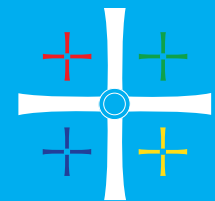


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

MARCH 2019

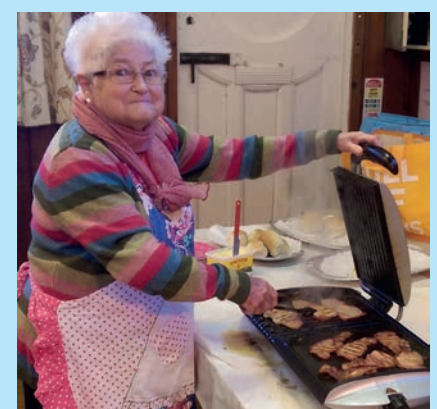


## Spring Really is Upon Us

These delightful photos were all taken locally by wildlife photographer Liz Dack who has kindly allowed us to use them for the Free for All. Liz says "I think of Spring as New Life!! So have included two pictures of a Mother Otter with her two pups taken last week, a Mallard duck with ducklings under her wing and a Chinese Water Deer with her fawns. Hares are always associated with March and I have also included Aconites with Snowdrops as spring flowers. All these represent my interpretation of Spring."



PEOPLE HAD A LOVELY TIME  
AT CAISTOR AT THEIR  
CHRISTINGLE SERVICE



SEE THE SAYING GOODBYE  
TO OUR LOVELY PAT AT  
ARMINGHALL PIECE ON PAGE 5

ARMINGHALL, CAISTOR ST EDMUND, STOKE HOLY CROSS with DUNSTON



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP



feel like singing, and others when we just don't. Maybe we just got out of the wrong side of bed this morning, but perhaps life is really, really difficult for all sorts of reasons. The song recognises this, because it continues

*Whatever may pass, and whatever lies  
before me*

*Let me be singing when the evening comes*

We all have things happen to us which we might not want, and none of us knows, at least for this life, what the future holds. But because of everything that God has done for us, the singing is to continue all the same. In fact, it is to continue even in the toughest times of life:

*And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come*

We are always called to sing God's song. I am so convinced about this, and I like this song so much, that I have attempted to learn it on the piano, which I can't really play at all. It doesn't sound all that great, and certainly not the equal of the Grammy-winning original. Yes, it won a Grammy! It also doesn't match a world-famous opera singer. But when I do it, because I'm not brilliant, I am not delighting in the sound of my own voice. I am singing God's song.

A couple of years ago now, I was watching BBC News and they were talking about a student who was having one of these wide awake brain operations that you may have seen on the TV. In fact, I am sure I have met someone around the villages who has had one themselves. The medics needed to get the patient to sing to test what they were doing to his brain. And I watched, captivated, as his croaky voice broke into the chorus of this same song:

*Bless the Lord, o my Soul, o my Soul,  
Worship His holy Name  
Sing like never before, o my Soul,  
I'll worship his holy Name*

Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before us, we can always sing God's song.

**W**hich are your favourite songs? This morning I was thinking again about Desert Island Discs, and specifically about the famous opera singer who chose seven recordings of herself singing, out of the eight she was allowed. In fact, the eighth piece of music was from a recording of an opera that she was in as well; she just didn't happen to be singing on that one.

Most of us wouldn't only choose songs like this, I hope. Perhaps we might choose someone else singing? What would our favourite songs say about us, and the things we find important?

A favourite song of mine begins

*The sun comes up, there's a new day  
dawning  
It's time to sing your song again*

One of the reasons I am particularly thinking of this song as I write is that we have just had a glorious, sunny week, and it feels like spring is on the way. Of course by the time you read this, we will be a year on from when we were in the vicelike grip of the Beast from the East, so I shouldn't be hasty. But the sun coming up prompts me to be thankful to God for the gift of every new day. Every day is worth singing about.

And every day is worth singing God's song about, too. There are days when we really

### VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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### STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Viv Carrington 493438

### STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Anita Rose (Parish clerk) 491709

### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### FUNERALS

**PATRICIA HOWLETT**  
St Mary's Church, Arminghall  
Thursday 7th February 2019

**PHYLLIS WELLS**  
Stoke Holy Cross Church  
Monday 4th February 2019

**KATHLEEN BOTT**  
Stoke Holy Cross Church  
Wednesday 6th February 2019

**GRETA BARON**  
Stoke Holy Cross Church  
Monday 11th February 2019

### INTERMENT OF ASHES

**BELLE WILSON**  
Stoke Holy Cross  
Friday 15th February

We continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones recently, or are remembering someone particularly at this time of year.

