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News

Issue13: March 2026

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Banham News has been busy organising some events for the village and we very much hope that you will be able to come along and support us and join in the fun.

As part of our Charity Spotlight we focused on the Phoenix Birds of Prey Rescue, and we agreed to hold a talk on their work, and in return they would bring some of their feathered friends along for people to meet. This is a great opportunity for both old and young to learn more about these majestic creatures. This is taking place at the Banham Community Centre on Saturday April 11th 2pm, so mark your calendars.

Secondly we are supporting the children at Banham Primary School by providing all 95 of them with a Design-Yer own Red Nose for Comic Relief. We will then hold an open session for all the children and parents to attend Banham Community Centre, in order to see their handy work, and issue a couple of prizes for the best in Show!!! This will take place on Saturday 14th March at 10 am.

You can also help to raise funds for Comic Relief, by going to our Just Giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rnd26-banham-news>.

We are trying to raise a modest £250, but perhaps with your help we will be able to smash it.

We are also finalising our sponsors for next year, and have just a couple of spaces left, if you are interested in highlighting your business.

Editorial Team



If you have a smart phone, you can now access all back issues, simply using this QR code

Newsletter Notes:- Items to the Editor, info@banhamnews.co.uk
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Distribution 750 copies. Closing date for copy for the April 2026 issue is 14th March.

NB.The inclusion of an advert or article in the publication, does not constitute any endorsement by the Editorial Committee, of the views expressed on a product or service

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Editorial

Hi and welcome to the 13th edition of the Banham News. We have been beavering away behind the scenes, to renew our sponsors, and add new ones who have been impressed with the look and feel of the newsletter. Its only by their support that we are able to bring this to the village, and continue to update, inform and hopefully bring a smile.

Whilst we really try to bring relevant information, we can only do it with your help. We need you to let us know what works, what you would like to see in the publication, and most of all let us know about events that are taking place. As I have said before, if you like doing a craft or going to a club, then so might others.

We are also on the lookout for anyone that has a few hours a month to spare, to become part of our small team. Literally it is one meeting per month, then as much as you can do to supply information and look for stories. So if you feel you would like to help, then please get in touch. We already have a great team of supporters who help with stories and articles each month, people like Rev Sarah, Heather, Sarah with her blogs, and everyone else, many thanks

During the next couple of months we hope to be bringing a couple of activities to the village, one of which will be a talk about birds of prey, including owls. This will be a free event for anyone that is interested in the life of these amazing creatures, along with how we might be able to help them. This has been inspired by a recent event, whereby someone noticed an injured bird in the road, and contacted the local rescue centre. So please keep your eyes open for more info on this, fun for everyone including children, as there will be some of these magnificent creatures present. Save the date :Saturday 11th April 2pm.

I recently noticed that the Community Centre is really trying to encourage people to support them, and ensure that the Centre will be there for many years to come. Just like us they are looking for people who care about the village enough to offer a little bit of time to help run the Centre.

New events are being added all the time, so keep a look out for them and try to support if you can. Along with a new web site, they now have a ticketing system for events, and are bringing in a state of the art booking system, so that you can book classes or hire rooms directly online. I for one think that the preservation of the Community Centre is essential to the well-being of everyone in the Village, so much so, that I took these old bones to the new Pickleball event, and thoroughly enjoyed it so much that I signed up and even bought my own paddle!!

I look forward to hearing from you with your ideas, and don't forget to keep sending in your coffee quiz answers, and get a chance to win a digital alarm clock, to wake you up to the Spring mornings.

All the best
Alan



info@banhamnews.co.uk/ 07775 906546 or use the Dropbox at the Post Office

Flora and Fauna

What to look for in March

March is a major transitional month, representing the official start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. We start to notice rapidly changing weather, increasing daylight, the awakening of nature after winter, and the landscape transitioning from winter dormancy to new growth. Early spring woodland plants, wetland specialists, and coastal species begin to emerge. Wildlife features breeding grey seals at Blakeney Point, Bitterns in the Broads, and Lapwings on coastal marshes. Key sightings include Chinese Water Deer, early butterflies like Brimstones, and Marsh Harriers.

Woodland and Hedgerow

Plants:

Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*): The official flower of Norfolk. One of the first signs of spring in woodlands and hedgerows.

Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*): Found along shady banks and roadsides, particularly in areas east of Watton.

Wood Sorrel: Appearing in shaded woodland areas, notably Whitlingham Country Park.

Early Dog-violet: Emerging in sheltered spots. Look out for flowers in Whitlingham Country Park.

Insects:

Brimstone, Peacock, Comma butterflies

Wet Areas and The Broads

Plants:

Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*): A very noticeable, bright yellow flower found around the Norfolk Broads. A key location for them is Wheatfen Nature Reserve ditches.

Colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*): These dandelion-like flowers appear in late March, on bare, damp ground. Look for them in Rosary Cemetery, Norwich

Alder Trees (*Alnus glutinosa*): Their lamb-tail like catkins are a true harbinger of spring

Mammals:

Chinese Water Deer (*Hydropotes inermis*): This small, reddish-brown deer with large, rounded "teddy bear" ears and prominent tusks can be seen in reed beds and marshes at Hickling Broad & Stubb Mill

Birds:

Bittern (*Botaurus Stellaris*): Booming in reeds at NWT Hickling Broad and Marshes

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*): Dramatic aerial displays at RSPB Berney Marshes & Breydon Water

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*): These beautiful birds can be seen Sky-dancing at NWT Hickling Broad & Marshes

Amphibians:

Frog spawn starts to appear in ponds

Roadside and Coastal

Plants

Three-cornered Leek/Garlic

(*Allium triquetrum*): Appears in late March, resembling white bluebell. It is abundant on Unthank Road, with plants spreading on road verges.

