

Birdbrook Parish News



The Plough, Birdbrook

Our local pub is now open again!
Wednesday 5pm
Thursday & Friday 4pm
Saturday & Sunday 12pm

Above: Bowls Club Open Day BBQ 13 April 2025

Friday Coffee Mornings at Birdbrook Community House

All welcome, come along,
10am -12pm, meet your neighbours and
enjoy a cuppa and an informal chat. Our
community PCSOs often drop in, too.

Parish Council Meeting Dates

7pm in the Community House

8 July 2025
16 September 2025
11 November 2025



June 2025

Braintree District Council Local Plan Review

The Local Plan Sub Committee will assess the sites submitted at meetings (subject to change):

12 June 2025 (Alphamstone, Ashen, Belchamp Walter, Birdbrook, Black Notley, Bradwell, Bulmer/Bulmer Tye, Bures Hamlet, Castle Hedingham, Colne Engaine, Cressing, other villages with no map changes required)

19 June 2025 (Finchingfield, Foxearth, Gosfield, Great Bardfield, Great Yeldham, Helions Bumpstead, Lamarsh, Little Maplestead, Ovington, Panfield, Pebmarsh, Pentlow, Rayne, Ridgewell)

25 June 2025 (Rivenhall, The Salings, Shalford, Silver End, Stambourne, Steeple Bumpstead, Stisted, Sturmer, Toppesfield, Wethersfield, White Colne, White Notley, Wickham St Paul) .

The meetings are streamed live on YouTube. You can also sign up to the planning newsletter.

For details and latest information see:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan-review-2/2>

Braintree District New Waste Collection From 1 June 2026

On 27 May 2025, Braintree District Council's Cabinet agreed changes to the future of its waste and recycling collection services for households. From 1st June 2026 kerbside waste and recycling collections will be:

*A weekly food waste collection

*An alternate fortnightly collection of paper and card

*An alternate fortnightly collection of glass bottles and jars, metals, plastics including bags and film and food and drink cartons


*A fortnightly paid for collection of garden waste

*A three-weekly collection of general waste

Clear sacks that are currently used for mixed recycling will be replaced with wheeled bins, in most circumstances.



CHAPEL COMMUNITY CARE
Support through Life Changing Situations
Ridgewell Community Chapel, Meeting Lane, Ridgewell, Halstead, Essex, CO9 4RS
Chair: Rev'd Adrian Burr, 07983 656166
Project lead: Jill Holmes, 07883 423528



We have 12 volunteers supporting around 60 people throughout the North Braintree Rural Community, between the towns of Haverhill, Braintree, Halstead and Sudbury.

We offer befriending visits, transport journeys, shopping trips, hospital visits, telephone befriending support, support visits. And dog walks.

Fund Raising

We need donations and fundraising to fund what we do and if you would like to support us please get in touch to make a one off or regular donation.

Zanna Newton PILATES



Zanna has been leading her 'highly recommended' Pilates classes since 2004.

Classes are available live on Zoom and also in Ridgewell, Stotfold and Melbourn (near Royston).

Please check the website where you can see class availability and book your place online.

www.zannanewton.co.uk

St Augustine, Birdbrook

St Augustine, Birdbrook Services:

Sunday 8th June: 10:30am Morning Worship
Sunday 22nd June: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion
Sun 13th July: 10:30am Morning Worship
Sun 27th July: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion
Sun 10th August: 10:30am Morning Worship
Sun 24th August: 10:30am Benefice Holy Communion

Reverend Canon Jonathan Lowe: vicar@2rivers.faith
Church Warden: Judi Price 01440 73050



The June Gap

You may have noticed: after the spring flowers and blossom are over, there is little in bloom. It's a while before bedding plants and other summer flowers reach their peak.

This 'June Gap' can be a problem for insects including honey bees, when pollen and nectar are scarce at a time when they will be trying to build up their colony for the main honey flow in July and August.

In towns and cities, urban gardens provide a greater variety of introduced plants and microclimates where summer flowers blossom earlier. The June gap is more keenly felt in rural, agricultural areas when it may be a while before wildflowers, brambles and heathers flower after the hawthorn and oilseed rape are over.