We are always happy to record the names of anyone from the villages whose funeral has been held recently, even if it wasn't taken by a member of our ministry team.

We would love to feature  
your village organisation

#### IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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# Saying goodbye to our much loved Pat Howlett at Arminghall

Many friends and family gathered at St Mary's church in Arminghall to say goodbye at Pat's funeral on Tuesday 12th February. Her life has impacted so many people and she will be sadly missed. Lyn and Rob took the service together and Rob gave a talk based on Jesus' story of 'The Good Samaritan', as it was just so appropriate for how Pat had lived her life, always being there for other people.

Pat's son Adrian also gave a lovely reflection on her life. Below is an edited version of what Adrian termed "My words for Mum":

Pat, my Mum, was born on 25th June 1942 the only child of Fred and Phyllis Rouse in the village of Aldeby. She spent most of her childhood in Kirstead where Nanny was in service as a cook in the big house and Grandad was the herdsman for the dairy herd; this probably explains that when most children had a puppy Mum had a bull for a pet which she often rode around the village. She had a fantastic childhood as a country girl and often got in trouble for having pockets full of pink harvest mice or riding her bike over grass snakes to get frogs to pop out of their mouths.

She went on to be head girl at Hobart High School and when she left there at 15 she got a job working at Taylors grocers on St Catherine's Plain. Whilst working there a certain Rosa Thompson spotted her and ran back to her brother and told him to "get over there and marry her she is a hard worker". Being 20 years her senior and with a flash car and plenty of money they married soon after. So began the darkest years for my mum and she was soon working in the family fish and chip shop.

The chip shop was the hub of the community and often had parties for all the local business owners. During that time, Mum had two children, my sister Tina and me. My Dad contracted Alzheimers in 1978 and mum was left to run the business, the home and the family a challenge that would daunt most people but Mum loved a challenge.

After selling the fish shop, Mum was approached by Sainsburys to run the fish counter at their new store on Brazen Gate. This was the easy life for Mum as she spent most of her time chatting!

Sadly in 1991 my Mum lost both her parents



within 8 days which broke her heart but it meant she could return to the country where she was happiest. Shortly afterwards my Dad also passed away - she had stuck by him for 15 years she deserved a medal!

Following the family tradition of being a bit of a card sharp she joined the crib team at

the wheel of fortune where she was partnered to Jim, I believe his first words were 'What the hell are you wearing?' (colourful knitted tights were all the fashion I believe). A relationship blossomed and a few years later they were married here in Arminghall. These were to be the happiest years of my Mum's life.

After a long battle with illness we lost Tina in 1996 something I don't think mum ever came to terms with. Mum completed her 25 years of service with Sainsbury's and retired at the ripe old age of 72.

Luckily she had the church to look after so she stayed busy and everyone will miss her jams and pickles.

ADRIAN

Adrian shared many more anecdotes of Pat's life and it is a shame we don't have space to print more.

-----

Two of Pat's close church friends sent in this piece about her.

Pat moved into the village when she married Jim about 23 years ago, and immediately involved herself in village life, proving to be a good, caring little bundle of energy. Her soups and cakes have been sampled and appreciated by many and the bacon butties she cooked in the last two years at the Lent breakfasts will long be remembered. In 2005 she filled in all the forms and managed to obtain a lottery grant for the village to enjoy the festivities of Trafalgar Day celebrations - hog roast, plate painting and lots of fun!!!

As well as her churchwarden duties she cleaned and looked after the church and made sure there were always flowers to feel more welcoming. She hosted all the church fund raising events with her tireless energy and organisational skills. She was a good friend and neighbour to all she met - always willing to give a helping hand! We miss her.

ANNIE AND PAM



## SERVICES FOR MARCH IN THE VENTA GROUP OF CHURCHES

- 3rd Mar Sunday next before Lent**  
**9.00 am** Traditional Holy Communion  
*Caistor St Edmund Church*  
**10.30 am** Morning Worship with Baptism  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church*
- 6th Mar Ash Wednesday**  
**10.00 am** Traditional Holy Communion  
*Arminghall Church*  
**7.30 pm** Reflective Evening Service  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church*
- 10th Mar 1st Sunday of Lent**  
**9.00 am** Traditional Holy Communion  
*Arminghall Church*  
**9.30 am** Praise and Worship  
*Caistor St Edmund Church*  
**10.30 am** Café Church  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall*
- 17th Mar 2nd Sunday of Lent**  
**9.30 am** Family Service  
*Caistor St Edmund Church*  
**11.00 am** Traditional Holy Communion  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church*  
**6.30 pm** The Gathering  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church*
- 24th Mar 3rd Sunday of Lent**  
**9.00 am** Traditional Holy Communion  
*Caistor St Edmund Church*  
**10.30 am** Sunday 4 Everyone  
*Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall*  
**4.00 pm** Evening Service  
*Arminghall Church*
- 31st Mar 4th Sunday of Lent**  
**10.30 am** Mothering Sunday Service  
*Caistor St Edmund church*

