

The NIB

Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf Parish Magazine



THE BENEFICE OF St BENEDICT

The Parishes of Ashmanhaugh, Barton Turf, Beeston St Lawrence, Horning, Irstead and Neatishead

Rector: The Rev'd David Smith

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draesmith2@btinternet.com

From Reverend Angela

Happy New Year and Happy Epiphanytide. In Advent, we had time to hear the stories of Mary and of John the Baptist, as well as remembering the history of the Jewish people of which they were a part – the history of the patriarchs and of God's promises delivered by the prophets. Christmas itself is a whole fortnight, culminating in the story of the arrival of the magi at Epiphany. And, as always, the church continues to celebrate for a whole 40 days, until at Candlemas on 2nd February, the Feast of Christ's Presentation in the Temple. Only then do we finally start to turn away from the story of the stable, and start looking towards the cross and resurrection of the Easter story.

These wise men from lands afar brought gifts for the Christ child. But what did they take away with them? The shepherds who came - what did they take away with them? What gift do we receive from the Christ child? Some of the gifts we were given when we married over 40 years ago are still in daily use, and when I use them now I am reminded of the givers. In the same way, if we receive the gift Jesus offers us, He himself becomes part of our lives. That is the gift we receive from the Holy child. Think of that scene when the wise men visited the Holy Family. G K Chesterton's Christmas poem speaks of the glory that shone from the Christ child:

'The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap, His hair was like a light.

(O weary, weary were the world, But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee, His hair was like a crown,

and all the flowers looked up at Him, And all the stars looked down.'

This poem paints a picture of all creation being drawn to that glory. All the flowers looked up at Him and all the stars looked down. Not just the one special star but all of them. The wise men came a long way to find Jesus. This is the message of Epiphany: that the gift of Jesus, the love that God has for us which shines from that child, is a gift offered to all creation. It is for all the world, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord. God has revealed his glory in the child of Bethlehem, in Jesus' ministry on earth, and in the Cross and Resurrection. God has revealed his glory for all the world.

But what do we do with this gift? - the gift that God has revealed to us in Jesus? Do we leave it wrapped up, lying decoratively by the tree - to be gathered up with the decorations and put up in the loft till next year? Can we really do that with the glory of God? Might it not just burst out of the wrapping and fly away in spite of our efforts to contain it? Or do we take the gift out of its box and

share it like Mary holding the infant Jesus for all to see? Think about the generosity of Mary – when she'd given birth in a stable because no-one would give her shelter after a long hard journey; and think about the generosity of Joseph when he'd watched his wife go through that. They might have been quite reluctant to let in strangers who turned up wanting to see the baby. But not so with Mary and Joseph - such was their trust in the love of God that it enabled them to open their home and their hearts to the world - just as that Love will enable us if we let it. But how do we reveal this baby to the world? This baby who is a sign of God's love and God's kingdom? Rowan Williams, when he was archbishop, in talking of the church's mission said that our real task was to go out into the world, to find out what God is already doing, and then join in. In the same way, we can see that the wise men went out to follow the star to find out what God was doing.

In this present time, a time of great crisis, it is easy to lose hope, to fall into despair at one disaster after another. Even the words of the carol seem to compound this sense of doom. 'Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow.' It's easy to lose hope, but it is also easy to see God at work. He is right there at the centre of the suffering. The carol doesn't leave us out in the cold in the relentless falling snow. It takes us into the very heart of God's love.

*'In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.'*

Amidst the cold is the blazing heat of God's love. Throughout this last year people have stood up to be counted, putting themselves in danger for the sake of others. In particular at this present time we give thanks for the patient work of the scientists who found vaccines for us. Through their generosity the Holy Spirit has been busy at work. The Oxford vaccine being distributed now is to be shared widely across the globe, without profit. A sign of God's love at work. Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business". As his church we must follow Jesus, our guiding star wherever he leads us and join in His Father's business, in the sure and certain knowledge that He is always with us wherever we go. That is both the challenge and promise of Epiphany.

With every blessing,

Angela Smith

Church Services and Church Opening

As I write this, the government has just announced that the majority of England will be placed under Tier 4 Coronavirus precautions, as a result of the continued rapid spread of the new variant of the Coronavirus, and the infection and fatality rates. During the first wave, earlier in the year, the more remote parts of Norfolk saw almost no instances of any COVID infection and some, I know, felt that lockdown measures were perhaps stricter than they needed to be in our more remote, less-populated areas. Nevertheless, we remained – mercifully – well-protected during that period. All the emerging evidence of this new variant of COVID infection suggests that its greater transmissibility means that those 'protections' – remoteness and low population – will have less effect. We are indeed already experiencing quantifiable and increasing instances of confirmed infections across Norfolk, including in our local area, which cannot be ignored. It is also now clear that a third or more of people who transmit the virus do so without symptoms and without ever knowing that they are, or have been, infected. Given all this, and until the vaccination programme is well advanced, the most effective means of curtailing the spread of the virus is to minimise close human contact as much as possible, and in particular indoor contact, which in winter is usually in less well-ventilated spaces – unless we want to freeze.

