

COMMUNITYscene

XTRA XTRA, READ
ALL ABOUT WHAT THE
PROPHETS Z AND Y.



Celebrate Christmas

at Stalham Baptist Church

Norfolk Wherry Unity

Brass Band

Saturday 13th December at 7.30pm

Candlelight Service

Sunday 14th December

All welcome to sing well known Christmas carols

Starting at 4.00pm

Followed by Tea and Coffee in the Schoolroom

Christmas Carols

at the Swan Inn

High Street Stalham

Monday 15th December 7.00pm

Sunday Service on December 22nd 10.45am as normal

Celebrate Christmas Morning

with SBC at 10 am

Celebrate the New Year

Sunday 4th January

Family Service 10.45am



Welcome To Stalham Baptist Church Christmas Community Scene



X Y?

This article is entitled Y X? and is about the way X is used in our daily lives. Writes Stuart Cato

Dictionaries describe X as the twenty-fourth letter in the alphabet.

It (is)

An unknown quantity in Algebra as “Y” is.

Symbol of multiplication

Mark’s the spot!

A social media platform.

Indicates the places to sign or fill-in amounts and items on forms

10 in Roman numerals

A model / trim level in automotive industry

eg: Ford - Ghia X, Jaguar - X Type / XF, Toyota - Mark X

An abbreviation for 4WD vehicles - usually stylised,

eg: BMW, X-Drive, Nissan - X-Trail, Volvo - XC

A symbol of extra size, height, length, width, weight and used in multiples eg XL, XXL, X-LWB

Indicates that something is incorrect or not allowed

Factor. Used to denote “that special something” that is usually undefinable in practical terms!

A generation of people born from mid 1960s to early 1980s

Used to send kisses in messages, cards etc.

As we approach the

25th of December

and celebrate the birth, the nativity of our Saviour and Lord be Jesus Christ, who suffered and died on a cross, X, let us remember Y? (why?)

Is it ok to call this highly important event and period in the Christian

(X-ian) calendar, Xmas?

The Messiah came from Heaven in the form of man to live, suffer and die for our atonement, our redemption!

It is Christ’s Birthday that we are celebrating, there were parties and gatherings attended by many folk who were there at the time - Mary and Joseph, Shepherds, Angels, Three Kings,

Innkeeper and family and more!

Will you be celebrating this year and knowing Y?

Let’s put Christ back into Christmas!

This is Stalham Baptist Church’s twenty-seventh Community Scene.

- A Merry Christmas to all our readers.
- A Really Big Thank You To Sonia Maynard, Tim Manley & Rev. Ron Skivington who helped with proof reading and Roger, Niki and Katie Newman at our printers Century Printing, High Street, Stalham - also to all the amazing volunteers who deliver the magazine for all their help.

You can contact us at
editor@communityscene.org.uk

Network Norwich Awards

Staged by the Network Norfolk website, to help mark its 20th anniversary, the awards aimed to honour and celebrate innovative, creative and inspiring work in the world of communications by members of the Norfolk Christian community held at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich on October 23rd. After votes up to 29th September. SBC Community Scene came 2nd in the **Best newsletter – digital or print** one of seven finalists.

The judges said “**Stalham Baptist Community Scene was Highly Commended**, an innovative, creative and engaging publication which has 100% reach in the community. It is relevant to Christians, while also being an excellent outreach tool. There is depth in the gospel message, with powerful story telling.” David Child collected the SBC certificate.



Stalham History

Stalham is a small market town it is situated close to the River Ant. The town has a rich history, with evidence of human settlement dating back to the Mesolithic Age. 10,000 BCE.

There is evidence for prehistoric activity in Stalham. Numerous flint implements of Mesolithic/Neolithic and Bronze Age and a quantity of Iron Age pottery have all been recovered in the area. On June 7th, 1875, at Sutton Marshes; a decorated bronze age shield 51cm (20 1/2 inches) in diameter was found by two men digging a main drain.

Stalham existed as a settlement in the medieval period, in July 2009 evidence was provided by an excavation at 113 High Street. The investigation at Church Farm in 2013 uncovered multi-period remains, including features and artifacts from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, and later periods. Finds included animal remains, a Bronze Age pot, Iron Age pottery and a coin, Roman articles, and later post-medieval objects.

Although there are no Roman ruins directly within Stalham there are evidence of Roman settlements near Stalham like pottery, coins, brooches, bracelet fragments, a nail cleaner, a spoon, hairpins, and a military harness mount and Quern stones (used for grinding grain). One site even suggested the presence of a Roman building.

The Stalham we know today has a very different map compared to what was in Roman times, AD 43 to AD 410 a substantial portion of this area was submerged beneath



the North Sea.

The rivers, lakes, broads and waterways that now draw boats were once part of an expansive estuary, which played a vital

role in Roman Britain. Yarmouth is now in between the Fleg Island with Caister and Burgh Castle.

Over the years, changes in sea level, silting of rivers, sandbanks built to block the North Sea, embanking and draining have created a landscape of water, mills and



marshes. And all that is left of that Great Estuary are the mudflats of Breydon Water.

The Saxons began invading England around 450 AD, following the end of Roman rule in Britain. Anglo-Saxons from the late 7th century spread Christianity during this time.

Missionaries, such as those from the Irish and Roman traditions, played key roles in converting Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Around Stalham

Saxon artefacts have been found and a canoe was dredged from the river Ant.

