

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 5

Newsletter

Aug 2012

*For the Parishes of
Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear
and Staple Fitzpaine*

Virtually every corner of the British Isles has been owned and tilled, cropped and grazed for at least 7,000 years. There is hardly a square yard of land that has not



been utilised by someone since the arrival of Neolithic man; the landscape we love and admire is almost entirely man-made. We don't own the land; we're merely looking after it.



Welcome to the fifth issue of the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, which hopes to satisfy the need identified in the Parish Plan for a 'hard copy' local news and information medium delivered free to every household in Neroche Parish. The aim of this publication is to improve communication within the Parish by providing news and information on a wide variety of subjects and issues.

Newsletter Foreword

David Fothergill (Somerset County Councillor) - June 2012



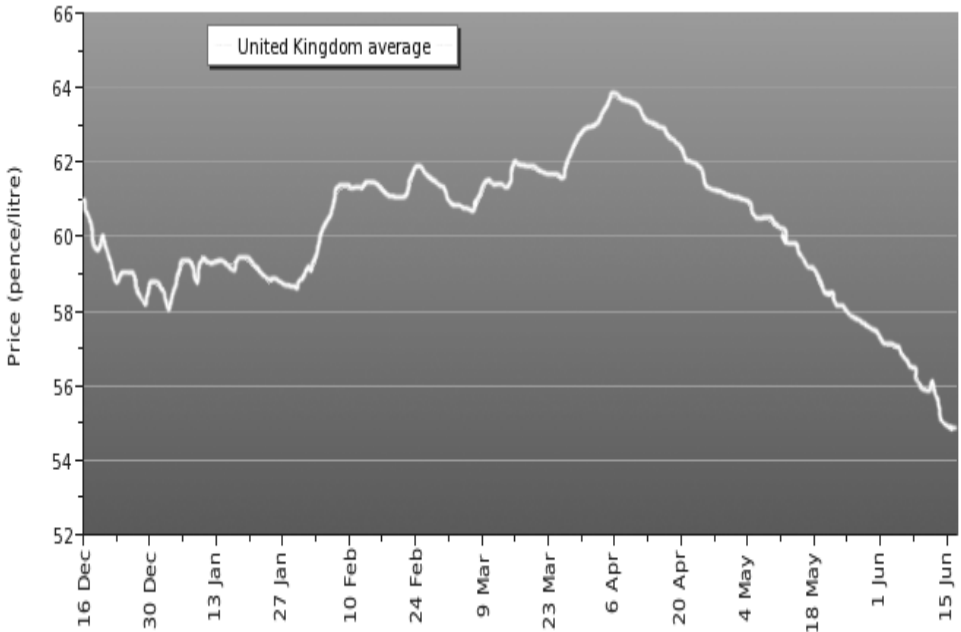
In my role as County Councillor I get to see a wide cross section of newsletters, sadly some appear tired and lacking enthusiasm, seemingly unloved apart from a few dedicated producers. I am delighted to say that the Neroche Villages Newsletter is totally the opposite of any of these criticisms; it is vibrant, interesting, informative and reflects the community it serves. A very big well done is deserved by all the team, from editor to volunteer deliverers, who seem to take the self-funding newsletter from strength to strength.

It seems difficult to believe but in ten months' time (where has the last three years gone?!) we will be electing a new County Council. It has just been announced by the Boundary Commission that the Neroche Villages will form the backbone of a new Division within the County Council. Previously aligned to North Curry, Creech St Michael and Stoke St Gregory the Neroche area will in future be a major part of the Blackdown and Neroche Division. This is a fantastic opportunity to emphasise the rural needs of the area and to ensure that a voice is heard at County Hall. If I am lucky enough to be selected to stand for the new Division I hope to continue the strong representation I believe I have already given. Most recently I have put forward a road safety improvement scheme for Staple Fitzpaine and Curland and I am hopeful that I will soon receive funding to install a local response defibrillator to save on those precious minutes after a heart attack.

Although I try to attend each Parish Council meeting I do always welcome questions or even comments from individuals in the local area, so if there is anything please feel free to contact me on 07765 256256 or by email DJAFothergill@somerset.gov.uk; I undertake to always get back to you.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to encourage everyone to continue to support your local newsletter. Without your contribution, advertising and support then the quality of publication will only fade and then sadly one day it may be lost.

Domestic Central Heating Oil Price



Are you paying too much for your oil?



Do you have oil-fired central heating? If so, we want to hear from you. We're planning to include an article on the '**Somerset Community Oil Scheme**' in the next newsletter. (Note: We don't want any personal details.)

Just send an email to the editor (alantperrior@yahoo.co.uk) specifying:

Payment type; specify one-off payment or monthly direct debit or community oil scheme or other.

Last purchase; specify the month in which you last bought oil.

Price; specify the price per litre.

Supplier; specify the name of your supplier.