If you enjoy gardening, there are plants which can bridge the gap. A few suggestions would be hardy geraniums, foxgloves, and various herbs such as thyme, chives, and catmint; roses, including dog rose, and shrubs like pyracantha and weigela.

But the best ideas would be to observe what is in flower around our area during this time, and make a note. An added benefit is that we would get to see some colour in the garden at this 'in between time' to enjoy for ourselves, as well.

Photo Above right: honey bee on lavender.



Ridgewell Garden Society

Flower Fruit and Vegetable Show
Saturday 12th July 2025 at 1 - 2.30pm.
Entries welcome from members and non members.
Public viewing from 4.30pm
Cheese and wine social with live music 6pm.

For info email: treasurer.rgs1@gmail.com

VILLAGE DAY PLANNING MEETING

JUNE 5TH FROM 7PM

AT BIRDBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSE
CO9 4BN

EVERYONE
WELCOME



**VJ DAY
MEMORIAL
PLANNING AS
WELL**

**WE NEED
YOU!!!**

BIRDBROOK

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL KATIE.OWNER@HOTMAIL.COM

THE MEETING WILL BE TO DISCUSS AND PLAN EVENTS
TO BE HELD ON AUGUST 15TH (PM) AND ALL DAY ON
AUGUST 16TH 2025

Hello from your District Councillor

Scheduled Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks

Intended closure of North Street, Steeple Bumpstead. Commencing 18th May 2025 for 1 day whilst Cadent undertakes new connection.

<https://one.network/?tm=142270013>

Intended closure of Water Lane, Sturmer. Commencing 19th May 2025 for 6 nights 20:00-05:00 whilst Essex County Council undertakes machine surfacing.

<https://one.network/?tm=141939616>

Multi-way traffic signal at New England, Sturmer Road. Commencing 1st May to 24th October 2025 for Utility Asset Works. Anglian Water. Project: SEW-12079 - Stambourne P Pump Away Scheme (see below)

Anglian Water – Works at New England Ref No. 64336411

Affected area: New England Start Date: 22 April 2025 Estimated restoration: 17 October 2025

We're investing in your local community to prevent flooding

You may know we recently completed a project laying new pipes between Stambourne and Birdbrook.

As part of that £1.4 million investment, we're about to start another project to upgrade the sewer system in New England, helping protect homes and the environment from flooding.

What's happening in your area?

We'll be installing new underground storm water storage pipes in the field opposite Sturmer Road in New England. The new system will improve drainage in your area and help to reduce the risk of flooding during heavy rain. We're due to start work on 22 April and if everything runs smoothly, we'll be finished by October 2025.

How will the work affect you?

Because you live nearby, you'll see and hear us working and you can expect to see machinery and heras fencing surrounding the site for the duration of the project.

The team will arrive quietly at our temporary site compound from around 7am to attend daily briefings and set up for the day. Work will start between 8am and 8:30am, we will aim to finish by 5pm each day. We don't currently plan to work weekends but if this changes, we'll let you know. As part of our work, we'll be using sheet piling to support the area around the excavation. This allows us work safely below ground. We plan to start piling in May, and it will be completed in two phases, each lasting around two to three weeks. This can be subject to change, so we'll be back in touch again closer to the time. We know this can be noisy, so we really appreciate your patience and understanding and thank you for bearing with us while we carry out this important step. When we're working on complicated projects like this there's always likely to be some disruption for local residents, and we'd like to thank you and your whole community in advance for bearing with us while we work.



Don't worry, none of our work will affect your water supply or toilet facilities. Once work is complete, we'll finalise arrangements with the landowner regarding their preferences for restoration.

Managing traffic during our work

We always try to keep disruption to a minimum, but the safety of our staff and the public is our top priority. To help with this, we'll be using 3-way traffic lights between Sturmer Road and Blois Road. They'll only be in place between 9:30am and 3:30pm and used when we expect larger deliveries. At all other times, traffic will flow as normal and the lights will stay green.

