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Great Ringstead News and Views

Summer 2020

Parish Council - Bridget Crowfoot, Chairperson

As the village emerges from self isolation it is perhaps a good time to reflect back over the past two months.

Firstly, we must thank Tim and Cathy at our village shop for their wonderful and caring support to all of us. Working closely with Melanie and John, who set up the isolation support group we have, as a village, been very well looked after and supported. We must also include Sue and Kate who serve in the shop on Monday and Tuesday mornings. It was so reassuring and comforting to know that they were there for all of us. THANK YOU.

Wards Nurseries kept us all busy 'digging for victory' with their wonderful home delivery service and as a result we will have wonderful vegetables to enjoy over the summer. THANK YOU.

We must also remember the milkman and postmen and all those in the village, who work either in the NHS or care homes and who continued to work despite the risk to themselves and their families. THANK YOU.

Lastly, we do thank all those second homeowners who obeyed the rules during lockdown and did not visit. THANK YOU.

I also believe that the tranquil atmosphere in the village was much enjoyed too. The peace and quiet with less traffic passing through, the blue skies devoid of vapour trails and the bird song. All as it used to be in days long past with Mother Nature happily displaying her gratitude.

Parish Council News

We have only received two positive responses from parishioners to the writing of a neighbourhood scheme. We shall be discussing this again shortly. It would in my view, be a very positive thing to do.

Five Years ago the Parish council set up a Footpaths Committee. This committee, led by David and Helga Lendrum, sent a detailed report, with evidence supported by old maps and many parishioners, to the Footpath Committee at Norfolk County Council. They were due to announce their findings in December last year. The council are investigating and trying to contact the chairman of that department at Norfolk CC and do hope to have a response for the Autumn newsletter.

We shall be activating the speed signs shortly. *Above photograph by kind permission of Les Bunyan, Wildlife Photography.*

Great Ringstead Parish Council Contacts:

Councillors

- | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
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Great Ringstead News and Views
Autumn Newsletter

to atk_hornbeams@yahoo.co.uk
 by Friday 28th August 2020

Please note: The views expressed in this newsletter are of the contributors and not necessarily the views and opinions of the editorial team. The team also reserve the right to edit articles as appropriate.

Ringstead Woodland Garden and Walks Group - Trevor Large, Chairman



It came as a surprise to us that people would abuse the area during this period of lockdown. Two benches were moved together and what can only be assumed a party held leaving two large black plastic bags full of wine, spirit, beer bottles and cans left behind. An unknown amount of money has been stolen from the donation box and graffiti has appeared on the box and on some of the benches which means that one of the benches will most likely have to be destroyed. Lavender plants have also been stolen from the sunken garden area along with the no camping sign in the car park belonging to the Le Strange Estate. There has been another incident of motor cycles being driven in the downs area and the police were informed while the perpetrators were on site and I await an update as to the result.

On a more positive front four volunteers have been very busy cleaning up the area but there is more to do. When the covid restrictions are lifted a village get together will be organised subject to demand. If you would like this to happen or would like to help in any way please contact me on 01485 525480 or via email at t.large304@btinternet.com The intention is to bring in live music and a bar with possibly the pizza van attending. Should demand be sufficient notices will be posted on the village notice board and elsewhere in the village.

Once again we thank everyone who picks up and removes litter and those who inform me of any problems as it is impossible for me to be in attendance 24 hours a day every day.

Village Hall - Debbie Rice

Unfortunately due to the coronavirus and the lockdown that has been imposed, the Village Hall is not in use. Hopefully, when the situation has improved and it is deemed safe to do so, the local groups will resume meeting on a regular basis at the Hall.

The Committee of Trustees had hoped to organise another of the popular Fundraising Race Night Evenings during October but at the moment it is too soon to predict whether or not this will be possible.

In the meantime please keep safe and well, and perhaps when lockdown is over you may want to join one of the local groups listed below.

Table Tennis Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.30pm Contact Richard Hendricks 525366
Carpet Bowls Wednesday 2pm - 4pm Contact Liz Witley 525341
Art Group Thursdays 10am - 12am Contact Liz Witley 525341



If, in the future, you would like to hire the Hall please contact our Booking Secretary, Mr Roger Pincott 525522 (Ringstead Residents are charged £6 per hour or £35 per day, non residents £8 per hour).

Village Pensioners - Roger Pincott

Hope I find you all well in these trying times. As you will be aware we had to cancel the Bingo in April and I expect the one planned for November will also not happen. But, assuming that the Gin Trap is up and running, with no social distancing, then we will be having our annual lunch in December. If you have never been to the lunch it is never too early to contact us for the meal in 2020. Please contact Elaine on 525522 if you are 60 years young for you girls and 65 for the old wrinkly boys, it is free to all. You just need to be a full time resident of the village.