Focus on Local Business

(Editor's note: There are about 60 businesses operating from within the parish, the majority being small operations, many working from home. We would like to feature as many of these businesses as possible in the newsletter. If you would like your business to be featured then please contact the editor.)

JACKSON ARCHITECTS



Jason Jackson moved to Thurlbear over 10 years ago and married Louise, who has lived in the Parish for over 30 years. He is an active member of Neroche Parish Council, serving 2 years as Chairman, and supported the recent Parish Plan initiative lead by Tim French. He is working as a member of the Planning Action Group to produce a Design Guide for the Parish.

He studied at Oxford Polytechnic (now Oxford Brookes University) and qualified in 1987 with a BA(Hons) Architectural Studies, Diploma (Architectural Studies) and a second Diploma (Urban design).

Before arriving in our beautiful Parish, Jason lived and worked in Cheltenham, having established his own practice in 1992 during the last recession and concentrated on providing a quality design service, whilst minimising overheads to remain competitive. The practice employs two technicians and a part time office manager in offices based near the family home in Thurlbear.

The practice specialises in domestic projects and Jason works hard to ensure that first time private clients are guided through the intricacies of building design, employing a builder and seeing their dreams come to reality. Jackson Architects can provide a full architects service, from initial ideas and sketch designs, through planning permission, detail construction drawings, competitive tendering and full on site management right through to completion.

The work is extremely varied but includes extensions and refurbishment to houses, barn conversions, new houses for private clients and extensive experience of working on listed buildings and period properties. The experience with older buildings allows Jackson Architects to reproduce authentic details when extending older properties whilst achieving modern technical requirements.






The Practice has won a number of awards including Somerset Local Authority Building Control “Best Barn Conversion” and “Best Listed Building Extension”. In addition to traditional buildings, Jackson Architects have an ever-increasing portfolio of modern designs for extensions, barn conversions and new replacement homes, often combining traditional materials in a modern context, for those clients who want something a bit different.

Jason studied renewable energy, and its impact on villages, as part of his degree and has written a dissertation on the subject. His practical knowledge of sustainable technology goes back to his first rainwater harvesting system, installed almost 15 years ago, and now extends to solar panels, air-source and ground-source heat pumps, heat stores and all the practical design issues of building sustainable homes. As an active member of the Parish Council and the Neroche Planning Action Group, he is always happy to discuss ideas and give free, impartial and practical advice to Parish residents.

Jason always gives a free first consultation to discuss any new project and is offering a 10% discount to all Neroche Parish residents. Jackson Architects has a great website (www.jacksonarchitects.co.uk) with plenty of photographs and examples of completed projects to inspire you. Alternatively, if you would like to discuss any ideas, large or small, give Jason a call on 01823 443742.





**St Peter’s Church, Staple Fitzpaine
Jigsaw Library**

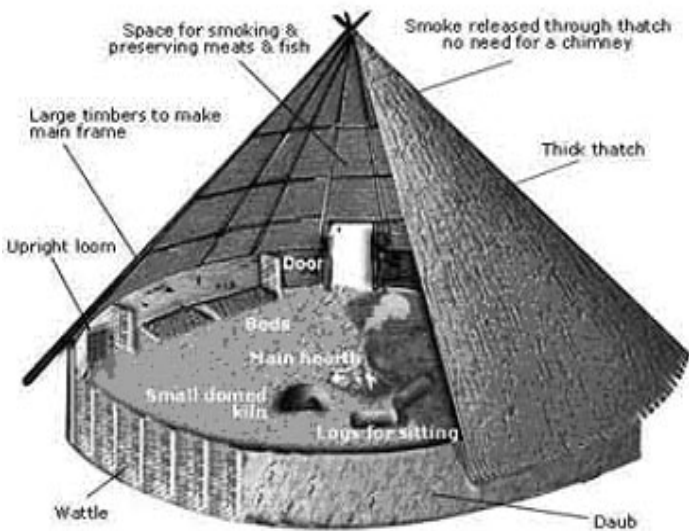
A selection of over 30 jigsaws to
choose from. £5.00 for the 1st year.
Contact:: Nikki Baxter on 01823 480675
or Georgina Leech on 07815 310990

Neroche History Group

'In The Shadow of the Blackdowns: The Making of a Landscape' From A Talk by Tom Mayberry to Neroche History Group

Tom Mayberry, Head of Heritage Services at Somerset County Council, is always one of our most popular speakers. On this occasion Tom's theme was how the countryside around us has been layered over time by nature and man to create the landscape we know today.

In the 1970's our local area was regarded as having little evidence of Bronze or Iron Age settlements. But over time archaeological and historical investigations have improved our knowledge.



