice to fuel your entrepreneurial aspirations, don't hesitate to contact me at Sharon Wray Accountancy Services. Let's transform your business dreams into a thriving reality. Your success story could be just around the corner.

My Top Tips

For those considering the entrepreneurial journey, here are my top tips:

Have a Business Plan: Create a well-structured business plan that outlines your goals, strategies, and values.

Know Your Numbers: Understanding your finances is critical. Ensure you have a robust cash flow forecast.

Find Your Passion: successful business often builds businesses around subjects they are genuinely enthusiastic about.

Solve a Problem: Look for problems or inefficiencies in your market, address real needs of your customers.

Build a Strong Network: connect with mentors, advisors and other like-minded business owners.

Focus on Customer Needs: ensure you deliver excellent customer service that will lead to repeat business and referrals.

Work Hard and Stay Committed: being a business owner can mean long hours but by putting the effort in now, will reap rewards for you in the future.

Look after your own wellbeing: don't forget that you need to take time out, it's so important to take the best care of yourself to be the best version of yourself.

Be Patient: success may not come overnight, be resilient and persistent when facing challenges.

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▲ Dahlia competition show table at the club's September meeting

GARDEN CLUB: 2023 REVUE, 2024 PROGRAMME

By **Andy Speller**

As we enter the quiet season for Wymondham Gardeners, the Club looks back on a successful 2023 and forward to the 2024 programme.

The Club held its AGM in October, our secretary of many years, Janice Hancock has been released from duty – allowed to retire! Janice has done a lot of work behind the scenes arranging speakers and keeping the club running smoothly. Everyone at the Club would like to say a big thank you for all Janice's efforts on behalf of the Club.

Highlights from 2023 include a personal favourite, Guy Barker, back in August with his honest & amusing answers at Gardeners Question Time. Plus the bonus of summer flowers and foliage from the gardens he professionally manages. I'm delighted to reveal he will be back in 2024 with a talk and array of flowers entitled "July Blooms".

Other highlights included Gabrielle Reid of Gabriel's Garden in Gissing whose talk prompted many members

to visit her garden on "Gissing's Sunday Best" - Open Gardens and Classic Cars day - on a lovely sunny Sunday in June. Jamie Blake of Bressingham Gardens talk included lots of sage & practical advice to help us gardeners, I should have taken notes!

The entertaining talk with least appealing title belonged to Dr. Ian Bedford (All you might ever need to know about slugs), a popular speaker, he opens the 2024 programme with his January talk "The Trouble with Wasps". Promises to be a fascinating talk about one of our Gardens best Insect friends who need better publicity agents with the general public!

The full programme for 2024 will be available to members at the December Club Meeting. Membership for 2024 will cost £20 – 12 meetings, free tea and coffee, a bargain price for anyone interested in gardening.

We thank Wymondham Garden Club for the financial contribution they have made towards the printing costs of *Wymondham Magazine*.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY PHOTO OF THE MONTH

By **Dominic Byrne**

In the words of the judge, Dominic had "used excellent lighting to bring out the detail of the subject's face and facial art." The monochrome treatment together with the subject appearing "lost in thought" enhanced the storytelling of this very powerful image.



NORFOLK CREATIONS CHRISTMAS MARKET COMING TO ARTS CENTRE

By **Liz Jenkins**

Norfolk Creations is a collection of Norfolk based artists, makers and crafters. All their creations are inspired by their beautiful county of Norfolk - its big skies, stunning coastline and abundant views are just some of the Norfolk elements that trigger their inspiration.

The group is run by four dedicated volunteers and travels around Norfolk exhibiting in beautiful, hand chosen venues offering visitors some of the best quality creators Norfolk has to offer. Liz, the current group's Chair Person is based in Bunwell and is thrilled to be able to exhibit locally.

2023 is a special year for this group - they are 10 years old - Happy Birthday Norfolk Creations - and last year saw them win two EDP Arts Awards for their support and contribution to the arts community across Norfolk.

After a debut exhibition at Wymondham Arts Centre at Beckett's Chapel last year, they were eager to return and after visiting the chapel recently, were blown away with the newly renovated venue. In September they held a very popular Arts and Crafts Exhibition and they are now busy planning a special Christmas Market featuring 20 Norfolk based artisans which is going to be from Saturday 25th November to Friday 8th December. It will include some exhibitors local to Wymondham alongside others from further afield in Norfolk. Every day you will meet different creators who will be happy to talk you through the special Christmas-inspired creations they have all been busy making.

If you love our county as much as Norfolk Creations do, and are looking for locally made Christmas gifts and decorations, please pop in to meet them, wish them a happy birthday and enjoy their Christmas market. They will be open 10-4 every day and on Sunday 26th November they will be open 10am till 8pm as part of the Wynterfest event.



CHRISTMAS PRESENT SOLUTIONS

By Roy Heatley, The Wymondham Ukulele Group

Yes, it's that time of year again when more often than not we are presented with that age-old question: "Whatever shall we get ___ for Christmas this year?" (Insert any appropriate name here!) which is then followed by much scratching of heads and blank looks especially when your loved one is that person who seemingly has everything they need.

