

Raynhams' Newsletter - December 2020

The festive season is nearly upon us and while it may not be the same as in previous years, we hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas; take some time to sit back, relax and look forward to better times in 2021.

Stay Well, Stay Safe & Keep Smiling!!

Molly's In Memory Walk



On Friday 11th December, I will be walking home from Fakenham Academy to West Raynham (six miles) taking part in the fundraising event called 'Walking Home for Christmas' which raises money for ex-military veterans in need of mental health care and who are particularly affected by Covid-19.

This year my walk is in memory of Mr. Laurence (Laurie) Mead in recognition of the service he gave to his country. Mr. Mead joined the Army when only 18 years old for his National Service and completed his time in the Army as a Corporal. Following that he joined the Territorial Army where he held numerous positions ending in training cadets and resulting in being awarded the Queen's Commission.

My memory of Laurie is him showing me how to ring the bells at St Mary's Church - I loved it! My walk will end visiting his wife Kate.

This year has hit everyone hard but if you can spare a few pounds to support me it would be much appreciated and more importantly it will ensure that we support those that need help. You can donate online at **Molly Williamson's Walking Home for Christmas:**

- <http://www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com/users/molly-williamson>

Photo competition: Results for November & December

The winner for November was David Stubbs with his photo of 'Raynham Hall and lake with skein of geese' and for December it was Jack O'Donnell and Ashleigh Britton with 'Home Sweet Home'. The runner-up for November was Ashleigh Britton with 'Lest We Forget' and for December it was David Stubbs with 'Frost at St. Margaret's'.

November



December

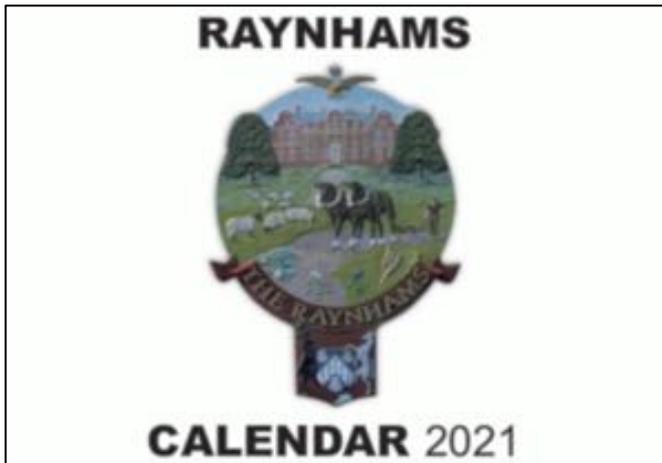


Thanks to everyone who submitted photos throughout the year as the calendar would not have been possible without you - whether you managed to win or not! Our sincere thanks also to Paula Harrison for sorting through and judging all of the entries.

While we won't be running a calendar competition next year, we are thinking of producing seasonal postcards or gift cards. If you have any thoughts or ideas on how to portray the wildlife, landscape or buildings around The Raynhams then do get in touch.

The Raynhams 2021 Calendar

The moment has finally arrived. After months of anxious struggle between some of the top photographers in the Raynhams, we now have our calendar! So enjoy next year with a collection of our winning images and they also make excellent Xmas gifts for your friends and family! The calendar is A4 landscape in size and layout. Each month has a photo of the winning entry on the top page, while the bottom page has an image for the runner-up along with the day/date columns. Our thanks to Tristan at Fakenham Prepress Solutions for the design and artwork. Calendars sell at £5.99 to cover printing costs and prizes for the winners and runners-up. Any profits will go to the village hall for special projects.



To buy one or more calendars please contact Judy or Paresh by email, phone or snail mail to arrange for payment and delivery:

- email to westray.newsletter@gmail.com
- phone 01582 756495
- text 0759 569 8920
- leave a note in the village hall post box or next door at Foundry Cottage

CENSUS 2021

I write to introduce myself as Census Engagement Manager for Norfolk, and I am contacting all Town and Parish Councils across North Norfolk to seek your help in encouraging your community to take part in Census 2021. Census day is March 21st 2021, and for the first time this will be a digital-first census, but paper will be available for those who need it.

Please visit The Census 2021 website www.census.gov.uk which has comprehensive Census information including social media feeds etc. There are also part-time temporary LOCAL JOBS available at www.censusjobs.co.uk.

Taking part in the census is so important, as it gathers essential information that's used for things that affect your community. Public bodies use census information to help plan and fund services like housing, education and healthcare. Charities and businesses also use it to inform their work.

If you have any Census related questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

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www.census.gov.uk

Notice on fly tipping

To report fly tipping please use the link below from North Norfolk District Council:

- <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/environmental-protection/report-fly-tipping/>

Alternatively, you can contact Jodie Bond, Parish Clerk, by phoning 07703 464409 or 01328 853031, or by email to raynhampc@gmail.com.