Work on Taunton's park and ride scheme near the M5 junction, has revealed previously unknown layers. It has shown substantial evidence through from the Bronze Age to Romano British. Two

very large Bronze Age roundhouses measuring some 17 metres in diameter have been identified, as have Iron Age roundhouses and fragments of tools for shearing sheep.

Aerial surveys have shown small Iron Age settlements at Thurlbear.

Hugh Grabham, a local resident, found earthworks subsequently identified as an Iron Age fort at Orchard Hill in 1986.

The Saxon Charters of the area identify boundaries, ditches and streams but no details of settlements. But contemporary field names may show their ancient roots e.g. Swincombe a field near Stoke St Mary may indicate a field where pigs were kept in Anglo Saxon times.

Following the Bronze, Iron, Romano British and Anglo Saxon periods, the Normans added another layer as their new churches replaced the more modest Anglo Saxon ones. Thurlbear church has a font dating from 1100 and was one of the earliest aisled churches in the diocese, while Orchard Portman has a fine 12th century arch. Staple Fitzpaine church, although heavily Victorianised, still has its Norman doorway.

The Portman family have been a major influence in the area over many centuries. Drawings donated to the County Museum show the Portman mansion, known as Orchard House, as being one of the



largest in Somerset of its period and to have been architecturally innovative during the Tudor era. After being demolished in 1840s, parts of Orchard House turned up in other local buildings. Tom wonders if a Jacobean panel in Staple Manor originates from there.

In 1833, by act of parliament, Edward Berkeley Portman enclosed Neroche Forest to increase the amount of agricultural land. In the middle of the 19th century, he built new estate and farmhouses, a new church at Bickenhall (now the Parish Hall), a school at Staple Fitzpaine, and the “New” Road from Staple Manor that goes to Bickenhall.

Thus an eloquently described and beautifully illustrated talk ended where it began namely with the theme of man’s influence in the layering and texturing of our local landscape.

Notes by Jane Hole from a talk by Tom Mayberry to Neroche Local History Group. For information about the history group contact Jane on 01460 234410 jane.hol@tiscali.co.uk

Annual Parish Meeting 2012 - by Tim French

On 3rd May sixty residents attended Neroche Village Hall for the Annual Parish Meetings of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine. These are the four civic parishes that make up Neroche Parish.

The meeting was organised jointly by Neroche Parish Council and the Annual Parish Meeting Action Group.

Marianne Bray, Chair of Neroche Parish Council, reported on the past year's work of the Council and its plans for the forthcoming 12 months. She also welcomed Howard Midworth, the new Clerk to the Parish Council.



Residents raised questions about traffic problems in the parish. The Chair reported that the public meeting the Council had proposed to hold last year on road and traffic problems did not go ahead as the Highways Authority would not attend. Councillor David Fothergill felt that a lot more could be achieved when the authority met the Parish Council and interested parties, rather than by public meetings.

There were questions raised about a security issue relating to the nursing home in Orchard Portman but little information was available other than what was in the public domain at the time (Afternote: The Clerk wrote to the Nursing Home and in reply they have offered to host a small group of representative from the Council, show them round the home, explain the services that are provided and answer any questions).

There were presentations on: the implementation of superfast broadband by Matt Ballard the 'Connecting Somerset' Development Officer; the jubilee celebrations by Councillor Karen Street; Neighbourhood Watch by the local PCSO; and the Parish Plan by Tim French.

The open part of the meeting followed, which allowed residents to circulate and discuss further issues with the speakers, Neroche Parish Councillors, Taunton Deane Councillor John Williams and Somerset County Councillor David Fothergill. Stands were placed around the hall representing various local clubs' organisations and groups that are active in the parish. These included: the Local History Group; Walking Group; Community Police; Communication Action Group; Thursday Lunch Club; Design and Planning Group; Litter Pick Up Group; Roads, Traffic and Transport Group; Queen's Jubilee Committee; Scarecrow Group; Neroche Parish Council; Neroche Project and Neroche Hall.

The Women's Institute provided delicious light refreshments and drinks - much appreciated by all present.

Neroche Parish Council Chairman's Report

- by Jon Bell

May saw the statutory Annual Meeting of the council, at which there are a number of business items which must be conducted. Jon Bell was formally elected chairman and Lynne Spors was elected as vice chair.



The council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed and agreed, along with the Accounts and Annual Returns.

There was discussion on the licence application for the Cosmo music festival at the racecourse and of impending temporary road closures. Some planning matters were also discussed.

Since the meeting we have been informed that a new code of conduct for councillors at all levels (including district and county councillors) is about to be announced by the government. The chairman and Parish clerk attended a recent meeting to hear more information about this and how we might be affected. This will need to be discussed and any changes to current regulations covering our own council's code of conduct and standing orders agreed at our coming meetings in July and September.

A Few Notes From the Farming Community

As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, it is proposed that we produce a series of articles that might give a better understanding of what 'life on the farm' is like in Neroche.

