

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 3

Newsletter

February 2012

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

Thought for the day:

“The countryside has become viewed by a growing number of people as having a higher quality of life not because of what it has, but rather because of what it does not have!”



Welcome to the third 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.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

www.nerochevillages.org.uk is **YOUR** local website covering the local parishes of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine; which, in turn, forms the area covered by Neroche Parish Council.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

The website contains a wealth of local information, including: local news; a 'What's On' page; details of local clubs, societies and organisations; information on local churches; a history of Neroche; maps; useful telephone numbers; links to the websites of the village Hall and the Blackdown 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB); adverts for local businesses; details of 'rights of way'; and much more. It is also the official website for the Neroche Parish Council.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

So, if you need to know where, when and what is happening in the area and who to contact, you'll find it on the website. The website is committed to supporting all that operates and happens within the boundaries of the Neroche Parish, including all businesses (please contact us if you are not listed or if you wish to advertise), social activities, those providing services to the area and, more importantly, you - our residents.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

The website was developed by the Neroche Communication Action Group with funds from British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Making it Local, Neroche Parish Council, and Neroche Parish Plan Steering Group. It is maintained with funds from Neroche Parish Council and advertisers. Please let us know how you think the website could be improved by using the Contact Page.

Why not log-on now and take a look?

Annual Meetings for the Parishes of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, every English Parish must hold an Annual Parish Meeting between 1st March and 1st June each year, and it must take place after 6.00pm



The Annual Parish Meeting is one of the most important local events of the year. An occasion when residents can: make their voices heard; meet their Parish Councillors; learn more about local, social and sporting activities; and be updated on the progress being made by the Parish Plan Action Groups.

It is also an opportunity to find out about the excellent work going on in the parishes, and the wide variety of activities that are taking place and, more importantly, become involved if you so wish. There will be guest speakers (including an update on the progress being made on the introduction of a faster Broadband service to the area) and stands for all the clubs and social organisations in the parishes to advertise their activities.

It is most important that as many local residents as possible attend this event. The date and timings will be published in the next newsletter and on notice boards throughout the parish.

Neroche Traffic Action Group

November was a bad month for Staple Fitzpaine Road! In just one week it saw five traffic accidents involving five cars and one lorry, including two cars leaving the road and hurtling into the Forest and another on its roof at Orchard Portman.



Stagecoach bus drivers cite Staple Fitzpaine Road as amongst the most dangerous roads in Devon and Somerset. According to recent statistics, gathered at Badger Street by SCC, around 3,000 vehicles use this road daily through Monday to Friday!

Thankfully, vehicles are designed to withstand collisions and protect drivers and passengers but what about walkers, riders and cyclists? Walkers, riders and cyclists cannot use this road without fear of their lives, so most don't - that's likely why there have not been the fatalities or serious injuries necessary for Somerset County Council to act!



Neroche Traffic Action Group is currently collecting data on accidents occurring on this road. Since SCC do not consider Staple Fitzpaine Road dangerous enough to prioritise we believe we will need the advice of an expert with a national perspective to help build our case and implement the measures to make this road safer.

We are now fundraising for the costs of expertise and implementation. At the Neroche Christmas Fair we raised £180 through sales of Sixsmiths's Staple Fitzpaine and Neroche Forest. This, along with some donations, is an encouraging start! If you want to help or buy a book please contact: Ann Jones on 07909 963509.



NEROCHE HALL QUIZ NIGHT
 With Colin Croad and Fish & Chips
 Teams of up to 6 - £2.00 per person
 (fish & chips extra)
 Friday 17th February 2012 @ 7.30pm



NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHEAS 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

Enjoy conviviality & friendliness at a community lunch

2012 Lunches will take place on
February 2nd, March 1st, April 5th, May 3rd,
June 7th (prov), July 5th, etc

Numbers will be limited.

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

ST PETER'S CHURCH STAPLE FITZPAINE

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

**&
 QUIZ
 &
 RAFFLE**



NEROCHE HALL

TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2012

7.15 FOR 7.30 PM

ADULTS £7 CHILDREN £4 (UNDER 16)

TICKETS FROM CHURCHWARDENS

ALISON BROWN 01823 480441

MAL LEE 01460 234282



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 winter 2012 is packed with a variety of activities. This winter why not join them on one of their events:

Sunday 12 February.

‘Hedgerow Baskets’. An introduction to basket making.



Tuesday 14 February.