Well, the Wymondham Ukulele Group (WUG) can easily help you with an answer to that pesky question because without breaking the bank, you can buy that person a UKULELE!

"TA-DAH!" At least one ever-present seasonal problem is now solved.

And to add to the good news there's already a well-established ukulele group in Wymondham for new players to join.

WUG meets at The White Hart in Wymondham on the first and third Tuesday of every month for a couple

of hours starting at 7:30pm and they are FUN sessions. We play selections from our many song books which can be downloaded from our web site wymondhamukulelegroup.com without the need for a password and each week we send out an email to all players with a note of what songs we shall be playing at the next club night.

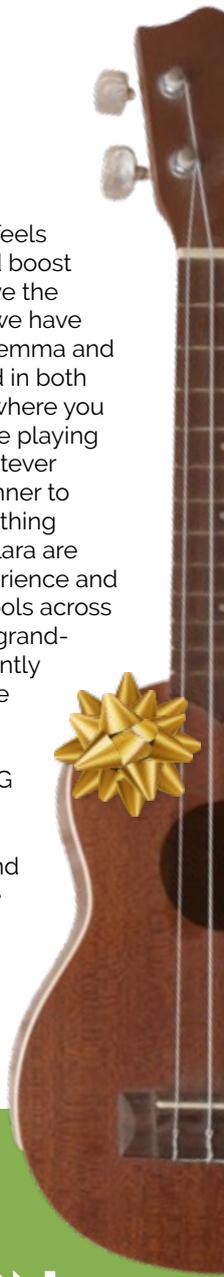
We also have meetings at The Feathers each second and fourth Thursdays but these are where we try out new songs and perhaps examine existing 'fluffs'. So this evening is geared more to the experienced player, but no-one is excluded - everyone is welcome.

The new beginner player may feel a little daunted about walking into a club but at WUG we've been welcoming players of all standards for the past ten years and many of them are still playing their ukes with us. Over the past twelve months, we have been delighted to welcome no fewer than a half dozen beginner players to the club and they have also continued to play with us as well. It goes without saying therefore that all new players, beginners or otherwise will be made very welcome.

If the new uke owner still feels that a few lessons first would boost their confidence then we have the answer to that too because we have well established links with Gemma and Clara at iloveuke.co.uk based in both Wymondham and Norwich where you can learn to improve your uke playing at your own pace and at whatever standard you are. From beginner to expert - there's always something to learn. Both Gemma and Clara are teachers of many years experience and currently teach in junior schools across the county. Clara taught my granddaughter to play and is currently teaching me the bass ukulele so I can happily add my own personal recommendation.

And the final piece of WUG good news is that there are absolutely no subs to pay - the only money you will spend is on the drink you buy at the bar.

Happy Christmas one and all from the Wymondham Ukulele Group!



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NATURE TALK: NORFOLK'S MAJOR NORTHERN RIVERS

By Nicola Cooke

The next indoor meeting of Wymondham Nature Group (WyNG) will take place on Thursday 14th December 2023 at 7:30pm. It will feature an illustrated talk by Dr Mark Collins about Norfolk's major northern rivers - the Rivers Bure, Ant and Thurne, including their history and the threats of climate change today.

The first indoor event of 2024 will be on Thursday 11th January also at 7:30pm. An illustrated talk will be presented by Sam and Barry Lister called 'Secrets of the underwater world'.

The venue for all Nature

Group talks is the Town Green Centre (behind Wymondham Methodist Church), on Back Lane. All are welcome to attend. General admission £3, NWT members £2 with no booking required. Further details

from Ann Carpenter on 01508 488337.

Wymondham Nature Group is the local members' group of Norfolk Wildlife

Trust, Registered Charity No. 208734.

Follow Wymondham Nature Group on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WymondhamNatureGroup/>



SEASON'S GREENINGS



By [Jay Andrews](#), Greening Wymondham

On Christmas Eve you may glimpse Greening Wymondham members out collecting water samples for testing. The fortnightly testing is rarely a hardship when you can walk the banks of the Tiffey – in the hopes of seeing the famous otter along with the kingfishers, voles and river flies. The photo shows GW's Mike, Andrew, Gabriella and Jay. Join us!

Or tell us what you'd like to see in terms of playground equipment at Rothbury Park. "Back in the summer our plans to transform the Park were approved unanimously by the council," says Mary Howard. "We're now busy raising funding for the replanting and reshaping of the park – and that includes updating current rusty equipment with imaginative and sustainable additions."

GW's Julie Morgan is having

playgroup consultations with young members of the Wild Tribe community group but would welcome ideas from other groups and age ranges – email her via greeningwymondham@gmail.com.

And a festive follow-up to our gift of trees to Wymondham's Year 6s. Ten-year-old Bethany Leathersich from Ashleigh Primary School couldn't find a suitable place in her garden, so mum Maria contacted us. We found a spot for the hazel in Kett's Park wood, where it could see at least a twenty-second century Christmas.