Ringstead Bowls Club - Roger Pincott

Bowls is so like many sports in that social distancing makes it impossible to play the game in a normal team format, to this end this year's season never got started, and I would be surprised if we roll a single wood in a league match this year. There may be a time towards the end of the season where we may be able to organise some form of an inter club roll up, but this would be by guidance of the government and the willingness of our players to partake. We have been

LOCKDOWN ART by Ringstead Art Group and Ringstead Artists



'Ringstead General Stores - Lockdown Hero's' Belinda Chell.



'St. Andrew's Church and Sedgeford Road Farm (work in progress)'- Liz Whitley
Ringstead Art Group



'View from window of my garden' - Barbara Fields, Ringstead Art Group.



'Wolf' - Anne Bunyan, Ringstead Art Group.



'Through the cracks' Poppies Docking Road, Ringstead, Barbara King.



'Rob Ross Tutorial' - Pat Nevin, Ringstead Art Group.

Peddars Way Lockdown Birdwatch, April and May 2020 - David Lendrum

On Thursday 16th April, after taking part in the weekly clap for the NHS heroes, Helga and I were able to communicate (from distance) with our friends and neighbours - Tony and Carole Best and Mike, Penny and Lucy Jones - effectively enough to agree to engage in a Birdwatch challenge. The objective was for each household to record every different bird species seen in or from their gardens and for a mile along Peddars Way or Ringstead Downs during the course of one week from Friday April 17th to Thursday April 23rd.

We all started observing much more intensely trying to distinguish between the confusing plumage differences of juvenile first or second year, winter or summer Gull species (normally just 'Seagulls'), Partridges (Red Legged or Grey) or Doves (Ring Dove, Collared Dove or Stock Dove). Song was also included as another identification feature (with the hope of hearing a Cuckoo) but in the event every bird recorded was seen. We marvelled at the birdsong during the week; because everything was so quiet it seemed much louder than normal.

The weather always plays a significant role in what is seen, especially during the spring migration period. It was gloriously sunny throughout (ideal for birds being out and about) but the wind direction was a persistent north easterly which is not so good for migrants moving up from Africa and southern Europe (Swallows and Warblers). Towards the end of the week the wind changed and the swallows returned.



Male Marsh Harrier - Hanneke Robson

This locality supports a wide variety of raptors and two very rare species were seen. A Black Kite, which can be identified by its uniform dark brown plumage and slightly forked tail, was observed flying from Ringstead Downs towards Courtyard Farm, (a neighbour confirmed it was also recorded there), and a male Pallid Harrier was seen hunting in the chalk pit at Ringstead Downs. While still extremely rare, this stunning light grey raptor has been recorded with increasing frequency in this region in recent years.

Mike, Penny and Lucy had an excellent view of a snow white Little Egret (another bird which is now well established in Norfolk) flying over their house, Tony on a dawn walk up Peddars Way was almost within touching distance of a magnificent Red Kite and Helga and I watched a pair of Marsh Harriers quartering the field next to our house. During the week we were sometimes able to call out to each other to see how many birds we had recorded so far; numbers were proclaimed, but because you started off well, it did not mean that you would still be in front at the end!

Along Peddars Way we saw birds we didn't see in our gardens – Skylark, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Oystercatcher. I thought I would certainly see a Barn Owl, which had been hunting regularly here throughout the winter, but sadly none of us saw one.

By the end of the week we had a good haul of spring migrants – Swallow, House Martin, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Garden Warbler - and an impressive list of our well loved residents.

On Thursday April 23rd we called out our lists to each other. Surprisingly although there were differences of species in each of our lists, our totals were very similar. We all agreed it had been a great experience and we observed birds in more detail which we either take for granted or in some cases had never seen before.

Our final collective total was the nice round number of 50:

Mallard, Red Legged Partridge, Grey Partridge, Pheasant, Little Egret, Red Kite, Black Kite, Marsh Harrier, Pallid Harrier, Common Buzzard, Sparrow Hawk, Kestrel, Moorhen, Oystercatcher, Black-Headed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black Backed Gull, Stock Dove, Wood Pigeon, Collard Dove, Tawny Owl, Green Woodpecker, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Swallow, House Martin, Pied Wagtail, Dunnock, Robin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Wren, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long- Tailed Tit, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Starling, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Linnet, Goldfinch, Greenfinch and Yellowhammer.

