

Raynhams' Newsletter – April 2021

We would like your photos of Spring!

Hello everyone! We hope you had an enjoyable Easter break and managed to see family and friends. Spring is here despite some spells of cold weather, and it is heart-warming to see the animal and plant life starting to emerge. We have had a few grumbles from some of our photographers who still have itchy fingers since we finished the monthly photo competition last December. So, there is now a **NEW CALL for photos** to be showcased in the May and June newsletters. Please email us with photos you have taken during this Spring, and also photos of your pets for a future 'Pets corner'. Send your images to westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Welcome to our newest arrival: Debbie Lamont

Just wanted to introduce myself as a newcomer into the village. I have just moved into Park Barn with my dog Rosie (one year-old black Labrador retriever, still in training!)



and two cats (not yet out patrolling the boundaries!). After a difficult four years I am delighted to be here and cannot thank you all enough for the warm welcome I have already received from so many of you. West Raynham is materialising into everything and more that I dreamed it would be. As lockdown eases I am looking forward to joining in with all aspects of village life from reading groups to learning how to knit gain to scything to anything else you



want to throw my way! You are all most welcome to knock on my door when restrictions allow to share a bottle of wine and chat in my garden. There is not much I cannot talk about! If I have not already met you, I look forward with pleasure to doing so (and so does Rosie!). Many thanks for your hospitality to date, I have been blown away with your kindness. Kind regards,

Debbie (and Rosie), Park Barn

Reading Room – free books and DVDs

Please take any books or DVDs you want from the Reading Room in West Raynham, as we are about to go through the collection and have a thorough sort out. The Reading Room is open daily so do pop in and see whether you can find just the book for you!

Newsletter Info and Contact Details

- Deadline for articles or notices is the 28th of each month
- westray.newsletter@gmail.com to subscribe or unsubscribe from the newsletter
- <https://www.raynhampc.info/documents> to view and download newsletters

Village Hall application to the Sustainable Communities Fund

The Village Hall Committee is planning a number of improvements to the Village Hall in West Raynham to be carried out this Spring/Summer in anticipation of fully reopening later in the year. Our overriding objective is for the hall to be able to support a wide range of activities that will engage as many local people as possible and overall offer greater benefits to our community.

To achieve this, we need to do three things:

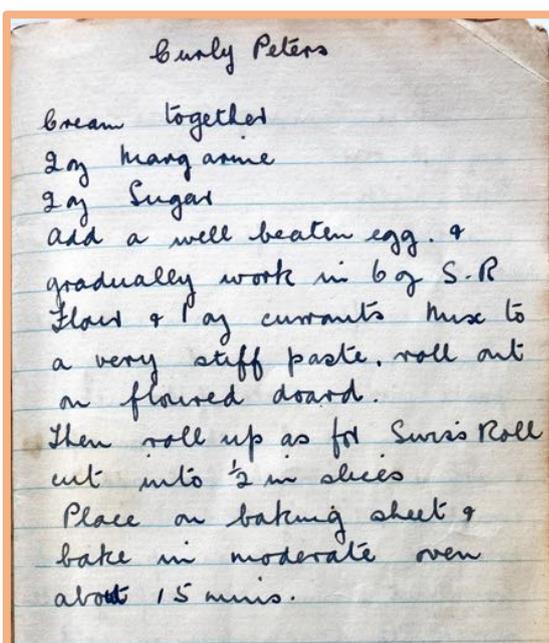
1. Ensure the building is sound
2. Increase comfort for users
3. Improve functionality

Among the proposed improvements, we are looking to install better and more energy-efficient heating, additional roof insulation, reconfigure part of the roof space to create storage capacity, and install Wi-Fi and a new audio-visual system.

To help pay for some of these works we plan to apply to the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund. Such an application requires the Committee to show local community support for the project. Therefore, we are asking all readers of this newsletter to send us a short email if you are in favour of the Committee making improvements to the Village Hall as outlined above. We would also like to know if you have any suggestions for activities you would like to see in the village hall.

Please send emails with your support and suggestions to westraynham.vhc@gmail.com. For further information about the grant application please contact Paresh Shah at pareshs999@gmail.com.