Much of the winter feed for farm animals is made, either as silage or hay. Sheep, cattle and horses need extra feed to get them through the winter months so there is a need to conserve the flush of summer grass in some form.



Silage is most easily spotted in the form of bales wrapped in plastic. The grass is mown and allowed to wilt or dry-out for 24 to 48 hours before it is baled and wrapped in a variety of shapes, depending upon what type of baler is used.

The grass still has a lot of moisture in it at this stage and would go mouldy if not sealed.

By making an airtight bale, the grass quickly uses-up the air and all the goodness is sealed inside. Careful handling is most important so as not to puncture the plastic when carting bales from the field.

Another form of silage-making is to cart the grass away and build a large heap known as a clamp. The grass is mown and a machine called a forage harvester picks up the rows, chopping the grass and blowing it through a spout into high-sided trailers. The grass is stacked and compressed by a machine at the clamp and sealed with



plastic, just the same as the single bale.



When cutting and collecting the grass, soil contamination should be avoided as a disease called listeria can develop in the feed. Moles can

be a real problem as mole hills and tunnels make it very difficult to avoid this happening.

Less hay is made these days due to the four-to-five sunny days needed to make a good quality product. To make hay, the grass needs to be turned



several times after cutting to allow it to dry, so when it is baled it stays fresh. Baling damp hay will allow mould to develop, resulting in poor or worthless feed. Because making good hay is weather-dependant, another form of conservation is often used. Known as haylage, this option allows baling and wrapping at

least a day earlier than waiting to make hay.

When the plastic bales are opened in the winter, silage is moist and heavy and has a strong smell, whereas haylage is a lot lighter and sweeter smelling.

Horses are very fussy eaters and would rather starve than eat poor quality feed. They tend to be the ones who eat hay or haylage; silage is more for dairy and fattening cattle. Sheep can be fed all three but farmers are usually less keen on giving them silage as it can lead to problems.



Finally, the weather is one topic that is anything but predictable. Successive dry winters saw much of the country declare drought conditions earlier in the year, but, as soon as the 'D' word was mentioned, the heavens opened. All of which makes planning farm operations a mixture of hope and experience.



Part of an article, which featured in the NFU's 'Countryside' magazine.

Enjoy the countryside but remember dogs can disturb ground-nesting birds, and take care when walking them in fields with livestock.

Bickenhall & District WI Meeting - June 2012

by Barbara Knight

The old cliché that the WI is ‘just Jam and Jerusalem’ really isn’t true. Already this year speakers have taken us through their adventures in Nepal, and recounted the emotional story of teenage cancer sufferers and the dedicated team of people, including WI Members, trying to raise funds for them.

We learned how to crochet with Fon Couzen, upped our knowledge of the European Union and listened and voted on the resolution to call upon the government to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives.

In June we had a ‘members’ meeting which is a way of saying thank you to the committee for their hard work. The meeting takes place in the home of a member and this year Julie and Mark Pope invited us into their home.



Alison Brown gave a talk on her involvement with the “Order of Malta”, an organisation whose goal is to assist the elderly and the handicapped and to aid victims of natural disasters, epidemics and conflict. Each year Alison joins with other volunteers to take seriously ill and handicapped people to Lourdes on a week’s pilgrimage. The story of Lourdes is that in 1858 fourteen year old Bernadette Soubirous claimed a beautiful lady, who the faithful believe to be The Virgin Mary, appeared to her in a remote grotto. Lourdes has become a major place of worship with millions of pilgrims and tourists visiting each year to take the waters, which they believe possess healing properties. It was very humbling to listen to this fascinating talk of dedication and selflessness.

We have another six months of interesting topics and entertainment to look forward to and would be very pleased to welcome new members. You would be made very welcome.

ngs gardens open
for charity

**Garden Open
Goddards
Orchard**

Staple Fitzpaine, Taunton
Sun 24 June
Wed 27 June
1.30 - 5.30pm

Adm: £3
Children: free Plants for Sale 

The National Gardens Scheme Association Ltd. 2008

Goddards Orchard Open Day

by Brian & Dianne Hood

After a rather worrying few days when rain was again promised for the weekend, there was a sudden change and



we had a most glorious sunny afternoon on Sunday.

Rain during the night had cleared away leaving us all feeling extremely lucky at the outcome. However, the cold and rain of June had already left its mark

on the Kiftsgate climbing rose that is normally in full flower by the end of June but defiantly remained only in bud. The roses, poppies and geraniums made another wonderful spectacle in their profusion and were enjoyed by many. But there were many other flowers to see and the exhibition on the History of Botanical Illustrations which was set up by Alan Marsh in the summerhouse was of special interest to many people.



We had over 100 visitors, most of whom sat down to tea and cakes in the marquee – a wonderful selection provided by the Bickenhall WI. The money to NGS cancer

charities was over £300 and proceeds from the teas made £90 for St Peters. The donations boxes alone amounted to £29.16p!

