

# The Oracle

Winter 2022



Issue 113

Issue 113 of The Oracle was compiled and edited by:

*Gill Chapman*

Would you like to be part of the editorial team? No experience required, just basic IT skills and the ability to work to a deadline as part of a friendly, collaborative team.

Please get in touch via email: [oracle@occold.com](mailto:oracle@occold.com)

The Oracle is a quarterly magazine published in March (Spring), June (Summer), September (Autumn) and December (Winter). Deadlines for each edition are usually around the 14<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month

To Advertise in the Oracle please contact Gill at [orac.treasurer@occold.com](mailto:orac.treasurer@occold.com) with your advert. Prices remain the same for another year:

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<b>4 Issues</b>	<b>Half Page</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>1 Issue</b>	<b>Half Page</b>	<b>£8</b>

Revenue from advertising in The Oracle goes to ORAC, helping to fund maintenance and development of the Village Hall, playing field, playground and village green. Our thanks go to **Occold Primary school** who are involved in printing the magazine.

**All submissions for publication should be emailed to [oracle@occold.com](mailto:oracle@occold.com)**

Use these settings in Word:

Font: Calibri 14

Narrow margins

Paragraphs: no spacing

No headers or footers

Submit a word, small pdf or jpg file

Guidance is on the village website [www.occold.onesuffolk.net](http://www.occold.onesuffolk.net)

ORAC and various groups in the village would like to thank our local Morrison's branch in Diss for their recent donations of items to support number of fundraising events.

**Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition.**

**If you have an interesting hobby or have visited somewhere of interest and feel you could write an article for the magazine, your input would be much appreciated.**



**Village Hall Bookings:** [villagehall@occold.com](mailto:villagehall@occold.com) or 01379 678198

## ORAC News

As a new committee we are settling in well and getting to grips with our new roles and responsibilities. We have organised 2 successful Quiz nights and have a Christmas Bingo and the ORAC Christmas dinner arranged for early December. There have been a number of bookings for the hall to host events for different groups and we thank them for their support.

One of the main things we are working towards is raising funds to renovate the Play area. We have applied for a grant from the Asda Foundation to enable us to purchase new seating made from Recycled Plastic Composite to replace the existing old wooden picnic tables and bench seat that were vandalised a little while ago. We should hear if this bid has been successful by the end of December. We still need more funds to purchase play-bark to thicken the safety surface and will be organising a work party at some time to undertake some basic maintenance tasks so watch this space.

The Badminton court has been marked out and the net and stands have been purchased. This project has been partly funded by a Minor Grant from Mid Suffolk District Council. We should have this up and running in the New Year– if not before. Watch out for booking details.

In January we will be starting up a Craft Group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 1 – 3pm. Bring an activity to do or share, or just come to socialise and be warm. The first session will be on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023. £2.50 per person, tea, coffee and biscuits available.

Our monthly coffee mornings continue to be a great success, all welcome. Thanks to everyone who help out. The next morning is on **5<sup>th</sup> December** and will have a Festive Flavour.

Finally we wish all residents a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Keep safe, well and warm this winter.

Ted Hampson	Vice Chair	email: <a href="mailto:orac.chairman@occold.com">orac.chairman@occold.com</a>
Gill Chapman	Treasurer	email: <a href="mailto:orac.treasurer@occold.com">orac.treasurer@occold.com</a>
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Nigel Woodhouse		
Caroline Jones		
Dan Hull		
Russell Grange		
John Davis		
Gordon Erhorn		

Our next meetings will be held on:

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December (Beaky), Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in the Village Hall all at 7.30pm

## **Planning for the Coronation Celebration**

*An initial planning meeting for our village celebrations for this event will be held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm in The Beaky.*

*Any individuals or groups that would like to be involved in organising this please come along.*

### **Upcoming village events:**

<b>Coffee Mornings</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of the month, except January 2023 which will be on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> , then 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb and 6 <sup>th</sup> March.
<b>Soup Lunches</b>	<i>Last Friday in the month in aid of 3Girls1Climb</i>
<b>OPSchool Christmas Carol Service</b>	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> December 5.30pm, St Michael's Church
<b>Carols in the Beaky</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> December
<b>Carol Service at St Michel's</b>	Christmas Eve 6.30pm
<b>New Years Eve Soul &amp; Motown</b>	<i>in the Beaky – tickets available</i>
<b>Burns Night</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2023 in aid of 3Girls1Climb
<b>Craft Club</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2023, 16 <sup>th</sup> February, 16 <sup>th</sup> March

## **OCCOLD PARISH COUNCIL**

Occold has 9 Parish Councillors. If you wish to raise any matters concerning the village, you can do so by attending a Parish Council meeting dates of which are posted on the Parish Website and on the Parish Council noticeboard, or by directly contacting one of the councillors or the parish clerk.

Clerk: Joy Hart	01359 408759 <a href="mailto:parishcouncil@occold.com">parishcouncil@occold.com</a>
Chair: Colin Cripps	01379 672945
VC: Kevin Chittock	01379 678464
Michelle Grange	
Stephen Hubner	
Andrew Duggett	
Tim Weller	
Heidi Stone	
Angela Hall	

Representatives from Suffolk CC are  
Andrew Stringer and Peter Gould

# Postcard from ...



I recently returned from a trip to Australia to visit my daughter, grandson and son-in-law after the 3 year Covid lockdown and travel restrictions. I arrived at 10.30pm Aussie time after 24 hours of travelling, and after a few hours sleep was whisked away early the next morning for a camping trip in Outback Queensland!