With all this in mind, following diocesan-wide dispensations from Bishop Graham, I consulted with the Church Wardens and we concluded, most reluctantly, that continuing public worship services in church is at present an unnecessary and unjustifiable transmission risk to our congregations and indeed to the wider community, especially given their age profile. This is a decision that no parish priest ever wants to announce, but the current local progress of this new Coronavirus strain is such that we believe this to be the only safe, sensible, and responsible course of action, until we can see that the spread of the virus is being brought properly under control.

As you may recall, medical advice has been that the virus can remain viable and thus infectious outside the human body for various times, depending on the nature of the surface on which it is resting, but that this is limited generally to a maximum of about 48 hours. Accordingly, when we have our churches open for individual private prayer, this only occurs after the building has been effectively quarantined to the public for at least the preceding 72 hours, so that it is free of any viable virus particles. In the summer we operated a regime of opening each church twice a week but in the winter months this is reduced to one day per week for each of our churches.

Accordingly, until further notice, our churches will continue to be open for individual private prayer from **10am-to 3pm** as follows:

Tuesdays	St Peter's, Neatishead
Wednesdays	St Michael's, Irstead
Thursdays	St Michael & All Angels', Barton Turf
Fridays	St Benedict's Horning
Saturdays	St Swithin's, Ashmanhaugh

For your own, and everyone's safety when visiting our churches, please follow the COVID secure instruction notices in each individual church, especially regarding hand hygiene and social distancing. In addition, we continue to publish a weekly worship service via YouTube video, which you can find on our YouTube channel – just search YouTube for 'Benefice of St Benedict'. These video services are also accessible via the individual web pages for each of our parishes on the Church of England's 'A Church Near You' website, together with a copy of the service sheet which you can download and print locally. If you would like to join in the recording of some of these weekly services, do please contact myself or one of the Church Wardens.

David Smith, Rector

From the NIB Church Wardens

We very much hope that you were able to enjoy the moving Christmas Day online service and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking our Rector, David, and all those who contributed to it for making it possible. It has been a difficult and challenging year for us all as we have sought to adjust to the changing restrictions imposed on us because of the pandemic. As the Church in our Parishes, we have sought to adjust as best we can, whilst acknowledging that we have not been able to worship in the ways that we are used to or to meet in fellowship or socialise as we would have wished. We can only pray that it will not be too long before we can come together again in Christ's name in our churches.

As we look back over the past year we would, on your behalf, like to thank David for his spiritual leadership in these difficult times and for his masterful use of modern technology to provide us with continuity of worship through the Sunday online services. Our thanks also to all those who have supported David in making these services possible.

May we take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy and healthy New Year whilst expressing the hope that it will not be too long, with the recent availability of vaccines, before we can move back towards a sense of normality in our everyday lives, whatever that might be in the changed circumstances. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us as your Church Wardens if we can be of any assistance to you. Do take good care of yourselves and do stay safe and warm.

The NIB Parish Church Wardens

Thank you to the Nordic walkers

A huge Thank You to the Nordic walkers for their excellent Christmas card delivery service around the villages. They have helped us all save a lot of money on postage and, at the same time, raised money for charity. We hope that they will offer this service again next Christmas. *The NIB Team*

Reporting problems on highways

Problems on the highways can be reported to your Parish Clerk, or direct to Norfolk County Council Highways Department by using the following link:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads/report-a-problem>

Knit and Stitch - Wednesday 13th and Tuesday 26th January

We hope you had an opportunity to see our bright and cheery alternative Christmas tree outside the NVH over the festive period. It was great to get some coverage by the EDP on their website. I was also interviewed about it on BBC local radio on Christmas Eve. We will be taking the tree down in the New Year to be dried out and packed away for reassembling next Christmas - maybe at a different village venue. Thank you to everyone who contributed - it's surprising what you can do with your leftover bits of wool! With the New Year upon us, it's a time to reflect, recharge and to look forward to a brighter year ahead. Although I think it will be a while before we will be able to meet up again, we will get together on Zoom to share ideas for new projects. We will keep to the same pattern of meetings on the evenings of 2nd Wednesday and 4th Tuesday of the month. If you have made a New Year's resolution to take up a new hobby or would like some inspiration for a new project and would like to join us please get in touch - we would love to welcome new members.