Our plans may change depending on how the work progresses, so you can always check the latest updates at anglianwater.co.uk/check.

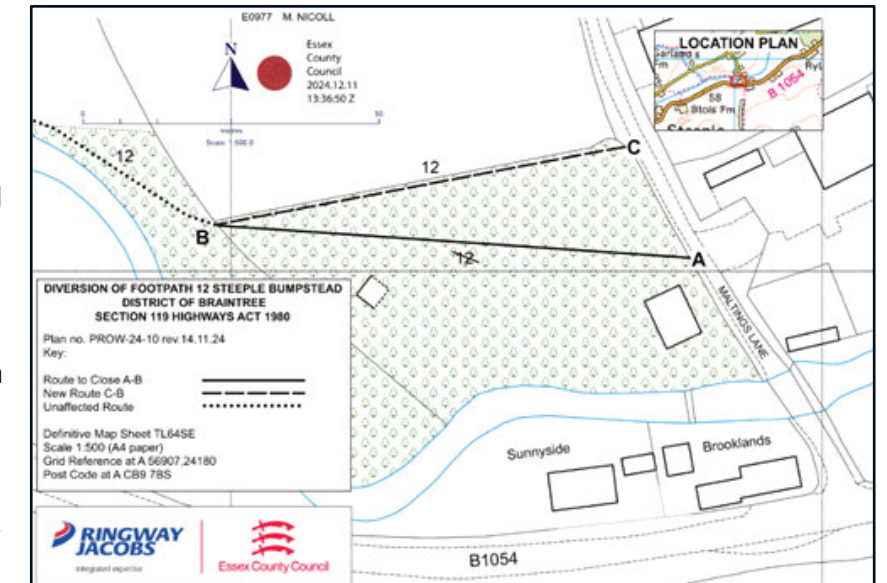
If you have any questions about our work, you can email us at onealliancecustomers@anglianwater.co.uk or call us on 03457 145 145.

Public Footpath Diversion Order:

Footpath 12 Steeple Bumpstead

The PROW over the land situated at Brooklands known as Footpath 12 Steeple Bumpstead. Shown by a bold continuous line on the order map numbered PROW-24-10 rev 14.11.24 shall be stopped up after 35 days.

At the end of 28 days there shall be a public footpath over land situated at Brooklands known as Footpath 12 Steeple Bumpstead, shown by a bold broken line on the order map PROW-24-10 rev 14.11.24.



Stambourne Swimming Pool Receives Grant

Spring Croft swimming pool in Stambourne has extended its venue thanks to a £36,350 grant awarded by Braintree District Council from the UK Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund. The new extension has transformed the venue into a community hub creating more space and opportunities for the local community. The new space includes a multi-use changing room, a small office, a customer service counter and a versatile function room and viewing area. The grant contribution supported the delivery of this extension, but its completion was only made possible thanks to additional investment from the venue itself. The new community hub is now open to customers. Visit www.swim4life.co.uk/

Stansted Airport Solar Farm – Update

Stansted Airport says ... *The 14.3MW solar farm, will be the first of its kind at a London airport and will be on land already owned by Stansted immediately to the east of the airport at High House Farm. The development is designed to meet current and increasing electricity demands, including from the growing use of electric vehicles, and will support them in their commitment to make operations net zero carbon by no later than 2038. The output of the farm at*

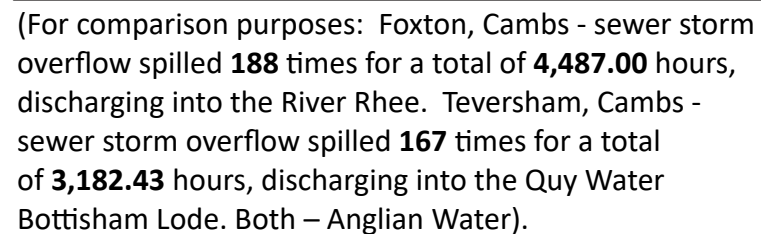


its peak, on the sunniest days of the year, will provide the equivalent energy consumed by around 6,000 homes, a similar number of households to the town of Saffron Walden! The project will also include the enhancement of biodiversity on site and the implementation of additional screening measures, such as the planting of over 50 new Willow and Field Maple trees, hedgerow reinstatement and 750 metres of new hedgerows plus a 19 hectare wildflower meadow.