‘Love Your Birds’. Find out how to help birds in your garden, get to know our most common species and even build your own nest box to take home.

Sunday 11 March.

‘Spring Flower Special’ A delightful walk along Umborne Brook to discover spring flowers.

Wednesday 14 March.

‘Managing Woodland for Wood-Fuel and wildlife’ A day of information at Park Farm Wellington on all aspects of woodland Management.

Saturday 17 March.

‘Circular Walk from Membury to Dalwood’ 5-mile circular walk.

...and the list goes on. For full information on all courses, events and details of how to apply, please 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 our 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.

Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton.

Some stunning shows from February onwards, including: 'A Night at the Musicals', 'Simon Callow Reads Charles Dickens', 'Acker Bilk and His Paramount Jazz Band', 'The Searchers' (the 60s pop group), 'the Barron Knights'. For more information on these and many other concerts go to www.thebrewhouse.net

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 February onwards, include: Steve Gibbons Band, Wishbone Ash, The Wurzels, Andy Fairweather Lowe and Richard Digance. For full information on these concerts and many others, go to www.squareandcompasspub.com

NEROCHE HALL CHRISTMAS FAYRE - 4th December 2011

(report by Anne Perry)

The committee of Neroche Hall hosted their first Xmas Fayre in December 2011. It followed the success of the ‘Parish Affair’, organised by the Parish Plan Steering Group two years previously, although this year’s event took on an identity of its own by attracting many local craft businesses exhibiting and selling their beautiful products. The exhibits included picnic and wine hampers, jewellery of all types, handmade wooden bowls and gift ideas, local clothing and home products made in soft handmade felt, artistically designed gifts for the home.

We are fortunate, also, to have as a local, BBC photographer David Spears who exhibited and sold prints of his work. We also saw stalls with cards, gift wrap, cake decorations and stalls to raise money for worthwhile charities.

Home made food was in abundance, with the W.I. and their usual high standard of bakes, the Pony Club with cupcakes and other edible treats and a real highlight was Bickenhall’s very own bakery, ‘Artisan Baker’. The hall committee also provided delightful home made cakes with the teas and coffees as well as a well supported raffle.



The identity of Santa is still a well guarded secret but he was a real star as he gave, for free, little treats to the children. We must not forget the hand bell ringers of St Peters who delighted all with their festive melodies.

As the children of Thurlbear began their performance of some Christmas songs the hall was full to capacity, and what a lovely sound they made. Well done to those parents, children and teachers who gave up their time to take part in the event. Alan and Doreen Marsh judged Thurlbear school’s art competition and the winners were announced, winning cash

for prizes. The competition was divided into two age-group categories and the winners were Sam Greenslade of year 2 with 'Snow Scene' and Dulcie Lanaghan of year 5 with 'Spring Tulips at Sunset'.