Thank you so much to all who attended, the lovely comments and all those who helped on the two days. It was an experience not to be missed.



**NEROCHE HALL
QUIZ**

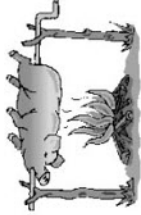


With Colin Croad
(and fish and chips)

Teams of up to 6
£2.00 per person
(fish and chips extra)

Friday 5th October 2012
7.00pm for 7.30pm start
(Bring your own drinks and glasses)

**NEROCHE HALL &
ST PETERS CHURCH, STAPLE
FITZPAINE PROUDLY PRESENT
LATE SUMMER BARN DANCE**



HOG ROAST

Home made salads and puddings.
Skittles – Bar – Raffle

LIVE MUSIC! - Band with caller

SATURDAY 1st September 2012 @ 7.00PM

Bickenhall Farm, Bickenhall
By kind permission of Chris and
Sarah Salisbury

Tickets: £14 adults, £8.00 14 and under
Contact: Mal Lee on 01460 234 282



NEROCHE HALL CHRISTMAS FAYRE

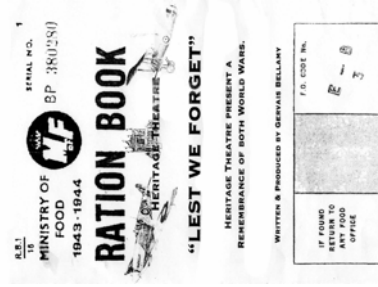
**SUNDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2012
2.00pm – 4.30PM**

**Featuring Father Christmas and
other festive entertainment
including carol singing.**

**Lots of ideas for Christmas gifts.
If you would like to book a table to
sell or display your wares contact
Alison Brown 01823 480 441**

A fabulous start to the festive season

NEROCHE HALL, BICKENHALL
Friday 9th November at 7.30pm
Presents
The Heritage Theatre Company



On Friday 9th November (Remembrance weekend) we have invited the Heritage Theatre Company to perform their tribute to all service men & women as well as the civilians who were involved in two world wars. Appropriate food will be served in the interval, although so far we have been unable to locate any egg powder or snook.

Ticket price to follow

NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHES

by Pat Croad

The Neroche Thursday Lunch Club was born out of the Neroche Parish Plan questionnaire. Alison Brown took on the mantle of starting it up and asked if anyone would be interested in helping her. A meeting was held and Alison produced a comprehensive timetable detailing every task required to make sure the lunch club runs smoothly. We have a good team of cooks, helpers and those who are willing to use their transport to pick up certain members of the community and take them home afterwards. Two course menus are planned by the named cooks for each particular month, and there is always a vegetarian option cooked.



As we have progressed, things have been fine-tuned to make sure that no one person has too much to do on their own.

Initially, we had around 18 guests attending but gradually word has spread and we now cater for on average 40 people (including helpers) each month, and it is a most enjoyable and rewarding event.

When the coffee and tea is being served, volunteers entertain us with stories, poetry readings, reminiscences, funny anecdotes, etc, and there has been no shortage of talented people coming forward for this.



After expenses have been deducted, any monies left over are given to charitable causes and there is a box for donations to the Open Door charity, for the homeless, to which money has been generously given.

As well as those attending the lunches, the team are having enormous fun, and there is a great sense of camaraderie and a good feeling of being part of a group creating a most enjoyable occasion. We have received many favourable comments as it is an opportunity to meet new people whilst also catching up with more familiar faces in the community.



We occasionally get together to discuss progress and from a small beginning, the lunch club has become a success due in no small part to the hard work Alison undertook to get this off the ground.

We look forward to seeing you there.....1st Thursday of the month, everyone welcome.

NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL

Come Along To Neroche Hall
Enjoy A Great Home-Cooked 2-Course Lunch
Meet People From the Locality
Take Time Out From Your Busy Daily Routine
and
Enjoy Conviviality & Friendliness At A Community Lunch

**Lunches will take place on Thursdays
at 12.30 for 1.00 pm**

**2nd August, 6th September, 4th October,
1st November, 6th December**

Please phone or email to book (need to know for catering purposes)
Transport / special diets can be arranged
Contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441
Email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk

Organised by Friends of St Peters Church

On Our Doorstep

There are numerous activities taking place within the Parish that are well advertised in the Parish Magazine and on the community website, however, there are many more happening ‘*On Our Doorstep*’ that you might not know of; here are a few that you may find of interest...

Blackdown Hills AONB Countryside Events Programme.

