ST MARY & ST PETER
NEWSLETTER



March 2026

Cover Picture: *Moor Road, Langham from the village website*

CHURCH SERVICES

1st March – Second Sunday in Lent
9.30am at St Peter's – Morning Worship

8th March – Third Sunday in Lent
9.30am at St Mary's – Holy Communion
3.00pm at St Peter's – Messy Church

15th March – Fourth Sunday in Lent - Mothering Sunday
9.30am at St Peter's – Holy Communion

22nd March – Fifth Sunday in Lent
9.30am at St Mary's – Holy Communion

29th March – Palm Sunday – Holy Week begins
9.30am at St Peter's – Holy Communion

30th March – Monday of Holy Week
10.00am at St Mary's - said Holy Communion

31st March – Tuesday of Holy Week
10.00am at St Peter's - said Holy Communion

1st April – Wednesday of Holy Week
10.00am at St Mary's - said Holy Communion

2nd April – Maundy Thursday
4.00pm at St Mary's – Holy Communion and stripping of the altar

3rd April – Good Friday
12.00 noon at St Peter's – Meditation on the Passion

To check for other services and any alterations please email The Reverend Heather Wilcox – *RevHWilcox@outlook.com*

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admin@colchesterhomecare.com

www.cqc.org.uk/locations/1-13089837879

https://colchesterhomecare.com

Deadline for submissions for the April edition: 15th March

Welcome to the March Newsletter.

Save Our Bridge is back in the news with some positive developments and now has a crowdfunder campaign for supporters of the project :

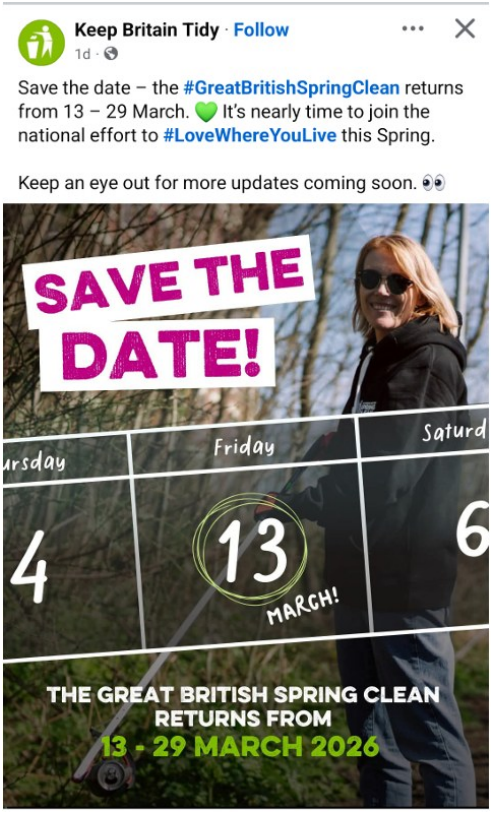
Link to crowdfunder is *https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/save-our-bridge-1*

Link to Save our Bridge petition is *https://www.change.org/p/essex-county-council-save-our-bridge*

The **Great Pylon Blight** is also still underway and it seems that representations are now being made in the consultation process. I hope to have more news of this for next time. The **Langham 900** Campaign is a year old this month, aiming to reverse the town-planning decision which wants to build 900 houses in the village without regard to the wishes of the present inhabitants.

Steve Pollington,
Editor





Did you know Langham Community Shop has been here for you for over 20 years!
Welcoming you every day, 364 days a year, that's over 7500 times the doors have been opened every morning!



And the most staggering part of all, every friendly, helpful, kind and caring person welcoming you when you walk through the door is a VOLUNTEER.

We are not just a group of people that turn up every now and again, we are a family, we are friends and we all do it for each other, for the shop and for our amazing community. Many of our volunteers have been here since the very beginning, some played a huge part in getting the shop started and everyone has helped to keep it what it is today.

We are proud of what we do, and we will continue for many more years.