Shrubby Sea-blite (*Suaeda vera*): A small shrub found on the saltmarshes of the North Norfolk coast. The saltmarshes near Blakeney Quay car park are noted for having metre-high, dense bushes.

Mammals

Grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*): Take the boat at Blakeney Point to see them with their pups. Watch from a distance at other locations.

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Banham Blog, WWII, Part 2 by Sarah Howard

Joseph Patrick Kennedy Junior (elder brother of US president John F Kennedy) was stationed at Fersfield. As the eldest son of the famous, wealthy Kennedy family, he was educated at Harvard and expected to ascend to political leadership. He became a naval aviator in 1942 and during his time at Fersfield, volunteered for a secret high - risk mission targeting German V-weapon sites. Tragically his explosive-laden B-24 Liberator bomber exploded over Blythburgh, Suffolk. Joe Jr and his co-pilot were both killed. His death was a profound loss to his family and changed the course of history. It is believed that driven partly by the loss of his elder brother, John F Kennedy took up a life in politics.

The US airmen at the bases surrounding Banham were frequent visitors to the village as it had the largest dance hall in the area called 'The Pavillion'. Unfortunately, I do not have any photographs of the venue (if anyone does, I would love to see them.) I believe the dance hall once stood in/around the area of the current community centre. The presence of the US airmen was a source of great excitement amongst the local women! It also ensured the continuing success of cider sales. The dance hall sold Banham's legendary Routs cider which was produced at the factory in the village. An elderly relative of this family recalled that after the war, the airmen went back to America, cider sales dramatically declined and this ultimately led to the closure of the factory.

Earlier I referred to a third, lesser- known memorial on the outskirts of the village. This can be found on Park Common Lane (behind the zoo). This memorial marks the field where another Liberator bomber tragically crashed shortly after take-off from Old Buckenham, killing 12 airmen. Their names are commemorated on the plaque.

The remnants of Norfolk and Suffolk's World War Two RAF/ US airbases and the crucial role they played in the war can be seen throughout both counties. Over Christmas I walked a circular route around Barningham and Coney Weston. It is not an area I know well and I was surprised to stumble upon a large US memorial honouring hundreds of personnel from the USAAF's 388th bombardment group stationed at RAF Knettishall (between Knettishall Heath and Coney Weston.)

It was a stark reminder to me that whether they were famous or ordinary, British or American, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to all those who were injured and have over the years, lost their lives protecting our freedom and way of life.

*More information (and photographs) can be found at:

- visitnorfolk.co.uk under ' History and Heritage' - Masters of the air : The friendly invasion
- 'Masters of the Air ' on apple TV
- 'The friendly invasion -how the United States changed East Anglia forever' e-magazine



Get Involved

Wednesday Cafe

Between 10am and 12:30pm

In the Banham Community Centre small hall

A welcoming warm space for all ages, from the youngest to the eldest, to spend in the company of friends and neighbours



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Bucks Photoshow | 8-10 May 2026

The Bucks Photoshow is back!

We'll be sharing full details soon, but in the meantime we'd love to hear from local photographers who might like to exhibit.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting out, all abilities are very welcome!

If you're interested or just want to find out more, email photoshow@newbuckenham.net

Banham Barrel Events March:

Sun 8th Motel Vandals

Sat 21st Reverse Cowboys and Krodah

Sun 22nd Hugh Lynch and Friends

Fri 27th Jazz Jam

Sat 28th Def Lef Lepp'd fundraiser for BACA

Banham Community Centre

Be part of the last 2 indoor Table Sales at Banham Community Centre, before the Applewood boot sales start. See BCC website for details

Tables are only £5 each, so why not come and sell, or pop along and pick up a bargain.

Email: events@banhamcommunitycentre.co.uk to book your space, or message/call 07775906546
All monies raised are used for the up keep of the Centre.

Pickleball

Banham Community Centre
Fridays 5:30 pm till 7 pm

If you have not tried this, then why not come along and have a taster session. We are currently almost at a maximum for the 1st session, but we are now thinking of introducing a 7:30pm til 9pm session.

This is great for people of all ages and abilities, and a good way to start you on the road to fitness

Contact:

events@banhamcommunitycentre.co.uk
or book a taster session

8th Table top sale in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care
Stanton Village Hall 9:30 til 12

Stoke Ash Village Hall 1pm til 5pm

11th Terrarium and Alpaca Experience, Mill House

11th Sheringham Shantymen, Connaught Rooms

Local Clubs

Zumba, Banham Community Centre

Come along and join Shani on Monday evenings at 6:30. £6 payg.
07877 172940

FitSteps - Wednesday & Thursday

Community Centre
Contact: Tracy Jenkins 07772 481232
tjfitsteps@gmail.com

Beavers, Cubs, Scouts,

Kenninghall, Attleborough, Harling, Old Buckenham.
www.scouts.org.uk, 0345 300 1818

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides.

www.girlguidingnorfolk.org.uk

All Anglia Karate, Tuesday 6pm till 8pm

Contact Ian Warren
allanglia.contactus@gmail.com
07917208916

Beginners Line Dancing

Tuesdays 9:30-10:45am, contact
Simone Holden
simsfitnessnorfolk@gmail.com

Banham Quiet and Calm for Baby Group Monday's

Designed for parents and babies, £3 per session, Jan, March, May

Banham Short Mat Bowls Club - Monday

Community Centre
Contact: Ron 07925 063553

Beginners Yoga and Relaxation - Monday

Community Centre
Contact : June Roberts
01953 498343 / 07766 108075
junemroberts@googlemail.com