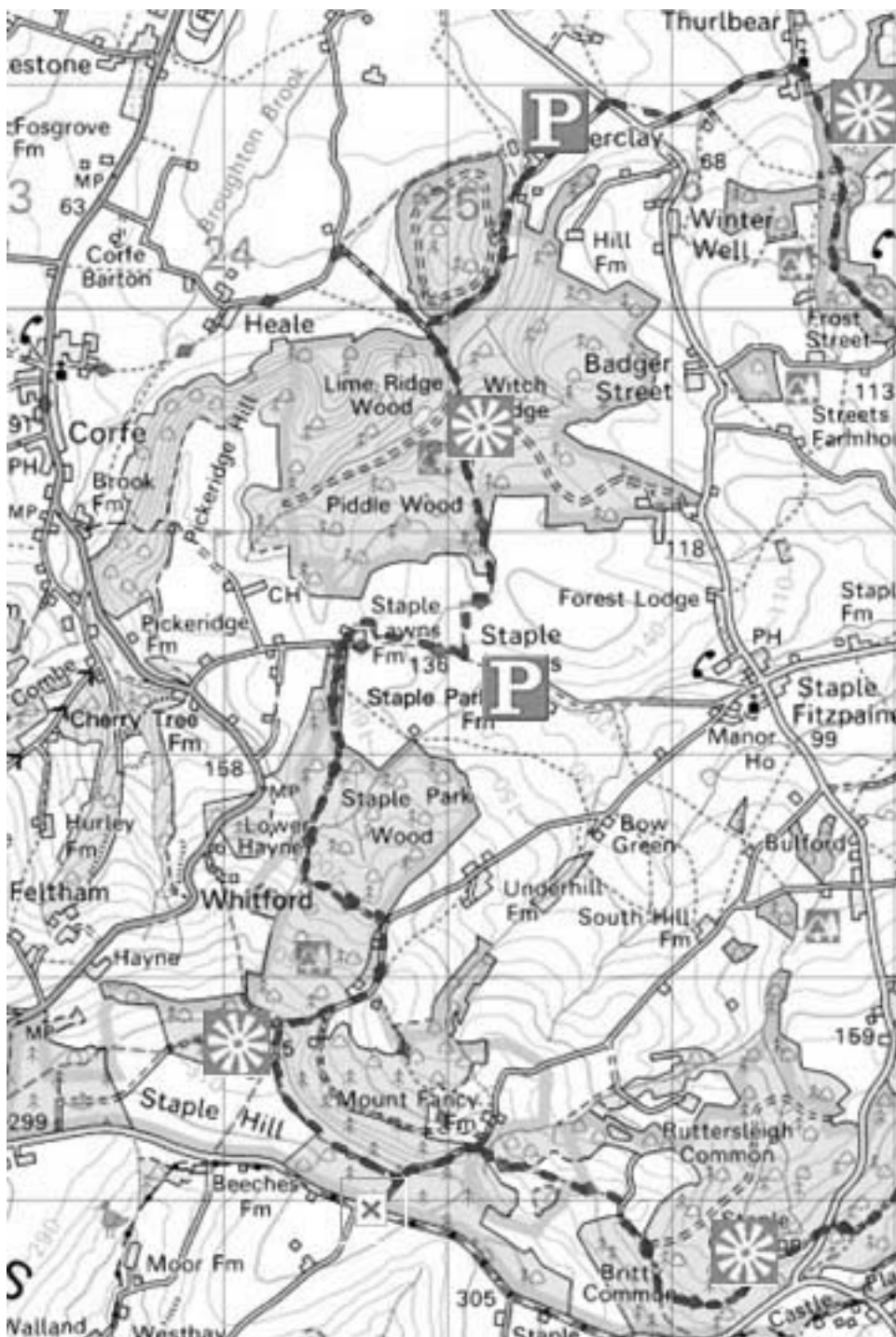
The blend of Santa, arts and crafts, and children's singing gave a lovely feel to the event and many of the stall holders have already requested a table at next year's event! Although the hall committee did raise some money for the upkeep of the hall, it was not intended to be a major fundraiser but rather a focal point for the community at Christmas time and all-in-all we are very happy with the outcome.



Neroche Hall is the local village hall for Orchard Portman, Thurlbear, Bickenhall, Curland and Staple Fitzpaine, and provides the perfect venue for many events and celebrations as well as for badminton, band practice, clubs and societies. If you are interested in hiring the hall please go to www.nerochehall.org.uk



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THE ONE AND ONLY

The first of a series of articles on 'one off' operations within the Neroche Villages.

NETHERCLAY COUNTRY STORES (the 'one and only' shop in Neroche Villages) was started by local women, (Penny Hoare and Gaynor Lomas) who combined their skills to create a shop catering for the everyday needs of horses, dogs, poultry and other pets; including clothing for humans and animals! They've now been trading for over a year and the store has evolved through meeting the needs of their customers.

Penny is a well established canine behaviourist, with a retail and pet trade background and has an excellent knowledge of canine nutrition (see her website www.helpwithyourdog.co.uk). **Gaynor** is the proprietor of the successful BHS approved yard, Netherclay Livery Centre. Many years of competing and teaching has given her an excellent knowledge of the needs of horses and riders, from daily care and routine to feeding and training (see www.netherclayliverycentre).

Netherclay Country Stores stocks feed for pets, horses and farm animals including frozen meats for dogs and feed for poultry, wild birds and rabbits. They stock equipment for the yard, stable and smallholder along with all the accessories and everyday essentials for horse and rider.



Penny and Gaynor would like to 'grow' Netherclay Country Stores with local interest at heart. They hope this will include stocking local produce and crafts. Penny and Gaynor are already working with the Neroche Herepath scheme by providing parking and picnic area facilities, including light refreshments. Why not pop in for a cup of tea and a look around – any ideas gratefully received!

? Neroche Community £20 Cash Prize Quiz ?

There is a £20 cash prize for this free-to-enter quiz. If you get stuck on any of the questions, then clues to all the answers can be found on the Neroche Community Website at www.nerochevillages.org.uk. Entries are not restricted to one per household so all members of the family can enter.