The Saxon name Stalham may be derived from the Old English meaning "homestead by a pool" or "homestead with stables". Another interpretation suggests "settlement by the river", referring to the River Ant. Stalham was registered as a settlement in the Domesday Book in 1086, part of the Happing Hundred of sixteen villages. Stalham is noted for its significant size and population during that time. The area was a thriving agricultural community during the medieval period. Stalham was a centre for hand-weaving during the Middle Ages, known for its wool trade. Basket-weaving also thrived, supplying fishing gear to the herring fleets at Great Yarmouth.

St Mary's Church The current church building dates primarily to the 14th and 15th centuries, in the Decorated and Perpendicular styles. Archaeological evaluations have found the footings of an earlier, probable 12th-century, round tower beneath the current structure, suggesting an earlier church on the same site. Inside, there is a remarkably well-preserved 15th-century octagonal font, which was buried during the Reformation to protect it from iconoclasts. Five panels of a vividly painted medieval rood screen are also preserved and set upon the chancel wall. The tower was never completed, leaving it with a squat appearance. It is said that someone died falling from the tower as it was being built and the others refused to continue. The former Maids Head Inn, opposite the church that was closed in 2004, is a medieval building said to have been constructed around 1380 to house the workmen who built the present St. Mary's Church. It's said that there was a tunnel joining the two and a woman ghost haunted the pub.

Stalham Baptist Church was founded in 1653 and moved to its current location in 1884, when the present buildings were opened. Key moments in its history include a 1672 royal indulgence by King Charles II for the first pastor to preach, major refurbishments in 2012 and 2024, and a history rooted in community and mission, with the church's logo reflecting the vision to keep "Jesus at the centre".

White's 1845 History Gazetteer and Directory show that Stalham had then 44 businesses that included five shoemakers and five farmers also Robert Watts innkeeper of Maid's Head, Thos. Miles Fenn innkeeper of the Swan. Other businesses included Willian Clowes a surgeon & registrar, Jonthan Burton corn & coal merchant and lime burner, Richard Silcock boardman, grocer, draper and agent to Norwich Union Fire Office, Geo Allcock saddler, Robert Ulph watch maker, Rev James White M.A vicar. of St Mary's. John Webb Esquire was the owner of Stalham Hall a Jacobean manor house located on the edge of town opposite the Academy school.

Market and Trains

Stalham was granted a market charter in the 16th century and had a regular weekly market every Tuesday until 2004. All the livestock had to be brought through Stalham High Street including cows to be sold in the market.

The railway opened on 3rd July 1880 and closed 2nd March

1959 before the Beeching Axe that closed many railways in the 1960's. The station was left derelict for many years. The buildings were later dismantled and rebuilt at the new Holt station on the North Norfolk Railway.

When the railway was built there were cattle trucks for livestock for the town's market, with other outward traffic which at times

included blackcurrants and sugar beet. Incoming goods were mostly coal but also included timber and grain. Following the closure of the railway in 1959, the railway bridge was taken down and the A149, was built along the road which bypasses Stalham.

Stalham Bombed

Wednesday October 30th, 1940, the penultimate day of the Battle of Britain.

It was late in the afternoon that day in Stalham, Beryl Allcock took her young sister Liz's hand and walked the few yards from her dad's butchers' shop, to chat to her good friend Jean Thirst aged 20 (pictured), in the bakers. Jean was clearing up from the day's trading. Liz said "Beryl often took me to the bakers; Jean always made a fuss of me. I would sit on the counter, and I would often be treated with a "doughbun" and a bottle of pop, Beryl spent a lot of time with Jean, and they went out with a group of girls quite regularly. Jean sang in the church choir and was engaged to be married."

Jean's dad Percy came through from the bakery and told



Circa 1890's People migrating to Canada from Stalham Train Station the bridge is in the background that was demolished



huge explosion and the sound of glass shattering. The shop front window was blown in and all the upstairs bedroom windows. I wasn't that old, but I will never forget that sound and the look, of horror on mum, dad and Beryl's faces." A lone German bomber had dropped a high explosive bomb into the middle of Stalham High Street.

Edward who was part of the Home Guard rushed outside and was confronted by a scene of total devastation, the bakery, the Railway Inn and part of the bank where a smouldering pile of rubble. People were frantically clawing through the wreckage to find Jean and Percy Thirst. Jean's brother Murray who worked in the ironmongers found his dad's body, but Jean was never found.

The Museum of the Broads is situated on Stalham Staithe, it showcases the history of the Norfolk Broads, including the peat industry which dates back to the Roman period and continues through the Middle Ages. The museum offers insights into the unique landscape, largely shaped by human activities like peat digging and attempts to control water

The Lost Shepherd

In a small village within rolling hills, a young shepherd named Daniel tended his family's flock.

As Christmas approached, the village was abuzz with preparations for the annual nativity play. Daniel, known for his gentle nature, was to play one of the shepherds who visited baby Jesus.

One cold evening, while gathering his sheep, Daniel noticed that a lamb was missing. The youngest and weakest of the flock, the lamb wouldn't survive the frigid night alone. Determined to find it, Daniel ventured back into the open fields as the sun dipped below the horizon. The wind picked up, and snow began to fall, covering the ground and masking the lamb's tracks. Darkness enveloped the landscape, and Daniel felt a pang of fear. Remembering the shepherds in the nativity story who followed the star to Bethlehem, he whispered a prayer: "Lord, guide me as You guided them."

As he pressed on, a distant light flickered through the trees. Intrigued, Daniel moved toward it. The light grew brighter, leading him over a small hill where he found the lost lamb tangled in a thicket.

