

*“Working Together for a Better Community”*

# NEROCHE VILLAGES

## Newsletter

Issue No 14

November 2014

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



We wish to thank Taunton Racecourse for their support to the local community by sponsoring all the production and printing costs of this issue of the Neroche Villages Newsletter. Should you wish to find out more about the racecourse, especially its excellent facilities or how to become a member, then please go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk), call 01823 337172 or see the articles on page 30

*If you would like **your** company to feature on the front page of a future issue, then please contact [wallytorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:wallytorrington@hotmail.com) (01823 480656)*

**W**elcome to the 14th 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.



# Foreword

By: *Wally Torrington (Project Coordinator) & Alan Perrior (Editor)*



*Wally Torrington*

Very many thanks to Taunton Racecourse for sponsoring this issue of our Newsletter. Bob Young, the Chief Executive, takes great interest in the local community and gives assistance whenever and wherever he can; we welcome his continued support.



*Alan Perrior*

2014 being the 100th anniversary of the First World War, we've included a couple of interest articles, particularly the story behind the local 'Roll of Honour' on page 48 and the commemorative window in All Saints Church on page 37. Many thanks to Alan Marsh and Ann Jones for their efforts.



*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*



We've also had lots of fun in the parish during the past few months, with the likes of a Boules Championship, the Village Cricket Match and the Scarecrow Festival; articles on all three events appear within these pages

As ever, if you have any comments or wish to produce an article for the Newsletter, please contact either of us (our details are on the back page).

## The Greyhound Inn - Staple Fitzpaine

**Quiz Nights** - 1st Wednesday of each month  
*(Why not have a meal before the quiz?)*

**Christmas Menus** - from 1<sup>st</sup> December  
2-course £18.95; 3-course £22.95

See the website for menu details; [www.thegreyhoundinn.biz/christmas\\_2014](http://www.thegreyhoundinn.biz/christmas_2014)

# News From Neroche Hall

*Richard Davies, Chairman of Neroche Hall Trustees, has agreed to produce a regular article for the Newsletter.*



**Friday Film Nights.** As the evenings start to draw-in we are beginning our winter programme of film nights, which, as many of you will know, are shown on the last Friday in the month. By the time you read this, we will have had our September showing and be publicising our October offering. The events are really good value for an evening's entertainment; there is

**NEROCHE FRIDAY FILM NIGHT**  
**November 28th @ 7.30pm**



**JIMMY'S HALL (12a)**

A rectangular box with a red border containing text and an image. The text at the top reads 'NEROCHE FRIDAY FILM NIGHT' and 'November 28th @ 7.30pm'. Below the text is a photograph of a group of people in a hall, some playing musical instruments like violins and a guitar. At the bottom of the box, it says 'JIMMY'S HALL (12a)'.

always a bar so you can enjoy a drink before the film or at the intermission. Tickets will, of course, be available in advance or at the door on the night.

**Safari Supper.** If you are new to the area, and are reading this Newsletter for the first time, I hope you will be pleasantly surprised at the wide variety of events that are either advertised or reported upon within our parish. It is likely that

you may not know many people but would like to do so, and get involved in the Community. I can recommend Neroche Hall as an excellent place to start, as well as the many other clubs and organisations that form our diverse community. One means of meeting new people is by going on our Safari Supper, which is being held in



**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>**

November. For those that may be unfamiliar with the format, I will take this opportunity to briefly explain. Several people within our community have kindly agreed to host a three course meal for six persons. In this case, however, each of your courses are held at a different host's home, and you travel from one to the other at a set time. At each venue you will dine with a new host and four different people, culminating at the Hall for coffee and Port or Brandy. I can thoroughly recommend it for making new friends as well as having excellent food and good company. Tickets will go on sale in the near future, so book early to avoid disappointment.

**Take Art.** For those of you who enjoy the Take Art events, we are very likely to be hosting one at the Hall in the New Year, possibly in February but more details in the next edition.



**Promoting Neroche Hall.** Finally, I would like to make a point of asking for your help in promoting Neroche Hall as a venue, which can be hired for a wide variety of events and functions, including business meetings and conferences. There is plenty of availability during the day for the hall to be hired, especially during the week, therefore, if you should hear of any person or organisation looking for such a venue, please feel free to champion the Hall. The Committee is in the final stages of producing a formal colour brochure for wide distribution in order to promote the hall; it will soon be available to anyone who would like a copy to show friends, work colleagues or employers.



soon be available to anyone who would like a copy to show friends, work colleagues or employers.