We regularly see too many small, local businesses closing around us. With your constant and continued support we will continue to work hard and always be here for you.

You can also be part of our family; you can support us and help us to stay here where we belong.
We can not just always rely on the generosity of what we have, we need more volunteers to keep us going and be able to stay open later as we have now managed to do. `

Langham Community Centre's
100 Club Draw

January winners were

1st	Louise Armstrong	no.7
2nd	Shannon Barnes	no.54
3rd	Peter Freeman	no.16
4th	Hugh Halsall	no.55

February winners were

1st	Chris and Rob Clarke	No. 67
2nd	Gill Salt	No. 95
3rd	Nicola Meecham	No. 99
4th	Ginny M	No. 33

Contact

01206 323007

shannon955@msn.com .

WHEELCHAIR LOAN

The Short Term Wheelchair Loan Charity (*Reg. No.112657*, *www.wheelchairloancharity.com*), based at Clacton Hospital, helps people needing the short-term use of a wheelchair. The chairs are for all ages and reasons. The service is a perfect interim solution if you require a wheelchair for an occasion such as a holiday, a wedding or to help accommodate a visiting relative. The service is funded by donations and is free to users, although a deposit of £40 from borrowers is asked for.

Enquiries may be phoned to 01255 201763 or emailed to **wheelchairloan@gmail.com**



BOXTED W. I.

The February meeting kicked off the flat season ahead of the spring as we enjoyed a night at the races. Members dressed Ascot style and the going was good with lively competition of chance and lots of laughter from jockeys, trainers, stable hands and owners. The winning pony of the evening in fine form' was 'Marigold' sporting yellow colours, the team celebrated with the customary (to horse racing & Boxted W.I.!) bubbly.

During the last month we also had a contingent enjoy a theatre trip to the Guys & Dolls musical wonderfully performed by Colchester Operatic.

The members continue to focus on lifesaving first aid with the aim of dispelling any discomfort people may feel in accessing a woman's chest when using a defibrillator.

Want to know more? look up: *#BBCGlobalWomen#CPR#BBCNews#firstaid.*

Future activities include our monthly coffee mornings and our next evening meeting will be **March 10th 19:30 Boxted Village Hall**.

We also have some rather good singers in our midst and they will be performing in two forthcoming local events which are open for you to enjoy;

Nayland Choir performing Stabat Mater & others - at St. James Church, Nayland 29 March @ 17:00 tickets: naylandevents.org

Holbrook Choral Society performing a Night at the Opera - at Royal Hospital School 6 March @19:00 tickets: via RHS box office





BOXTED WI in their Ascot finery ... the bubbly flowed freely!!



Save our Bridge campaign welcomes the recent reopening of the bridge to pedestrians and cyclists but strongly objects to the proposed Traffic Notice prohibiting motorised vehicles. The Accolade load test in September 2025 was limited to pedestrian and cyclist use: it did not assess the bridge's capability for vehicles. Therefore the claim that the load testing carried out "justifies reopening of the bridge to pedestrians and cyclists only" is misleading.

Highways has not fully executed their 'continued investigations' after the bridge closure in 2023. In 2024 Cllr Tom Cunningham committed his highways officers "to explore the repair option and continue to meet with the campaigner's experts who have asked that this is fully and fairly considered as an alternative". Despite this, Highways submitted a planning application for the bridge's replacement. The Essex County Council planning committee deferred their decision in April 2025 until more information was provided to them by highways on repair and like for like options – but nothing has been forthcoming. Highways had previously agreed to proceed with load testing using the patented Mann Williams test, strongly recommended by respected conservation engineer Ed Morton. This test was unaccountably cancelled at the eleventh hour, had it been allowed to take place, it would, crucially, have informed on the bridge's ability to take vehicles and the feasibility of repair.