Claire Penstone-Smith, 630580, claireps@btinternet.com

Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf Community Heritage Group (NIBCHG)

"What was it like for you in 2020?" I guess we will hear this many times over the next few months. As we begin with tighter restrictions for 2021 in Norfolk, we have to look forward to brighter times with the vaccine against COVID-19 now available. We would be grateful to receive your memories and photos of 2020 for our archive. I don't remember seeing very much snow in 2020 but back in 1979 and 1947 with snowdrifts and freezing temperatures the villages came together to support each other as we have done this past year.

Winter in Barton

I have heard people say they actually like the winter, but I think even they must change their opinions when the bitterly cold weather arrives. Oh yes, there is something wonderful about a crisp and frosty morning with the sun shining and Mother Nature's already beautiful trees and hedgerows adorned with a mantle of glistening white frost. What a difference though when it is dark and damp, wet and windy, especially those biting winds from the east and north. Did you know they are referred to as "lazy winds" ... because they are too lazy to go round you they go through you instead! The winter of 1947 was one of the worst in Barton; the village was cut off for several days and it was almost two weeks before a bus could travel along the road from Gunns Corner to Neatishead. Every available man in the village had to join the snow-heaving gang and dig out the roads so supplies could be brought in. Only the rooftop of the bungalow near Mill Garage was visible, the snowdrifts coming up to the eaves. When single-line traffic was let through again the snow stacked at the sides of the roads was as high as the single-deck buses. The bus crews in those days used to carry a couple of shovels and a bag of sand under the back seat in case they got stuck. Wonder what would happen in present times! Of course, Barton Broad was frozen over and many people went skating; also Barton Common used to be flooded and frozen over then so we could skate on there with a greater degree of safety, the water not being as deep as the Broads. In 1963 we again had a very hard winter, not much snow, but two months of almost continual frost. It seemed that half the population of Norfolk came to skate on Barton Broad at weekends. Now in 1979 we are again having our quota of frost and snow, but whereas in 1947 we thought we were the only ones, the present-day television and press reports show us that we are very lucky compared with some parts of the country. In 1947 we had to rely on the daily papers and, if they did not get through, you listened to the radio but communications took much longer to get through to the BBC so often news was old before it was broadcast about other regions. So when you moan and groan about the snow that we have had to contend with, look at the TV or papers and think how lucky this corner of England is. We do not get 'cut off' very often, and with the wonderful community spirit that is a part of our three villages, there will always be someone willing to lend a helping hand if we get snowed in. There is one bright thought about winter; the snowdrops will soon be forcing their way through the frozen earth to prove that Spring is just around the corner.

Peggy Owen, Editor, NIB February 1979'

Claire Penstone-Smith, 630580, claireps@btinternet.com

New Victory Hall

Many thanks to all who supported the Christmas and Farmers Market in December. Amazingly £1142 was raised for hall funds. I am grateful to all the makers, contributors, helpers and those who supported us in whatever way. The Christmas Draw was well supported and the 19 winners were all contacted so that one way or another all the prizes were delivered or collected. The Knit and Stitch Christmas Tree was much admired and a great reminder that every little bit helps make something very special.

The New Victory Hall is now closed again for all activities due to the Tier 4 Coronavirus regulations, but will reopen as soon as government advice permits. Enquiries about individual clubs should be made direct to the group leader for latest information. If permitted, the Village Screen Cinema return **Monday 1st February** and the Farmers' Market will take place on **Saturday 13th February 2021**.

The Trustees remain optimistic that at some point in 2021 it will be possible to bring back the full programme of recreational and leisure activities, so there will be lots to look forward to. The Events Committee has already started to think about events and is just waiting for the moment when firm plans can be made. If you have a celebration or event to organise for later in the year, you can still make a provisional booking now with no obligation or deposit to ensure you have the date in the diary. Meanwhile, best wishes for 2021 and most importantly stay safe and well. *Doreen Dean*

Gardening Club

Thank you to all our members who supported the NVH fundraiser on 12th December. It proved to be a successful event and it was good to see people we haven't seen for months! As I write this we are in Tier 4, staying at home as much as possible. If any members have anything of interest to share please send it via email to me or Julie (julie.walls@yahoo.co.uk) and we can forward it to members. If you are thinking of joining the Gardening Club in 2021 please contact me and I can put you on the membership list to receive news and information from the club. Keep well and enjoy the New Year! Hopefully, we'll be able to meet properly before too long – maybe a BBQ, tea and cakes.....?
Jane King, 630002, janeelizabethking@hotmail.com