Well Being

Community Centre
Every Tuesday 11:45—13:15

Rise Fitness

Monday 18.00-19.00 - Circl Mobility - Banham Barrel
Tuesday 18.15-19.15 - Bootcamp - Banham Barrel
Thursday 08.30-09.30 - Circl Mobility - Banham Barrel
Thursday 20.00-20.50 - Bootcamp - Online
Saturday 0900-10:00 - Bootcamp - Banham Barrel
Pre booking is a must.
07928 223962

Friday Club - Rowancroft, Kenninghall Road

Bible stories and activities for Primary school children, 6:15 pm during school term time

Kenninghall Garden Club Plus

Talk from the Suffolk Owl Trust (no live birds)
Thursday 5th March in Kenninghall Village Hall at 7.30pm
Contact: davidmorton132@btinternet.com

Banham Pickleball Club.

5:30pm-7pm Fridays.
events@banhamcommunitycentre.co.uk

Banham Badminton Club.

8pm-10pm Mondays and Thursdays.
Contact Adam 01953660281
adam@adampower.co.uk

Knit & Natter Crochet & Chatter

Once a month on a Wednesday, in the Community Centre Bar. Details can be found at the Post Office.

Banham Toddlers Group 10 till 12
Friendly group for 0-5 year olds £3 per family inc snacks, 9th Feb, 20th April, 15th June

Your Community Centre

Hello and welcome to the monthly update from the committee at Banham Community Centre.

It's been a busy month for us who work behind the scenes keeping your Centre running as smoothly as possible. And while we meet monthly and discuss what plans and ideas we think you, the community, would like to see happening here, we really wanted to take this opportunity to actually ask you what you want.

We have now started up a popular Pickleball session on Friday nights, with a possible second session being planned to cope with the numbers of people who recently attended the second session. In case you don't know, the first session is free! It's a fun, lower impact sport than tennis, that someone like me, who doesn't 'do' sport has now joined. Anyone who knows me, will know that is a momentous undertaking for me!

We have two large table tennis tables in storage that are desperately looking to be used. We need someone to help us run a table tennis club. Are you that person? Or do you know someone who is?

We are also starting dances up, which used to be a popular feature of the hall years ago. Have you booked a ticket? It's easy to do online at just £6 per ticket, or you can buy a physical ticket in the post office. Our first dance is on 21st February and the band 'Rum Ole Rockers' will be providing the music. It'll be a fun evening of music from the 50's & 60's, not just for people of a certain age either. Lots of younger people like a bit of Rock n' Roll!

We've also run two tabletop sales over the past couple of months. We have two more to fit in before the Banham Car Boot starts up on April 14th. Then we will stop until the car boot finishes again in the autumn.

These are changes we've made for the community and to help keep the Centre running. We really want your ideas, so we know we're responding to community needs. If you're not using the centre at all, then we need to know why? Please contact me, Sylvie Maney by Email: sylviemaney@gmail.com or leave your comments in the box provided in the foyer area of the centre.

Have a good month.

Sylvie (Vice Chair Person)

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News From The Pews

Spring now feels very much as if it is on its way. Now in the gardens there are already the snowdrops budding into life and the daffodils beginning to appear. Alfie, our puppy, who is now 8 months old is getting very excited too in the early morning when he hears the bird song. I must admit I really do like this time of year with all the new growth, and everything seems to be waking up after the long dark evenings of winter.

In the Christian year we are now in the season of Lent which recalls Jesus' temptation of 40 days in the desert and is a period for reflection, self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study in preparation for Easter. The season may seem rather somber, but it is intended primarily to bring new meaning to people's lives through personal and spiritual development. Every Thursday evening from February 28th at 19:30 we will be holding a Lent course at New Buckenham village hall which will focus particularly on Jesus' teaching on the Beatitudes. You would be most welcome to come along to these sessions if you would like to do.

In the middle of Lent of course we also celebrate Mothering Sunday which this year is on Sunday March 15th. It traditionally was a day when people relaxed their Lenten observances and in the 16th century people visited their 'mother church' and later it evolved into a day off for servants to visit families with gift-giving, Simnel cake (see recipe on page 31) and giving of flowers. My own dear late mother used to love going out for a meal on Mother's Day and it was a very special day for her.

May this season of Lent then be a positive and joyful time for you with good memories, a time too for self-reflection and a time for new growth and development.

With my good wishes and God bless you.

If you would like to contact me then here are my contact details:

Tel, 01953 571549 or revsewalsh967@gmail.com

Church services during March

March 1st – 10 am Group service at All Saints, Old Buckenham

March 8th – 09:30 Holy Communion, St. Mary's Banham

March 15th – 09:30 Morning Prayer at St. Mary's, Banham

March 22nd - 09:30 Holy Communion, St. Mary's Banham

March 29th – 10am Service of Palm Sunday Holy Communion at St. Martins, New Buckenham

Get Involved at The BCC

What is pickleball?

Fast becoming one of the most popular racket sports in the world, pickleball brings together some of the best elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, into a fun and exciting game for people of all ages and abilities.

Played on a court the same size as a badminton court – and using a shorter tennis-style net – players use paddles to hit a plastic ball between one another. You can play as both singles and doubles, and it's a great way to exercise with friends and family or meet new people.