## NEXT EDITION

Items for the next month's magazine please send by email to Henry and Eostre Caswell by email to

[ventafree4all@outlook.com](mailto:ventafree4all@outlook.com)

By 10th of this month please.

The 10th of the month will be the deadline for all copy for the next magazine for the time being.





## ST GEORGE'S HALL DEMENTIA SUPPORT CAFÉ

On the 2nd and 4th Monday morning of each month this is a great place to relax for those with dementia and for their carers. Come along and join us for fun activities and refreshments. There's always room for more people living with dementia and their partners or carers to join us, whether on our subsidised outings or at our regular cafe sessions from 10am till 12 noon in St George's Hall, Upper Stoke. For more information please ring 01508 493661 or 492938, visit our website at <http://stgeorges-dementia-support-group.btck.co.uk/>

If you would like to come along but have transport problems in reaching the cafe one solution might be to contact the voluntary organisation 5+ Good Neighbours on 07934195724 or maybe one of a regular members can offer the occasional lift.

Our meetings in March will be the 11th and 25th when the chiropodist will be in attendance.



## POST OFFICE

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## allstars club

### after school for 4-11s

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All Foundation-Year 6 children are welcome to join us at our after-school club, as well as any older helpers who would like to join in!

**Thursdays 3.30-4.45**  
**in the Church Hall**

**28th March**  
**25th April**

### Want to be there? Need Information?

Contact us via the details below. To help us plan ahead, we really need to know in advance if you are coming, but if you can't contact us for any reason, **please do just come along.**

*All children must be signed in and out by a responsible adult.*

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## WELCOME TO OUR LENT GET-TOGETHERS FOR 2019



We are really looking forward to having Lent breakfasts again this year. These will run for 5 Saturday mornings from 8.30-10 in Stoke Church Hall, from 9th March to 13th April (with a week off on 30th March!) And Everybody really is very Welcome! That's not just the way we feel about the breakfasts, but the name of the course we will be using, is looking at the things that we can do to make people feel welcome when they are thinking about becoming part of our churches.

It helps us to remember that anyone attending church should be made to feel welcome, and that welcoming is a ministry for every member of the church. We'll be thinking about how we approach newcomers, and helping everyone to be part of it. It's based on ideas that are the same for every church. It will give us some things we could decide to do, and some practical changes we can make.

## MOTHERING SUNDAY 31ST MARCH 2019

This Mothering Sunday we will be having one big Family Communion service for the group at Caistor St Edmund at 10.30am. We would love to invite you not only to the service itself, but to join us as the men serve breakfast from 9.30 in honour of the special occasion. Please come and join us and enjoy being looked after before the service begins. We'd love to see you there. (Rob is happy to receive any special requests for the breakfast, and offers of help – from men only!)

## CAISTOR CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

You may have seen on the front cover a couple of photos of the lovely Christingle service we had at Caistor on Sunday 20th January. 2019 was the 50th anniversary of the Children's Society and we had a great time making Christingles and thinking about God's love for all of us together.

## STOKE COMMUNITY HUB STARTING MARCH 6TH

Come and join us every Wednesday morning from 6th March, at our new **Community Hub**. There will be a warm welcome for all ages with a cafe area with hot drinks and cakes, and space to just sit and chat. Please do come along and give it a try.

Alongside the cafe will be an **infant feeding group** with support from mums who are qualified feeding counsellors and healthcare professionals. We'll have toys and room for big siblings to play too.



The Hub will be at Stoke church hall from 9.30-11am each Wednesday morning.