After a 6 hour drive, comfortably surrounded by pillows and doona (Aussie for duvet, enabling me to sleep off some of the jetlag) we arrived for our first night at the Nindigully Pub. This is renowned for being the oldest licensed pub in Queensland, located in its original condition on the banks of the Moonie River and slap bang in the middle of nowhere!



The License was issued in 1864 and the pub was originally accommodation for shearers at the Nindigully Sheep Station. From the late 1800s the pub was a Cobb & Co coach change over station. Every year the pub holds 'The Nindigully Pig Races' (yes, they race pigs!) and visitors come from far and wide to enjoy the festival and raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It is a popular camping area for the intrepid explorers providing an unspoilt, welcoming taste of the traditional outback.

After a late start the next morning we moved on even further west, driving for miles across the dead flat landscape and arrow straight roads edged with red dirt, to our destination at Charlotte Plains, 493 miles from our starting point in Brisbane.

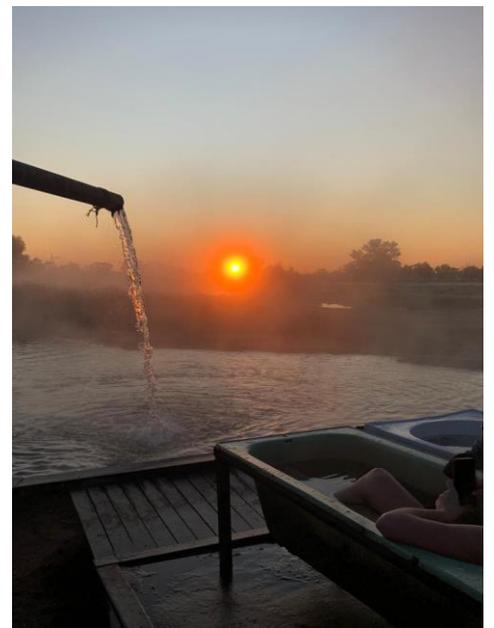
The land is vast with fields stretching as far as the eye can see to the horizon. Crops grown were cotton and wheat and the landscape was dotted with huge grain silos all painted with designs of birds and wildlife. We saw mobs of emus, loads of wild goats and a spiky echidna along the way.



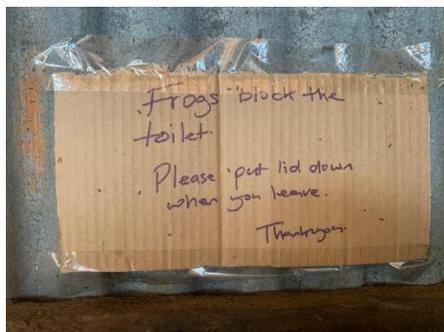
Our destination, Charlotte Plains, is a family owned campground and sheep station near the town of Cunnamulla. It is an amazing and quite unique place to visit, its striking feature being the Artesian Bore that pours out from middle earth.

The water gushes out at a temperature of around 46 degrees and visitors can wallow in the mineralised warm waters either in the pool itself, the creeks or in baths situated along the creek edges. It was a very different experience to watch the sun rise over the outback scenery through the steaming mist, while soaking in this hot outdoor spa. The colours of the landscape were stunning; being springtime the spring flowers were blooming in the lush green grass surrounded by the rich red dirt.

There was a great array of bird life but one downside was the incessant plague of flies! They started as the day warmed up, about 8.30am and didn't relent until the sun started to go down around 5pm. The camp reception sold fly nets to wear and they were certainly needed.



The facilities were fairly basic - 1 main toilet and shower block then other 'toilets' dotted around the camping area comprising of open cubicles of corrugated iron looking out on the view! The sign in the main toilet however was the best I've seen – hilarious!



The Great Artesian Basin is one of the largest underground water reservoirs in the world and is 100 – 250 million years old. It takes up one fifth of Australia lying under the arid and semi-arid areas of Queensland, New South Wales and Northern Territories, stretching from the Great Dividing Range to the Lake Eyre depression. The water in the basin moves slowly through the layers of porous sandstones at rate of 0.2 – 2.5 metres a year and the oldest groundwater had been dated at around 2 million years old.



Charlotte Plains was certainly a different place to visit and well off the usual tourist track. It was like no other place I have visited and not for the faint hearted camper. I wouldn't say it was beautiful but it had it's own special beauty and is quite unique. I feel privileged to have been able to go there and experience part of the Australian outback. Gill Chapman



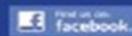
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# Would you like to be the Local Recorder for: **OCCOLD**



The Suffolk Local History Council runs a Recorders Scheme throughout Suffolk. We administer a network of volunteers to ensure that the '*present*' is adequately recorded at local level for the '*future*'.

A Recorder will note significant happenings in their parish and collect their local parish magazines, leaflets, election pamphlets and newspaper cuttings. At the end of each year, they are asked to submit a short report summarising the activities of their parish. The reports are deposited at the Suffolk Record Office and available to future researchers together with the collected items.

If you are interested, please look at the Recorders Pack by visiting [www.slhc.org.uk](http://www.slhc.org.uk) to acquaint yourself with the guidelines of the scheme. You do not need to be a historian; you do not need any qualifications other than an interest in your parish. In return you will receive a copy of the SLHC Newsletter and be invited to the annual conference specifically for Local Recorders. To volunteer to help in this important work, please contact [recorders@slhc.org.uk](mailto:recorders@slhc.org.uk)





## November 2022

Whilst I am pleased that we are now moving forward with our new Prime Minister, during these recent weeks and months, it has been more important than ever for me to focus on the issues which matter to us locally here in Suffolk. That's why I was delighted to recently welcome to Parliament a delegation of farmers and food producers from Fram Farmers.