Relieved, he freed the lamb and cradled it in his arms. But when he turned to head home, he realized he was disoriented. The snowfall had intensified, and the familiar landmarks were obscured.

Daniel's heart raced. "Please, God, help me find the way," he prayed. At that moment, the clouds parted slightly, revealing a single bright star shining directly ahead. Trusting this celestial guide, Daniel followed the star's light.

After what felt like hours, he emerged onto the main path leading back to the village. Exhausted but grateful, he returned home safely with the lamb. Word of his adventure spread quickly, and the villagers marvelled at how the star had guided him, much like the wise men in the biblical account.

That Christmas Eve, Daniel shared his story at the nativity play. "Just as God led me to my lost lamb, He leads us all when we stray," he told the assembled crowd. "We only need to look up and trust in His guidance."

Trusting in God's guidance can lead us safely through even the darkest times.



Able Community Care Questions and Answers

Able Community Care is a Norfolk, family owned, Home Care provider which was established in 1980. We are often asked by our clients, carers and members of the public, questions across a wide range of care issues. Care information is often time-consuming and difficult to access, so we are happy to share some of our questions and answers with you.

Question – I have an elderly relative who lives several hundred miles away from me and we rely mainly on phone calls to keep in touch, but apart from me, she has little contact with anyone else. Someone mentioned that the Silver Line is a support service for older people in her situation, what do they do?

Answer – The Silver Line Helpline run by Age UK is a free, confidential telephone service for older people. The following comes from their website:

We offer friendship, conversation, and support to older people aged 55 and over. Whatever the day or time, you can pick up the phone and speak to one of our friendly Silver Line team members.

Whether you'd like to exchange a quick "Good Morning" with someone, fancy a chat about how your day has gone, or need a trusted listening ear to share your thoughts and feelings with, we're here to talk.

Calls are free on **0800 470 80 90**

Question – Will Age UK help an older person with debts?

Answer - Yes, Age UK can help older individuals struggling with debts. They offer a free Advice Line and have specialist advisors at local Age UK branches who can provide support and guidance. The free Advice Line telephone number is **0800 678 1602, Open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year**, and you can get help with debt and other financial issues.

Question – I feel I have a hearing problem but cannot afford to purchase hearing aids. Can I get them for free from the NHS? I am a pensioner.

Answer – The first step to take is to visit your GP who can

refer you to a hospital or a local audiology service for a hearing test and assessment. In some NHS areas, if you are over 55 you can directly refer to the audiology service.

If you are assessed as needing hearing aids, then the NHS will provide. If you have NHS hearing aids, you can get free replacement batteries from any hospital audiology or ENT department.

There are often waiting lists for the audiology service. There is also the opportunity to purchase hearing aids privately if you are able to.

Question - I have a life insurance policy, when I die, will the proceeds of the policy be tax free?

Answer - The payout from a life insurance policy is typically tax-free and not subject to income or capital gains tax. However, if the payout is part of your estate, it might be subject to inheritance tax unless it's set up in a trust. (Money Saving Expert.Com)

Question - What is the 2-year rule for NHS dentistry?

Answer - The NHS Dentist two-year rule means you should not wait more than two years between check-ups. If you don't see your NHS dentist within this time, you might lose your registration as an NHS patient.

Question – What does a Community Matron do?

Answer - An NHS community matron is a highly experienced, senior nurse who provides intensive, personalized care to patients with complex long-term conditions, helping them to manage their health at home and avoid hospital admission. They act as case managers, coordinating with GPs, other health professionals, and social care to create care plans, monitor conditions, and provide advanced nursing interventions. There are approximately 2,000 Community Matrons in the UK. Refer to your local surgery for further information on local availability.

Web: www.ablecommunitycare.com Tel: +44 (0) 1603 764567 Fax: +44 (0)1603 761655

Food Bank & Community Fridge



SBC is a collection and distribution point for the Foodbank and is open Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon to receive donations for the food

bank and provide a space for personal prayer.

Jerry or Ron are always on hand for anyone who needs help. The Food Bank at SBC is open on Fridays in the Stables, 1.15 to 3.00pm.

If you need help, or know someone in difficulty, either contact the Food Bank on 07826 376343, or contact Ron Skivington at minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk

The Community Fridge food is available to everyone otherwise it goes to waste.

Tesco's have regularly donated large amounts of produce and also other retailers like Nicholson's and Morrisons, but local people have also regularly brought in garden produce or food that wasn't going to get used. It's often said there is no such thing as a free lunch, but the Community Fridge is a free lunch as food is exchanged between people instead of going to waste.

Community Fridge is open:

Monday 2 to 4pm and Tuesday to Friday 10 to 12 noon.

For more information go to
Stalham Community Fridge Facebook.

Revivals Are Continuing



Malachi is the book that closes the Old Testament. Nothing is really known about him except his name means “My messenger” and that he was a prophet with a message to give to a people who had forgotten God loved them. When that happens it affects the way people live, not only do they lose sight of and turn away from God, so at best He becomes background wallpaper in their daily lives, but also the result of that is that every relationship and every activity they take part in is diminished.

Writes Ron Skivington

Chapter 1 verse 1 says “I have loved you” says the Lord; the people’s response follows “How have you loved us”? God here is like the loving parent reminding their child they are loved and yet the child comes back with a rebellious attitude and response, challenging the parent “you don’t understand me, you just want to spoil my fun, if you love me why are you always on my back”?

The people were suspicious, what would God demand of them? Would He not just add burdens to them, make life more onerous, rob them of what they believed were their rights and stifle their fun?