Straw on Lanes and in Drains

In response to resident complaints (also in 2023 from Sturmer residents), I have again written to ECC Cllr. Peter Schwier, Cllr. Tom Cunningham and Leader of ECC Cllr. Kevin Bentley about the continued problems with straw and hay shedding from transportation vehicles. It blocks the drains, and re-jetting is needed in the autumn as it causes flooding during flash or heavy rainfall. I have asked them to lobby Central Government for legislation to net the transportation vehicles as per many other countries.

The Rivers Trust has now updated their sewage map to include the 2024 annual summary data for sewage spills (planned discharges). <https://theriverstrust.org/key-issues/sewage-in-rivers>
Examples:-



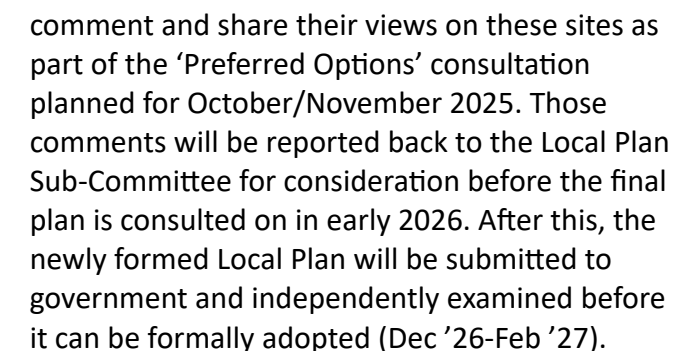
The Government announced new housing targets and requires Councils to review these every five years. The Local Plan is a key planning document that is used to shape, plan and manage growth, regeneration and development across the district. BDC is in the early stages of reviewing its Local Plan up to 2041. It is looking at growth options post 2033 through to 2041.

The 8 sites at Birdbrook are scheduled for debate on 12/06/25 at 19:15 (e.g. BIRD2012 Eagle Farm, Baythorne End, BIRD2013 Land West of St Augustine's Church, Birdbrook, BIRD2014 The Old Station, Birdbrook, BIRD2401 Moat Rd, Birdbrook, BIRD2402 at New England, BIRD2403 Land East of Birdbrook Hall, BIRD2405 Land East of Daw St, Birdbrook, BIRD2404 Daw St, Birdbrook

The large/strategic scale sites of 500+ homes, e.g. STUR2293, (158.75ha with capacity of around 2,200-3,000 homes) which straddles Sturmer, Helions and into the neighbouring Suffolk authority, should be considered either 24/09/25 or 01/10/25. Large sites have a need for bespoke technical work. Please check the LPSC agendas on BDC's website as dates may change.

Going forward, once all the sites on where new homes, jobs and other facilities could be located have been considered, the ones the council are looking to allocate will go forward into a draft plan. Residents and all interested parties will have the opportunity to

For interactive map: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan-review-2/3> (click blue button: 'Call for



If residents and interested parties would like to make a representation at a Local Plan Sub-Committee meeting, they can register to speak online here: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/council/attending-committee-meeting/2>. Meetings are streamed live via the council's YouTube channel and available on catch up: www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube.

To register to the council's Local Plan database to get notified first when Local Plan consultations launch: <https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>

To sign up to our planning newsletter to be the first to hear of latest updates relating to planning

Local Plan Sub Committee meetings are scheduled to take place in May, June, July and September in advance of the Regulation 18 consultation. These meetings will consider sites put forward for development. Sites will be grouped by ward to enable interested parties to join meetings based on areas of interest. Please be advised that this schedule may be subject to change for a variety of technical reasons. Therefore, it is recommended that anyone following sites in a particular area consults the published agenda to be certain that areas of interest will be discussed as set out. See page 2 for current plans for each meeting and link for latest information. As you will be aware, some of the sites put forward are large scale/strategic scale sites (or, when combined with neighbouring sites, would deliver a development of this scale). Owing to the need for bespoke technical work to support an assessment of strategic scale developments, these will not be considered until the 24 September 2025 meeting. Where an area is listed at an earlier meeting (e.g. Halstead on 28 May 2025), the sites considered will be smaller scale sites only.