The proposed Traffic Order prohibiting vehicles on the bridge would inflict a permanent, lengthy, 7 mile diversion for locals going about their daily business or commuting to Colchester. Given the lack of a load test evaluating the bridge's ability to take vehicles and justify the Notice, Save Our Bridge have launched a Crowdfunder campaign to raise the cost of the Mann Williams test, which Ed Morton continues to strongly recommend to ECC. This test would allow a true assessment of whether opening the bridge to vehicles is viable.

Supporters of our Crowdfunder campaign are being offered unique and memorable rewards: a punt trip on the River Stour with tea, a tour of the Dedham Vale in a Model A Ford saloon, built in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1929 and still in its original paintwork, and a day's coarse fishing on Boxted Mill millpond, with more rewards to follow. Please support our Crowdfunding appeal!

Over 8400 people support saving Boxted bridge and all our local councils want it repaired and to reinstate vehicular access

Lucinda de Jasay
Save our Bridge campaign

07932 626284

Colchester SUGARCRAFT Association
presents a

FULL-DAY
MODEL MAKING WORKSHOP

Saturday 30th May 9.30am – 4.00pm

Tollgate Hall Villa Road,
Stanway, CO3 0RH
(behind Stanway Village Hall)



This event will be run by Christina Georgiou, an internationally renowned expert in sugarcraft

Minimal equipment will be required, a list will be given on application

Please bring your own lunch

Tea and coffee will be provided

The fee is £60

Example model

Email Carol at b15hie@hotmail.co.uk

Numbers are strictly limited, so apply soon.

© Colchester Sugarcraft Association 2018

WATERMEADOWS

It hardly seems possible that six months ago we were facing a serious drought with rivers and reservoirs almost dry and much of the canal system shut down due to lack of water. Now, after weeks of rain, the water table has been replenished and we see water standing on the saturated land and rivers overflowing.

We see floods in the Stour Valley most winters, with water flowing over the riverbanks onto the *floodplains* – the low-lying land either side of the river which is deliberately allowed to flood to temporarily store this extra water until the river level drops and the water can drain back into the river. These are *floodplains*, but river water was also allowed to flood the adjacent land for another purpose. Way back in the past the land beside rivers would have been just marshes and bogs, until the development of drains and ditches produced summer grazing for livestock.

However, beside the Stour in Sudbury, ditches can still be seen which form a tangible reminder of an almost-forgotten part of England's agricultural heritage, the traditional method of management of water and land called water meadows. From the 16th Century until the middle of the 20th Century many of the fields along lowland rivers were managed by farmers as water meadows by the construction of drains, sluices, weirs and bridges to enable controlled flooding of the meadows by a shallow layer of moving water for irrigation.

Water was diverted from the river along a leat called a main or top carrier and carried down the valley at a gentler slope than the river. The main fed smaller carriers which tapered down to a stop end, and were built roughly parallel to the river on the crests of ridges across the fields. The water would overflow slowly down the sides of the ridges to be collected in drains between the ridges, which joined into a bottom carrier to return it to the river. The ridges and drains made an interlocking grid (like interlaced fingers) but did not connect directly. A by-carrier took any water not needed for irrigation straight from the main back to the river. Although it is difficult to see the complete pattern of drains, their positions can still be seen today as lines of dark green water plants across the meadows. The flow of water was controlled by a system of sluice gates called hatches, and small earth or wooden board dams called stops. Thus irrigation could be provided separately for different sections.

Obviously waterway networks built on almost level fields required careful construction to ensure good operation. The working and maintenance was done by a highly skilled craftsman called a 'drowner' or 'waterman', who was often employed by several adjacent farmers. The aim of this irrigation was not to flood the ground but to keep it continuously damp. In early spring the meadows were flooded overnight when there was danger of a frost. Later the water would all be drained off to allow air to get to the soil again. The river water did not freeze because it was kept moving so it kept the land and grass above freezing temperature, preventing frost damage to new growth and allowing the grass to grow several weeks earlier. During a dry summer the water irrigated the grass to keep it growing. The water flow across the meadows also helped to keep the soil fertile by depositing nutrient-rich river silt, at the same time helping to reduce river pollution.