In May, with the change of direction of the wind to a southerly, more migrants have passed through or taken up residence. In our garden or along Peddars Way, we have seen, in order of arrival: Common Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail, Swift and Wheatear.

extremely fortunate this year by having some really generous sponsors who have supported us even though we are not able to play. Their support has enabled us to continue to maintain the rinks and keep the machinery in top order. The mower alone cost us £243.00 to have sharpened and serviced, and at a time when we had no income from match fee's. Without the support of our sponsors we would have been in a very sorry state. Keep safe.

Village Club - Elaine Pincott

For obvious reasons we are not able to run our club. I still have a full program of speakers until the end of the year but when we can start again is impossible to gauge. Watch the notice board for further details.

Ringstead Open Gardens - Jenny Martin Smith

At this confusing time we are writing to you as church people and those leading Ringstead Open Gardens. As you may be aware, having originally set the 14th June as a date for Ringstead Open Gardens, about a month ago we advertised two 'fall back days'; 12th July and 30th August.

We have now met online and, given recent governmental advice, have decided that certainly the 14th June and probably 12th July are out of the question for such a gathering and that by the 30th August the gardens will be well past their best, lunches/teas will still be inadvisable and the handling of money is fraught with difficulties. We reluctantly have therefore decided to cancel ROG 2020.

We believe that this is correct given the ages of a number involved, for the safety of all visitors and residents and to offer clarity.

Ringstead Open Gardens is a wonderful event, bringing the whole village together for over 40 years, and we look forward to resuming in 2021.

Of course we all look forward to a time when we can meet again and, following our St Andrew's Day coffee morning in 2019, we intend to come together on Saturday 28th November to share in refreshments, sales of produce, Christmas cards etc. So please put that in your diaries.

Do remember that there are a number of people who are willing to help if you are in isolation and Melanie Hutchison (525494) and John Crofts (525142) are pleased to co-ordinate such help.

The Gin Trap - David Lamyman

What a difference a couple of months make! I hope everyone is safe and well. Forced into lockdown on Friday 20th March, we have remained closed for the last 2 months. I don't know about you, but lockdown has been stifling and frustrating. Luckily for us the builders have recently started back again so that we can finish the improvements, albeit with less people on site.

As far as opening back up again, we're hoping to offer some kind of service from the government's much stated date of 4th July onwards. At the very least we're going to be offering a take-away service, where the menu will have Stuart Wyllie's stamp on it, but will probably be more suited to take-away rather than our recent dining in menu.

As far as hygiene goes, we are taking every precaution necessary to ensure a safe & sanitised service area and kitchen. This will include a one-way system into the pub and safely being shown to a table outside in the garden or in the conservatory. Tables will be spaced further apart than usual, and our staff will be wearing masks. All customer areas will be thoroughly cleaned constantly. I'm afraid initially it won't be possible to order from the bar or even sit at the bar. We are looking into getting our own app, which customers can download and then order their drinks and food from, preventing the need for printed menus to be handed out. If you're waiting for a takeaway, we're hoping we can serve you a drink. Then once you have finished, we're asking our customers to exit via the garden at the back, which will prevent customers meeting each other at the front door.

If we can make it completely safe we might even put in a serving hatch at the public bar door (not the main front door), so that our regulars can order a drink outside and then sit on one of our spaced out picnic tables.

This is what we're hoping to offer, but will constantly rely on government rules and guidelines and amend as necessary. The next year is going to be incredibly tough for us, as it will be for many other businesses. But we'll get through it and hope a vaccine comes quickly. In the meantime I hope everyone stays safe.

Great Ringstead History Group - Bill Jacob

The pandemic raises the question, 'Has anything like this happened before in Ringstead?' Well, perhaps. The 'Black Death', bubonic plague, in 1349 had a devastating impact on England's population, and historians think that Barret Ringstead, the village around the ruined church by Downs Farm, is one of the few villages that really was depopulated and abandoned after the Plague. New rectors were appointed to both Little Ringstead St. Peter and Great Ringstead St. Andrew in 1349, which suggests that both rectors had died that year. Thereafter there were regular recurrences of plague, and probably when we can again access the parish registers recording baptisms, marriages and deaths from c1538, we will see years when there were above average numbers of deaths, perhaps indicating an outbreak of plague here, until it died out soon after the great plague year of 1666. Similarly we may be able to see evidence of the impact of Spanish 'flu in 1918-19.

A former resident has found a New Testament she was given as a small child to mark 'the Week of Thanksgiving' in Ringstead for Victory in Europe 1945 and has asked what happened in Ringstead that week. Does anyone remember, or remember their parents or grandparents talking about it?

Members have been busy while locked down researching about people who served in World War 1, the village celebrations for George V's coronation in 1911, businesses in Ringstead, rectors, and doing archaeology in their garden.