*(Please refer to the film advert on page 38 and the Safari Supper advert on page 29. Also, watch out for notices on all Neroche Hall activities in the Neroche Email Alert, plus, as always, all the information you need can be found on the Hall website: [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk))*

# A Summer's Tale from Staple

By Nick Napper

There's a scene in the classic film Jurassic Park in which two raptors cut converging swathes through a field of crops in pursuit of their prey; after this, the reassuringly bucolic sight of a field of ripening wheat would never be quite the same. Thus it was on a July evening I walked around the edge of one of Mark Pope's fields with my son's Jack Russell terrier Ricky, when we heard something moving through the corn.

Although not quite at the speed of Spielberg's computer-generated dinosaurs, it was nonetheless travelling in our direction. We waited, while Ricky strained impatiently at the leash (a stance from which he rarely relaxes) and watched the stalks gently part as the unidentified creature made its way relentlessly towards us. I peered closer and was rewarded with the sight of an animal which, whilst not as fearsome as a raptor, nonetheless has a fossil lineage which dates back to that period; a tortoise.



*Ricky keeps a wary eye on Tina the tortoise*

As far as I'm aware, tortoises are not indigenous to the Blackdowns, so presumably I had discovered an escaped resident. Much to Ricky's bewilderment (see photo), I carried the lost soul home, and from the powerful thrusts of its legs I discovered just how strong these creatures are, and that he/she was not especially thrilled at the unexpected addition to its journey.

Local enquiries revealed a total of four errant tortoises in recent years, and Tina (as I discovered she was named) was found to belong to Jon and Mary Bell. She was returned from her short holiday in my garage, and Jon very kindly presented me with something from his cellar. Ricky hails from a remote area of Dartmoor where the Wesleyan view of sobriety has not been completely forgotten, and consequently he declined to join me for an excellent red wine. However, his abstinence did not extend to the plate of mature cheddar I'd placed beside my glass prior to leaving the room for a moment (apparently Wesley did not comment on the partaking of cheese), and so this short tale ends happily for all involved.



## ST PETER'S CHURCH, STAPLE FITZPAINE

### Service of Remembrance

Sunday 9th November at 10.55am

\*\*\*\*\*

### Carol Service

Wednesday 17th December at 7.00pm

*Enjoy a traditional Christmas celebration followed by mince pies and mulled wine*

\*\*\*\*\*



### Carol Singing Around the Villages on Saturday 20th December

*Further details to be announced*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Christmas Day Service on Thursday 25th December at 10.00am

\*\*\*\*\*

*St Peter's Church is part of the 'Seven Sowers Benefice' of which further details can be found at [www.sevensowers.org.uk](http://www.sevensowers.org.uk)*

## Deroche Local History Group - Visit to Castle House

*By Dianne Hood*

Members of the History Group met on a dry September evening at the Museum where Chris Sideaway, the Castle House Manager, gave us a brief history of the entrance tower and buildings surrounding the Museum courtyard which was within the original castle walls, the earliest part being 12th century. The buildings are owned by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

Taunton was a Saxon town administered by the Bishops of Winchester who were heirs to the Wessex kings and owned land in London and other areas of the south of England but their main holding was in Somerset. In fact Taunton was the richest ecclesiastical area in England. Taunton Castle was built as a military base but also a Bishops Palace where the Bishop held court in the Great Hall.

In the 16th century the Bishops lost some powers when Henry VIII grabbed land from them; the ecclesiastical estates were worth huge amounts of money –

Glastonbury was worth £3,500 (£30 million in today's money). Taunton Castle was used as an Assizes Court, the reason for it becoming Somerset's County town. It is thought that Castle House was used as lodgings for visiting magistrates, eg Judge Jeffries.

In 1843, the Castle became the Wesleyan Proprietary Grammar School, which was the foundation for Queens College in Taunton. The main downstairs room overlooking the courtyard is currently presented as a schoolroom and can be hired out for meetings, having a multimedia projector and screen with seats for up to 50 people, so it is still 'educational'.



One of the other three rooms on the ground floor has many pictures of the castle and Castle House, the oldest dating from 1780, showing the changes that have taken place over the last 200 years. This room is also the entrance to the flat above that is let to provide an income for the maintenance of Castle house.

We were shown around the flat to see how the old building has been so sympathetically restored and converted to its present use. The living room has been completely re-roofed with oak boards and the 3 arch-braced collars supporting the centre of the roof have been cleaned and restored. Although it was part of the original 1482 building, built like a Manor House great chamber, it was once divided into two rooms by a screen, but this was later removed to become one great room. A large stone fireplace was added turning the house into a small domestic lodging house, probably for a bishop. Evidence was also found of a large wall painting on the end wall, believed to be of the crucifixion. The doorway in this wall leads to a small room which also has external access to the courtyard via the tower. This room is called the 'exchequer' and it is believed that money was collected there – the cash being placed in the safe room, which still exists (and is used by the Museum) on the other side of the entrance.