Why is pickleball popular?

It's simple – pickleball is easy to learn, fun to play and is a great way to exercise. One of the fastest-growing sports in the world, pickleball is suitable for people of all ages and abilities and is a very social activity that you can play with family and friends.

The game is exciting, challenging and offers a good workout. In fact, one 30-minute game of pickleball can burn up to 300 calories.

When was pickleball first played in the UK?

If you're wondering how long has pickleball been around, it's been played for over 50 years and continues to rise in popularity. In the UK, pickleball clubs started to form around 2011 and the sport has continued to grow ever-since.

At Banham Community Centre we want to be recognised as an approved Pickleball location, and help grow the sport. Why not come along and try for yourself.

Friday evening's 5:30 pm till 7pm. With the growing numbers we may look to put on additional sessions. Get in touch for more details or just turn up and have a go.



After the great success of the first 2 Table Sales, we will be holding 2 more before the weather breaks, and we return to the outside boot sales.

So why not book a table at only £5 each, declutter, and grab a bargain, refreshments are also available.

Sunday 1st March 9 till 12

Sunday 5th April 9 till 12

For all events at BCC contact events@banhamcommunitycentre.co.uk

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Save the Date



Phoenix Rescue was set up in 2013 for the rescue and rehabilitation of sick and injured wild British Birds of Prey.

We have helped many birds including Tawny Owls, Kestrels, Barn Owls, Little Owls, Buzzards, Short-Eared Owls, Hen Harriers, and Sparrow Hawks.

After being cared for by our dedicated Falconers most of the birds are happily released back into the wild.

Come along and join us at the Community Centre on Saturday April 11th at 2pm, and hear from Phoenix Rescue, on the work that they do, and learn a bit more about these amazing creatures. Something for the whole family to enjoy, get to meet some of the birds.

Its Free!!

BRITISH BIRDS OF PREY WE HAVE AND CAN HELP

BELOW IS A LIST OF BRITISH BIRDS OF PREY WE ARE ABLE TO HELP TO HELP IDENTIFY THESE BIRDS VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND ADVICE ON WHAT TO DO SHOULD YOU FIND ONE IN NEED OF HELP



Copyright © 2024 Phoenix Bird of Prey Rescue All Rights Reserved

Red Nose Day

Banham News are really happy to be giving all the children at the Banham Primary School, one the new decorate yourself noses.

We will then ask them to bring them along to the Community Centre on Saturday March 14th to show off their handy work and hopefully win a prize for best NOSE.

That's right, it's a blank canvas — the first ever Design-Yer Nose!

Draw, decorate and make it wonderfully your own. Whether you're an artist or just feeling playful, every unique Nose brings a little joy to the world. And this simple bit of silliness helps support serious work here in the UK and beyond

Come along and see the noses in all their glory, support the children and support Comic Relief.

If you cant come along, you can still donate by going to our Just Giving Page

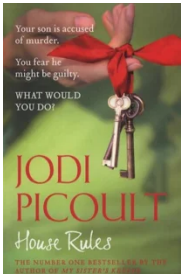
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rnd26-banham-news>





Monthly Book Review

A quick overview of the books that you are reading.
What's good and what's really good.



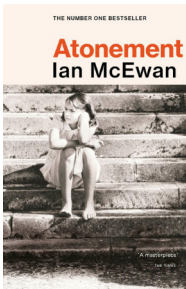
House Rules by Jodie Picoult

A really gripping murder mystery, telling the story of a family struggling with a teenage son, suffering with Asperger's Syndrome, who is obsessed with forensic analysis, as well as her hectic family life.

Couldn't wait to get to the end and find out who done it!
As always Jodie Picoult never fails to deliver.

Review by Christina Snow

Atonement by Ian McEwan



Atonement explores themes of love and guilt across three time periods. It follows the Tallis family and the son of their housekeeper, whose education was sponsored by them.

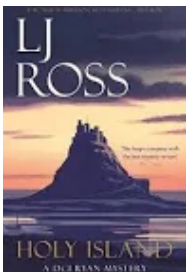
In the evening following a hot summer's day a life-altering series of misunderstandings dramatically changes the course of the life of each character.

This book is so beautifully written, and the character portrayals are so good. You can feel what the protagonists experience and envisage the various settings so clearly that you could be there as one of them.

Atonement engages you on every level. I have added it to my list of Favorite books. Currently number 1.

Review by Mel Jay

Holy Island by L J Ross.



This is the first book in the DCI Ryan Mystery and is set on the spectacular Northumbrian island of Lindisfarne, cut off from the English mainland by a tidal causeway. It's a fast-paced crime whodunnit with a sprinkling of romance and humour. DCI Ryan is staying on the Island. He has been forced to take sabbatical leave from his duties as a homicide detective. Then, the body of a young woman is found dead amongst the ancient ruins of the nearby Priory. DCI Ryan contacts his Detective Chief Superintendent, Gregson, and confirms to Gregson that he is fine to come back to duty and he is needed there on the Island to solve the murder. Gregson calls in a consultant, Dr Anna Taylor, as it appears that some pagan rituals have taken place and this is her speciality. DCI Ryan is not happy about this and it turns out that Dr Taylor used to live on the Island. As the story unfolds, you find out more about DCI Ryan's and Dr Taylor's past. It's an interesting read with various twists and turns. By the end of the book, it leaves you wanting to know more about various characters. This was an enjoyable read.