Sadly in their blindness, apathy and rebellion they could not see the harm they were doing to themselves, that the fact they had cut themselves off from God was really just cutting off their noses to spite their faces kind of behaviour meaning life simply got harder and more miserable for them.

There is a four hundred year gap between Malachi and the Gospels when all was silent from heaven’s side but an expectancy began to grow in the hearts of some who remembered Malachi had said God would send a messenger who would prepare the way and that the Lord they had begun to



seek would suddenly appear in His temple [3:1] A song that’s sometimes sung in churches, based on this book, is “Restore O Lord the honour of Your name.” What was happening was a sense of expectancy, of anticipation, was growing “O come, O come, Emmanuel.” Come, O long expected Jesus” was the prayer, though of course no-one had heard of Jesus at that time. People just wanted God to act, to deliver them, to send them a Saviour because they had begun to realise their need, that to have the best life they couldn’t wouldn’t happen without God’s input.

Jesus eventually came, was born in Bethlehem to Mary, was worshipped by angels, shepherds and kings but hated by King Herod and the religious elite who wanted God on their terms not on God’s.

Jesus’s life and teaching attracted followers who became the church which exploded onto the scene in and around first century Jerusalem, after the resurrection. We could say a revival of sorts had broken out.

Revivals have continued to happen all around the world at various times and places since then, a revival being defined as a restoration of life in the church bringing a desire for a more vital and closer relationship with God, usually after a period of moral decline. This new life begins with God rather than people. To my mind it has little to do with religion but is all about a relationship with Jesus through whom we begin to know God better.

One thing Jesus was very clear about was that one day He would come again [John 14:3]

That’s part of the Christmas story, every bit as much as His birth and being called Jesus for “He will save people from their sins” [Matt 1:21]

May we see God do a new thing amongst us this Christmas.

Unlimited

Making memories, changing lives!

Looking for your kids to have a great holiday and find out more about faith? Then look no further! Choose from multi-activity residentials with a mix of sport, adventure, arts and crafts, fun and games, or go for one of the specialist holidays which focus on a specific activity such as sailing, technology, outdoor activities or baking.

For those with additional needs, “Wide Open”, “Unlimited” and “Boundless” will give you the opportunity to have great fun, make new friends and learn more about Jesus. They are multi-activity holidays for teenagers and young adults with learning difficulties and everything will be geared towards helping you to have an amazing holiday in a safe and secure environment.

Wide Open - 13-18yrs - 16-20th Aug (Somerset)

Unlimited - 19-25yrs - 4-8th Aug (Norfolk)

Boundless - 26-30yrs - 11-15th Aug (Norfolk)

Visit scriptureunion.org for more details of all their holidays.

Boundless

Scripture Union

SBC Notice Board

Ladies Breakfast

The next Ladies Breakfast will be on January 17th 2026 & 21st March 2026 8.30am in SBC's Schoolroom. Followed by a guest speaker. No fixed charge, but all donations are appreciated, all profits will go to a charity.

Book a place or more information by contacting Elaine on 07796 875785 or email Elainesmith364@btinternet.com

Table Tennis

The table tennis Club meets every Wednesday morning 9.30-12.00pm in SBC Schoolroom. Your first week is free thereafter it's a £2.00 donation which includes refreshments. We are a happy group of all standards of players, look forward to you joining us. The club has been going since 2008 It's a great way to get some exercise and have a chat, for more info call Stewart on 07421129812

Warm Space

Warm Space's in SBC'S Stable is for people who need some time in the warm. It is open as a warm space so people can come and have a cuppa, enjoy a chat, make new friends, play board games. It is open to everyone.

Donations are always welcome.

Opening times:

Monday 2.00 to 4.00pm alongside Community Fridge
Wednesday 10.00 to 12.00pm alongside Community Fridge

Thursday 10.00am to 2.00pm alongside Community Fridge to 12.00noon.

Soup will be served from 12.00 to 2.00pm. Volunteers are still needed. If you can help staff it or occasionally provide soup, please speak or contact Diana at secretary@stalhambaptist.org.uk

Memories Café at SBC

Friendly and welcoming space in the last Monday of the month 10-12.00 for people with memory problems and their carers that will help and support people in the community. Come along for a cuppa, games and other activities. For more information, please talk to Diana - 07951 949 128.

Coffee and Chat

Every Tuesday Coffee and Chat is open 9.30am to 12.00pm. Great social gathering with cakes, biscuits and bacon butties available. Everyone is welcome to sit and chat.

Merry Christmas

HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Incredible Revival

Britain's religious landscape is undergoing its most momentous generational shift in decades.

GB news says "Young Britons are driving an unexpected surge in Christianity in the UK, hearing from those who have found faith in both God and the Church.

The UK had been suffering a staggering decline in Christianity over the past decade, with under two per cent of Britons regularly attending Church of England services. However, since being freed from lockdown, UK churches have witnessed a major surge in loyal attendees - often spearheaded by younger people."

Figures from YouGov's bi-annual tracker revealed that belief in God among 18 to 24-year-olds has almost tripled in just three-and-a-half years, rising from 16 per cent in August 2021 to 45 per cent in January 2025.

Among 25-49-year-olds, belief has risen, from 21 per cent to 33 per cent over the same period.

Church attendance figures have also increased, according to two YouGov polls in 2018 and 2024, which showed a 56 per cent growth in UK adults attending church at least once a month.

It is the younger generation who are driving the growth in churches.

Young women have jumped from three percent to twelve percent and thirteen percent of young men are attending churches.