The original elm floorboards on this floor have been patched with oak where damaged; the wide elm boards not being available any more due to Dutch elm disease. Some of the old timbers remain in view and the original wide staircase gently leans to one side with age. The furniture and furnishings are a mix of old and very modern, blending comfortably together. The restoration has been done carefully, enhancing the older features and conserving the building for the future.

# Yellows, Oranges, Reds, Purples and Browns

## It Must Be Autumn in Neroche

*By Madeleine Spears*



*Staple Fitzpaine in Autumn*

*We are most fortunate to have Madeleine Spears living in our midst; she escaped the South East to come to Curland ten years ago. Madeleine has a degree in Zoology, and on retiring in 2010, decided to fill-in some gaps in her biological knowledge – particularly Botany and Geology - and attended a number of Somerset Wildlife Trust Botany Tutorials. She has kindly produced this most fascinating and informative article, where she shares some of her thoughts on ‘Colour in a Neroche Autumn’.*



*The Ubiquitous Somerset Apple*

Autumn is a time of rich colours. These may be colours of autumn flowers, but the most obvious colours at this time of year are those found in the foliage of the deciduous trees, bushes and ripening fruits. The latter are trying to attract animals to help in the dispersal of their seeds.

*So where do the colours come from?*

The familiar green of the majority of leaves and stems comes from the pigments called chlorophyll. They are important in the process of collecting the



sun's light energy and converting it into usable energy for plants enabling them to grow, produce seeds and perform basic functions.



*Oak Tree in a Curland Field*

As we move towards the winter, many plants and trees go into a form of hibernation when the need for energy reduces radically and the chlorophylls are broken down. As this happens, the orange/yellow pigments – the carotenoids - that have been masked by the chlorophyll, begin to show themselves and the green colour fades.

In some plants, new pigments are formed as the colder weather begins to affect the rate of photosynthesis. These are the anthocyanins which are reds, purples and blues.



*Leaf Turning Red*

These are also found in flowers and the foliage of some plants and particularly in young leaves. This is a little confusing because young leaves such as those of the maple found in local Neroche hedges are red in the spring; green through the summer and red and yellow again in the autumn, before finally changing to

brown and falling off. These colour changes occur as the plant first begins with the red photosynthetic pigments, then develops chlorophyll, which is more efficient at capturing the sun's energy and masks the red and yellow pigments. Later the plant reabsorbs magnesium from



*Beech Leaves in Neroche Woodland*



*Maple Spring Leaves along the Herepath*



*Wild Fuchsias in a Curland Garden*

chlorophyll as it breaks down, a process that conserves essential nutrients, leaving the red and yellow pigments obvious again. The whole plant then gears down for the winter, and the red and yellow pigments also get broken down leaving a brown leaf just before it falls, its function over.

Autumn flowers and fruits are often brightly coloured with these and other pigments. Plants such as fuchsias in the

wild are bright red and purple. Colours in plants are often about attracting animals to perform specific purposes, such as pollination and seed dispersal. The green, red, yellow, orange, purple and blue colours are what we see but a few plants have ultraviolet pigments which many animals can see but we can't.



*Hips in a Curland Hedge*

Our local hedgerows have a variety of fruit, which are also colourful. The red berries of hips and haws, the vivid pink of spindle berries and the reds and purples of blackberries attract the birds, mice,

flies, butterflies and other insects. This is essential for the dispersal of the seeds of the plant, as the seeds within the fruit may be dropped or defecated away from the parent plant.



*Spindle Berries in Bickenhall Hedge*

Colour, however, is not always what attracts animals. What is surprising is that a rather uninteresting looking fruit tempts a similar number of birds and animals to eat them. This is the fruit of the common ivy that produces nectar earlier in the year, which is a good source of food for flies, wasps and bees – many of us overlook this feast for animals.



*Blackberries in an Orchard Portman Field*



*Ivy Fruit in Thurlbear Wood*

Many of these fruits last well into winter, when other sources of food have disappeared. Winter has its own colours, but these are less vibrant. The plants not in hibernation are adapted to colder weather, strong winds and snow and ice – another set of problems all together.