Even though water meadows and their associated structures were costly for landowners to construct and maintain, they were widely used as they made the riverside fields much more productive and increased their value. The meadows were used to graze both sheep and cattle, as well as producing crops of hay. The system allowed a hugely increased number of animals (principally sheep) to be overwintered and contributed to a vast expansion of the wool trade, upon which East Anglia's prosperity was based.

We may think of history as all about dates, kings and wars, but history was made by ordinary people living their lives. Some had more specialised tasks like the drowner working the water meadows, but there are many stories to tell about the past. Why not join our history group to hear about people and times gone by. You will be made very welcome.

Sue Brown



LANGHAM LADIES

The Langham Ladies meeting in February gave a lot of interest to our members. It all started with a gift of a book to our speaker Joanne Larner from her son, which was called "*Sex, Lies and Handwriting*.

After reading the book Joanne got an interest in analysing handwriting. She showed us many well known people's signatures and explained how according to how they were written, tall, short, upright, slanted, untidy and many other ways she could analyse what type of person they were, their moods, how they kept themselves and many other things.

She asked the members to copy a sentence that she gave them and to sign it with their usual signature. During refreshment time many members had their writing analysed by Joanne. A lot of interest and fun was had by all.

The next meeting is on Thursday 12th March to be held in Langham Community Centre starting at 7.30pm. The speaker is Professor Alison Rowlands from Essex University, her talk being *"Witchfinders from Essex to Suffolk"* As this talk will be of local interest it will be an open meeting so gentlemen, friends in fact anyone who is interested will be welcome to come. A guest charge will be £5 which includes refreshments tea/coffee and homemade cakes.This also gives a chance to meet new friends.

Our new year's program has now started and new members will be very welcome so come and see what we do and enjoy yourself.

BOXTED RUNNERS

Boxted Runners continues to go from strength to strength in 2026. New members join us regularly and existing members continue to shine week in week out whether they are taking part in a race or a regular Club session. On the final day of January we held our ever popular Saturday morning Social run and started a new Beginners class.

On the first day of February we had our usual Club sessions with a number of members running further than they had for a long time or in some cases ever before. A number of our members are training for the Colchester Half Marathon on the 8th March(a report on this race will be in the April issue)and they ran 12.5 miles.

Also on the 1st February we had a number of members at the ever popular Great Bentley Half Marathon. The weather was ideal for racing and everyone put in first class performances.

There were PBs all over the place and we saw a new Club record of 1:21:15 for the Half Marathon distance by our very own Ryan Baker. Ryan made everyone from Boxted Runners exceptionally proud as he came sprinting down to the finish looking resplendent in his Club kit.

Another excellent weekend of running from our members and they'll be more weekends like that in 2026. If you'd like to know more about Boxted Runners please contact us on

www.boxtedrunners.co.uk

Ian Bown



Hope springs eternal

Have you ever noticed how many idioms, have the word 'Spring' in them? For example, we might say, someone has a 'spring in their step', when they are walking energetically or with liveliness, or we might need to 'spring into action' and start doing something quickly or suddenly, when we hear an alarm bell ringing for example.

We might say that we have 'spring fever', by which we mean a feeling of restlessness of excitement felt at the beginning of spring as we look forward to spending more time outdoors. This restlessness of course, may also lead us to a bit of 'spring cleaning', and sometimes we might hear someone say, that someone is 'no spring chicken', perhaps meaning someone who is not so young as they used to be.

As Spring has now sprung, I wonder what it is about spring, that lends itself so readily to so many sayings, and I guess, there is something around the freshness and newness of spring.

Having just gone through the darkest, coldest season, with trees bereft of leaves, as Spring arrives, it feels like we have turned a corner and there is a fresh sense of hope in the air, which is sure to put a spring in our step. Our gardens and countryside are slowly being transformed as creation works its wonders, hedgerows are taking on a subtle green hew, that over the coming weeks and months will grow stronger, the spring bulbs are bravely breaking through the ground and bringing life and colour back, and soon there will be more and more lambs springing merrily across the fields.