Newsletter contact details and further information

- westray.newsletter@gmail.com subscribe or unsubscribe from the newsletter or submit photos and articles
- westraynham.vhc@gmail.com book the village hall for an event
- <https://www.raynhampc.info/documents> view and download past newsletters

News from Raynham Estate - Jo Bosch

Sadly, the second phase of lockdown restrictions came into play within days of us announcing our first **open-air Christmas market** and this led to us having to cancel it. The good news is that we're planning to hold the event **over Easter instead**, and we'll be releasing more information about that through our website (www.raynham.co.uk) and our social media pages in the New Year at:

- <https://www.facebook.com/RaynhamNorfolk>
- <https://www.instagram.com/raynhamnorfolk/>

We urge you to support all of the wonderful Norfolk businesses and producers when planning your Christmas - we know this year it could mean the difference between them surviving or not.

We were also sad not to be able to host the **fireworks** this year, but we do plan to bring it back next year if circumstances allow.

The weather has caused real challenges with the harvest for our farm team this year, and we send our apologies for the increase in farm traffic during unsociable hours. We really appreciate your understanding on this.

We all wish you and your 'bubble' a safe and very happy festive period, and, like you, we're keeping our fingers crossed for a return to some sort of normality next year. As always, if there's anything you think we should know about, drop us a note at info@raynham.co.uk.

Recipe Corner - Auntie Ethnee's mince pies by Sandra Forsyth

The recipe is from my husband Alan's beloved godmother Ethnee who was also a very good friend of mine. She left me her Grandmother's aspidistra which must be at least 150 years old now. Luckily, we have brilliant neighbours in London who look after it for me!

Auntie Ethnee's mince pies

- Ready rolled puffed pastry sheets
 - Shop-bought mincemeat mixed with additional brandy (optional)
 - Milk and water
1. Roll out pastry
 2. Use biscuit cutter, approximately 650mm, or jar top to cut pastry
 3. Place one piece on a baking tray lined with silicone sheet or equivalent
 4. Place a small amount of mincemeat on the pastry. Dab water around edge and place more pastry on top
 5. Press down edge of top pastry with fingers and brush over with milk
 6. Bake in a hot oven for about 20 minutes or until light brown.

Beware: mince pie filling is hot straight out of the oven!

If you have a recipe to share, especially if it has a personal story with it, then either post it in the village hall post box or email it to: westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Pottering in the greenhouse and garden - Bridget Stanley

We have now had our first frosts, and the garden is slowing down for the winter. Not everything is going to sleep though. I have been digging up the assorted forget-me-not and foxglove seedlings that are popping up all over the place and replanting them where I want them in the cottage garden bed. There are still lots of these to transplant which will be done on the more reasonable days in December.

I've lifted the remaining dahlias and transferred them into pots in the greenhouse. They are tucked away in there with the chilli and sweet peppers and the geranium and begonia plants, all covered up with bubble wrap. The greenhouse isn't heated, and if we have another mild winter they will survive through to next year.



The plan for the next couple of weeks is to pot up the best of the strawberry runners and to plant some new bare root roses. "Nice and deep" as per the advice from the Peter Beales' staff! A couple of the roses are still flowering, a joy on these dark gloomy days!



Also on the 'To Do List', is to empty the oldest compost bin into the veggie plots and then cover the beds with cardboard to keep the weeds at bay until the spring. And to pot up the watercress which has rooted from pieces from the salad bag. I won't be expecting a large crop, but there might be enough for a sandwich!

Insects in the garden - Paresh Shah



Cluster and house flies have been feeding on the pollen of a neighbour's flowering *Fatsia japonica*, joined by the occasional common wasp. Brown and green lacewings are now coming into the house to overwinter. Larvae of both species and adults of brown lacewings feed on aphids and other pests including spider mites,

mealybugs, whiteflies, scale insects and caterpillars, while green lacewing adults only feed on pollen, nectar and aphid honeydew.



West Raynham Nature Notes - David Stubbs

November is normally a fairly quiet month for wildlife, but this year I have been pleasantly surprised by how many bird species I have seen in and around the village. A few times I have heard water rail calling in the reedbeds and wet woodlands along the Wensum, but the birds have always remained hidden from view. Kingfishers and grey wagtails have been more evident, Cetti's warblers continue to make their strident song from deep cover - another very elusive species - and one day I flushed three little egrets from the river at South Raynham.

At the opposite end of the elusive scale have been the geese. The flock of greylags that have spent most of the month on the parkland pastures by Raynham Lake number over 350 birds. Amongst them are several pairs of Egyptian geese that are very vocal at the moment, with their repetitive, unmusical sawing call. These exotic geese don't really have anything to do with the greylags and you sometimes see them perched up in the old chestnut trees; they do in fact nest in old trees, so this is a perfect habitat for them.