Gracie a 15-year-old member of SBC says"

Christian revival is happening more and more. God is moving across Britain, and more people are turning to him. People are sharing His word increasingly, online and in person meaning more people are coming to believe."

Another young member of SBC Angel has written. The

Gift of light (John chapter 8 verse 12)

'In the midst of darkness, there is a light that shines brighter than any shadow. A light that guides us and gives us hope. This light is not just physical phenomenon but a spiritual presence that dwells within us.

It is the light of love, the light of hope and the light of faith. A light that reminds us that we are not alone, that we are loved, and that we are cherished.

As Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

The gift of light reminds that we are part of something greater than ourselves. A greater story of love, redemption, and hope. A story that is still being written, and one that we are all a part of.

So go forth, dear one, with the light of love in your hearts. Shine brightly in the darkness. Amen!



Angela Caine who owns the Emily Faith Shop in Stalham High Street that she opened in 2010 says "I always give bibles free to people which was around 4 to 5 a year they came mostly from house clearing that I do, once a man asked if I had a bible amongst the books, I gave him a bible and he cried saying "you have no idea what that means to me" She went on "This year to date (October 2025) amazingly we have given out 69 bibles, meaning I have had to get more bibles. The customers have been a youngster a 17 year old to the oldest of 94, mostly the customers are aged 20 to 40."

In recent times SBC has seen a steady flow of new faces, of all ages, and often holiday makers attending our services some saying SBC is their holiday church. We are especially encouraged by the numbers of young people joining us. Usually before the youngsters leave, for age-appropriate groups, there is an illustrated talk geared to them.

In the last few months, the young people have taken the Sunday services.

We also have young people drumming and playing the keyboard at times.

Our lively services last around an hour led by different people with different styles, including by our youngsters.

Our songs and hymns are a mix of classic to modern

standards led by a band again often involving all ages. Ron and Jerry, with the occasional guest, bring a relevant message in keeping with today's world and life.

Since Covid we have provided an Online service which gives a flavour of what we do and can be accessed by clicking onto services on our

website www.stalhambaptist.org.uk/

As many of you will know we deliver prayer request cards around Stalham. If you have something or someone you would like us to pray for, drop a line to minister@stalhambaptist.org.uk. We promise complete confidentiality.

We are pleased too that more and more from the Stalham community are coming to events and activities held in the Schoolroom and Stables details of which are on pages and can also be found on our website.

The Revival for this Christmas can be seen as a stone thrown into one of the broads which makes one circle that then grows and grows and grows reaching out like the love of Jesus and His gift of eternal life to more and more people giving themselves to Jesus, for anyone its simple, just ask Him into your heart.

Mark the man in Boots

Hi, my name is Mark, and I am your local community pharmacist in Boots in Stalham. I have the honour of being asked to provide an article about myself and the community pharmacy for the Christmas Community Scene . It has now become apparent it is not easy to write about yourself. You begin to realise you are not that interesting.

I have been a pharmacist for over 25 years and worked in the sector for over 30. I know what you are thinking-must have started as a baby! That is almost true. Pharmacy is in the blood as my late father was also a pharmacist. He always told me not to become a pharmacist but like all good children I went against that advice and did it anyway. I have a wonderful wife and and three lovely children, and I do a job I really enjoy. I live 5 minutes from the shop. The people in and around here are really nice. I am a lucky man, and I feel really at home in Stalham. I have had two great influences on my career. My father is obviously one but the other was a real stalwart of community pharmacy a gentleman called Roy Simpson. During his career he became affectionately known as Mr Cromer. He in many ways has shaped the pharmacist I am today. He would do anything for anybody and really go above and beyond to help his patients. Patients used to



come into the pharmacy specifically to see him and there was a very good reason for that. One great piece of advice he gave me that I have always used and never forgotten was that if you treat everybody like a member of your

family (one you like) then every patient will get the same care and attention. The best bit of my job is seeing and helping people. A big part of community pharmacy is being there, and I will always make time for anybody, but I am only able to do so with the support of all the wonderful people I work with. Working in a pharmacy is stressful so you need a team you can have a laugh with during a long workday.

Community pharmacy has changed a lot over the years and the thing that we have to offer is ease of accessibility. It used to be that a pharmacy just dispensed medicines.

Now we are offering a lot of NHS services to take some of the pressure off GP practices. You come in and you will be able to talk to a trained member of staff. It is face to face. So many interactions with people these days are by phone, text or email. That is sad and apparently progress. All pharmacies need the support of patients. Our presence on high streets and local communities makes us an integral part of the healthcare system. If we don't use them then they will close. No pharmacy is safe even Stalham. I look forward to seeing you all.

All hands-on deck!

That's the appropriately nautical call you'll hear from us in November. It might sound odd to be calling for help in the month that we close for the winter but in fact it's a time when we need all the help we can get. Because when we reluctantly close the doors to the public for a while the work doesn't stop. Writes Pete Goodrum.

November sees us step up to boat maintenance for a start. Obviously, our boats are constantly maintained for safety and reliability, but downtime gives us the chance for thorough servicing. Then there's cleaning and conservation of the quaysides, pathways and the buildings. Less 'physical', but absolutely equally essential, there's a lot of work to do on research, especially for our upcoming exhibition on holidays on The Broads. Our new Souvenir Brochure is in the planning and there's work to do on that. And that's before we get into the actual marketing of the museum for next season - let's face it, telling all of you how we will continue to bring the stories of the Broads alive is a vital job. Oh - and did we mention the need to clean and refurbish all the exhibits between seasons? You get the picture.