Which reminds me of another idiom, 'hope springs eternal'. In this season of spring, we are reminded that hope springs eternal, hope never dies, there is always hope. As we look around us and see so many signs of new life, our hope is renewed. And I am reminded that in Lamentations we are told, 'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.'

(*Lamentations 3*:22-23) Hope springs eternal.

I pray that as you travel through this season of Spring, with all its signs of new life and hope, that you will take hope in the steadfast love of the Lord.

May God bless you

Rev Heather

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BOXTED HISTORY GROUP

Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, lived through turbulent times. Her family came over with William the Conqueror and, after a series of good marriages, had by the beginning of the fifteenth century become wealthy and powerful. Cecily herself was born in 1415, the year of the battle of Agincourt, in a castle in the north east of England and she lived through the reigns of five kings.

Privileged and rich, she was betrothed at the age of nine to Richard Neville, connected to the royal family, whom she married when she was older. She had her first child at the age of 24 (late for the times) and went on to produce six sons and two daughters. They lived an aristocratic life of considerable luxury with estates in the north east as well as properties in Westminster and Windsor. They spent money lavishly, especially on elaborate clothing and expensive jewellery. Much time was spent in France on her husband's tours of duty. Large areas of France were then ruled by the English crown. In England they hobnobbed with King Henry the Sixth and Cecily assisted her husband in managing the estates.

But the political situation was becoming more volatile and the Wars of the Roses were not far away. Things deteriorated when King Henry, who was not suited temperamentally to being a monarch in such an era, suffered severe mental illness. England lost most of its possessions in France, retaining only Calais.

It was at this time that rumours began to spread that Richard Neville coveted the crown. Much effort had to be spent by Cecily and her husband to clear his name. In the midst of all this they had another son - named Richard after his father - the future Richard the Third. As an adult and before he became king, Richard was

appointed Lord Protector but there is no evidence that he murdered the princes in the tower.

The appointment gave a significant boost to Cecily's family. The tensions between the houses of York and Lancaster finally erupted into full scale war and Cecily, as a

relief from the pressures of her husband's duties, went to stay in the castle belonging to Sir John Fastolf in Norfolk. However, when the Lancaster cause was in the ascendancy, Cecily and Richard were stripped of their titles and privileges. Cecily appealed to the king for clemency and they were granted forgiveness but lost their estates. Eventually the House of York won the Wars at the battle of Bosworth Field and, with their fortunes restored, Cecily's son Edward became king.

When Edward died, the other son Richard became King Richard the Third and Cecily retired into the religious life. She gave up her worldly concerns and died in 1495 at the age of 85 - a vast age for the time. She had lived for most of the century and had become herself the mother of kings.

Frances Sparrow talked to the History Group about Cecil Neville. The next meeting will be at 8.00pm on Wednesday, 18 March, in the village hall when Angela Bell will talk about Seven Wonders of the Waterways

ALAN LADBROOKE



Colchester Sugarcraft

We are a small friendly club who welcome everyone interested in cake decorating and making flowers and models from sugarpaste. We meet at **Stanway Community Hall** on the last Thursday of every month at 7.30. Visitors £5 includes refreshments.

February

26th Fuchsia Natalie Porter **March**

26th Easter theme Jacqui Kelly **April**

30th A.G.M. Sugarpaste model. Renew membership £40 per year. Contact Sue Albins *Sue28albins@btinternet.com* or 01026 251955.

Mothers' UNION
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Diocese of Chelmsford

Tuesday 3rd February, 2 pm
St.Mary's West Bergholt

1st Meeting of the King's Ridge Mothers' Union

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IN AID OF LANGHAM & BOXTED CHURCH YOUTH WORK

BOXTED EVERGREENS

Our Club meets in the village hall every fourth Thursday of the month from 2.00pm to 3.30pm. The age of our members varies but the club would suit anyone over 60 so please come along and you would be given a warm welcome. Our members are always asked for their suggestions before our yearly entertainment programme is arranged and we do try our best to cater for everyone. If you would like more information about our club please call Elaine on 01206 273183.