## ELECTORAL ROLLS

It is getting to the time of year for us to look at our electoral roll (a bit like the membership list for Anglican churches) and to be planning for our annual meetings. This year we have to ask everyone who wants to be on the list to fill in a new form, whether they have been registered before or not. So if you would like to put your name on the list and be involved in all God is doing in our churches, please do collect one either at a service, from one of the electoral roll officers – Arminghall, Pam Kemp; Caistor, Jani Wymer; Stoke & Dunston, Gary Marsh – or from the Vicarage, **and please do return it straight away too.**

## OUR ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

These are where we will be gathering to do the official business of the church, to celebrate all that God has done in 2018, and also to look forward to everything that might be ahead of us this year. The meetings are being held as follows:

Stoke and Dunston,  
19th March at 7.30pm at the Church Hall

Caistor St Edmund,  
25th March at 7.30pm at the Church

Arminghall,  
1st April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

And again everyone is welcome and we would love to see you there.

## PORINGLAND ART EXHIBITION AND SALE at THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION PORINGLAND NR14 7SH

Thursday 11th April to Friday 12th April at 11am to 5pm

Saturday 13th April at 10am to 4.30 pm

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Stoke Hall in 1914

## The Birkbecks, Stoke Hall and more...

In the September 2018 edition of Free for All we wrote an article on Stoke Hall, based on information written by Richard Watts and the late Michael Ranson. At that time we did not have enough space to add more of the history of the Birkbeck family, specifically in relation to Stoke Holy Cross. So here goes.

There is no doubt that the Birkbecks were a very prestigious family in Stoke Holy Cross in the 1900s. Henry Birkbeck (born in 1821) moved to Norfolk from Settle in Yorkshire and employed a well known architect to design and build Stoke Hall as his family home. In 1842 Henry inherited a partnership in the Gurney Birkbeck Bank and the Stoke Estate. This inheritance came from his maternal grandfather, Joseph Gurney.

As stated in the previous article, Henry married Mary Anne Hammond and, after their marriage, commissioned the building of Stoke Hall. Until this marriage, Henry Birkbeck was a Quaker but later he joined the evangelical wing of the Church of England. He gave many gifts to Stoke Church in the late 1800s and he undoubtedly helped with funds for the great restoration and also donated funds for a new organ.

Sadly Henry's first wife died in 1862 after the birth of their sixth child; Mary was only 34 years old. A few years later Etheldreda Brown

folkes came to the Hall as a governess to Henry's six children. Henry Birkbeck was so attracted by her charms that he married her in 1871, when she was half his age.

As part of the Birkbeck family history, there is a memorial window dedicated to Margaret (daughter of Henry and Etheldreda), who died aged 32. This window is on the south side of the chancel in Stoke Church.

Henry Birkbeck died aged 74 and was buried at Stoke Holy Cross on 5 February 1895.

Even though Stoke Hall no longer exists, Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall is another memorial to the Birkbeck family. In 1905, Martin and Geoffrey Birkbeck enacted a Deed of Gift of land at the corner of Long Lane to the Vicar and Wardens (The Trustees) for a building to be erected thereon. The hall was duly built with a large proportion of the costs met by the Birkbecks. This building was to be used for 'rites and ceremonies of the Church of England' and for religious, social and charitable purposes as the Trustees might think fit.

In 1956 when the Charity Commission regularised the arrangement by vesting the property in the Diocesan Board of Finance and confirmed the Parochial Church Council as 'Managing Trustees'.

### ALPINGTON & YELVERTON HISTORY SOCIETY

Alpington Village Hall, Church Road, Alpington NR14 7NU 7.30 pm

Tuesday 12 March

### WELCOME TO THE WORKHOUSE

When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries, who would look after the poor & needy? In 1834 there was an amendment to the Poor Law Act & the Workhouse was born, but who was going to pay for it?

Speaker Richard Mann

### STOKE HOLY CROSS TUESDAY GROUP

The Group's March meeting will take place at the Church Hall on Tuesday, March 19th, and we shall revert to our usual time of 7.30pm. Mrs Frances Middleton is due to speak on a visit to Nepal, that majestic and mysterious country which has within its borders some of the highest mountains on the planet. The title of her talk is 'Rhinos and wrapping paper'. The title alone is enough to compel attention. Did the sherpas wrap a rhino up? Surely not.... We'd be pleased to welcome you to find out more!

Our New Year Supper was a great success, and it is pleasing to report that a profit of £236 30p was made in support of our charity for 2019, the East Anglian Air Ambulance. Our thanks to everyone who supported this, in any way.

### Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council Notice

#### NEED FOR STOKE TO UPPER STOKE FOOTPATH

Thursday 14th March –  
Public Meeting – 7.30pm –  
The Pavilion

#### Are you concerned about the lack of a footpath between Upper and Lower Stoke?

Your Parish Council is listening but we need your support.