There's allot goes on behind those closed doors. It's all about making next year the best year - but it needs a lot of help!



Why not consider being a Volunteer at The Museum of The Broads?

We absolutely rely on our Volunteers and you can rely on it being a fun and rewarding thing to do. You might have skills that we need and you're happy to put them to use for us. You might fancy learning a new skill too - and we can help there.

You'll get training, make new friends, get to attend social events (and get into the

Museum for free!).

There's even a newly updated uniform - yes- we have new colourways!

And there's an end of year thank you event too. Which usually starts in November (we said it was a busy month!). Maybe you'll be there next year.

Meantime, if you're interested please contact Susie Lay, Volunteers Manager (01692 581681)

or volunteersmanager@museumofthebroads.org.uk

Family Help

As Winter draws in and Christmas is fast approaching it can feel an expensive time of year for families with the cost of heating, food and presents.

Leanne from Family Hub and Lucy from Schools and Communities provide advice and guidance for families with children aged 0-18 (or 25 for those with a special educational need) as well as any support for parents or carers whose needs may impact their child.

The Family Hub is for any family that needs early help support. As part of the Family Hub, Leanne helps to bring services together to offer support to families with access to a range of services including Start for Life, parenting support, debt, housing and welfare advice. Leanne is also able to provide food bank vouchers for families and signpost to warm spaces as well as any particular services that can help support families especially over the festive period and winter.

The School and Community teams offer support to education settings and families with a focus on inclusion,

early help, and prevention.

They aim to help children and families as soon as possible - be this in the home school or in the community. Lucy can offer advice and support to families to address any issues being faced as early as possible and to prevent escalation of need within SEND support arrangements.

Future dates for the new year where you can find us at The Stables, Stalham Baptist Church between 9:30-10:30am on the 6th

January, 3rd February, 3rd March and the 7th April.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Helpful contact details-

North Norfolk Family Hub 01263 739060

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) 0344 800 8020

The SEND and Inclusion support line 0333 313 7165

Client Hardship Service (Support around financial struggles) 0344 800 8020



Stalham's Christmas History

Stalham's Christmas history is largely a reflection of broader English and Norfolk traditions, evolving from ancient Yule celebrations to Victorian-influenced family festivities and modern community events like the annual Yuletide Market.

Ancient and Medieval Roots

Like the rest of Norfolk, Stalham's earliest midwinter celebrations would have been influenced by **Pagan Yule festivals** brought by Scandinavian settlers (Vikings). These 12-day festivals involved:

- Feasting on ham or boar.
- Drinking mead.
- Burning a large Yule log, the continuous burning of which was thought to bring

prosperity for the coming year.

Decorating with evergreens, a custom inherited from the Roman festival of Saturnalia. With the spread of Christianity, these customs were incorporated into a more austere Christmas period focused on prayer and the nativity, though medieval Christmas still involved significant revelry, music, and feasting.

Victorian and Early 20th Century

The modern Christmas was largely shaped by the Victorians, who made it a family-centred holiday. In a bustling Victorian Stalham, local families and tradesmen

would have adopted customs such as:

- **Christmas trees**, a tradition popularised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.
- **Gift-giving** on Christmas Eve.
- **Handmade decorations** and parlour games in homes without electricity.
- **Carolling** (likely an evolution of wassailing traditions) at St Mary's Church.

The widespread availability of **turkey** for Christmas dinner, a bird that was locally raised in Norfolk and walked to London markets in earlier times.

Modern Stalham Christmas

In recent history, a notable addition to the town's festive calendar is the annual **Stalham Yuletide Market**, first held around 2017. This event has become a major community gathering with a Victorian theme, organised by Stalham Area Business Forum featuring this year on Sunday 7th December 12 noon – 4pm.

- Over 40 stalls, inside and out, food & drink, crafts, gifts, decorations.
- A Christmas tree festival at St Mary's Church.
- A visit from Father Christmas for children.
- Live music & refreshments.

The Yuletide market and related activities continue the tradition of community celebration during the festive period, reflecting the town's history as a self-sufficient market town on the Norfolk Broads.

- **Christmas Carols in the pub** in The Swan Inn Monday 15th December 7.00pm with SBC
- **Norfolk Wherry Unity Brass Band** in SBC Saturday 13th December at 7.30pm



Keeping Your Home Warm

As we enter autumn and winter approaches, now is a good time to take stock of the ability of our homes to retain heat.

Here are the 4 key areas in your home where you could be losing heat and how to minimise it:

Walls.

Heat loss through walls of your house

Up to 35% of heat can be lost through walls if they're not insulated.

The vast majority of properties built from the 1990s onwards were insulated, however, many older properties have no insulation at all.

There are various options to resolve this, both internally and externally.

All need to be carried out by professionals

- Injection, from the outside of blown mineral fibre, polystyrene beads or polyurethane foam.
Least invasive and doesn't alter the appearance of the property
- Externally, fixing insulation board to the outer walls and finishing with an epoxy render.
- Planning permission will be required.
- Potential to alter appearance of property.
- Expensive, as access equipment will be needed
- Internally, fixing insulated plasterboard (usually 37 to 50mm thick to the outer wall in each room.
- Disruptive, possible electrical and plumbing work
- Small loss of room area.

Roof

One of the most common ways a home loses heat is through the roof. Up to 25% of heat can be lost through the roof, but this can be reduced with good insulation.