Braintree District Councillor for the Bumpstead Ward

Birdbrook Ladies Group

March

Amanda Sutherland came to speak to the group. We have had a number of her talks and she never disappoints. The talk was entitled "Masterclass in Styling" in which Amanda gave us lots of different ways to make the most of our shapes. She brought along her mannequin and a number of items of clothing and showed us how we could enhance or detract from the parts of our bodies we liked or disliked.

She made us laugh with some of her suggestions of how to wear some of the items. Amanda is always an entertaining speaker and clearly loves what she does.

There was an opportunity to buy some of her merchandise which included a number of very stylish hats and some unusual handmade jewellery.

April

This month we did an in-house craft session and as it was just before Easter, it obviously involved eggs of some description. We were a select few as some members were away on holiday. Sue brought along a few examples of what could be achieved and we mainly focussed on using a decoupage method. Everyone was pleased with their finished eggs. There were also some Fabergé lookalikes produced.

Some members enjoyed the activity so much that they made more at home. It was an enjoyable activity. Hot cross buns were provided as refreshments.

May

This was the Annual General Meeting for the group. The Treasurer produced the accounts for the year and gave the members an opportunity to raise any questions. The Chairman's report of the previous year was read. The election of officers was held and the posts of Chairman and Treasurer remain the same, Sue King and Hillary Hoyer. The Secretary's position remains vacant.

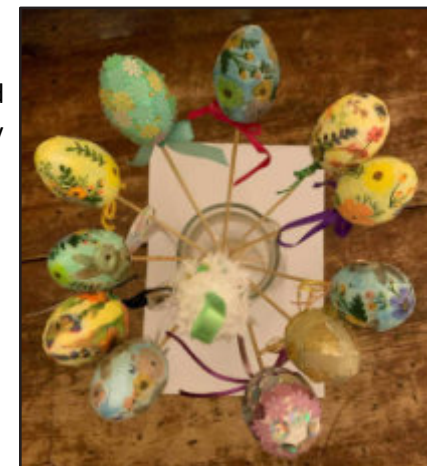
The programme for the forthcoming year was made available for the group.

After all the business was concluded there was time for refreshments and quiz based on VE Day.

Our next meeting in June is a visit to a garden in Stoke by Clare.



Above: Amanda Sutherland
Below: Easter crafts



Sue King, Chairman



Annual Membership: £25.00

**New members and visitors are
always welcome.**

Sue King: s_54king@hotmail.com

Birdbrook Bowls Club

Well here we are at the start of the 2025 season.

Just to remind you that two of our teams gained promotion at the end of the 2024 season, so everything to play for this season!

The lifeblood of a bowling club is its members & of course The Green. Once again we are indebted to our dedicated Green keeper Keith Choat & his team for preparing the surface ready for competition to get underway.

On the 13th April we had our annual Open Day, I am pleased to say that we were blessed with good weather along good support for the day, and gained some new members. Our Open Day was made all the more special this year as our District Councillor Diana Garrod (*centre of photo top right*) came along to inaugurate two sets of junior bowls. These were purchased using our very fortunate grant, obtained courtesy of Diana's DC scheme. I have to say she is a natural & bowled very well, as did Edward & Thomas who represented the Scouts & Beavers.

Bowls is not just for the elderly & retired, it is for all & all ages. Over the Bank Holiday weekend: 24th 25th 26th May, Bowls England Promote bowls through the Big Bowls Weekend to encourage younger people to join a bowls club. Played in the fresh air it's a fun game, especially when the sun shines.