Review by Karen Manser

Don't forget to submit your book reviews info@banhamnews.co.uk



2026 - The Year of Reading!

At Banham Primary School, we love to share books and our children start to learn to read through phonics.

Phonics is a structured method for the teaching of reading and writing by developing phonemic awareness—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds (phonemes) and connect them to written letters or groups of letters (graphemes). It enables children to decode new words by blending sounds together and segmenting words for spelling.

Here at Banham, we use the DfE approved scheme Monster Phonics. Monster Phonics uses colour coding and sound cues to support the learning of long vowels, silent letters and 'tricky' letters. The monsters each represent a sound and we meet them through engaging videos, power points, activities and stories. The coloured monsters enable children to distinguish and recognise the sounds the letters make, so they can blend them together to read a word. The children are also able to hear the sounds broken down in a spoken word to write.

We are very proud of all of our children here at Banham and want them to possess a love of reading. Our Reception children, who joined us in September, are already well on their way to becoming fluent readers and creating sentences on their own.



Our children in Swifts have enjoyed sharing the book *The Nowhere Emporium*. As part of the Trust, it was organised for the children to meet the author Ross Mac Kenzie. Meeting Ross has inspired further reading, boosted literacy skills, and provided a direct, personal connection to literature, transforming reading from a solitary task into an engaging, tangible experience. It has enthused the writing process, encouraged creativity, and provided a relatable role model.



This Your Life

How the Zoo Came to Banham (Part 1)

Anyone driving through Norfolk, will sooner or later, come across a sign pointing to Banham Zoo, one of the main tourist attractions in the county. But how did a small country village come to have a zoo with over 2,000 animals? And what does this have to do with a company called RENTAFRIDGE? Martin Goymour, who came to the village, aged 2, in 1952, tells the tale.

“It really begins with my grandfather, a Master Baker, who was joined by his son - my father - to set up the first bakery in Bury St Edmunds to use gas-fired ovens. With shops in Bury, Newmarket and elsewhere, they were also called upon to supply bread to the military and air bases in the area throughout World War II. Then in 1952, exhausted from having worked 16 hours a day as a baker, and with the advent of factory-produced bread, my father retired from baking and bought Grove Farm in Banham.

With 296 acres, I was privileged to grow up on one of the last mixed farms, comprising Holstein Fresian cows, Aberdeen Angus bulls, pigs, chickens and a milking parlour, about 20 acres of orchard and over three acres of strawberries. Local folk seasonally worked on the farm, picking fruit that was sent to Covent Garden by Bullen's Transport, also in Banham. My father used his expertise at selling to advertise: ‘Buy your apples direct from the farm.’ He threw open the doors to the barn, next to the One Stop shop, where apples were stored, a foot deep on big oak racks, bedded on straw.

I was the youngest of five sisters and a brother, running around the farm, almost feral, until I started at Banham primary school. I'd walk to and from school and spend my pocket money on sweets at the corner shop on the green. The village street had lots of activity. There was Harry and Joe's fish and chip shop on Crown Street, selling the best fish & chips and cod fritters I've ever had. There was a barber, Ivor Mapes, who looked after the grounds at the Nunnery in Quidenham, and also cut hair in Banham. There were several pubs operating then, including The Red Lion, The Kings Head, The Walnut Tree and The Garden House.

My father was very strict and we weren't encouraged to mix with the village folk. My mother wasn't allowed to join the Women's Institute and my sisters weren't officially allowed to go to the Pavilion Dance Hall, opposite Wash Lane. A wooden barn with a dance floor, it was the place to go. Well-known bands played there, including the Ivy Benson All Girl Dance Band. In the war years, it was a magnet for the American forces from the many local airfields.

With a busy home and business life, my parents shunted me off to Moreton Hall, a weekly boarding school in Bury St. Edmunds, then to Newton Court, a full-time boarding school also in Bury St Edmunds. Finally, I landed up at Bracondale, a day school in Norwich, biking four and a half miles to Eccles Road station, catching a train to Norwich and walking about a mile - and that was just one way.

I left school at 15 on a Friday and started work the following Monday, and belatedly realised, instead of getting eight weeks off in the summer, I'd get two weeks off for the whole year! I earned £3.50 a week, gave my mother £2.50 for board and keep, which left me with £1. I was initially employed as a dogsbody in the showroom and offices of our electrical shop.

My father, who was never a farmer and never professed to be one, had, as another venture, bought some prefabs. These temporary houses had been erected in London after the war and were now being taken down. My father and a partner erected 45 prefabs on land they owned at Stanton, next to RAF Shepherds Grove, and rented them out. My father gradually bought more housing in Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Thetford, Bury St Edmunds, which he rented to US Air Force families. The USAF forces had returned in numbers to counter the threat from Russia in the Cold War years, and there was a demand for off-base housing.

The Americans wanted all the modern conveniences, which were still in short supply in the U.K.

My father bought up a quantity of refrigerators, that had been in the old prefabs, and set up a company called RENTAFRIDGE. Domestic appliances were comparatively expensive but renting was an alternative. The RENTAFRIDGE company prospered with its mainly American customers and soon offered a wide range of everything electrical to rent: refrigerators, tumble dryers, twin tub washing machines, vacuum cleaners, sewing machines, radiograms and TVs. If it was electrical, you'd find it there.

RENTAFRIDGE had over 2,000 customers and five vans, and a peak team of delivery and service men, mostly local lads. Monthly rents and ledger sheets had to be written up, invoices had to be typed and posted out. About 2,000 items of post arrived each month, with cheques and postal orders to be accounted for and banked. The dining room of our house, became an office with four or five girls helping with accounts. My mother also did the farm accounts.