Following a tour of Parliament, I was pleased to host a meeting with Fram Farmers where I heard first-hand about the challenges facing Suffolk's farmers and food producers. Although it's fair to say that the discussions focused generally on agricultural policy and potential changes on the horizon, more detailed conversations were also had around the financial challenges affecting farmers and food producers, and indeed all businesses here in Suffolk, including the rising cost of fertiliser as a result of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and rising costs of energy and fuel.

We are all proud of Suffolk's farmers who produce food which is locally sourced to the highest standards. I have always believed in the importance of UK farmers having a fair and level playing field with farmers from other countries, especially in areas like animal welfare standards, food labelling and quality of grain entering the food chain. In all of these areas, our own farmers are world class.

Whilst I regularly visit farms and food producers across Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, it was great to also be able to welcome some of them to Parliament. It is vital that our Government policies are fit for purpose and it's important to hear the impact that any changes will have on the ground for our local food producers.

I will always do my very best to support Suffolk's farmers and food producers and I will continue to speak with Ministers to make sure that their voices are heard in Parliament. The effects of the ongoing Avian Influenza outbreak Suffolk are of significant concern and this is why I have been pressing Government Ministers to better support this important sector. It is essential that the Government continue to consider the impact that these issues have on our farmers, food producers, retailers and ultimately the consumer.

Agriculture, food and drink remain central to our local economy with more than one in seven jobs in Suffolk having some link to food production. We really are incredibly lucky to have such wonderful farmers and food producers on our doorstep and in the run up to Christmas, like you, I will be supporting them by buying local produce and gifts.

As always, if you have any issues which I can help with at one of my local advice bureaux, please don't hesitate to get in touch with my office via [www.drdanielpoulter.com](http://www.drdanielpoulter.com)

# Occold Book Club



Once again we've read a variety of books, with varying reactions from the readers! Miriam Margolyes autobiography, *This Much is True*, certainly gave us plenty to talk and laugh about! No one loved the book and her shock tactics wore thin towards the end. Plenty of copies available if anyone wants to read it for themselves, I don't think we've all donated to a charity shop yet! We then read

Claire Lombardo, *The Most Fun We Ever Had*. Not everyone managed to finish the book but most of us enjoyed the story.

The next book was Louis de Bernieres, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. One member loved it but most of us found it hard going and didn't finish the book. More donations for the charity shop I guess!

Our Christmas read is Ada Moncrieff, *Murder Most Festive*.

We are not meeting in January but will meet on Tuesday February 7th 7.30 pm for a show and tell evening at The Beaky. All are welcome to come along and share books they have enjoyed.

We were thinking about a name for the group and one member thought "Read Between the Wines" might be appropriate! All suggestions welcome.

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## Rich Fruit & Chocolate Bar

Elly Rivett

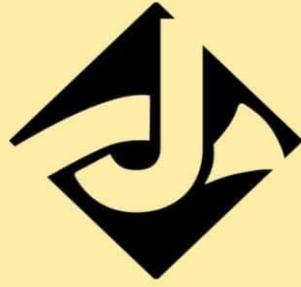
### Ingredients

16 sponge fingers  
15 fl oz double cream  
3 oz (75g) plain chocolate (melted)  
7 tablespoons brandy  
4 oz (100g) raisins  
1 tablespoon milk

### To finish

10 fl oz double cream  
Grated chocolate a caraques

1. Soak raisin in most of the brandy for at least 1 hour. Drain, saving brandy
2. Whip the double cream. Fold the chocolate and raisins into the cream. Mix milk and brandy (together with any left from the raisins). Dip 8 fingers, one at a time into the brandy mixture. Arrange horizontally in two rows on an oblong plate. Spread with cream mixture. Dip remaining fingers in brandy mixture and arrange on top. Chill until firm
3. Spread cream over cake leaving some to pipe swirls around the edge. Fill centre with chocolate grated a caraques.



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This November our group celebrated it's Centenary Anniversary... 100 years of the WI in this area! The group originally started in Redlingfield and then Occold joined some years later. We had an enjoyable celebratory meeting with cake and prosecco, browsing through the records and memorabilia that has been stored away over the years. It was interesting to see the different activities our members were involved in all those years ago. Our speaker for the evening was Paula Baker from the Suffolk Prickles Hedgehog Rescue. She told us about the work done at the centre, something of interest to many of us as there is quite a strong population of hedgehogs in and around the village. We are looking forward to our Christmas meal in December.

We meet every month on the first Wednesday of the month in Occold Village Hall at 7.30pm. The one exception will be our January meeting which will be on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023.

We usually organise a group outing in June and have a variety of speakers booked for the year including ... Dr Geoffrey Kay: The Pre Raphaelite brotherhood (11<sup>th</sup> January), Walking Suffolk Churches (1<sup>st</sup> February), Michelle Attrill: British Sign Language (1<sup>st</sup> March).

If you would like more information please contact our President Carol Peters on 01379678597, or just come along to a meeting. We look forward to welcoming you.

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## **DAWS HALL TRIP**

Towards the end of October a small group of us WI ladies visited Daws Hall Nature Reserve just south of Sudbury on the banks of the river Stour. It is a private reserve not usually open to the public but offers Open Days at different times during the year to show the features of the different seasons. It is mainly used as a Centre for Environmental Education and has been in existence since 1985. There are a variety of different habitats including woodland, wildflower meadows and the river Stour itself. The Sanctuary and Gardens have a collection of different species of waterfowl in particular a small flock of Red-breasted Geese native to Russia, an endangered species that breed here each year.





Having missed some of the earlier dates we were determine to visit in order to see the Autumn colours at the reserve. There had been a few glorious days, delightful Autumn weather with blue skies and sunshine ... but the day of our visit it tipped down with rain on and off throughout the day!