A sustainable Season's Greetings to you all! Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@GreeningWyndham), online at www.greeningwymondham.org.uk; or email greeningwymondham@gmail.com



▲ Festive testing of water at the river Tiffey



Bethany, 10, planting a hazel tree in Kett's Park wood ▶



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A YEAR OF PROGRESS AT THE MID NORFOLK RAILWAY

By Peter Singlehurst

As the summer running season at the Mid Norfolk Railway ends, and preparations for this year's Polar Express event continues, the railway is pleased to highlight the progress made this year despite some setbacks.

The work to replace the life-expired way beams that carry the rails across Crownthorpe Bridge will, together with associated track work replacement that is needed to run to Wymondham, be completed before the next summer's running season begins.

In what has been an exceptionally busy year for the PW Department, much essential work has been carried out to ensure that trains could continue to run to Thuxton and to ensure the line is ready for Polar Express.

The PW department has also extended Platform 2/3 at Dereham, made possible by signing a contract that gives the MNR a franchise to run Polar Express for the next seven years. This work removes the costs of the temporary platform.

Another sign of progress this year was at the AGM, with one of the largest turnouts of members for many years. Six



▲ New rolling stock to support new events and services

new members were elected to the Trust Council, meaning the majority of members are new. Mr Watts said: "I take this as a very encouraging sign that members have been prepared to stand and are bringing their professional experience in a wide range of areas to the railway. This is essential if the Trust Council is to develop the business and achieve the Charitable Aims of the Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust."

Other developments this year have seen the successful reintroduction of events such as the Beer Festival and the addition of new events such as the Dino Trains. To facilitate these and other future services, a new rolling stock plan has been announced that has meant the railway has bought an Mk 1 dual braked BFK coach E14023.

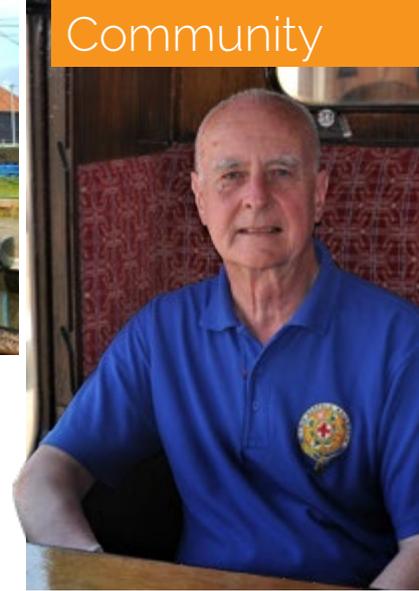
At the railway the work of the Signal and Telegraph Department to resignal the line from Dereham south to Wymondham continues to make good progress. Dereham and Thuxton are approaching completion and the focus will now move to Wymondham, where the former Spooner Row Signal Box is now nearing the end

of its refurbishment ready for hand over to the S&T Dept to begin installation of the signalling system.

Mr Mark Collinson has rejoined the railway after working elsewhere in the Heritage Railway industry and will take on the day-to-day management of the railway operations.

Summing up the year Graham Watts, the new Chairman said: "Of course not running to Wymondham this year has been disappointing, but despite that the railway is making progress.

Everyone is looking forward to Polar Express and then it is our intention to run a full programme of events next year for the first time since 2019".



▲ New chairman of the Mid Norfolk Railway, Graham Watts



YOUTH MUSIC SOCIETY FESTIVE FUN CONCERT

By Ruth Walker

Join the Wymondham Youth Music Society and friends for an evening of festive fun! Thursday December 7th at 6:30pm in Queen Street Baptist Church, NR18 0AY.

Together with the Windmill Handbell Ringers and members of the High Oak Music Group, Junior and Senior instrumentalists of WYMS plan an evening of happy

music making and good cheer, celebrating Youth and the Community. Admission price on the door is £10 for Adults whilst children get free entry.

For 35 years, the Wymondham Youth Music Society has been providing opportunities for young musicians of Grade 1 standard and upwards. Visit www.wyms.org.uk for more information.

COMMUNITY GRANT APPROVED FOR OUTREACH PROJECT

Wymondham Community Outreach Project will receive funding from South Norfolk Council's Community Action Fund.

A panel of councillors met in October to allocate grants to projects that will enhance the lives of local people.

Chair of the panel, Cllr Kim Carsok, said: "These grants make a huge difference, supporting projects that bring people together and improve people's quality of life.

The grant can also be a catalyst for other funding streams."

The Outreach Project run by Arnie McConnell will receive £5,269 to purchase additional equipment needed to help WCOP run an effective foodbank and drop-in centre at their new

location in the Abbey Hall.

Cllr Kevin Hurn supported WCOP with the grant application, which will allow them to rebrand, create safe spaces where private interviews can be held, purchase stationery, install shelving, and buy IT equipment and a large freezer.



SEASONAL SOUNDS WITH SNR

By David Mann

South Norfolk Radio's volunteer team will be bringing you seasonal music and live coverage from Wymondham as families from the town and beyond gather for this year's Wynterfest event on 26th November, organised by Wymondham's Business Group and the Town Team in association with Clear Company CIC.