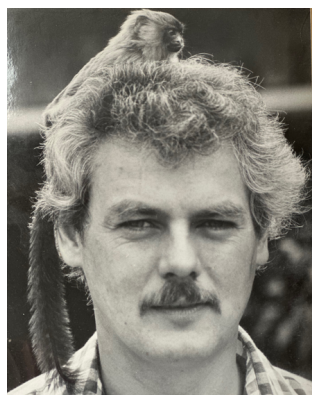
At strawberry time, members of the WI provided teas on the lawn to raise money for the then Spastic Society. At blossom time, in Spring, we laid on tractor and trailer rides around the orchard. We hosted coach loads of WI groups. Visitors would wander round the farm, visit the cattle yard to look at the cows and buy strawberries from the Barn, which was like an early Farm Shop. I kept pet guinea pigs and sold the offspring for pocket money. My father, as a hobby, had about a dozen ornamental pheasant aviaries that people enjoyed seeing.

In those days, when there weren't any import controls or concerns about rabies or conservation, pet shops imported and sold exotic birds and animals. Even Harrods sold monkeys and lion cubs. People bought young animals, not thinking they'd become big animals. Then they'd say to my father, 'I've got this parrot or wolf cub, I don't want anymore. Would you like it?' And my father could never say no.

Before long, we had a menagerie. Eventually, our farm manager complained that this didn't fit his job description, so we needed to employ somebody to look after the animals. And that person needed to be paid, which meant we'd have to charge an entry fee - and that's how Banham Zoo was born.

The entry fee was two and sixpence for adults and a shilling for children (12 ½p and 5p). Initially two prefabs were erected to house various animals and parrots. Elsewhere there were gardens and other animals, including a pair of North American timber wolves, three Australian dingoes, some brush-tailed porcupines and some Himalayan bears, which scared the hell out of me. Bears have very strong claws and teeth and, in hindsight, their enclosure, made of wood and weld-mesh was barely adequate to keep in dangerous animals!

I was 17 years old, when we opened the doors to the zoo in February 1968. We began to advertise and, by the end of the year, we'd had 14,225 visitors.



The zoo opened in 1968 and I continued to work, not only for RENTAFRIDGE but also for Anglo American furniture rentals and various property companies, which provided rented homes, but all my spare time was spent at the zoo, my main interest.

Four years down the line, my father decided the zoo wasn't working. He advertised in Cage and Avery Birds magazine and ultimately leased it out to Herbert and Carol Dornbrack, professional hairdressers from Wales, who also kept a colony of South American woolly monkeys and were keen to do more. After three years the Dornbracks realised they needed more investment and, eventually, my father took the zoo back, keeping Herbert and Carol on as managers.

I got on with Herbert and Carole very well and the zoo grew in size and extent of animal population. The interest at this time was in South American primates, and our speciality was in Marmoset and Tamarin breeds, in which we excelled.

During the 80s, the Ministry of Agriculture introduced rabies quarantine: all mammals, entering the country had to have six months quarantine. Whilst this had a beneficial effect in reducing the number of exotic animal importers for the pet trade, it also hampered the exchange of stock between zoos and legitimate imports. We built our own Ministry approved Rabies quarantine house. We were able to supply a service to other zoos, and it wasn't only exotic animals that had to be quarantined. Returning British forces from Germany wanted to bring back their pet rabbits, guinea pigs and pet rats – cats and dogs weren't allowed in army accommodation in Germany - and we were able to offer a quarantine service.

Around 1976 we'd been one of the first to join the Zoological Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. This was somewhat prestigious and required our zoo to be inspected to ensure we met standards set. In 1981 Defra introduced the Zoo Licensing Act, covering the care of animals and the health and safety of the public, and a set of standards was introduced. Zoos are inspected at regular intervals by a select team, including a zoo experienced Vet, Environmental Health Officer, and an experienced zoo person. I was honoured to be appointed a Zoo Inspector, and helped inspect several zoos over the years that followed.

Whilst today it would be rare to find any animals in zoos that came in from the wild, due to the success in breeding, care and coordination between zoos world-wide, in the 1980s, imports from the wild were still quite common. Banham Zoo imported primates from Panama, Brazil, Costa Rica and other South and Central American countries, and also from Africa, and the Far East.

The Spider monkeys now in Banham Zoo are the descendants of a group of Spider monkeys we imported and quarantined in the 1980s.



**With Thanks to Heather Bateman in conversation with Martin Goymour
To Be Continued Next Month**

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As we step into March at Banham Zoo, we're delighted to finally welcome the arrival of spring. With longer days, milder temperatures and the first signs of new growth appearing across the zoo, the change in season is bringing renewed energy to both our animals and animal care teams. Many species are becoming more active, and it's a wonderful time for visitors to enjoy seeing natural behaviours as the zoo comes to life after the winter months.

We're pleased to share some lovely animal updates this month, including the arrival of two new residents. Sirius and Biru, our Hornbills, have recently joined the zoo and are settling in well. These striking birds are already showing their unique personalities as they explore their new environment, and our keepers are enjoying getting to know them as they adjust to life at Banham.

We're also happy to report that Poppy, the coppery Titi monkey born in November 2025, continues to thrive. She has been doing very well under the watchful care of her parents and the primate team, growing stronger and more confident each week. Visitors may be lucky enough to spot her clinging closely to her family as she begins to explore her surroundings a little more.