Back to Birdbrook: our new members commented on what a friendly bunch we were and said "I wish we had joined earlier". They took the first step, that's all it takes, so why don't you give it a try? As well as the fun and challenges of the bowling, it's a friendly social club, welcoming everybody.

Our first event this year was when we hosted Presidents Day held on the 11th May. We entertained 16 teams from around the area to an excellent day's competition bowling. Once again we were blessed with excellent weather, a big Thank You goes to the club members who helped the day run so smoothly. A special Thank You goes to the ladies who prepared & served two sittings for lunches - the food was sublime.



Photos on this page from the
Birdbrook Bowls Club Open Day, April 2025



It was a great day with some great bowling. Congratulations go to the team from Castle Camps who won the competition.

So we are now one month into the season & all seems to be going well. We have won our first two matches & won our first round cup match, which has given the club a real boost. A good start, well played teams, and long may it continue.

Fancy trying your hand at bowling? Come along to one of our club nights held on a Wednesday evening from 6pm behind the Community House. All will be welcome.

Have a good summer !

To find out more contact the club secretary
Sue King email: s_54king@hotmail.com

Whitley Bridge/Old railway course

Debbie, our Parish Clerk, has been in contact with the landowner and received this response (with permission to share):

The old farm track which runs along the course of the old railway line from Birdbrook Station to Whitley Station hadn't been cleared since 2011 so we needed to clear a number of fallen trees, fly-tipping and monoculture of blackthorn, much of which had died due to lack of light penetration, which had built up over the past 14 years.

I have been in discussions with Essex Waste about a landscaping and woodland creation scheme along the old railway line and so they offered to do the clearance work if they could survey and submit plans for a scheme.

As part of this survey, they needed to clear trees from the slopes, which I was very happy to agree to as the woodland officer had noted a high instance of advanced Ash die-back disease, and we have had incidents with trees falling along parts of the old railway line that people walk along regardless of whether it's a footpath or not.

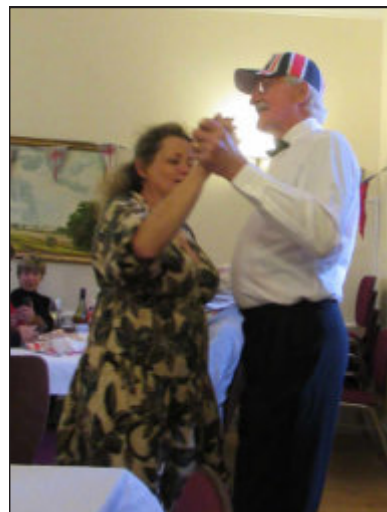
It was too wet to get along there in February and, although we wanted to clear it in March, the Felling Licence only came through on 1 April with a condition giving us two years to restock the site and so we had to make a start asap to give us a chance to meet the conditions for felling."

VE Day, Thursday 8th May



Thanks to Anita Chadney for

organising the well supported fish and chip supper, in the Community House, superbly cooked on site by Ben Allen (below right), supported by his team (above).



Dancing (Anita and Alan Cook) was followed by the lighting of the beacon on the green.



VE Day: Jim Coe (top right), oldest person born & living in Baythorne End. Above, the Birdbrook Beacon. Beacon photos by Carol Carter.

Jim Coe

Following the wonderful VE commemoration at the Community House gathering in Birdbrook, organised brilliantly by Anita Chadney and the Parish Council with the laying of the wreath by Jim Coe, we asked Jim if he would share some of his memories for the Birdbrook News. Jim is the oldest person born in Baythorne End who still resides here and neighbours Joan MacIver and Hilary Hoyer interviewed him to capture some of his recollections of this area and his life.



Jim lives just a few yards from where he was born in a cottage that no longer exists but was in the garden at the back of Hall Cottage and Burleigh House in Baythorne End. He thinks the coach house in Burleigh House was used for people who came to the Swan Pub, which was a popular destination for local people. He remembers walking to school in Wixoe and there were two teachers – one for the ‘small’ children (to 9 years old) and one for the older children (to 15 years). The children of Wixoe, Boyton End and Baythorne End all went there and during holidays they played in the countryside from dawn to dusk and everybody knew everybody. Jim started school at 4, partially to free his mother to collect the stones from the fields before drilling in April. The stones would be gathered in heaps and then put by the men through a ‘tumbler’ that was drawn by a horse and it remains a strong memory of childhood.