Barnacle goose with greylags - photo Jan Mata

There is though one notable hanger on amongst the greylags and that is a barnacle goose, spotted first by my wife Jan while out walking the dog - with photographic proof to confirm. Barnacle geese are quite a bit smaller than greylags and have a distinctive black neck and crown, with a bold white face, seen clearly here. The bill and legs are dark, so it should be unmistakable, but can be surprisingly hard to pick out when scanning across

a flock of hundreds of other geese. There are some naturalised flocks of barnacle geese in Norfolk, at Holkham and at Pensthorpe, so this one is probably detached from one of those populations and has settled in with the Raynham greylag flock.

Little owls have been quite active this month and, one evening, I was delighted to see one fly from a neighbour's rooftop to the big oak in St Margaret's churchyard. I have been less lucky with barn owls lately, but Paresh Shah reported seeing one at the village green car park area on the 28th. Even more elusive are the tawny owls. Their familiar call is known to everyone, but it is rare actually to see one, as they are strictly nocturnal and spend the day hidden in dense cover. However, one day, just as it was getting dark, I did see one fly across the road in front of me as I was driving along the lime avenue towards the village - only my second sighting of the year.

Close encounters with Vigo the bearded vulture

First I must start with a confession! A couple of months ago Janice Hankey told me she had seen an eagle as she was driving towards South Raynham. I suggested it was maybe just a buzzard, but she insisted it was huge. Must be some mistake, I thought.

More recently I came across Barry Sergeant who had an amazing tale to tell. One day at the end of September (or early October) he heard a scream from his wife Kate and looked out of the kitchen window of their house (the gate lodge by St Mary's church) to see a giant of a bird of prey come right past the window having almost scalped Kate as it leapt from the tree where it had been resting. It was so close, Barry noticed the tuft of feathers below its chin (hence the name bearded vulture) and he described the bird's immense wingspan as being as big as his garage.

The next day I learnt from Françoise Walker that the vulture had spent several days on a farm near East Rudham, but the landowners did not tell anyone at the time, presumably not wanting hordes of

twitchers descending on their property. So, apologies to Janice; you didn't see an eagle, but it must have been the bearded vulture instead!

This brief sojourn in our part of Norfolk is just part of a bigger story about this unusual bird, which was given the name 'Vigo' by its birding followers. It transpires that Vigo is an immature female, hatched from a wild nest in the French Alps in 2019. How do we know all this?

The first sighting of Vigo was reported from the West Midlands back in June. She was refound high up in the Peak District, where she roosted for nearly three months on a remote rock outcrop and explored the local area, sometimes venturing further afield to Wales and the Lake District. During that time, someone managed to collect a couple of feathers from her roost site, which were DNA analysed by an association linked to the Vulture Conservation Foundation. This proved her point of origin, which in itself is a great conservation success story. Since 1986 there has been a reintroduction programme for these rare vultures in the French Alps and today there are some 60 breeding pairs in that region.



After leaving Derbyshire, Vigo was seen in Oxfordshire before heading to Norfolk where she was found in late September around Dereham, Foxley and North Elmham. Then there was a gap before turning up in the Fens and later in Lincolnshire. That gap we can now say was in and around our area. The only pity (for me) was that I never saw her...

Vigo was last seen in the UK heading out to sea from Beachy Head in East Sussex on 15 October, the day this photo was taken by a local birder, Peter Coe. The two carrion crows alongside give a good sense of scale.

Happily, there were two reports of a bearded vulture in France over the following two weeks, which align with a trajectory taking Vigo back to her alpine home.

Cleaning bird feeders

Many people put up bird feeders in their garden. Not only is this a great way of attracting several species so you can observe them close to home, but it is also a valuable source of food for these birds, especially over winter months when natural food is scarcer.

However, there is always a risk of infection with so many birds coming to one spot and some species, especially finches, are vulnerable to Trichomonosis, a disease caused by the protozoan parasite *Trichomonas gallinae*. It was found to be the major cause of the rapid decline of the British greenfinch population that was first noted in 2006.

Affected birds appear lethargic and fluffed up - as though they are bloated and can only fly a short distance before dropping down exhausted. They may linger around the feeding area for a few days before succumbing. Chaffinches are another common victim, but the disease can also affect goldfinches, blue tits, great tits, dunnocks and house sparrows amongst others.

Therefore, this is a plea to all those feeding birds in their garden to make sure you regularly clean and disinfect feeders and feeding sites. Suitable disinfectants that can be used include a weak solution of domestic bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) or other specially-designed commercial products. Always rinse feeders thoroughly and air-dry before re-use. It's also a good idea to rotate positions of feeders in the garden to prevent the build-up of contamination in any one area.