1. *Which three Neroche villages were mentioned in the Doomsday Book?*
2. *In which decade of the 20th century did the Portman estate pass into Crown ownership?*
3. *When was Thurlbear Primary School established?*
4. *Which parishes do Chris Baxter, Mark Pope, Jason Jackson and John Parsons represent on the Neroche Parish Council?*
5. *On what day of the week are the Neroche Lunches held in the Neroche Village Hall?*
6. *What is the name of the B&B establishment that Ann Bartlett runs in Curland?*
7. *What is the name of the Chairman of the Neroche Parish Council?*
8. *On what evening does the Neroche Short Mat Bowling Club meet in the Neroche Hall?*
9. *The BASC centre is based at Smokey Bottom Lodge in Staple Fitzpaine, what do the initials BASC stand for?*
10. *On what date was the Neroche Annual Parish Meeting held in 2011?*

Send your answers (together with your name and contact details) to wallytorrington@hotmail.com or post to Myrtle Farm, Bickenhall TA3 6TS. Closing date is 29 February after which the winner will be drawn from the correct entries submitted.

Waste and recycling collections Severe weather guide



In severe weather, recycling and refuse crews will try to keep collecting if it is safe.

If your collection is missed, please be patient; we will try to return once conditions improve, working late and on Saturdays to catch up. Please put out recycling and refuse by 7am for the next three working days; if we have not been back by then, please take it back in and put out by 7am on your next usual collection day.

If your collection is delayed, extra amounts of regular waste will be accepted: please put rubbish in black sacks, recycling in carrier bags and food in covered buckets or in black sacks with other rubbish.

In very bad conditions, we may have to suspend collecting garden and bulky waste to give priority to the main services. If our clinical waste service is interrupted, we will get back as soon as possible.



Recycling is not just good for our environment, it also saves us all money.

If you do not separate out things like kitchen scraps, paper and cans, they end up in landfill. Over £5million a year of your money currently has to be spent on landfill; money that would be better spent maintaining public services.

Every extra bottle, jar, can or piece of cardboard you recycle does make a difference. The best thing you can fill your bin with is fresh air!

For help with how and where to recycle and information on collections during severe weather, go to:

Website - www.somersetwaste.gov.uk

Facebook - www.facebook.com/somersetwaste

Twitter feed - [@somersetwaste](https://twitter.com/somersetwaste)

Local radio and local council customer services

Bank Holiday Household Recycling & Refuse Collection Day Changes for 2012

Easter 2012			
Your usual collection day		Your revised collection day	
Good Friday	6 April 2012	Saturday	7 April 2012
Easter Monday	9 April 2012	Tuesday	10 April 2012
Tuesday	10 April 2012	Wednesday	11 April 2012
Wednesday	11 April 2012	Thursday	12 April 2012
Thursday	12 April 2012	Friday	13 April 2012
Friday	13 April 2012	Saturday	14 April 2012

May & August Bank Holidays in 2012		
Bank Holidays	Revised Collections	
May Day	7 May 2012	One day later than normal.
Late Spring (moved due to Diamond Jubilee)	4 June 2012	No change on 4 June – Monday collection as usual.
Queen's Diamond Jubilee	5 June 2012	Tuesday to Friday collections all one day later than normal.
Summer	27 August 2012	One day later than normal.

Somerset Waste Partnership
manages waste and recycling services on behalf of
Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and West Somerset
District Councils, Taunton Deane Borough Council and
Somerset County Council



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

The Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is proposing to change the way they respond to automatic fire alarms, between 8.00am and 6.00pm, to reduce the impact of false alarms on the Service.

Proposal Summary

An automatic fire alarm (AFA) is any system designed to alert the occupants of a building that it has detected the signs of fire. AFA calls account for 30% of all incidents attended by DSFRS, but more than 94% of these incidents are false alarms.

Currently DSFRS responds to AFA calls when the person reporting the alarm is able to confirm that there is a fire, and also when there is uncertainty. The proposal is to reduce attendance levels for domestic properties, and to cease attendance at some non-residential business premises, unless the person making the 999 call can confirm that there are signs of fire.

Note: The consultation findings are due to be presented to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority on 17 February 2012.