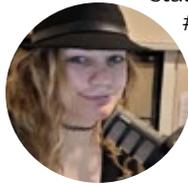
South Norfolk Radio is an entirely volunteer-operated Community Radio Station, run on a not-for-profit basis. It's based in the centre of Wymondham and has been on air for five years. Programmes are available to hear on-line through the website at snradio.uk, through mobile devices, tablets, laptops and PCs - and on smart speakers too. If you have the internet - then you've got South Norfolk Radio! Many SNR programmes are also available on a 'listen again' basis too.

Radio Station Manager

Anthony Woods says "Although South Norfolk Radio has been broadcasting for five years now, we're keen that even more people should get to know about us and so we'll be bringing you live Wynterfest performances direct from the town centre during the day on SNR."

Pop along to the radio station's stand near the Market Cross at Wynterfest and say hello, maybe have a go at the station's on-the-day competition and if you'd like to find out more about becoming a member of the SNR team, or to make a request or dedication, then you can do that in person at Wynterfest too. Sophie Garrod, regular presenter of 'The Sophie Sessions'

on Saturday mornings on SNR will be amongst the volunteers co-hosting coverage from Wynterfest. "We're really looking forward



to seeing everyone!" says Sophie.

'Wynterfest Live' will be on air on South Norfolk Radio from mid-morning until early evening on November 26th and will be bringing you all the live events as they happen, plus a big selection of seasonal tunes to put everyone in the Wynterfest mood! "We don't usually feature Christmas music heavily on SNR until a couple of weeks or so before the big day" says station manager Anthony, "but of course we're making an exception for Wynterfest!"

Looking ahead to Christmas itself, there'll be special editions of many of the station's regular shows, and #BreakfastBriefing host David Mann will once again be presenting South Norfolk Radio's own local version of 'Junior Choice' at gam on Christmas morning. It's a real nostalgia-filled show, with many of the old classics of Christmases - and childhoods - long past. "Our own version of 'Junior Choice' is one of

the highlights of the year for me" says David. "It's great to get a chance to play some music that just oozes nostalgia for times past, especially at Christmas. Expect Captain Beaky, Ernie the Milkman and Puff the Magic Dragon amongst many others, and not forgetting My Bruvver! We welcome requests, dedications and your own nostalgic Christmas memories for the show too." continues David. "Just drop an email to david@snradio.uk."

For full details of the radio station, including the programme schedule, and an extensive local 'What's On' listing for upcoming events in the area, just check the radio station's website at snradio.uk. That's also the place where you can find details about joining the station - maybe you could help with live events like Wynterfest or even present your own radio show. With technology evolving all the time, SNR can now even offer you the opportunity to present a show from the comfort of your own home! "It's a great opportunity to try something different, and a volunteering role always looks good on the CV, whatever age you are!" says SNR station manager Anthony. "If you're interested, then we'd love to hear from you" he adds.



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Christmas Fayre
 Saturday 2nd December
 10-2pm
 Ashleigh Primary School
 Entrance on Sheffield Road
 50p entry
Refreshments
Santa Selfies
Craft Games
Stalls
 Charity number: 800828



WYMONDHAM BAPTIST CHURCH
 QUEEN STREET WYMONDHAM NR18 0AY
 PRESENT A CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH THE
ST. MARY'S SINGERS HEMSBY



SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2023
TIME: 2:30PM | **TICKETS: £10**
(including refreshments)
 For tickets please contact Norman & Helen on 01953 600563
 In aid of the Church Building Fund
 Charity Number: 1199302



Wymondham Youth Music Society's Festive Fun Concert

Thursday December 7th 2023
 at 6:30pm
 Queens Street Baptist Church, Wymondham NR18 0AY

Join the Wymondham Youth Music Society and friends for an evening of FESTIVE FUN . Together with the Windmill Handbell Ringers and members of the High Oak Music Group, Junior and Senior instrumentalists of WYMS plan an evening of happy music making and good cheer, celebrating Youth and the Community

Admission at the door: Adults £10, children FREE!

If you haven't heard of the Wymondham Youth Music Society in its 35 years of providing opportunities for young musicians of Grade1 standard and upward, visit www.wyms.org.uk



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Community Noticeboard

**CHRISTMAS
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FREE ADMISSION
REFRESHMENTS CRAFTS, RAFFLE,
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OPEN AND MORE!