Current requirement is 270mm, this has been increased over time and many older houses no longer meet this as levels have not been topped up as regulations have changed

The installation of loft insulation is an easy way to prevent heat loss and can be carried out with minimal disruption, by able bodied 'diy-ers'

- Fibreglass, lightweight and flexible, available in various thicknesses and can be easily cut to size.
Irritating to the touch, although the latest products are now 'soft touch'
- Mineral wool, lightweight and flexible, available in various thicknesses and slabs, can be easily cut to size. Denser than fibreglass and better performance
However, higher cost than fibreglass.
- Rigid board.
Lightweight, easy to cut and shape, more effective than mineral wool, slightly more expensive than

mineral wool

- Blown
Foam, more expensive up-front cost, fills all spaces, however has to be installed by a specialist
Fibreglass or vermiculite, again installed by a specialist, however air movement in the loft space will disturb the fill.

For those seeking a more environmentally friendly solution (although rockwool, as its name suggests is manufactured from naturally occurring materials) there is the option of a sheepswool or hemp based insulation, although these are quite pricey.

Windows and Doors

Up to 15% of heat can be lost through closed windows and doors.

- Replacement windows with sealed unit double or even triple glazing.
- Use of Low-e heat reflecting glass, expensive
- Compression draught strips to ensure no cold air penetration.
- Flexible sealant internally and externally.
- Installation of a high performance composite door (also self-coloured so no decoration required)

Compression strips and seals are simple to install to provide a simple improvement

Floor

Up to 15% of heat can be lost through the floor of your home.

Most likely if the floor is timber, rather than concrete.

Impractical to insulate concrete floors, post construction, however suspended timber floors can be insulated, although this is disruptive.

- Removal of the floorboards, installation of a breathable membrane to hold the insulation in place and then cut to fit either fibreglass, rockwool or rigid board.

Other tips

- Fit flaps or brushes to letterboxes internally
- Fit brush seals to doors
- Add a keyhole cover to an external door
- Seal around doors and windows, internally and externally.
- Insulate pipes and tanks
- Add reflective panels behind radiators when redecorating.

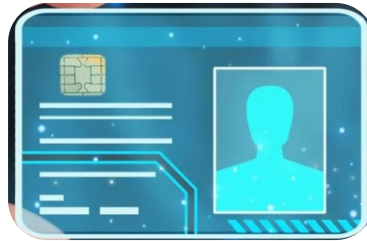
Always remember to ventilate and allow the house to 'breathe' in milder and warm conditions.

If anyone wants more information or help, email editor@communityscene.org.uk



Known Intimately— No ID needed.

What's your view on the government proposal to introduce the new, mandatory, digital ID to help tackle illegal immigration in the UK? Do you agree that digital ID cards will help the UK move into a digital future by providing everyone with a way to prove their identity? Or do you think they could pave the way for a more intrusive system, raising concerns about privacy, data security and government overreach? At the heart of this debate is the question of identity. How much information about yourself would you want others to know? Are digital IDs a way of telling people who you are in a nutshell, or are they a version of George Orwell's vision in his novel 1984, where Big Brother is always watching our every move?



However intensely we feel the government is observing us, Psalm 139:1-6 in the Bible presents a far more profound vision of being fully known by God. The Psalm was written by Israel's greatest King, David. He reminds us that God does not need databases, CCTV, or ID cards to know who we are, because He is omniscient and omnipresent. David reflects on the fact that God knows him intimately, and this knowledge brings him comfort and awe.

David begins with a powerful declaration: "O LORD, you have searched me and known me!" (v.1). This is not a superficial glance. It means that God has dug deep. He is fully acquainted with every part of our lives, knowing us completely, comprehensively and exhaustively. This knowledge is breathtakingly detailed in Psalm 139:2-6. David says, "You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord." So complete is this knowledge that David describes it as being completely surrounded: "You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head." (verse 5). We are encircled by God's awareness of our past, present, and future.

To some, this knowledge that God knows all about us can

feel threatening, much like the concerns about the digital ID cards. But the Psalmist's reaction is strikingly different. He whispers in worship and says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!" (verse 6). For him, God's all-embracing knowledge is not a prison of surveillance but a welcoming refuge.

And this is where the Christmas story shines its glorious light. The wonder of Christmas is that the God who knows everything about us did not remain distant. The profound truth of Psalm 139 is made personal in the manger of Bethlehem. The all-knowing God, who discerns our thoughts from afar, chose to draw near. He laid aside the glory of heaven to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, to be known not just as our Creator, but as our Immanuel -God with us.

In a world where so many are looking inward for answers and struggling to know themselves, King David in this Psalm - and the Christmas story-points us to the one who knows us best. There is a profound, energising comfort in knowing that the God who knows our every strength and failure, every joy and sorrow, loved us so much that He sent His Son to walk with us and save us.

The question for us this Christmas season is whether we are willing to make room for Him in our hearts. How wonderful it is that in the kingdom of God, we don't need digital identity cards because our God loves, cares for, and knows us so intimately that He gave us His only Son. In the child of Bethlehem, we find the ultimate proof that to be fully known by God is to be perfectly and eternally loved. The Christmas story is about God loving us and drawing close to us. The question is, are we willing to draw near to him?

"Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay Close by me forever and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, And take us to heaven to live with thee there."— The hymn "Away in a Manger" by William J. Kirkpatrick.

Cawing Crows

For some of us the loud cawing noises from the culprits of chaos in the air and the trees can be very very annoying in Stalham. Yes crows! known as a "murder" of crows, however, these birds might not be making a fuss without good reason. That noise might be the heartbroken cries of the crows mourning a fallen friend.