Recipe Corner: Curly Peters - Judy Pell



This recipe is from my great Auntie Lottie's recipe book - she was my grandfather's sister. From the aged look of the notebook I think she must have been writing up these recipes in the 1940s and '50s - if not earlier; there are certainly some strange recipes in the book (ideas for future 'Recipe Corners' maybe) but this one looks really tasty and, I think, may well be a traditional Leicestershire recipe, reflecting where she was born, grew up and lived for most of her life. Hope you enjoy trying this ancient recipe.

If you have a much-loved recipe we would love to include it in the newsletter. Please send your recipes to westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Sunflower Growing Competition

This past year has been tough for everyone. Not being able to have our regular village events and get togethers hasn't helped, and we have all missed them - but rest assured - they are not forgotten - and, as we all ease out of lockdown, it's time to come together, look forward to happier times, and do something together again as a village - we really hope you are all up for joining in!

The Village Hall Committee invites you all to take part in 'The Great 2021 Sunflower-Growing Competition'. We will deliver sunflower seeds to every household in the Raynhams so that everyone can have a go at growing them in their front garden - or even in a pot. At the end of the summer there will be a prize for the tallest sunflower, which will be presented at an 'end of summer' event (specifics to be decided but we will keep you posted in the Newsletter). The seeds are free and will come with full instructions to help you - even if yours are not the tallest just think what a lovely show they will make throughout the Raynhams when they are all flowering!

Look out for the information pack and seeds coming through your letter box **SOON**; if, you don't receive them in the next ten days just get in touch so we can deliver them to you. Contact Judy Pell at westray.newsletter@gmail.com.

Insects in the Garden - Paresh Shah

Great excitement at the new wildlife pond we put in last Autumn with adults of pond skaters, whirligig beetles and a Great Diving Beetle. The highlight has been seeing the first dark-edged beefly, *Bombylius major*, of Spring during the two day warm spell at the end of March.

Beeflies resemble hairy bumblebees but have a needle-like proboscis used to collect nectar from Spring flowers, and they are parasites of solitary bees and wasps. Several species of mining bees are hosts for the larvae of *B. major*. Beefly larvae change from active hunters to legless maggots (hypermetamorphosis) once they have found a mining bee larva to feed on to complete their development. The pupal stage may last up to two years in the soil before adults emerge to restart the life cycle.



Greenhouse and Garden - Bridget Stanley

Isn't there always something to do in the garden? And even more so in March and April. Seeds of all sorts have been sown, indoors and out. Space is now at a premium in the greenhouse, and on my windowsills and even on the floor indoors!

The geraniums have overwintered OK in the greenhouse and have been re-potted into fresh compost to give them a boost. A couple of begonia tubers are showing signs of life too. The petunias didn't make it however, and I wait to see what happens with the fuchsias! The tender salvias are showing green shoots at the base, it is so heartening to know they are coming back to life after a winter of bubble-wrap in the unheated greenhouse. I planted three new potatoes in pots, also in the greenhouse, and they are all showing green shoots now. I keep topping up the pots with compost to cover the shoots and to encourage bigger plants and to protect them in case of frost. I have planted up a couple of baskets with petunia, lobelia and fuchsia. These will stay in the greenhouse until mid-May at least, again to protect from frost. I have pinched out the growing tips of the plants to encourage more shoots (and therefore more flowers!), and popped the pinched-out cuttings into jam jars of water. They are starting to root and I will plant them into compost and hopefully have enough for another basket full.

Out in the garden, the raised veg beds have been topped up with fresh compost and potatoes and onions have been planted. The rhubarb is starting to poke through now. It is lovely to see all the new growth coming through now everywhere, with wonderful deep colours of the leaves on the roses and the crab apple.



Spring flowers are blooming and the bees are buzzing. I even saw a butterfly today! At the time of writing, the forget me nots aren't out yet, but they look like they will be blossoming in a few days with this lovely sunshine. The scent of the hyacinths is amazing.

I mentioned a while back about putting spent coffee grounds around the camellia, in order to acidify the soil. It doesn't seem to have improved the colour of their leaves at all, so I won't bother with doing that again. Coffee grounds will go in the compost as usual! And the camellia will be treated to some ericaceous feed!

It is a good time to look at dividing up herbaceous perennials, like delphinium and phlox. They have started showing their shoots in the cottage garden now, and it is quite easy to lift them carefully and divide them up, and spread them around. Give them a good water after doing so.

Happy Gardening Everyone!