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Saturday 2nd December
Star Throwers Centre,
30 Melton Road, Wymondham

Star Throwers
Cancer Support Charity
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Wymondham Choral Society

Howard Goodall
**CHRISTMAS
CANTATA**

Ralph Vaughan Williams
**FANTASIA ON
CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

AND OTHER SEASONAL MUSIC

Claire Dixon | Conductor
Hannah Long | Soprano
Kevin Ward | Bass
Rob Goodrich | Accompanist

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER

7.30pm St Mary's Church Attleborough
Tickets £12 (under 19s free) on the door, or:
Reeves, Market Street, Wymondham,
Nuts 'n Bolts, Church Street, Attleborough. Cash or cheque only
or buy online www.wymondhamchoralsociety.org.uk

Wymondham & District Ex Service's Social Club
Tel: 01953 602261

**Children's
Christmas Party!**

Saturday 16th December
From 2pm till 4pm

**Children's Entertainer, Disco,
Party Games & Refreshments**

£5 per ticket

**Christmas Jumpers & Fancy
Dress Welcome!**

**Tickets available to
purchase in advance from
the member's bar**

Wymondham & District Ex-Service's Social Club
Friarscroft Lane, NR18 0AT Tel: 01953 602261

Charity Christmas Afternoon Tea
in the Regal Lounge

A selection of festive food accompanied by
a glass of mulled wine!

Christmas movie showing on the big screen
+ a raffle!

Saturday 9th December, 12pm till 3pm
£15 pp bookable at the member's bar

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2023 Reflections

THE LOWE DOWN

With Freddy Lowe

On Wednesday, the 25th of October, an Edinburgh venue hosted a public discussion entitled: "Can Words Really Hurt?" On the panel, there was a mix of authors and lawyers to discuss the boundaries of free expression in the law, as well as from a standpoint of intellectual rigour. I was there, and the discussion was fascinating. My flatmate commented – possibly accurately – that the obvious answer to the question, 'can words really hurt,' is yes, case closed. I don't disagree with him, though it obviously becomes a different question when examined from a legal perspective.

However, the most memorable thing about this event was not the fascinating discussion. It was not having a drink bought for me by a charming attendee, nor my ensuing chat with said attendee and his equally charming pals that revealed them all to be hard conservatives whose views somewhat jarred with the effect Wymondham High's drilling of An Inspector Calls has on almost every GCSE English student.

It was this: quite simply, everyone there was incredibly friendly. The discussion was complex and controversial, yet humaneness prevailed. People with wildly different perspectives sat merrily in the same room, and the planet managed to keep spinning. In the words of my free drink benefactor, it was "disagreement without being disagreeable".

This, to my mind, embodies the festive spirit! A debate about the legal nuances of free speech probably doesn't scream 'festive', but I admired it for the dedication to human connection above differences. And, if nothing

else, this time of year has (traditionally, anyway) stood for a similar kind of goodwill. I remember when I was still a Wymondham High pre-GCSE student, and at home, I'd ironically sing "Tis the season to be jolly..." placing particular emphasis on 'jolly' to remind my parents not to stress out too much. (What an irritating child.)

Undeniably, the pressure on people at Christmas to be unflinchingly happy and jolly tends to achieve the exact opposite goal, hence the importance of not placing oneself under puritanical standards. But if this season reminds us that differences actually aren't everything, that is enough.

On a more serious note, 2023 was a thought-provoking year. The year's stories in the *Wymondham Magazine* consisted of community bookshops, updates about hard-working cancer charities, the plight of the local pub legend the Green Dragon, and even tales of a former Norfolk soldier who wrote of the arduous conditions in a later-discovered diary. Our fabulous legion of book reviewers has covered a diverse array of literature, ranging from Angie Thomas to Eliza Clark. Any struggles to buy Christmas gifts for bibliophiles can be solved by scrolling through the Wymondham Magazine literary archives.

Speaking of literature, J.K. Rowling's latest Cormoran Strike novel, *The Running Grave*, marks a happy year for crime fans, as well as new releases by Kate Mosse (*The Ghost Ship*) and Ragnar Jónasson: his recent novel *Reykjavik* was co-written with his Prime Minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir. (That must have felt bizarre. Can you imagine co-authoring a book with Boris Johnson or Rishi Sunak? Nor can I.)

2023 also saw the deaths of many beloved figures, including Tina Turner – the singer I shall always remember for belting out the iconic Bond theme Goldeneye – and Matthew Perry, the *Friends* star. Among the funniest, and most touching, tributes to him was Miranda Hart's admission that she met him once (he was her celebrity crush), word-vomited in "utter madness", and blurted out, "this isn't who I am!" before making the case for herself as good wife material. (We've all been there Miranda.) She says he responded very graciously – like a true gent.

Speaking of graciousness, one of my favourite moments of the year was seeing Julian Clary and Christopher Biggins at the Edinburgh Fringe. Julian declared himself to be "so left-wing it

frightens me" and admitted that, by contrast, Biggins was "so right-wing" (he said with a shudder). And yet the two gentlemen were onstage like two old pals, cracking

"People with wildly different perspectives sat merrily in the same room, and the planet managed to keep spinning."

smutty jokes and giving the audience a fantastic time. Like the debate on words, to me, that embodies the festive spirit – even though it happened in August.

Whether you agree with me or think I'm garbling like Miranda – Merry Christmas Wymondham readers, and a Happy New Year!

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FROM MY PERSPECTIVE



By Todd Baker, Wymondham Town Councillor, Central Ward

This time last year, I wrote in this column about the concerning decline of Wymondham's high street in the context of a national trend in our town centres. I suggested that it would likely fall to our 'strong and engaged community' to revive the high street in the same way that events which are cornerstones of Wymondham's calendar rely on dedicated volunteers.