The History of Neroche

This is the first of a series of articles on Neroche's history that will appear in the newsletter in forthcoming issues. If you are interested in local history then why not join the history group? Contact Jane Hole on 01460 234 410 or jane.hole@tiscali.co.uk

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**T**here is evidence of Iron Age occupation in the parish with hill forts at

Orchard Hill and Castle Neroche. It is likely Orchard Hill was built sometime from 400BC onwards and was probably abandoned for the site at Castle Neroche, three miles to the south. The name Neroche is thought to be derived from the Old English *nierra* and *rechich* or *rachich*, meaning the 'camp where hunting dogs were kept'.



At Castle Neroche, a recent survey by English Heritage suggests three main periods of occupation: late Iron Age; the post Norman conquest period; and the time known as 'The Anarchy' period, between 1238 to 1248.

During medieval times the parish had a settlement at Playstreet (opposite Neroche Hall), which was revealed through aerial photography in 1977. This settlement was likely to have been established in the period immediately following the Norman conquest (11th century) on the edge of the Neroche Forest.

It was during this period that the motte and bailey at Castle Neroche was under construction. Following the dissolution





of the monasteries, Playstreet fell into several different private hands; by 1602 it was owned by a member of the Portman family.

In later medieval times the Portmans, through the marriage of William Portman to Christina de Orchard in 1450, became one of Somerset's leading families.



Over the course of the next few centuries they came to own much of the land and property in Neroche (not to mention three hundred acres in central London) and were influential in supporting the

movement for agricultural improvement in the 19th century. Many of the cottages within the parish bearing the familiar stone facing and brick window surround were built during this period.

In Victorian times the majority of people in the parish would probably have been tenants who worked on the land. The activities of wives, sons and daughters were vital to the upkeep of the family

The 1851 census shows that there were a total 13 paupers in the villages of Staple Fitzpaine, Curland and Bickenhall. At the beginning of the 20th century, Staple Fitzpaine had 2 ploughboys, one cowboy and one farm boy all aged 13.

Most of the Portman estate passed into Crown ownership in the 1940's. The Forestry Commission has leased the forest areas since 1947.



Many dairy farms in the parish have closed in recent years. Today, there are just ten working farms left in the parish - a mixture of arable, cattle, dairy and sheep. Most are owned by the Crown estate.

## CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Following the retirement of Peter Crossley as Clerk to the Parish Council, **Howard Midworth** took up the position at the beginning of 2012.

Howard is currently the Deputy Chief Executive of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), which is the national professional body for local council clerks, based in the centre of Taunton. He will be utilising the resources and expertise of the society to assist with the duties of Clerk to Neroche Parish Council, and the staff based in the SLCC offices will be happy to talk to any parishioners if Howard is not available.



Howard's current role with SLCC includes liaising with Government Ministers and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) over various issues affecting local Councils, including the implementation of the recently passed Localism Act, and dealing with a variety of legal and financial issues raised by Society members across England and Wales.

He previously worked for Somerset County Council in a variety of Finance and Strategy roles, and prior to that held a number of senior management positions in the financial services industry.

Howard lives just over the parish boundary in Hatch Green, and his wife is the Clerk to the neighbouring West Hatch Parish Council and also Beercombe Parish Council.

Howard can be contacted on the normal Neroche Parish Council email address of; [neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk](mailto:neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk)

# Events For Your Calendar

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## February

- 2 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 5*)
- 4 Walk with the Neroche Parish Walking Group
- 9 Taunton Racing
- 17 Neroche Hall Quiz Night (*see advert on page 5*)
- 21 Taunton Racing
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper & Quiz (*see advert on page 5*)

## March

- 1 Taunton Racing
- Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 5*)
- 3 Walk with the Neroche Parish Walking Group
- Take Art Event 'Odyssey' (*further details to be published soon*)
- 8 Neroche Parish Council Meeting
- 12 Taunton Racing
- 28 Taunton Racing

## April

- 5 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 5*)
- 7 Walk with the Neroche Parish Walking Group
- 12 Taunton Racing

## May

- 3 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 5*)
- 5 Walk with the Neroche Parish Walking Group
- 10 Neroche Parish Council Meeting
- 12 Taunton Racing (Arabian Horse Meeting)
- Safari Supper (A Village Hall Event)

*For further information go to the parish website [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*

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*A comprehensive list of clubs and organisations, including details of those in neighbouring parishes, features in the Community Website launched last year. ([www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk) or Google Neroche Villages.)*

## ***Local Communication and Information***

### ***Websites:***

**Neroche Villages** – [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://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. It is also the website of Neroche Parish Council and lists its activities, agenda, minutes and official documents.

**Neroche Hall**– [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://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](http://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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