Nature Notes for March 2021 - David Stubbs

All change

March is a period of transition. The first summer migrant I found was a chiffchaff along the river on the 5th. A few more were heard towards the end of the month and it wasn't until the 31st that I heard my first blackcap in song, also in riverside woodlands. It has been a slow start for summer migrants here this year, although there are plenty of reports from around the country of migrants beginning to return.

Meanwhile, numbers of wintering birds were tailing off. Redwings, which were abundant at the beginning of March had all departed before the end of the month. Fieldfares and siskins did stay throughout and the latter were present several times in our garden - even coming to the feeders. Duck numbers have also dropped as the season advances. Most of the wigeon that wintered on Raynham Lake have moved on, and gadwall and teal are down to a last few too.



Snowdrops have finished, but lesser celandines and dog violets are out in profusion. Either side of the path that runs along the end of Raynham Lake, many spikes of butterbur flowers are now emerging. They look quite modest now, but later in summer their huge rough leaves - reminiscent of a giant form of rhubarb - almost choke the path.

This is also a good time of year to spot the small basal leaves of wild orchids. There's a small colony of six bee orchids on one of the road verges in West Raynham - hopefully this year they will not be mown just when they are about to flower.

Butterflies had a slow start, but the warm weather at the end of the month brought out large numbers of peacocks, small tortoiseshells and brimstones. A holly blue passed through our garden and our frogspawn has hatched.

Plenty of hares are out in the fields and one day I was pleasantly surprised to see three fallow deer (the rarest of our local deer) on the edge of a small wood between Whissonsett and South Raynham. A weasel darting across the road on Hempton Common was another notable and uncommon sighting.

Another big whopper

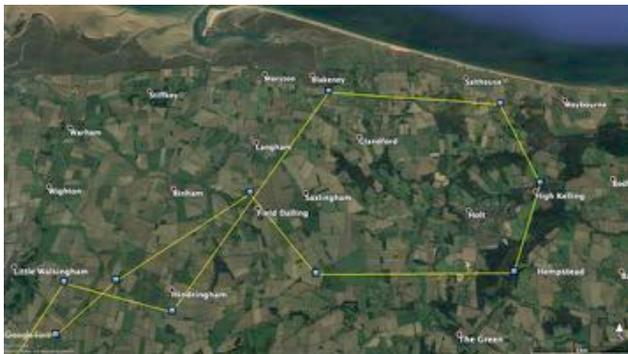
Regular readers will recall last autumn we had the excitement of the long-staying Lammergeier (bearded vulture) spending a few days in our area, before it drifted south and headed back to its home territory in the French Alps. Or at least some had the excitement; much to my chagrin, I missed out on seeing it.

Earlier this month my knowledgeable and well-connected friend in Hempton messaged me that there was a White-tailed eagle in the area. It had been reported at Harpley and

later that day near Tittleshall. All very well, but information like that even an hour old is no use, as these giant birds move around very rapidly. This one had been in the Cley area the day before.



A couple of days later while out with the dogs, Phil (one of the Raynham Estate workers) pulled over and leant out of his tractor, his face beaming with delight. He excitedly told me he had seen a white-tailed eagle passing low over the airfield. He had been awestruck by its size and how it had dwarfed the buzzards that were trying to shoo it off. The above recent photo by Andy Bloomfield, the warden at Holkham, shows the size comparison with red kites.



The eagles turning up in Norfolk are from a release programme in the Isle of Wight. Several of the birds make long distance wandering trips around the country before eventually returning to their original release site. They are satellite tagged, so it is possible to follow the exact movements of each individual. The one that came our way was number G463, a young bird that had wintered north of Chard, Somerset, then

headed NE in mid-February. It spent a week in the Brecks before visiting North Norfolk. The map shows its 15-minute fixes, not its exact path, on 11 March (Info [R.Dennis](#)). I couldn't find a published trace over our area, but this gives a good sense of its movements that day.

Egyptian goose post-script

Last month I mentioned there were Egyptian goslings in the parkland. Well, sadly they lasted barely a week before disappearing. The adults were still there, but no sign of their chicks. Any number of nocturnal predators could have had them, but I am suspicious of the pair of herring gulls that had been hanging around the parkland for several weeks.

Next month should be all about new arrived migrants; April is one of the best months of the year for wildlife watching, so do keep an eye out and let me know if you see anything interesting.

If you have any unusual nature observations please let me know:
David Stubbs: davidstubbs1@btinternet.com or WhatsApp me on 07974922197