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership produces a programme of activities titled ‘Blackdown Hills Countryside Events’. The published programme for 2012 is packed with a variety of activities; why not join them on one of their programmed events:

3 Aug. ‘Walk from Upottery’. *Upottery Parish Church. A circular walk from Upottery Parish Church along the valley.*

10-11 Aug. ‘Dads and Lads Overnight’ *Seville Croft Hemyock. An exciting overnight experience that will hope to strengthen father-son relationships.*

11-12 Aug. ‘Aquaponics Weekend Course’ *Upper Hayne Farm. Learn how to grow fish, vegetables and fruit for the table.*

22 Aug. ‘Living Tree Grading’ *Park Farm Wellington. A day designed to help the woodland owner value and grade living trees.*

12 September. ‘Managing Woodlands for Fuel and Wildlife’ *Park Farm Wellington. A day of information on all aspects of woodland management.*

15 September. ‘Young Stargazers at Forest Glade’ *Forest Glade Holiday Park. An opportunity for older children and teenagers to explore the wonders of the night skies.*

23 September. ‘Walk at Castle Neroche’ *Castle Neroche. Walk from Castle Neroche via Curland, Green Lane, Staple Common, Britty Common and Blackwater.*

For more information go to www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk

Taunton Racecourse.



We are most fortunate to have England's youngest National Hunt racecourse, and one of the most beautifully located in the country, situated within Neroche Parish. It has outstanding views across the course to the wooded slopes of the Blackdown Hills, with excellent access from all areas of Neroche.

There can be no better way of entertaining your family or friends than a day at the races 'The Sport of Kings'. For full details of fixtures, ticket prices, facilities, etc go to www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

Car Boot Sales.

A car boot sale is held every Sunday at Taunton Racecourse, 52 weeks a year and in all weathers. Gates open at 11.00am (09.00am for sellers). Cars £5, vans £6. For more info call Tracey on 07778 275998.



Ilminster Arts Centre

The Ilminster Arts Centre is situated at the Meeting House in Ilminster. It has a full programme of exhibitions, concerts, workshops, crafts and produce markets, and a thriving craft shop and café. For full details of their forthcoming events and extensive programme, go to www.themeetinghouse.org.uk



Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton.



Some stunning shows from August onwards, including: **The importance of Being Earnest**; **The Upbeat Beatles (tribute band)**; **Melvyn Tan (pianist)**; **Carry on Swinging (big-band evening)**; **Romeo and Juliet**; **Shakespeare School Festival**; **Forever in Blue Jeans (evening of 50s, 60s and 70s pop music)**; **Big Girls Don't Cry (music of the 'Four Seasons' pop group)**; **Ralph McTell**.

The Square and Compass, Ashill.

The Square and Compass hosts a vibrant and diverse range of musical events, spanning the full range of musical styles. Events from August onwards, include:



10th August - Hells Bells (AC/DC tribute band)

7th September - Talon (Playing an acoustic set, including Eagles covers.)

21st September - Andy Fairweather Low & The Low Riders (Andy played a sell-out concert here in May and said that it was one of his most enjoyable gigs of the year; so he asked to come back. It'll sell-out again.)

9th October - Dire Streets (Dire Straits tribute band)

8th November - Dr. Feelgood (One of Britain's Finest Rhythm and Blues Bands.)

For full information on these concerts and many others, go to www.squareandcompasspub.com

United Parishes Senior Citizens Club, Stoke St Mary

Almost 60 members attended the meeting of the United Parishes Senior Citizens Club held at the Stoke St Mary Village Hall on 12th June. The meeting took the form of a Birthday tea in celebration of the **Club's 48th anniversary.** Anne Pickard, the Chairman, opened the meeting with a hymn and prayers. She also asked for a minute's silence in respect of club member, Cissie Rossiter, who had sadly died in hospital.



The Somertones provided an afternoon of musical entertainment and friendly banter. This male voice choir opened their programme with some old favourites including a sprightly rendition of 'You are my sunshine'. The singing was interspersed with recitations and monologues. One male choir member bravely presented 'Why can't a woman

be more like a man' (from My Fair Lady) earning himself a few light-hearted jeers from the female majority of the audience. With respect to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, The Somertones finished on a patriotic note with 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Rule Britannia'.

Thanks are extended to all members who helped with the catering (the usual tasty assortment of sandwiches, fruit cakes, sponges and some delicious home-made sherry and fruit trifles with cream) and the washing up; not just for making an extra effort for this celebration but for all their hard work throughout the year.

Events For Your Calendar

August

- 2 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 17)
- 3 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 14 United Parishes Senior Citizens Club (see report on page 20)

September

- 1 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 1 Barn Dance (see advert on page 14)
- 6 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 17)
- 13 Parish Council Meeting (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)

October

- 4 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 17)
- 5 Quiz Night (see advert on page 14)
- 6 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 30 Taunton Racing (see www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

November

- 1 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 17)
- 3 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 8 Parish Council Meeting (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 9 Heritage Theatre (see advert on page 15)
- 15 Taunton Racing (see www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)
- 29 Taunton Racing (see www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

*For further information go to the parish website
www.nerochevillages.org.uk*

*See, also, the many various events listed in the
'On Our Doorstep' article on pages 18, 19 and 20*

Chairman's Report for the AGM of Neroche Hall

12th June 2012

(Editor's note: The Village Hall is an extremely important facility 'the beating heart of the community'. This is an edited version of the Chairman's Report, the full version can be found on the website, www.nerochevillages.org.uk. The report highlights all the hard work that is involved in making the hall such a successful operation).