However, we were not deterred, donned our wet gear and set off. Despite the rain, we were not disappointed with the beautiful trees in the Hall's garden and woodland showing some spectacular colours. The grounds were covered in a carpet of leaves and a variety of fungi that glistened in the wet conditions. We also enjoyed sitting in the visitor centre with tea and cake while the heavens opened around us, but did venture out in between the downpours to enjoy the scenery and walk through the reserve. All in all, an enjoyable trip out.



\*\*\*\*\*



## What's on at the Beaky

Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> December 8pm	Christmas Carols in the Pub
Christmas Eve from 2pm	Visit from Santa (parents, please bring clearly named small present beforehand)
31 <sup>st</sup> December – New Year Eve	Soul & Motown night with Daniel Uppiah tickets £10 IN ADVANCE, £15 on the Door

For me choosing a favourite flower is impossible as I find it depends upon the changing seasons and a lifetime of memories. The sight of bright red geraniums and the perfume of sweet rocket and honeysuckle remind me of my mother and the garden of the farm where I was born and lived until I was almost 12 years old. Cornflowers take me back to a lovely summer's day when we walked across the fields to Banham Common to collect milk from the farmer there. We took a short cut through the derelict garden of an old empty cottage, cornflowers of pink, white and blue had colonised the whole garden. It was alive with the buzzing of bees and lovely butterflies fluttering everywhere – just magical, never to be forgotten!



Our farm was ½ mile from the nearest road, the lane was basically an unmade cart track with grass in the middle, suitable for the horse and cart, then Dad's motorcycle and sidecar and eventually in 1953 a Fordson tractor. We spent many happy times searching for 4 leafed clovers among the many wildflowers growing there ie yarrow, buttercups, daisies etc.

Standing back halfway along this lane had been another house which burnt down when I was a baby and only the outer brick walls were left standing. Sometimes on our way home from school we would take a path passing this ruin. In early summer a beautiful deep pink rose still managed to flourish on what remained of the front wall and hypericums carpeted the ground in a blanket of yellow flowers. Lovely but at the same time sad sight.

All through life different flowers stay in the memory for various reasons, such as a graveyard in late winter glowing with snowdrops and aconites, Spring woods swathed in bluebells, wedding bouquets with sweet smelling freesias.

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## St Michael's Flower Guild

The last few months have been very busy. We have now a few new members which is great to see.

A big thank you to all members and friends who designed and produced fantastic flower displays for the flower festival in August.



In September Ken Salmons gave an interesting talk about plants for the Autumn in our gardens, with many plants brought for the garden.

In October we had an interesting talk by Linda Scoles called God Rest Ye Merry.

It was all about tales other family's Christmas and their reaction to Christmas presents over the years.

November's meeting is a Christmas Meal at the Beaconsfield Arms a big thank you to Leigh and Peter for producing a Christmas menu for the members to choose from.

Our next meeting is in January with a coffee morning on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 10am - 12 noon

February is Reflexology and GuavSha with Deborah Kilburn.

For information

Kate Dunnett or Jayne Tarrant

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To Buy or Not to Buy? That might be the question facing you this Christmas...times are hard and it's reminding me how things have changed.

The old nursery rhyme spoke of butcher, baker and candlestick maker. Thankfully, the first two remain but who's buying candlesticks these days? Unlikely to be found on the high street. (I did ask Ollie if they were stocked in the Handyman- "no" he replied).

Speaking of the Handyman, I remember when it was Beales' Ironmongers and recall adventuring up what seemed to a child at the time, a giant staircase which confronted you on entry. Yes, it was a two-storey business back in those days!

Perhaps you have fond memories of shops as they were? Maybe a place from your childhood? For me back then it was always any shop which sold sweets. My tooth fillings are proof! Culyers in Eye was a favourite (now an antiques shop) or Goulds/Mace (now Beards Deli) and probably my favourite, now McColl's but previously Hollingsworth's, Shepherd's, NSS Newsagents, Fourbuoys (apologies if I've missed any.)

Shops today are fewer but the act of shopping is unlikely to die out, thanks in no small part to the internet. Everything is there at the touch of a button (even candlesticks!). Online purchasing is here to stay whether we like it or not and the analysing of what we buy means our shopping is under scrutiny like never before; whether in the supermarket or online, retailers know what we shop for and assume we must have what we want instead of what we need.

Which reminds me of a song from my teenage youth back in the 1980s which suggested "what we want and what we need has been confused."\* We have these competing forces of want and need in our lives which we don't like to own up to and find it easy to hide from others. The basics are just not enough.

The Lord's prayer says, "Give us this day our daily bread." Jesus encourages us to ask for what we need to live, nothing more, nothing less. Recently, my wife measured my waistline and the shocking number it produced suggests I am guilty on the "more" rather than the "less" side of that equation! Perhaps instead of looking to material things, we should consider the spiritual? Maybe the answer is not in what can be seen and consumed but in what is unseen? For that we need faith.

Jesus also said "Man shall not live by bread alone." There is more to life than simply satisfying ourselves with the basics of life. CS Lewis, the renowned Christian author, declared man not to be a body with a soul but rather a soul with a body. That's a profound way of telling us we are primarily spiritual beings, not physical. Bread alone is not enough. Our soul, which will live on after us, is not something to take for granted. Jesus made this clear when he said..."For what will it benefit if someone gains the whole world and yet loses their soul....." You see there is nothing more valuable in life, indeed in the whole world, than your soul.

This soul can only be satisfied with what Jesus offers. This is the good news of the Gospel which we proclaim week in, week out at Jubilee Baptist Church. The good news is that Jesus came into the world to put us right with God.

That's what Christmas is all about!

\*Finest Worksong by REM (1988) I.R.S Records.