Some of you may remember several years ago completing a survey about the amenities you would like to have in the village. Two amenities were highlighted as being needed: a foot/trod path up Long Lane and a new pavilion.

As many of you will be aware from the recent public consultation, the New Pavilion Working Group have made huge progress with replacing the new pavilion and are hoping to shortly submit a planning application. Now is the time to advance the footpath and provide a safe means of travelling, particularly for those young people who want to cycle/walk to Framingham Earl High school.

Come and hear more and consider joining a new working group.

If you have been involved in a similar project elsewhere, we'd particularly like to see you there.

LYN MARSH,  
Chair, Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council



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New, guest & charity stallholders welcome

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## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 7th March 2019. This is our AGM and we will be commencing at 11.45am. Anyone who wishes to come along and join the club this is the ideal opportunity to come along and meet us. You will be made very welcome. After our meeting we will be having a light lunch followed by entertainment. **Our dates for Bingo** are the 6th and 20th - we commence at 1.30pm. **Our dates for Carpet Bowls** are the 13th and 27th - we commence at 1.30pm - cost for this is £2.

All meetings in St George's Hall

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Further information about the Choir can be found on our website:  
[www.framinghamearlsingers.co.uk](http://www.framinghamearlsingers.co.uk).

Full details of the application process can be obtained from Amanda Lockett:  
[amandalockett@btinternet.com](mailto:amandalockett@btinternet.com) mobile no: 07775777404.

*Would you welcome a visit from one of our church team?*

*We will do our best to come and say hello to new people moving into the village where possible. We would be very happy to come and visit you.*

*Maybe you would like us to pray God's blessing over your new home, for example. Please do get in touch with Rob, Lyn or the churchwardens if you would welcome a visit. Also members of the church are always pleased to come and bring communion to you if you would like to get in touch.*

All the contact numbers are on page 3.

# Adam's Gardening Tips for March

## SEED STORAGE AND HANDLING

The principles of seed storage are very straightforward. Keep the seeds cool, dry and preferably in an airtight container. A fridge is ideal! These days many seeds come in foil containers inside the seed packet. If you find small desiccant silica gel packs in any packaging, you can use these to help keep your seeds dry. If the silica turns pink it has become moist and can be re-dried in a warm oven.

The storage life of seeds can vary considerably from species to species. Aubergine, celeriac and celery for example can last for 4 years or more, but others such as sweetcorn, peas, beans and spinach last for a couple of years whilst swedes and turnips only remain viable for about a year. Parsnip seed really needs to be used straight away as it does not over year very well. Having said this it is always worth running a small test, by putting a few seeds on damp paper and covering them with cling film and observing the germination rate. If about half or more grow give the rest a chance in the soil.

It is both economic and interesting to save one's own seed. Adam has a friend who grows runner beans every year from saved seed which was originally used by her grandfather. They are excellent croppers! The seeds must be fully mature and need to be naturally dried to avoid damaging future germination. To collect very small seeds cover the seed head with a paper bag and shake the seeds into it. This will avoid accidental loss. It must be remembered that whilst most varieties will come true from seed (ie will replicate itself) with anything that has been described as a hybrid the resulting plants

can be very unpredictable. This is depicted as F1 on the seed packet.

Varieties have changed and improved over the years as a result of hybridisation but it must be remembered that old heritage varieties can still contribute some good qualities relevant to today, particularly flavour. They may not be as easy to grow and have some disadvantages such as poor disease resistance but are always fun and interesting to try.

It is possible to obtain pelleted seed, (enclosed in clay) which can help handling and precision planting. The pellet may contain nutrients and some fungicide to protect the seed. April has found that pelleted parsnips germinated and grew very easily.

## Recipe

Cabbages, red, white and green, are very good at this time of year and although it may seem strange to eat a salad in March it can feel very invigorating.

¼ of a red cabbage finely shredded  
¼ of a white cabbage finely shredded  
1 large carrot, peeled and coarsely grated.  
Half a red onion thinly sliced (optional)  
100 grams natural Greek yoghurt  
Two tbsp mayonnaise  
Juice of half a lemon  
(or 1 tbsp white wine vinegar)  
Salt and pepper.

Cut out the stalk of the cabbage before shredding. Mix the vegetables together. Then combine the remaining ingredients and add to the cabbage mixture. Season to taste. You can add any fresh herbs you have available if you wish. Eg Parsley, chives.

## SPRING TIME

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C H S S O R C R D Q Q C S E T  
P A N C A K E S A A S R S C H  
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