When I sought election to the Town Council in May, I did so because I wanted to contribute to the revival of our Town Centre and our community. I noted that

Diss Town Council organises its carnival and Christmas lights through council sub-committees whilst Dereham Town Council runs its own community taxi scheme.

Many readers will be preparing to enjoy a day out at Wynterfest on 26th November. After years of being organised by incredibly committed and passionate volunteers - and still supported by many of them - 2023's event has relied on Clear Company - a local non-profit organisation - and funding from Wymondham Business Group for its organisation. Similarly, the award-winning Wymondham

in Bloom campaign was organised and produced by wonderful volunteers whose energy transformed our town centre. The watering of these plants though was, in large part, drawn from private businesses such as The White Hart rather than public sources. If you wanted to host a meeting in the Council building to discuss such a community event, a room for just ten people would set you back £18 an hour.

Fellow councillors have sometimes argued it is not the place of the council to be at the centre of issues within the town but to support volunteers and groups who are passionate about particular issues. When the council recently declared a climate emergency, it was determined that a group linked to the council would be formed as opposed to an official arm of the council.

Furthermore, when Labour's Town & District councillor, Cllr Rosen, proposed the council consider adopting play facilities if the opportunity arose, it was unsuccessful.

Our Town Council cannot be everything to everyone. I would argue that it would better serve the town, however, if its approach were more proactive and outward-reaching than the passive one it takes now. If we are to continue to rely on the sterling work done by these groups to bring our community together, the council must be more supportive. The council must open up its spaces, buildings and - wherever possible - its resources for community groups to use. We cannot rely on the good nature and commitment of local residents forever.

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Unruly by David Mitchell

By Henry Opina, Volunteer at Kett's Books

"Thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office." -William Shakespeare, King Lear.

We've heard about Kings and Queens where I'm from. In fact, we're named after one. The Philippines, named after King Philip II who never stepped foot in the country. The man who named the country after him was from Portugal. But all of that is history. Not ancient history, mind you. 20.4% of Tagalog, the Philippines' national language, comes from Spanish and pretty much all of my family have Spanish last names. Everywhere you walk in The Philippines, the mark of other countries is seen in our cuisine, in our architecture and in our history.

That's true of England, too. It's just much less talked about. Comedian David Mitchell's *Unruly: A History of England's Kings and Queens* introduces us to England's fascinating line of monarchs in a way that feels irreverent yet intimate. To me, it felt like tagging along with a friend to a party and someone close to the host is giving you all the juicy details. Throughout the book, Mitchell reiterates that he is not a professional historian but someone with a keen interest in the subject. When he does so,

be prepared for the book to shine. "I'm not a professional historian so I don't have to pretend I haven't picked a side. In fact, I'd argue that historians telling themselves they haven't picked a side are more misleading in an insidious way, because they definitely will have done, even if they don't know it." Sometimes Mitchell will use his absence of scholarly responsibility to veer into one of his famous rants, as seen on beloved panel shows such as *Would I Lie to You?*

Like the Kings and Queens he writes about, David Mitchell is sometimes more persona than person. Like the Kings and Queens he writes about, some of that persona is shed in this book. He imagines (because imagining is all one can do, even with the historical records surrounding these figures) their humanity - how love, loss, and family ties affect one's choices as a ruler and emotions as a human being. Perhaps playing himself as a character for all of these years has let him connect with England's monarchs in a way even many professional historians cannot.

For a review of such a vast period of history, the book

never fails to feel current in its discussions of English political changes. Once again, this is a testament to David Mitchell as a communicator. He's not just talking about English history, he's talking to us about English history. We, with all of our nebulous preconceptions about which king died (or, more accurately, didn't) die at the tip of a hot poker and the scandalous mystery of the princes in the tower. We like to believe that the monarchy doesn't hold any power in the 21st Century but, seeing as the royal motto on the cover of our passports translates to "God and my right", the precedent for their sovereignty remains in a state of "they might as well." It's not the state the English monarchy was in for most of its history. *Unruly* reminds us that, now and always, the idea of "who England is" is a matter of who tells its story.

Image: Penguin Books

Kett's Books





ICENI RFC - NORFOLK'S FIRST ALL-INCLUSIVE RUGBY CLUB!

By Drew Turner

Iceni Rugby Football Club became the first all-inclusive rugby club in Norfolk when we were first founded back in September 2022.

Based at Wymondham Rugby Club, our team initially started out with only a few individuals, and has grown substantially in its' first year, with regular membership now reaching over 40 people and more joining every week.

For many, the club has acted like a beacon for those in the LGBTQIA+ community who have been searching for a social way of keeping fit, but may have had reservations about pursuing a team sport.

Historically, many within the LGBTQIA+ community have had to deal with the stigma and bigotry of homophobia and

transphobia when participating in sport, usually during their school years. This has fostered high levels of anxiety and shame for some and has led to many not wanting to participate in a sport at any level.