Greg Noller

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## Orac Coffee Mornings

**First Monday in the month 9.30 – 12.00**

**Next dates: 5<sup>th</sup> December**

**9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**6<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

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# Children's Xmas Craft Afternoon

1.30-4pm  
3rd Dec

Occold  
village  
hall

★ £5 per child - come and make  
Xmas crafts with your children

★ Booking essential



★ Refreshments available

★ Second hand toy stall

## GO NUTS OVER CHRISTMAS

In times past every Christmas a decorative bowl of mixed nuts and nutcrackers would be placed on the sideboard. Everyone passing would be tempted to have one or two. Come mid-January the bowl would still be there with a few sad almonds and brazil nuts in the bottom which no one had been able to crack no matter how hard they tried.

**The Hazel** (CORYLUS AVELLANA) and the **Filbert** (CORYLUS MAXIMA) both have attractive catkins in Feb/March. Corylus comes from Greek meaning helmet or hood referring to the calyx on the nuts. Hazels symbolise fertility, knowledge and protection. They grow in any reasonable soil in sun or partial shade. Coppice down to ground level every few years. The brushwood or faggots were used for heating up bread ovens. Propagate by layering or by removing rooted suckers in Autumn or plant nuts 2 inches deep outside in October.

Rods of hazel are used as magic wands to detect water underground. This is known as dowsing.

The nuts are a favourite food of squirrels, woodpeckers and the elusive dormouse which needs them to put fat on for winter hibernation.

### CHOCOLATE NUT CRUNCH

200g dark chocolate

30g mixed hazelnut, sunflower & pumpkin seeds

20g dried cranberries

Put chocolate in a heat proof bowl over a pan of simmering water until melted

Line a tray with baking paper

Mix nuts, seeds and fruit into the melted chocolate

Put into the lined tray and smooth over

Allow to cool, cut into squares

Keep in the fridge.

**Common walnut** (JUGLANS REGIA) aka the nut of Jupiter. **Black walnut** (JUGLANS NIGRA) is a fast growing tall tree with an average lifespan of 30 years. It's timber is mainly used for furniture. Walnuts like deep, well-drained soil in full sun and will start producing nuts after approx. 10 years. Prune by removing unwanted wood in Summer or Autumn, never Spring. Plant nuts outdoors in Autumn. Squirrels are experts at this! Walnut roots can suppress the growth of near-by vegetation so give them plenty of space.

Nuts can be picked whole but are more often used in baking especially for date & walnut or coffee & walnut cakes. Chopped walnuts can be added to salads to give an extra bite, the Waldorf Salad is particularly famous for this.

**Spanish or Sweet Chestnuts** (CASTANEA SATIVA) thrive on warm light soil and dislike chalk. They were introduced into the UK by the Romans for their nuts but beware of their very spiky casings. There are lots of them around Colchester. Growing up to 100ft tall, once grown for coppice wood used for fencing poles and faggots for the old bread ovens. Heavy

fruiting is hit & miss in the British Isles and most sweet chestnuts are imported. Propagate by planting nuts as soon as they are ripe.

Roasted chestnuts are a delicious winter treat roasted in their skins, make a small hole in them first to prevent an explosion. They can be chopped and added to biscuits and cakes. To make a tasty stuffing mix sausage meat, sage & onion and chopped chestnuts to go with your turkey on Christmas day.

**Peanut (ARACHIS HYPOGAEA).** Unlike the other nuts the peanut is a legume and grows underground. It comes from South America and has been cultivated since ancient times. It grows about 30cm tall and spreads up to 1.2m. Some have a bushy erect growth and others are ground spreading.

After the flower is fertilised the elongated receptacle, called the peg turns downwards from bare flower stalks to bury the ovary tip in the soil where the pods develop. There are both large and small seeded types grown in the USA. Large seeded types are used for roasting and confections and small seeded types are used in peanut butter and oil. After the nuts have been harvested the plants are fed to livestock.

Peanuts are nutritious and high in energy. They contain 40 – 50 % and 20 – 30% protein and are an excellent source of B vitamins. Peanut oil is use as a high quality salad or cooking oil, often used in margarine.

We used to buy them in their shells and thread them onto string and hang out in the garden for the wild bird to feed on pecking away until they managed to access their reward. Now all the hard work is done for them!

Caroline Miller

## **HAVE CRACKING GOOD CHRISTMAS**



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### Essex & Suffolk Water

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### Police

Non urgent messages 101

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(or Police on 101)

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## **Visitors to Occold**

It's been five years since we handed over stewardship of Theydon House to Kate and Dave and left the village of Occold with mixed feelings. We try to return once a year to renew old friendships forged over our eighteen year's stay, so it was with great pleasure that we received an invitation from Mr Miller and Caroline to attend the WI's Harvest Supper on 15<sup>th</sup> October. Having done a bit of research we discovered that we could rent the Old Coach House for our two-night stay. Imagine our surprise when we discovered that it was really a Tardis and opened up into a very spacious and inviting space. Tanya and Scott had indeed done an excellent job of renovating and we found it very welcoming and comfortable. It is indeed very handy after an evening spent in the Beaky or the village hall!

The Harvest Supper was, as usual, well organised and we enjoyed a delicious two-course meal and managed to catch up with many familiar faces. Imagine our delight when Kate told us that the Suffolk Wildlife Trust had featured the garden of Theydon House in one of their articles – well done Kate and Dave. At the end of the evening, we were pleased to note that a lot of the raffle prizes were won by the organisers, which they rightly deserved.