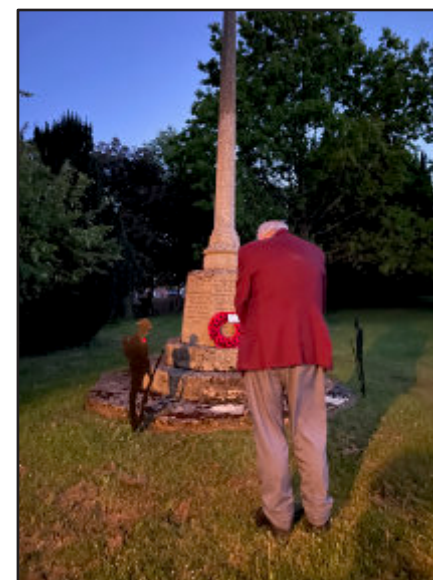
He also remembers VE day as he was six and half. Jim recalls the owner of Baythorne Mill, Miss Bowes – Lyon who was an air raid warden, and she used a 3-wheel bike and would use a whistle to announce all clear. If you had to go to the doctor, you walked all the way to Clare. A Mr Rumble lived in Rose Cottage (now Hawthorne House, previously

known also as Mill Cottage) and Mr Baxter who had been a foreman at The Hall lived in Burleigh House – one was always very respectful to him.

Jim’s father worked for some time at the ‘Hall’ (Baythorne Hall – now our wonderful farm shop hub and Tarka’s café) before returning to Ridgewell to farm with his family. Unusually his father did encourage him to go on to school and at 13 he went to Hedingham. Few children went on to further education past 15 but if they did it was to Halstead, and they took the train from Birdbrook Station. Very sadly Jim’s mother died when he was 12 and the children had to learn to take care of themselves. He had an older brother Victor and a brother George (buried in Ridgewell in the Coe corner with their parents) and a sister Hilda, whom he still visits in Hampshire. His father did eventually remarry and at one point they all lived in Wash Farm in Ridgewell, and the family joined the two cottages into one building with a beautiful oak staircase. Jim’s grandfather was a horse breeder. The farm was sold off and he was sad about that.

Early in Jim’s working career he worked at Gurteen’s in Haverhill pressing trousers! At eighteen, he received his call up papers for National Service and joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment in Norwich, which then joined forces with the Southern Suffolk regiment. (The Suffolk Regiment was ultimately amalgamated with the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1959 to form the 1st East Anglian Regiment, which later became part of the Royal Anglian Regiment.) Jim was deployed to Cyprus in February 1958 to June 1959. Jim feels that National Service was one of the best things he did as it changed his life and widened his horizons of a rural country boy. After the army he went to live in Aldershot with his sister and was a civilian working for the army in the army storerooms.

He married Ivy in 1967 who was also working for the army in Aldershot. They decided to move back to Baythorne End, where he had a job ‘dressing the farm seed’ for the Unwins. His brother George was working for the Unwins on the farm. Jim and Ivy thought it would be good to have a change to the countryside with their infant boy Mark, who



Jim Coe on VE Day laying the wreath. Photo by Carol Carter.

sadly died after many health complications at the tender age of three and he is buried in the Birdbrook churchyard. He ended up switching to working on the farm and retired in 2004 to spend time with Ivy and travel and enjoy life. Unfortunately, Ivy died of cancer in 2009, but they had some wonderful times together. Her children from her first marriage keep in touch with Jim and he has many step grandchildren. Jim continues to travel by coach – now mainly to wonderful places in the UK. Jim particularly loved visiting Austria.