Shaun Rennie-Plume, President of Iceni RFC says: "As a founding member, I wanted the club to be a safe space in Norfolk where LGBTQIA+ people could play rugby. It was also a new way for our community to engage with one another outside of the traditional bar and club culture".

"I would like to see the club continue to grow organically as it is, and to engage with those that need it, for both their physical and mental health needs. Playing rugby is only one side of it, we have built a fantastic community of

people that probably wouldn't normally mix in the same circles".

This is exactly the all-inclusive message our club is using to drive an ever-increasing membership from all walks of life, with a wide spectrum of experience and ability.

Iceni RFC reiterates our unwavering support for our Transgendered family.

As a team, we want to again make it clear that we fully support our trans community in all aspects of life, including access to healthcare, education and involvement in sports.

Over this past summer, the "Tribe", as we lovingly refer to our team, hosted the 'Pride on Pitch' fundraiser for Norwich Pride, a rainbow and pride-inspired fancy dress touch rugby tournament. Furthermore, Iceni RFC

WYMONDHAM KART RACER IN PREPARATION FOR HIS LAST MAJOR EVENT OF THE SEASON

Logan Howes from Wymondham has started his preparations for the winter cup which is being held at Whilton Mill kart track in Daventry 15-17th December.

Logan the recently turned 12yr old who races with the kato motorsport team has had a good year learning, battling up against others who are in their 16th year. Showing great progress and pace throughout the year he's gearing up for the last big event of the season before he take his winter break and deciding on which championship to tackle in 2024.

Logan is also looking for sponsorship for his race in December for anyone who would be interested in sponsoring his race tyres for the weekend or even if anyone wants to sponsor Logan throughout his 2024 campaign.

If anyone is interested in this please contact @Logan Howes Racing on his Facebook account for more information.



has begun to play competitively with the club fielding a team at Beach Rugby Wales in June and subsequently hosting a successful inaugural tournament titled 'Boudica's Battle of the Balls 2023' in September.

A notable achievement is the Tribe's formal induction to the IGR (International Gay Rugby), the umbrella organisation for the world's gay and inclusive rugby clubs.

Plans for the upcoming year include further competitive matches, pursuing sponsorship deals, growing our membership and building on our Iceni RFC family.

If you are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community or an ally and want to learn some touch rugby skills and meet some wonderful people, then come along to a taster session and meet our tribe!

Follow the team and contact us via Instagram and Facebook: @iceni_rfc and @IceniRFCUK.

We train every Wednesday evening, from 7:30pm to 8:30pm at Wymondham Rugby Club, followed by a social chat and drinks. We have also started an informal training and social session on every 2nd and 4th Sunday for November to February from 11am to 12:30pm in Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich.

Norfolk
Creations

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Wymondham Arts Centre
(NR18 0PH)

Open Daily - 10am till 4pm
(10am till 8pm Sunday 26th November)

From Saturday 25th November
till Friday 8th December 2023

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WEST NORFOLK 10 WYMONDHAM RFC 20



Photos: Kerry Lake,
KML amateur sports photography

Match report by [John Hood](#)

Unfortunately this keenly anticipated fixture was spoiled as a spectacle by the saturated playing surface, squally rain showers and the difficulty both sides had in keeping their feet at the breakdown, resulting in a very whistle heavy afternoon.

Wymondham repulsed early pressure from the home side before mounting an attack of their own, winning a penalty successfully converted by Bradley. Despite the conditions, which would

traditionally suggest a stick it up your jumper style conservative game plan, both sides were attempting to play open rugby. Jermyn came close to breaking through following a clever inside pass from Cousens and Mustard very nearly profited from a deft Blackham chip to the corner. In defence Rodgers was tackling everything in a grey shirt. Wymondham continued to use their three quarters to threaten the home line

before finally finding a way through. From a period of concerted pressure Cousens took play left, dragging the defence with him, before quick ruck ball fired right saw the rugged Girdler maori sidestep through two defenders before putting the supporting Bradley in for a beautifully crafted score which he also converted. It was shortly after this that Wymondham lost their highly influential skipper Kiddle to a serious leg injury. This disrupted their momentum and the half petered out with neither side able to mount any further serious threat save a lone West Norfolk penalty. Half time score 3 - 10.

The visitors started the second half in determined mood and quickly laid siege to the home line. Showing excellent patience and discipline they probed left then right with Airdrie and Cousens both going close before young Hughes demonstrated excellent footwork then explosive power to surge over, Bradley converting. At this point the weather deteriorated further and the game settled into a long period of stalemate with neither side able to sustain any real momentum. Bradley managed to land a long range penalty and at 3 - 20 just as it looked like the game was petering out Wests secured a lineout in the Wymondham 22, drove to the line and were awarded a penalty try when the maul collapsed. A player down and with Wests looking to capitalise the Wymondham

defence showed its mettle and they gradually managed to wrestle back momentum to finish the game on the front foot.

Final score West Norfolk 10 Wymondham 20.