Sunday morning saw us taking a walk with Gill [Jim was on football duty] to Thornham Walks to do a spot of birdwatching – we enjoyed the walk but saw very few birds which seems to be the way things are going these days as we have noted the same in Surbiton where we now live. Of course, Sunday lunch could only be spent at The Beaky, and delicious it was too. We spent the afternoon meeting up with Sue and Tiny and then Billy and Judy.

Monday morning saw our departure having spent a really enjoyable weekend at one of our favourite destinations but we didn't leave without first visiting the Egg Shed as we had had a special request from our Surbiton friends to bring back eggs from Church Farm.

Thank you all for being so welcoming and we were pleased to see that Occold hadn't changed one bit.

**Vivienne and Jim Harvey**

### **STOKE ASH GARDENING CLUB 2022**

No meeting in December

Awaiting copy of 2023 programme

Will post on Village Notice board asap

Meetings start at 7.30pm in Stoke Ash Village Hall.

For more information contact Caroline on 10379 6788712

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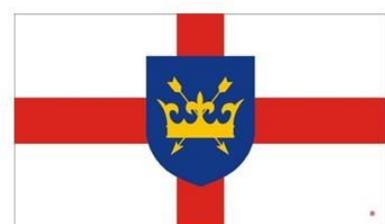
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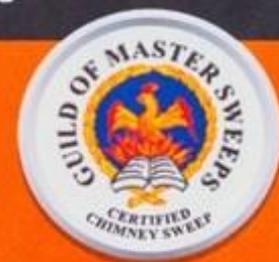
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## NATURE NOTES

I've seen red kites over the local fields on a few occasions this year, proof that they are gradually spreading eastwards. Red kites are a conservation success story. They suffered from persecution and were almost extinct in the UK: by 1903 there were only a few pairs left in Wales. The population did not exceed 20 pairs until the 1960's, when it started to slowly increase. At first they were confined to old oakwoods in the mid Wales uplands; but they gradually colonised more productive habitats in the valleys. Hence red kites increased to more than 100 pairs by the mid 1990s and there were 350-400 pairs by 2003 (data from RSPB). I remember visiting Wales with our boys at this time: we were so excited to see our first ever red kite sitting nonchalantly in the middle of a field. Later in the week we visited Gigryn farm in Rhyader, where the farmer fed the kites every afternoon and visitors could view from them a hide. It was an amazing sight: tens of kites swooping down over the field to take the chunks of meat spread out for them. The occasional buzzard would try to get a look in too!

However, the red kite population seemed unable to spread beyond Wales and so the RSPB, along with partners Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage, organised a reintroduction programme. The Getty estate, in the Chilterns, was one location used. From there they gradually spread along the M4 corridor: as kites are scavengers, they would be looking out for roadkill. When we lived in Brentwood and went on holiday westwards, we used to mark the location of our first red kite sighting on our satnav. By the time we moved to Occold, we were seeing them regularly on the M25. My friend in Hemel Hempstead often sees them over her garden. We were visiting our younger son a couple of years ago, who lives in a flat in Watford - and there was a red kite sitting on the aerial of his roof! The RSPB now estimate that there are probably around 1,800 breeding pairs in Britain, so a success story in this time of increasingly worrying news.

Locally, the summer drought and the current very mild weather is another sign of a changing climate. Our pond dried up over the summer, but our moorhen pair stayed on. Luckily the wildlife pond is finished, so they would visit that, albeit timidly as they are very shy. This year, however, we had hummingbird hawkmoths feeding regularly on the red valerian: at one time in late June there were four at once! The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) organise a Garden BirdWatch survey, but include other wildlife sightings too. Evidently 2022 has been a bumper year, due to the long dry spell. According to the BTO, there is also a possibility that rising temperatures mean a growing number are able to overwinter in the UK.

So changing times and I am very sceptical that our politicians have got the foresight to focus on the long term, rather than on their next election prospects.

Kate Burchell

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**Please call Rob (01449 774609) Greg (01379 678198) or Andrew (01379 678160) for more details**

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**10:45 AM / Village Hall or Chapel Hall**

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Appointments at the Occold clinic will be available from July.**

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Every Monday afternoon starting in November we are opening the chapel as a Cozy Corner. Come and enjoy a warm and welcoming space. Free soup, tea, coffee and refreshments. Come and relax, read your book, play games, do a puzzle or chat to others.

## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

- Carols in the Pub - Thursday 15 December at 8.00pm
- Christmas Carol Service - Sunday 18 December in the village hall at 6.30pm



*Everyone welcome*

## NEW YEAR

In the New Year our Sunday services will alternate between the village hall and the chapel – watch out for our flag!!!!

- 21 January – our Darts Night returns in the village hall (7.00pm for 7.15pm start)

Follow us on  jubilee\_baptist

 jbcoccold

## YOUTH CLUB

Our youth group continues to meet fortnightly on Friday evenings in the chapel for anyone in year groups 10 upwards 7.30pm – 9.30pm.

Like our page for updates  Jubilee Baptist Church Youth Club

\*\*\*\*\*



## Occold's Flying Neighbours

The United States Army Airforce (USAF) were the predominate occupiers of airfields in Suffolk from 1942 to 1945 and still actively operate from RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath. We regularly see C130 Hercules transports making a quiet, stately progress towards the north-west early on Tuesday evenings, flying at about 2,500'. Very occasionally a less than stately C130J, often used in Special Forces operations traveling from east to west at about 250' parallel to Barrick Lane. Mildenhall's KC135 and KC 10 Tankers are rarely seen over Occold but feature regularly on the Flight Radar 24 App heading out to the North Sea as do Lakenheath's F15 and F35 Lighting II fighters.