Following the successful conclusion of our major building works last year and the formal opening ceremony, the past twelve months have enabled the hall committee to enter a new phase. This has primarily been one of consolidation and continued improvement as well as being an opportunity to draw new energy following a period of intense fund raising.



We have been working to improve, update and modernise our facilities in order to provide a welcoming and valuable facility to our various communities within the Parish of Neroche in addition to promoting the hall as a viable venue for many activities and events.

We have continued to improve the hall with our maintenance program, improvements to the storage facilities, new external signs for the hall and the facility to promote forthcoming events plus the refurbishment of the main hall, kitchen and entrance hall. The 'Book Swap' goes from strength to strength providing books to cater for a wide variety of tastes.

We have seen quite a kaleidoscope of events and functions at the hall over the past year in addition to our 'regular users' who continue to support the hall. The 'Fish & Chip Quiz Nights' continue to be very popular and competitive and can always be relied upon to deliver a full house. Colin Croad and his dedicated team continue to provide us with a wide spectrum of questions designed to challenge our collective knowledge, whilst our team have now developed a very slick service to deliver food to everyone.

The summer saw the arrival of the 'Folk Club Camp' who took over the hall and facilities for a week long gathering in Chris Salisbury's field behind the hall. Members of the community were welcome to attend their music evenings and other events and the whole week proved very popular, aided by good weather. It also proved a very good fundraiser for the hall in addition to promoting it to a wider audience.

The Christmas Fayre was an outstanding success with 24 tables selling a wide variety of items including craft gifts as well as food and other produce, much of which was locally sourced or produced. Santa and his grotto were a popular attraction for the younger ones. The whole event was a huge success and involved a massive team effort from everyone.



Our January Jumble Sale, courtesy of Rob Larkman and his dedicated band of helpers, continues to be a very popular event attracting many people from far afield and is one of the hall's major fundraising events. Our thanks once again go to Rob who takes on the organisation and promotion with unstinting enthusiasm.

The 'Take Art' team provided a diverse program of two special performances with the Budapest Café Orchestra and Odyssey. 'Take Art' continues to bring culture to the community and there is always hot competition to attract and book the popular performers. Well done to all concerned.

Our Safari Supper in May of this year was again very popular with gourmet meals being provided by our able hosts. As always, it ran with clockwork precision and involved much planning and hard work by all concerned.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to briefly comment upon our recent Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The hall committee were pleased to provide our facilities to the Jubilee Committee for the celebrations and to enjoy the excellent events on the Bank Holiday Monday. It was encouraging to see the support from the community and the large numbers of children present. The organisers certainly pulled off a memorable day.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank members of the committee for your support during my first year as Chairman. Without your support, guidance and friendship my task would have been far more difficult. I suspect that many do not have any idea as to the degree of time and effort that is given to putting on successful events, which is testament to all the hard work done behind the scenes.

Richard Davies. (Chairman) - 12th June 2012.

Neroche Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - 4th June 2012



Over 150 people from the parishes of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear & Staple Fitzpaine gathered in the field behind Neroche Village Hall, by kind

permission of Chris Salisbury, Bickenhall Farm, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



Chris Baxter was Master of Ceremonies who kept us all informed of the timetable of events with regular 'tweets' from Her Majesty. The day started



with families and friends gathering for picnics at midday, followed by the presentation of commemorative Jubilee Mugs to all the children of the four parishes. This was followed by a fancy dress parade which got everyone into the spirit of the 'jubilee' and ready for a fun-filled afternoon.

Then there were the inter-village games with team captains encouraging their members and everyone being cheered on. The games culminated in a tug of war competition with Staple Fitzpaine and Bickenhall battling it out in the final but Curland were the overall winners on the day with the children receiving gold medals. Running concurrently in the Village Hall were decorated cake competitions for adults and children, also art & photography competitions. The judges were Doreen Marsh (cakes) and Andre Wallace





(art & photos) and prizewinners were awarded certificates. There was also a quiz available on Royalty and the Life & Times of Queen Elizabeth II. The afternoon culminated with a



rousing rendition of the National Anthem.



The hardy souls among us re-grouped in the evening for a rounders match, barbecue and bar with music through the decades playing over loud speakers.

The evening came to a close with the lighting of our Jubilee Beacon at 10pm. Although it was a cold day, it remained dry and a great time was had by all.