Wildlife Notes

Having mentioned the influx of white-fronted geese in last month's NIB I was pleased to record a small flock of a dozen of our Russian visitors mixed in with a larger flock of greylag geese when doing a monthly bird survey at St. Benet's Abbey in early December. At the end of the month there was a much larger flock numbering some 150 birds on the St. Benet's marshes near Ludham Bridge. I have been seal wardening at Horsey over the Christmas holidays and it's pleasing to note that there have been over 2,000 pups born for the second year running. This year, however, there have been some losses as the storm and subsequent high tides swept some of the pups away down the coast separating them from their mothers and leaving them abandoned and starving. It is hard to be accurate as to how many pups were lost but it was probably as many as a couple of hundred. The bird of note on the coast at Horsey / Winterton this winter has been an Iceland gull and, whilst I can understand that gulls are not everyone's cup of tea, an adult Iceland gull is slightly smaller than a Herring gull but lacks any black on the wings. Strangely, despite its name, it is not found in Iceland but visits Britain during the winter having bred in Greenland or Northern Canada. There are a few birds recorded around the Norfolk coast most winters although many are juvenile birds with speckled brown plumage but again noticeably lacking any black on the tail or wings. Iceland gulls are one of two gull species which visit Britain during the winter, the other being the larger glaucous gull. This too has no black on its wings or tail leading to the description of both species as white winter gulls although white/grey winter gulls would be more accurate.

Listen out for the sound of great spotted woodpeckers drumming as the days start to lengthen. The males will be busy sorting out their territories and announce this by vibrating their beaks on a dead piece of wood which acts as a sound box and makes a far-reaching drumming noise. One was performing this action at the Barton boardwalk this afternoon (28th).

Jerry Simpson, 630674, simpsonj24@btinternet.com

Hoveton and Wroxham Medical Centre: For more information visit <https://www.hovetonandwroxhammedicalcentre.nhs.uk/> or call 01603 782155

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New Victory Hall bookings: by email bookings@victoryhall.info or call 07551 008065

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Horning Jo Beardshaw 01692 670787

Barton/ Irstead Diane Bradley 07867 422925
Neatishead Charlotte Hummel 01493 718128

Contributions welcome to The NIB, but please note the Team reserves the right to amend or omit items., We also start the magazine from the 1st of the month, and therefore events in the previous month will not be advertised. Views expressed are those of the named author. No responsibility can be accepted for any errors. Everybody who sends in articles, including advertisers, automatically consents to having their details published on the internet, unless they specifically request otherwise, in which case we will endeavour to omit details before uploading onto the churches' websites.

Diary Dates for January 2021

Tuesday 12th 7pm Barton Turf & Irstead Parish Council virtual meeting
Wednesday 13th 7.30pm Knit & Stitch via Zoom
Tuesday 26th 7.30pm Knit & Stitch via Zoom

Future Dates

1st February Village Screen (to be confirmed)
13th February Farmers' Market (to be confirmed)

Mobile Library

Due to coronavirus restrictions, our mobile libraries service is **suspended** until further notice. All items currently on loan will be automatically renewed and no further charges will be incurred until further notice.

Visit our Library service coronavirus update page for further information on service closures and what you can still access from home.

Benefice of St Benedict:

	Church open 10am-3pm
Tuesdays	Neatishead
Wednesdays	Irstead
Thursdays	Barton Turf
Fridays	Horning
Saturdays	Ashmanhaugh

Church Wardens: **Neatishead** Pauline Simpson 01692 630674
Irstead David Murrells 01692 631427
Barton Turf Barbara Pilcher 01692 536132

Neatishead Baptist Church, Chapel Road, Neatishead, NR12 8YF. Sunday service at 10.30am. Please wear a mask in the church. Pastor: Ian Bloomfield, pastor@neatisheadbaptist.org.uk, Secretary: Sue Gibbons, secretary@neatisheadbaptist.org.uk

BartonTurf Methodist Church: Services suspended until further notice, Lay Pastor, Mrs Ros Peedle, 01692 405591 www.northnorfolkmethodist.org.uk/bartonturf

United Reformed Church, Wroxham: Sunday services at 11am. Minister: vacancy, Secretary: Lynne Howard, 01603 738835. lmhoward100@btinternet.com. All safety measures for COVID-19 are in place, however please see our website in case of any cancellations to services.

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