However, the RAF were operating in Suffolk well before the Friendly Invasion of the USAAF. The oldest, RAF Martlesham Heath was opened in 1917 when the Royal Flying Corps moved its testing squadron from Upavon in Wiltshire. The station was greatly enlarged in 1922 and two years later the importance of the experimental work was acknowledged as the units serving there were renamed the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (AAEE) Despite the secret working being undertaken there it opened its gates for the very first Empire Air in May 1936. Douglas Bader who led the Duxford Wing during the Battle of Britain served at 'The Heath' from December 1940 leading 242 Hurricane squadron and taking the offensive with fighter sweeps over France in 1941.

Notwithstanding the 1942 airfield building programme most of the RAF airfields in Suffolk had their genesis in the early 1930's, planned as bomber bases during a major period of expansion as a response to the growing threat from Germany. Permanent airfields at Wattisham, Honington and Stradishall were built as part of the expansion plan. The former two remaining RAF flying stations into the 1990's while air operations at Stradishall ceased in 1970, later being reopened, with modifications, as HM Prison High Point in 1977. Wattisham remains as a flying station operated by the Army Air Corps (AAC) flying Apache AH64 helicopters. The RAF connection is still loosely maintained as a serving ACC officer ruefully remarked "we've been here over 20 years and the locals still call it RAF Wattisham, not Wattisham flying Station"

Other stations such as Chedburgh were temporary, built by John Laing & Co in 1942, it was very much akin to Eye airfield. Built quickly, concrete runways surrounded by a sea of mud dotted with Nisan Huts which slowly disintegrated over the years. There is an Occold connection to RAF Chedburgh. A Lancaster Navigator serving there with 218 Gold Coast Squadron was the father of one of our villagers. The books High Adventure - A Navigator at War by R L Austen and The Eighth Passenger by Miles Tripp, a Bomb Aimer serving with 218 Squadron provide vivid account of life and operations from Chedburgh in 1944 and '45. Purists would probably point out that a Lancaster usually had a crew of seven. In Tripp's book the eighth passenger was fear.

Coming more up to date one of the expansion bases Mildenhall and its satellite Lakenheath still operate as flying stations and retain an American connection being among the largest US Air Force bases in Europe.

The newly opened RAF Mildenhall was the starting point for the England to Australia air race in October 1934. The race was won by Flight Lieutenant Charles Scott AFC and Captain Tom



Campbell Black flying a De Havilland DH88 Comet named Grosvenor House in an elapsed time of 2 days, 23 hours and 18 seconds

Two De Havilland DH.88 Comets and a Gee Bee at Mildenhall Aerodrome prior to the 1934 MacRobertson Race. The airfield had opened 4 days earlier. (BAE Systems).

A year later the Silver Jubilee Review held by King George V over 350 aircraft provided an impressive demonstration of RAF air power.

Throughout WWII Mildenhall served as a bomber base operating Vickers Wellingtons from 1939. A Wellington from 149 Squadron gaining a starring role in the in the film Target for Tonight. The film was shot by the Royal Air Force Film Unit, with location filming being carried out during the last two weeks of March and the first two weeks of April 1941. The film won an honorary Academy Award in 1942 as Best Documentary by the National Board of Review.

The 'staring' Wellington, code letter F for Freddie even got a mention in a 1987 episode of 'Allo 'Allo!, "Pretty Maids All In A Row", containing a scene where the rescue of two British airmen by plane is hampered by the fact that all spare British aircraft are currently being used for a movie named F For Freddie.

A number of serving aircrew appeared in film with uncredited parts due to security restrictions. Also appearing, uncredited is Constance Babington Smith, who was a serving WAAF officer at the time and was responsible for photographic interpretation of aerial reconnaissance pictures. Appearing in the control room scene is motor racing driver John Cobb, then a serving RAF officer.



At the end of the war Harry Watt, the film's director, noted with regret that most of the flight officers and crew who appeared in the film did not survive the duration of the war. For example, the front gunner in the film was played by Flight-sergeant Joseph Ronald Bird who lost his life on the 27/28 August 1942 flying as rear gunner of a Short Stirling aircraft whilst on a bombing mission to Kassel, Germany. As did Group Captain Pickard and his navigator,

Flight Lieutenant J. A. "Bill" Broadley while flying on Operation Jericho, a low level raid to release Resistance prisoners held in Amiens Prison.

In the latter part of 1941 the twin engine Wellingtons were replaced by the four engine Short Stirling. This led to Mildenhall being closed in November 1941 for the construction of three concrete runways and hard surfaced perimeter tracks to a standard pattern similar that that used at Eye airfield. The airfield reopened in April 1942 as home to 15 Squadron. A flight of this unit being used to form 622 Squadron in August. For the next eighteen months Sterlings from both squadrons took a full part in the increasingly intensive Bomber Command offensive until being replaced by Avro Lancasters in December 1943.

According to RAF statistics squadrons operating from Mildenhall flew over 8,000 bombing sorties during the war, dropping 8,000 tons of bombs and losing 200 aircraft, each with six or seven aircrew.

In the course of those operations Rawdon Hume "Ron" Middleton, a 149 Squadron pilot in the was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

Talking off from RAF Lakenheath, then a satellite base of Mildenhall on 28 November 1942, Middleton was captain of a Stirling detailed to bomb the Fiat aircraft works at Turin. It was his twenty-ninth combat sortie, one short of the thirty required for completion of a 'tour' and mandatory rotation off combat operations.

Over the target area Middleton had to make three low-level passes in order to positively identify the target; on the third, the aircraft was hit by heavy anti-aircraft fire which wounded both pilots and the wireless operator. Middleton suffered numerous grievous wounds. Despite being in great pain he was determined to fly his crippled aircraft home and return his crew to safety.