I'm sure that everyone who attended would wish to thank the organising committee for their hard

work in making the day such a success.



The Jubilee committee are very pleased to report that the day's celebrations raised funds of just over £500. The committee have decided to purchase a commemorative plaque for the Neroche Village Hall as a reminder of the day's events. The remaining money will be donated to the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust Fund. The trust works with strategic partners to identify charitable projects that will enrich the lives of all Commonwealth citizens in order to provide a lasting legacy for HM The Queen.



MISSING: Does anybody know the whereabouts of the effigy of the Queen? She hasn't been seen since Jubilee day and the organisers would be grateful for her return. Please contact Mal Lee or Alison Brown if you have any information..



SAFARI SUPPER - by Colin Croad



The Parish Hall held its first Summer Safari Supper on Saturday 12th May. With 6 families hosting the event, 36 visiting diners were able to enjoy their hospitality. Each host family donated a superb three-course meal whilst the guests joined three different couples for each course. This arrangement means, often, that people living in the same community have the opportunity of meeting and socialising with near neighbours, sometimes for the first time.

This year hosts were outstanding and when diners returned to the Parish Hall for coffee and a cognac or port, they were full of enthusiasm for an evening of fine cuisine and company, all at a cost of £15 per head.

The coordinator has a key role ensuring that couples never dine with the same guests more than once and that any special dietary needs are accommodated. Once the numbers are known, the hosts are approached and if they agree, the 6 guests are allocated for each course. The coordinator does not reveal to the guests where they are to dine, for each course, until the Friday evening.

Fortunately, the Parish contains many sociable people and there is no great difficulty in finding participants. This year's Safari Supper contributed almost £500 to Parish Hall funds.



SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

It is always useful when planning business, personal, social or voluntary/charity events to know when the school holidays are taking place. The dates below include, where appropriate, the weekends either side, as these are equally affected by the school breaks, especially regarding family holidays and road traffic:



21 July to 2 September 2012
27 October to 4 November 2012
22 December to 6 January 2013
9 February to 17 February 2013
29 March to 14 April 2013



NEROCHE TRAFFIC ACTION GROUP - by Ann Jones

In April our County Councillor David Fothergill put forward a submission to the Local Scheme Consideration proposing a range of improvements to roads around Staple Fitzpaine and Curland. This submission took on board the recommendations of the Neroche Traffic Action Group. Whilst the submission is now under internal consideration at Somerset County Council, we are really grateful for the time and support David Fothergill has given to our concerns. (See also David Fothergill's Foreword on page 2.)

June saw work carried out on the section of Staple Fitzpaine Road that runs through the forest. The bumps caused by subsidence have now been levelled. In the course of this work the road has been widened and many of the Beech trees that lined this part of the road have been felled. Whilst levelling the road is welcome, the effect of the work carried out is already encouraging faster driving - **don't try crossing the road at the foot of that hill!**

The Neroche Traffic Action Group really need support in bringing unsafe roads to the attention of decision makers. Currently there is a small core of people trying their best but if you really feel strongly please be active, join us and campaign for safer roads in our Parish.

NEROCHE PLANNING ACTION GROUP - by Ann Jones

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting back in May, Jason Jackson presented the research the group has done on appraising the character of our Parish. This research is now complete and will inform the Design Guide which the group has now started working on. When complete the Neroche Parish Design Guide will be available on the nerochevillages website and other related sites, it will be downloadable as a pdf document.



Household Recycling & Refuse Collections Bank Holiday Day Changes



27th August - 31st August; All collections one day later
(including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 1st September)

Local Communication and Information

Websites:

Neroche Villages – www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Community website run by the Neroche Communication Action Group. It has an up-to-date calendar of events; a news section; information about residents' action groups, e.g. on broadband, traffic; a business section and advertisements. The website features a comprehensive list of clubs and organisations, including details of those in neighbouring parishes. It is also the website of Neroche Parish Council and lists its activities, agenda, minutes and official documents.

Neroche Hall– www.nerochehall.org.uk

It lists the coming events, facilities and availability for hire of our village hall, and has an online booking form.

The Church of England Seven Sowers Benefice – www.sevensowers.org.uk

This website has a calendar of events and church service times for Staple Fitzpaine and Orchard Portman churches, as well as other churches in the benefice.

Email Information:

The Neroche Communication Action Group runs an email systems for sending information to those wishing to receive it. It forwards information of a general nature about local events and issues - please use the contact form on the Neroche Villages website if you would like your name added.

The Parish Magazine:

Full information on benefice matters, a great source of news, coming events and general information, and details of many local businesses and services. For new subscriptions phone Kate Reynolds on 01823 444023.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this Newsletter.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the Neroche Communication Action Group. Publication of an advertisement in, or with, the newsletter does not imply the Action Group's approval of the goods or services.

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