This was a pleasing if not pretty victory on the road against a stubborn and hard tackling opponent. Notable performances came from the ever improving Blackham who is forming a highly effective half back partnership with a rejuvenated Airdrie and the whole pack who worked tirelessly throughout. Mention must also be made of Kiddle, who has been a stand out forward during the first half of the season and who's steadying hand on the tiller will be sorely missed during his absence. We wish him a successful and speedy recovery.





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Sunday 26th November

Wynterfest, 12pm-5pm, Wymondham Town Centre. The town's main festive event with stalls, fun fair, santa's grotto and independent shops.
fb.me/e/1hhZC6kcA

Makers Market, 12pm-5pm, Town Green Centre. Wymondham Methodist Church warmly welcomes the Wynterfest Maker's Market. The church will be open as a 'still place' for reflection and prayer.
wymondhammethodistchurch.com/

Whirligig Ceilidh. 2pm-3:30pm, Fairland Hall. Dance fun for all generations - no experience necessary! The band comes with its own dance caller who will explain what to do every step of the way. Advance tickets only via link below.
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wynterfest-whirligig-ceilidh-tickets-744027314727

Tuesday 28th November

Wymondham Photographic Society. 8pm-10pm, Dells Bowls Club. Open DPI Competition Round 2.
www.wymondham-ps.org.uk

Friday 1st December

Photographic Society Coffee Morning. 10am-12pm, Dell Bowls Club
www.wymondham-ps.org.uk

Saturday 2nd December

Ashleigh Christmas Fayre. 10am-2pm, Ashleigh Primary School
Festive fun for all the family. Refreshments, games, stalls and a visit from Father Christmas himself! 50p entry.
www.facebook.com/events/ashleigh-primary-school-nursery/ashleigh-friends-christmas-fayre/499576238467557/

Abbey Days Christmas Fair. 11am-4pm, Wymondham Abbey. The fantastic festive shopping experience returns, brimming with stalls, crafts, delicious food, music, and entertainment.
www.wymondhamabbey.org.uk

Tuesday 5th December

Volunteer Workday
9:30am-3:30pm, Kett's Park Woodland
Join volunteers to help this woodland to thrive. Refreshments at 11:00am. Bring yourself, your lunch, a pair of gloves and sturdy boots.
www.greeningwymondham.org/

Full Town Council. 7pm, WTC Kett's Park Office. Public welcome.
www.wymondhamtowncouncil.org

Wymondham Photographic Society. 8pm-10pm, Dells Bowls Club. Guest Speaker-Paul Raddon: An insight into judging.
www.wymondham-ps.org.uk

Wednesday 6th December

Art Society Christmas Social. 7:15pm, Catholic Church Hall
www.wymondhamart.org



Saturday 9th December

Community Orchard Volunteer Workday. 10am-12pm, Browick Road Orchard
Refreshments and tools provided but bring your own gloves. Entrance opposite Gunton Road NR18 0QN or Ayton Road Car Park.
www.greeningwymondham.org/

Monday 11th December

Garden Club Christmas Social
7:30pm, Town Green Centre
Annual end of the year club social with Christmas Fare, Fauna, Song and a few surprises! Award Presentations: Banksian medal, Presidents Cup, Gavin Brown Cookery trophy. Members Free, guests £4. For further information contact
wymondhamgardenclub@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100077254060337

Tuesday 12th December

Volunteer Workday
9:30am-3:30pm, The Lizard
Join volunteers to help this natural area to thrive. Refreshments at 11:00am. Bring yourself, your lunch, a pair of gloves and sturdy boots.
www.thelizardwymondham.co.uk/

Wymondham Photographic Society
8pm-10pm, Dells Bowls Club
Zoom talk - Andy Page: Moody and dramatic Landscapes
www.wymondham-ps.org.uk

Thursday 14th December

Nature Group Indoor Meeting
7:30pm, Town Green Community Centre
Illustrated talk by Dr Mark Collins about the rivers Bure, Ant and Thurne. Their history and the threats of climate change today. Admission £3, NWT Members £2.
01508 488337 www.facebook.com/WymondhamNatureGroup

Saturday 16th December

Farmer's Market
9am-1pm, Market Place
Browse a range of products from local producers.

Christingle

3pm, Wymondham Abbey
All Wymondham children are welcome to join in the Children's Society annual service.
www.wymondhamabbey.org.uk/

Sunday 17th December

Christmas Film Show
2:30pm, Regal Lounge, Ex Service's Club
Main film 'It's a Wonderful Life', Doors open 13:45. Supporting film 'The Night Before Christmas' Tom & Jerry Cartoon, plus a look at celebrations of Christmases Past in Wymondham throughout the 20th Century. Admission is £5 payable at the door in cash.

Tuesday 19th December

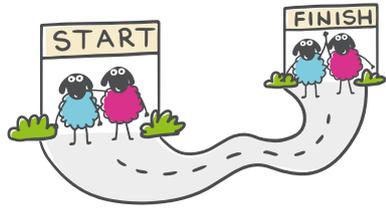
Wymondham Photographic Society
8pm-10pm, Dells Bowls Club
Christmas Buffet and Quiz
www.wymondham-ps.org.uk

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