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Boxted History Group

Meeting every third Wednesday of the month at Boxted Village Hall. 7.30 for 8pm.

Guests always welcome.

2nd Langham Scout Group

Meetings are held each Wednesday evening at the Community Centre.

Squirrels 5:00 to 6:00

Beavers 4:45 to 6:00

Cubs 6:00 to 7:30

Scouts 7:30 to 9:00

Contact Group Scout Leader:
James Puxley 07935 909063

The Art and Craft Club meet on the **third Wednesday of each month, 2-4pm** at **Boxted Village Hall.**

All welcome - come and join in!

LANGHAM LADIES

*Any ladies wishing to join the group or to come along as a guest, please **telephone Gill Brown** on **01206 273286.***

BOXTED CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Come and join us for a friendly, enjoyable afternoon playing bowls at **Boxted Village Hall on Friday 2 - 4 pm,** Sept to April

Further info please contact:

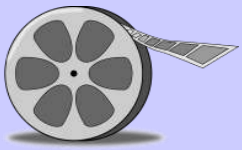
Michael Hubbard 01206 271892

Sue Smith 07465443795

sueronben@gmail.com

LANGHAM FILM NIGHTS

For details of films and screening times and to book tickets, go to *www.langhamcommunitycentre.org.uk/next-cinema-screening/*



Crafty Ladies

Meet on first Wednesday of each month throughout the year, 10.00 am to 3.00 pm at the Community Centre. Subscription £26 due March and September. Contact Chrissy Todd tel. 07742 131454.

Carpet Bowls Club

Meet every Tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 4.00 pm at the Community Centre.

Contact Cliff Jones on 07922 156545 or Mervyn Bushe on 01206 230209.

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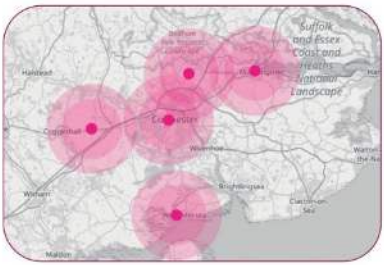
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*** Our team of volunteers uses their own cars to provide door-to-door journeys to medical appointments or to pick up prescriptions**

*** We also visit folk who are housebound for friendly chats**

*** Registration is very simple—just phone the number for the day shown on the posters or in the Parish Magazine a few days before your appointment**

*** There is no charge for the service, although donations are very welcome**

*** All our volunteers are DBS checked and are friendly and experienced**

Interested in volunteering? Please get in contact with Annette Whybrow:

annettejwhybrow@gmail.com

01206 272773 07983519825

Langham with Boxted PCC Registered Charity: 1131211

GOOD GN NEIGHBOURS

Are you elderly, vulnerable or otherwise in need of help, and live in the Parish of Langham with Boxted? We are a group of local Volunteers who can assist:

- **with transport to an important appointment, including Hospital, Dentist or Flu/Covid Booster**
- **with collection of items such as prescriptions**
- **or make a friendly visit just for a bit of company.**

Call so that we can help you, Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm

Monday.....230525 or 273324

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Wednesday....272755 or 272013

Thursday..... 07765 037892 or 323007

Friday..... 272773

Please telephone either number shown for the DAY ON WHICH YOU MAKE YOUR CALL (not the day of your appointment). If there is no reply, please do not leave a message but RING ANY OTHER NUMBER.

This scheme is associated with the Churches of St Mary's Langham and St Peter's Boxted

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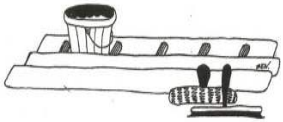
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Denise Hobday 230918

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BOXTED

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15th March
Contact the editor via email:
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Community Cafe Coffee Morning

Hosted by
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10:30 - 12:00

ALL WELCOME!