We now have a **Facebook** presence at Great Ringstead History Group. If you have any questions, or information you would like to share, don't hesitate to be in touch.

Bill Jacob (Tel 01485 525394 email wmjacob15@gmail.com)

Barbara King - Plastic is only a problem

..... when it is thrown away says Monty Don. So I've been finding new ways to use plastic rubbish in the garden. Unable to get to the tip, I was just about to break up some polystyrene packaging to put in the bin when I saw its potential. I have now punched some drainage holes in the bottom and painted it to disguise the rather glarey whiteness, filled it with earth, planted it with salad leaves and use it as a trough for edging the bank where onions have been set.



Other projects have included making a hanging basket from the plastic moulding of an easter egg; using bottles filled with water and upturned near

vulnerable plants to keep them watered during this dry weather, and foil pie tins, flattened and strung up to make a glittering clicking mobile which might just ward off a bird or two from the veg patch. I have also used an old shower curtain hung up in the greenhouse to give extra shade to emerging plants. In this heat it makes it feel like a bedouin tent or when the wind blows - a sailing boat at sea! Now what can I do with that old.....?

Coming out of lockdown - Hanneke Robson

We are now in our third month of lockdown, during which we have experienced life as never before. Though our rural haven has exempted us from the depth of anxieties felt in our cities, life has nevertheless been a tad trying. But, last week our much missed nursery reopened, as did the Downs, and our hopes are high.

So, when lockdown is over and we can mingle once more, wouldn't it be nice to have a 'bit of a do' in the village hall with an exhibition of our lockdown experiences? We could show paintings and crafts, garden photos (now Open Gardens has been cancelled), or writings about how this tragic but historic time has affected our lives.

Wonderful art has been already been created by members of the Ringstead Art Group. Inspired projects such as the lockdown bird count by David Lendrum and his Peddars Way neighbours, contribute greatly to the knowledge of what is flying about our ears, and history projects, so invaluable to our understanding of this delightful village.

If you have never painted, drawn or crafted, if this nasty virus has made you pick up the pen, brush, needle or camera, it would be great to share your journey. Then, when we are free to roam once more, we can come together for a glass of something and celebrate the end of this awful time with a 'Coming Out' do.

If you have interest in this project, do please contact me or Pauline Atkinson. Cheers!

hanneke@thegaragestudioinorfolk.co.uk 01485 525715 atk_hornbeams@yahoo.co.uk 01485 525375

How was Ringstead Church built? - Bill Jacob

Have you ever wondered how Ringstead church was built about 700 years ago? If you walk round the outside of the church, which is all you can do at the moment, and look carefully at the walls, I think that you can see how it was built round about 1300AD. If you look closely at the walls on the south side, as you come up the path, especially towards the east end, (the road end), you will see that there seem to be horizontal layers of rubble walling about one and half metres deep, with slight changes in mortar colour and layering of the stones as the wall rises. Roughly at the top of each layer there are a series of large blocks of stones, with some infill under them. Probably the layers mark a summer's season of building, for there was no building when there was a risk of frost.



The tops of the walls would have been covered with straw or bracken as protection from rain and frost, and to allow the mortar to consolidate, and bear the weight of another layer. So each layer marks a year's work on the walls. The blocks of stone are 'put log' holes, where the timber scaffolding supports were inserted as the walls went up, to support the builders. If you count the layers, you can work out how many seasons/years it took to build the walls.



If you look at the north side of the tower, the layers and the 'put log' holes there are even clearer. There it looks as though there are ten or eleven building seasons.

Back on the south side, you can see traces of render or plaster on the walls. Almost certainly when the walls were finished, they were rendered or plastered, to keep out the weather, and lime-washed, to further protect them, but also so the church would shine, as a beacon of light in the landscape.

When the church was largely rebuilt in 1864, the render was removed, and the new north and west walls were all of one build, using a harder cement that dried out more quickly.

Why the south and west sides of the tower look as they do, is for another time. *Photography: Bernard Birch*

Anyone for the 50 yard threading needle race?

Prize 2 shillings. Climb the greasy pole: prize 5s. Just two of the attractions listed in the programme of sports organised to celebrate the coronation of King George V on 11th June 1911. There was also a feast of ham, beef, mutton, bread and cake, tea and ginger beer.

The programme, the balance sheet and receipts for the event are stored in the church, and were recently scanned by Great Ringstead History Group to be used for a future display.

I'm looking at the 1911 census for details of people named, the committee, the subscribers, and the shopkeepers. It would be great to have names of people participating in the sports. Was someone in your family a winner? Do let us know.

Kate Birch katie.kb65@gmail.com
Great Ringstead History Group