In recent years thanks to the internet, Jim has reconnected with some of his former army colleagues, and they meet up annually. Many forget the four-year conflict and the ‘1959’ peace in Cyprus. During the Cyprus Emergency of 1955-1959, 371 British soldiers died as well as many British policemen and it was a difficult time for young recruits. It was very fitting that Jim was the one to lay the wreath at the War Memorial in Birdbrook. Five years ago, the residents of Mill Road in Baythorne End lined up metres apart on VE day (remember the Covid restrictions?) on the road to remember the 75th anniversary of the end of war in Europe and honour those who took part. The road was as empty as it was in Jim’s youth, but as he recalls his sister still managed to be knocked over on the road!

This chat was a wonderful opportunity to capture some of the memories of our area and past times, and we encourage all of you to do so too with those who have lived in your village and community for some time. Thank you, Jim — (Neville James Coe!) for sharing your recollections of an earlier and simpler time in Baythorne End.

The lighting of the beacon in Birdbrook on May 8th was a wonderful sight and was a way to take part in a nationwide moment of remembrance and celebration to honour the end of World War II in Europe and to remember the sacrifices made during the war.

Joan MacIver & Hilary Hoyer

Our galaxy - The Milky Way

Visible March - Sept to the south in a clear, dark, sky

Our galactic home is a barred spiral galaxy around 13.6 billion years old. It is a large disc of stars, dust and gas. The disc is approx. 100,000 light-years across and 1,000 light-years thick with large arms stretching out across the cosmos.

At the centre of our Milky Way there a supermassive black hole, named Sagittarius A*, which has a mass equivalent to about four million of our suns. This region is called the galactic centre or bulge and it is very bright. Everything else in the galaxy revolves around this very powerful Black hole, it is estimated to contain 100–400 billion stars.

We live in one of the arms called 'The Orion arm', about 26,000 light-years from the galactic centre. Our home planet rotates around our Sun and our solar system orbits the centre of the Milky Way. When we look up in the sky at night we are looking through the disc i.e. we have an edge-on view of our galaxy. The solar system flies through space at around 500,000mph and it takes approx. 250 million years to complete a full rotation around the Milky Way. So, last time earth was in its current location dinosaurs were just appearing and mammals didn't exist.

Our galaxy is called the Milky Way because of its apparent milky white appearance as it stretches across the night sky. On a clear night, without light pollution (from us or our moon), it is possible to see the Milky Way with the naked eye. It will appear as a cloudy white-ish band arching across the sky, as we look through the disc. It's visible all year round but the best time to see it in the UK is between the end of April through to early September, late at night/early morning. Around this time when looking Southwards you will see the bright galactic centre rising upwards – moving from the Southeast through to the Southwest as the night progresses. At



Below: A view through our Milky Way galaxy showing the galactic centre. Taken at Durdle door, Dorset in April this year.

OM1 camera, 7mm lens, 60sec, f/2.8, ISO 1250 – a stack of 20 images.

this time of year, when you look up in the sky you can see the Milky Way arching from the bright galactic centre in the South up over head and then towards North.

As recently as the 1920's it was thought that our galaxy was the entire universe until Edwin Hubble (NASA's Hubble telescope is named after him) showed that what was called the Andromeda nebula was actually 'Outside' our galaxy at approx. 2.5 million light-years away meaning it was another galaxy. Now we know that the observable universe, which is the portion of the universe we can see with current technology, is estimated to contain between 100 billion and 200 billion galaxies.

To see the Milky Way better it is best to take a photograph of it. Here are a few tips.

Put a camera on a tripod, a standard camera or even a mobile phone, you need to use Manual mode and a wide-angle lens, e.g. 12mm. Use a remote shutter release or timer so that you don't shake the camera when pressing down the shutter button. Point the camera to the South in the summer months. Make a start with the following setting but you will need to experiment – set exposure to approx. 15sec, use as low f number as possible e.g. f/2.8 and set the ISO to around 6,000. You can improve your image by taking several photos and stacking then in software like 'Sequator'.

Keep looking up.

Martina McGovern

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<https://e-voice.org.uk/birdbrookparishcouncil/birdbrook-parish-news/>

Next edition:

News and adverts by 15 August for the September BPN

Editors Val and Katie: birdbrook2021@gmail.com