The following details are given in the London Gazette of 12 January, 1943:

*Flight Sergeant R. H. Middleton was captain and first pilot of a Stirling aircraft detailed to attack the Fiat Works in Turin one night in November, 1942. Very difficult flying conditions, necessitating three low altitude flights to identify the target, led to excessive petrol consumption, leaving barely sufficient fuel for the return journey. Before the bombs could be released the aircraft was damaged by anti-aircraft fire and a splinter from a shell which burst in the cockpit wounded both the pilots and the wireless officer. Flight Sergeant Middleton's right eye was destroyed and the bone above it exposed. He became unconscious and the aircraft dived to 800 ft. before control was regained by the second pilot, who took the aircraft up to 1,500 ft. and released the bombs, the aircraft meanwhile being hit many times by light flack. On recovering consciousness Flight Sergeant Middleton again took the controls and expressed his intention of trying to make the English coast, so that his crew could leave the*

*aircraft by parachute. After four hours the badly damaged aircraft reached the French coast and there was once more engaged and hit by anti-aircraft fire. After crossing the Channel Flight Sergeant Middleton ordered the crew to abandon the aircraft. Five left safely, but the front gunner and the flight engineer remained to assist the pilot, and perished with him when the aircraft crashed into the sea. Flight Sergeant Middleton was determined to attack the target regardless of consequences and not to allow the crew to fall into enemy hands. While all the crew displayed heroism of a high order, the urge to do so came from Flight Sergeant Middleton, whose fortitude and strength of will made possible the completion of the mission. His devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds is unsurpassed in the annals of the Royal Air Force.*



Ron Middleton was posthumously promoted to Pilot Officer and is buried at St Johns Church, Beck Row, Mildenhall, Pilot Officers George Royde (navigator) and Norman Skinner (wireless operator) were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, while Flight Sergeant Leslie Hyder (2nd pilot), Flight Sergeant Douglas Cameron (mid-upper gunner) and Sergeant H.W. Gough (rear gunner) each received the Distinguished Flying Medal. Coincidentally, Cameron would be a member of Squadron Leader Ian Bazalgette's crew when the Canadian would be awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross in 1944

Mildenhall remained an operational station housing four squadrons of Avro Lincolns, a development of the Lancaster in 1949. By early 1950 the squadrons had been disbanded or moved to other stations.

The development of the Cold War saw the arrival of the first American units, B50's of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group arriving in July 1950. Fears of a global conflict stemming from the Korean War started a rotation of Bomb Groups under the control of the United States Air Force Strategic Air Command (SAC). In October 1951 SAC formally took over RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

While rotations of bombers continued the primary role of Mildenhall became air to air refuelling and transport. The first tankers to arrive were Boeing KC97's which appeared in 1953 with transport aircraft arriving in 1958.



*KC 97 refuelling a B 47 Stratojet*

The tanker came to dominate Mildenhall was the Boeing KC135 Stratotanker, a direct descendent of the KC97. Air to air refuelling supports a wide range of operational deployments and the transport capability has proved to be an essential part of the air bridge between the United States and the European and Middle Eastern theatres.

Since 1992 Mildenhall has been home to the 100<sup>th</sup> Air Refuelling Wing, a decedent of the US Army Airforce 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group based at Thorpe Abbots from 1943 to '45.



*A KC 135 refuelling an F 15 Eagle*

Ted Hampson

*Compiled from:*

*Action Stations 1 Wartime military airfields of East Anglia 1939-1945. Michael J Bower. Patrick Stephens Ltd. 1979*

*Suffolk Airfields In The Second World War. Graham Smith, Countryside Books 1997*

*The Military Airfields of Britain. East Anglia. Norfolk and Suffolk. Ken Delve. The Crowood Press Ltd. 2005*

*Ghost Fields of Suffolk. Roderick McKenzie, The Larks Press 2012.*

*Target for Tonight - Wikipedia*

*Ron Middleton (VC) - Wikipedia*

*Royal Air Force Mildenhall > Home (af.mil)*

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# Burns Supper

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Occold Village Hall

7pm for 7.30pm start

Bar and Raffle

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## ***News from St Michael and All Angels***

*Firstly thank you to all volunteers who came to help clear undergrowth and cut back dead trees in the churchyard and to the Hull family for disposing of the material. This remains an ongoing project but we hope residents notice the difference. We have made a conscious decision to leave certain areas uncut for periods of the year to encourage wild flowers - let's see what next spring brings!*

*We have also cut down the trees to the north of the church as these were undermining the church, and you may have noticed that the big yew tree to the south has been trimmed. All necessary work recommended by the church architect. The ditch in front of the churchyard extension has also been cleared.*

*Looking forward we are holding the Carol Service from 6:30 pm on Christmas Eve and hope to see many residents in the church. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available afterwards.*

*We are planning a book sale to take place towards the end of April 2023, so if you do have surplus books we will aim to start a collection early next year. We will also hold the flower festival on the third weekend in August again and hope for good weather again (although perhaps less of a drought).*

*Best wishes to everyone for Christmas and 2023*

*Stephen Hubner (678360) and Gill Richardson (01728 627926)  
Churchwardens*





Join the...

# Crafty Crafters

Every third Thursday in the month in  
the Village Hall, 1 - 3 pm

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023,  
16<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and  
16<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Bring a craft activity  
to do or share. Tea,  
coffee & biscuits  
available.

£2.50 per person



**If your child was born between  
1 September 2018 and  
31 August 2019,  
you must apply for a full-time  
school place by  
15 January 2023**



You **must** make an application even if your child already has a place in a nursery class, pre-school or family hub

To apply for a place or for more information you can visit:

**[www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions)**

Information is also available from:

•The Admissions Team on **0345 600 0981**

•Your local school