You could be stumbling into a crow funeral. Crows are amongst the most intelligent birds in the animal kingdom. These birds possess higher cognition skills, which allow them to solve complex problems and plan their future tasks. Their response to death is another unique feature that distinguishes them from the rest of the animal kingdom. Only a



few other animals, such as elephants and whales, have significant responses to death.

When a crow comes across a fallen comrade it raises an alarm call to alert the other members of the "murder".

They then settle down to look at the corpse,

looking thoughtfully for a long time.

They then break into intense cawing, as if grieving the death of their fallen friend.

After crying out with shrill cries they then sit in silence, watching over the corpse for several minutes. If predators

approach the dead crow the birds mob and scold predators like hawks.

Such rituals have been often seen by farmers, bird watchers and people in parks or in their backyards.

Christmas Carols at The Swan Inn Stalham

The Swan Inn has held Christmas Carol evenings since 2015 with Stalham Baptist Church. Increasing numbers have come year on year to singing carols and enjoying a good evening.

Christmas pub visits in Britain have a deep-rooted history, as pubs served as central social hubs for centuries. The tradition involves gathering at local inns and taverns for drinks and carols, a practice that gained momentum during the Victorian era when landlords opened on Christmas morning.

Today, pubs offer a cherished ritual to connect with friends and family during the festive period.

While modern traditions have evolved, the act of gathering at a pub during Christmas continues to echo centuries-old practices of sharing festive cheer.

Sara's Great Pink Coffee Morning

Sarah says the Pink Coffee Morning in the SBC Schoolroom went brilliantly, raising £1,000, on Saturday October 18th. We had a guess the weight of the cake competition and the fabulous tombola. As normal there were bacon rolls, home-made cakes, hot drinks & cold drinks lots of laughs and chats.

This is a cause incredibly close to my heart as most of you will know.

In the UK it's estimated that 5,6000 women and 400

Men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2025. Every penny raised helps fund research into this hideous disease!

SBC Bible Art

We are open for people to join in open for people of all ages to join us either as a one off or on a regular basis. If you have your own craft materials you are welcome to bring them along.

Our next Bible Art in the Schoolroom is

December 5th - December 19th after Christmas

January 16th - January 30th February 6th - February 20th

March 6th - March 20th - April 17th

Any questions? Feel free to contact Simone

Otieno: sim1otieno@gmail.com and or 07436837210

Simone Otieno



Messy Church

Its families [of all different shapes, sizes and ages] getting together to snack, be creative and celebrate on a Bible theme, then share a meal. It's a *different* sort of church.

Ours, at Stalham Baptist, happens once a month on the 3rd Thursday at 3.15 to 5pm. We snack and are creative for about an hour, then have a story, song and prayer for about 15 minutes

before we share a meal. For more information contact Barbara on barbarageoff@gmail.com



Noah's Ark Baby & Toddler Group

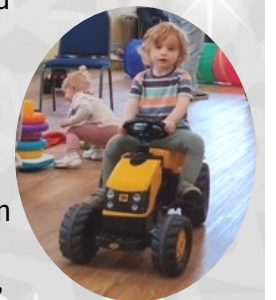
The Noah's Ark Baby and Toddler Group continues to meet in the School Room at SBC every Wednesday from 1.30 - 3.00pm during term time.

We have a large space in which the children can enjoy active play as well as puzzles, craft, construction toys and books. This term we have created a large wall frieze with

lots of different transport drawings and towards Christmas we will be creating another of the Christmas story. Each week we have songs/stories and snacks are available too.

We have links with the local staff from the children's community hub who can also offer support to families.

So, if you are a mum, dad, aunt, uncle, grandparent, childminder or foster carer you will be very welcome - so long as you bring along a child under five years old! Do come and join us for Wednesday afternoons of fun. For more information contact: Jenny Payne at jennifer.payne55@gmail.com



Citizens Advice Service

The Citizens Advice Service is open on Friday in the SBC Stables, 1.15 to 3.00pm. To book an appointment phone 07826 376343, or just drop in.



MEMORIAL SERVICE.

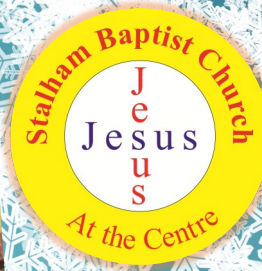
13TH DECEMBER 2025, @2 PM.
@ STALHAM BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Stalham Bereavement Support Group invites you to our Annual Memorial Service. The Service is open to All who would like to remember their loved ones who died.

If you want your loved one to be remembered, please send their name and possibly a picture to: sbsg.0623@gmail.com before the 06th of December, 2025 or contact Jerry at 07733837687.



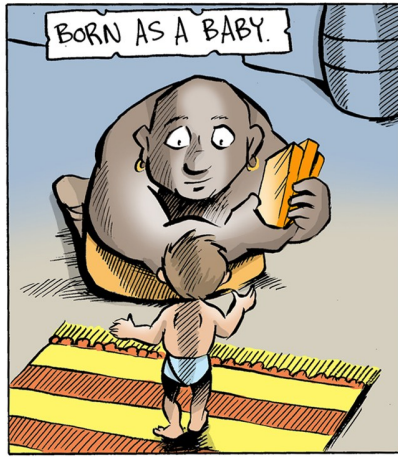
SBC Shining Christmas



Swan Inn Christmas Carols 7.00pm Monday 15th December



BORN TO CONQUER



BUT TO CONQUER DEATH.
AND TO DO THAT HE HAD TO DIE.