Looking ahead, we're excited to remind our community about the upcoming Run Banham Zoo 5K. This much-loved event, held within the zoo grounds, offers a truly unique experience, allowing participants to run, jog, or walk past some of our incredible animals while supporting a great cause. Open to all abilities, the 5K raises vital funds that help support animal care, conservation projects and the continued development of the zoo. May 9th 2026.

Thank you for being part of the Banham Zoo community and for your ongoing support. We look forward to sharing more springtime stories, animal news and exciting updates with you as the year continues!

Rosie Hiskey

PR & Marketing Executive



Young Voices

This August, I am planning to go on what is called a "World Challenge" trip to Montenegro. You may ask - what is world challenge? Well, it is an overseas expedition specifically for students that focuses on personal development, teamwork and community service. It is a highly regarded award (which looks great on a CV) and is also a once in a lifetime opportunity to go abroad and have fun whilst also learning. I am going for ten days, which are split into two. For three nights I am going to be staying in a local hotel in a small town on the coast of Montenegro, and for seven nights I am going to be camping outside! The trip itself will consist of lots of activities, including trekking around three different national parks, kayaking out on the bay and also white water rafting, which I am really looking forward to.

Out of the 1000 students that go to my school, I am one of the 26 that get to go on this trip, so when I say I am lucky, I really do mean it. This sort of thing is something that later on in life, I will be so proud to say that I have done, as it really is such a life changing trip. You get to interact and bond with locals, learn all about the wildlife,



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DofE is open to any young person aged 14-24. Participants build their own programme, choosing activities and a cause to volunteer for. The DofE is structured into three levels of Award which increase in challenge and duration: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The main differences between the Award levels are the minimum length of time it takes to complete the programme, how challenging it is, and the minimum age you can start. There are four main sections of a DofE programme: Volunteering, Physical, Skills, and Expedition. At Gold, participants will also complete a Residential section.

In 2023-24, 330,984 young people started their DofE, giving 4.7 million hours of volunteering to their communities. The DofE charity has increased our target to give 1.6 million young people the chance to participate in a life-changing DofE programme by 2026.



All the best Edie

Parish Council News

The February meeting of the Banham Parish Council took place on Thursday 5th February 2026.

Community Hub News

The Community Hub are delighted to announce that it is now a registered charity, and the Parish Council would like to congratulate everyone who has played a part in making this possible, and those who continue to help make the Hub such a welcoming and special place for many Banham Residents.

Also, the Hub would like to announce that a new volunteer will now be available to help with form filling, and a laptop has been sourced for use at the Wednesday Cafe.

On the 30th May, the Hub will be hosting a women's self defence workshop, and the Movement for Wellbeing classes now have a second instructor, which will further support everyone who attends.

Finally, the lovely Monica will be taking part in a sponsored swim on the 6th March to raise funds for the Hub, so please look out for opportunities to donate and support this amazing Community space.

Banham Community Award

The Parish Council is pleased to announce the launch of the Banham Community Award. Plans are underway to introduce this exciting new award in the very near future. The Banham Community Award will honour a special person or team in Banham who goes above and beyond to make a real difference in our Community.

Nomination forms will soon be available to everyone in Banham, giving you the opportunity to put forward someone truly deserving of this honour so please watch this space.

A voting form will be published in the April edition of Banham News

The Banham Parish Council usually hold their meetings monthly on the first Thursday of each month in the small hall of the Community Centre. For any changes please see the website or the notice board located on the wall of the Banham Post Office & Stores. If you have any questions or reports in respect of allotments, street lights or potholes, please email Michelle Jones on banhamclerk@outlook.com.



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Recipe Of The Month

Simnel Cake

Ingredients

For the almond paste

250g/9oz caster sugar
250g/9oz ground almonds
2 free-range eggs, beaten
1 tsp almond essence

For the cake

175g/6oz soft brown sugar
3 free-range eggs, beaten
175g/6oz plain flour
pinch salt
½ tsp ground mixed spice (optional)
175g/6oz butter or margarine, plus extra for greasing
350g/12oz mixed raisins, currants and sultanas
55g/2oz chopped mixed peel
½ lemon, grated zest only
1–2 tbsp apricot jam
1 free-range egg, beaten for glazing



Method

For the almond paste, place the sugar and ground almonds in a bowl. Add enough beaten egg and mix to a fairly soft consistency. Add the almond essence and knead for 1 minute until the paste is smooth and pliable. Roll out a third of the almond paste to make a circle 18cm/7in in diameter and reserve the remainder for the cake topping.

Preheat oven to 140C/120C Fan/Gas 1. Grease and line a 18cm/7in cake tin.

For the cake, cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well incorporated and then sift in the flour, salt and mixed spice (if using) a little at a time. Finally, add the mixed dried fruit, peel and grated lemon zest and stir into the mixture.

Put half the mixture into the cake tin. Smooth the top and cover with the circle of almond paste. Add the rest of the cake mixture and smooth the top leaving a slight dip in the centre to allow for the cake to rise. Bake in the preheated oven for 1¾ hours. Test by inserting a skewer in the middle – if it comes out clean, it is ready. Once baked, remove from the oven and set aside to cool on a wire rack. Brush the top of the cooled cake with the apricot jam. Divide the remainder of the almond paste in half. Roll out a circle to cover the top of the cake with one half and form 11 small balls with the other half. Place the circle of paste on the jam glaze and set the balls round the edge. Brush the cake topping with a little beaten egg.

Preheat the grill to high. Place the cake onto a baking tray and grill for 1–2 minutes, or until the top of the marzipan begins to brown. Alternatively, lightly heat the cake topping using a cook's blowtorch, until the marzipan is golden brown.

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| DKH/Attleborough | 07492 189158 |
| Able/Diss | 01379 640900 |
| John's Taxi's | 01379 640000 |
| Harling Taxi | 07950 189260 |

Dial –a–Bus (Wednesday's, Banham to Diss)

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NHS Hospital Car Scheme

03332 404100

Travel Norfolk Car Scheme

3 x Working Days Notice Required. Book up to 2 Weeks Ahead. 0344 800 8020

Mobile Library (every 4 weeks)

Crown Way 15:20—15:50

Apple Close 15:55—16:35

The Green 16:40—17:05

Nov 19th

Important Contacts

Police 999 (Non Urgent 101)

Fire and Ambulance 999 (Non Urgent 111)

Power Cut 105

Parish Council 07309 358357

Breckland Council 01362 656870

Registrars Office 0344 8008020

E. Harling & Kenninghall Surgery

01953887208

Norfolk & Norwich Hospital

01603 286286

Citizens Advice Bureau

03444 111444

YOUR BEAT MANAGERS

Your safer neighbourhood team

What is a Beat Manager?

The Beat Manager is a local police officer whose aim is to keep your neighbourhood safe to live, work in and visit.

Your Beat Manager PC is here to engage with local communities and work to solve local issues and priorities within your neighbourhood.

Email us at SNAttleborough@norfolk.police.uk

Your Beat Manager



My name is PC Dion PHILLIPS, and I am your local Beat Manager for Attleborough and the surrounding areas.

Please get in touch with me via the above email address to discuss concerns, ask for crime prevention advice, or tell me about local events you're organising.




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We care deeply about the work we do and the people we help. Our specialist doctors and paramedics bring hospital-level treatment straight to the scene. From blood transfusions and pain relief to anaesthesia and emergency surgery we give patients the best possible chance of survival and recovery. We also provide vital aftercare, train people in lifesaving skills, and carry out clinical research to keep improving care.

It's Dr Ben bringing advanced medication to John who in cardiac arrest in a local supermarket. It's Critical Care Paramedic Sally giving an emergency blood transfusion to Emma who has been involved in a road accident while on her daily commute to work. It's Dr Julie giving Sanjay an emergency anaesthetic in his living room when he is suffering from a bleed in the brain. No two emergencies are the same. We ensure every person our crews are called to receives the emergency treatment and care they need as soon as possible, before being transferred to the most appropriate or specialist hospital – whether that's a major trauma centre, specialist cardiac centre, or burns unit – for their ongoing treatment and care.

We partner the emergency services and, in 2024-25, we provided urgent treatment and care to 1,846 people, but we're not funded by the government - and that means we're fuelled by supporter donations.

So, you really are part of the crew who keeps the helicopter rotors turning and our crews responding to our region's medical emergencies, day and night. We'll go to whoever needs us, wherever we're needed, to farmland, town centres, minor and major roads, sports centres, and people's homes. Every single tasking shows us the strength of your support.

It truly is a team effort; thank you for being by our side.

In 2024/25

- 8 taskings by air and road, on average, each day
- Responded to incidents in 6 counties
- 156 children treated
- 1,483 helicopter taskings
- 1,304 critical care car taskings
- 1,812 day-time taskings
- 975 night-time taskings
- 665 patients and families supported by our Aftercare team



Contact East Anglian Air Ambulance WWW: eaaa.org.uk

T: 03450 669 999

E: info@eaaa.org.uk

A Day In The Life- Of A Zumba Teacher

Hi, my name is Shani, and I've been a Zumba instructor for over 15 years. Just over a year ago, I moved to Banham, (from Kent) with my husband, Christian, our two children, Darcey and Austin, and Baxter — our crazy cockapoo.

Dance has always been a huge part of my life. From teaching primary school children, performing in amateur shows, taking part in flash mobs, and even appearing in a music video, movement and music have always been where I feel most at home. But it wasn't until 2009 that I discovered Zumba — and everything changed.

A friend of mine, who was a Cuban salsa teacher, introduced me to it, and from the very first class I was hooked. Zumba brings together dance, fitness, and joy in a way I had never experienced before. It quickly became more than just a job — it became my passion.

A typical day in my life doesn't start in a studio with loud music and flashing lights. Like many people, it begins with family life: school runs, dog walks, and fitting everyday tasks around busy schedules. Woven through all of this is music — planning playlists, practising choreography, and thinking about how to make each class welcoming, inclusive, and enjoyable.

One of the things I love most about being a Zumba instructor is the freedom it gives us. While we are provided with choreographed routines, we are encouraged to make them our own — adapting moves, adding personal style, or changing things to suit our participants. This freedom means no two instructors are ever the same.

I teach every Monday evening at 6.30pm at Banham Community Centre, and my focus is never on perfection. Instead, it's about creating a space where people can switch off, move their bodies, and leave feeling better than when they arrived. Bringing the joy of dance and movement to others is an absolute pleasure, and I still feel incredibly lucky that this is what I get to do.

Zumba isn't just about fitness; it's about confidence, connection, and having fun. Whether someone comes to class to get fit, meet new people, or simply enjoy an hour to themselves, my goal is always the same — to make everyone feel welcome and free to move in their own way.

After all these years, that sense of joy never fades — and that's what a day in the life of a Zumba instructor is really all about.

For more information on classes:

Facebook : Shani's Zumba Classes

Message: shanizumba@hotmail.com



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