## **THURSDAY LUNCHES AT NEROCHE HALL**

Come along to Neroche Hall and 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  
6<sup>th</sup> November, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 8<sup>th</sup> January (tbc)**

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](mailto:alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk)



# Focus on Local Business

## Staple Farm Christmas Trees

By Wally Torrington



Staple Farm has been worked by the Pope family for more than forty years. Mark and Julie are the current occupants, who live there with their family and run Staple Farm Enterprises. The main crops on the 700 acre arable farm are wheat and field beans, with a small area for miscanthus; plus, they have diversified into Storage and Christmas Trees. They also take great pride in the farm's involvement with various conservation schemes to protect the environment and wildlife.

Mark and Julie have been growing Christmas trees at Staple Farm for well over 20 years. Currently, all the trees are Norway spruce, which are normally hand



*The Norway Spruce*

planted in February of each year. They start harvesting the trees after 6 years; the main crop coming in years 7 and 8. Selected trees are then left to 'grow-up' for churches/halls/schools/village-greens etc; the largest they have provided was approx 30ft high. They also supply small rooted varieties. The trees need pruning from year 4, which produces a thicker bushier tree. They are cut-for-sale from early December, a few at a time, thus always ensuring the trees remain fresh and needle-drop is kept to a minimum. They also sell to a farm shop about 10 miles away. Call-in to the farm from early December onwards and there

will always be a number of freshly cut trees available.

A popular initiative operated by the Pope's is the 'Pick Your Own Tree' or to be precise 'Select Your Own Tree from the Plantation' which can be a great fun experience for all the family. The idea is that customers (often as a family group) stroll around the fields of Christmas Trees that are ready for harvest and select a tree by tying-on a tag, then, they simply state which date they would wish to collect. On the day of collection, just a few hours before their arrival, the tree is cut, thus guaranteeing maximum freshness and minimum needle-drop. They have built-up a lot of repeat business under this scheme, with people coming back 'years after year', and last Winter they even had a young couple, newly married, who used to come and select trees with their parents. Mark and Julie have quite a few regulars who purchase this way; these customers say that this really signals the start of Christmas for them.

As a development on this theme, Mark and Julie propose to hold a 'Pick/Select Your Own Tree' open day at the farm on Sunday 30th November from 10am to 3pm. Visitors will be invited to walk the fields, choose and label their chosen tree, then leave details of when they wish the tree to be cut. Larger trees can be delivered for a small fee. There will also be a small selection of cut trees offered for sale in the yard. Mince pies and hot drinks will be available throughout the day.

## **Staple Farm, Staple Fitzpaine**

### **Pick/Select Your Own Christmas Tree**

**Sunday 30th November 2014 - 10am to 3pm**

Stroll through the plantation with your family, select a Christmas tree, attach a label and state when you wish it to be cut ready for collection or Delivery. The freshest tree you will ever buy.



Free entry – All the family welcome – Mince pies and warm drinks

**Ready cut trees also available on the day, and throughout December**



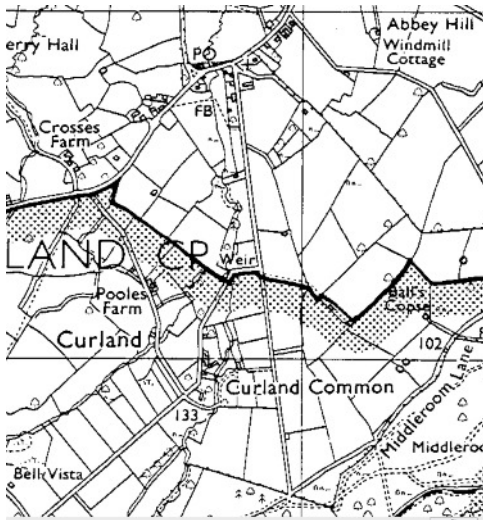
# News From Neroche Parish Council

*Our Clerk to the Parish Council, Gillian Midworth, has kindly agreed to produce a regular feature for our Newsletter.*

I am now entering my second year as the Parish Clerk to Neroche. My first year has certainly been busy, with unexpected issues such as the Crown Estate's decision to terminate the tenancies of many of our parishioners. In addition to the six ordinary Parish Council meetings held during the year, three extraordinary meetings have also taken place within the past 12 months.



**Planning Applications** Although August is traditionally a quiet month for



*Baker's Field is at the centre of the map, with the word "weir" typed over it*

Parish Council business, receipt of a contentious planning application resulted in an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting being convened to discuss the proposal. The application, to convert an agricultural building to a residential dwelling at Baker's Field in Curland, was submitted, following amendments to the General Permitted Development Order, which now allows for the change of use from an agricultural building to a dwelling house, subject to certain conditions. The Parish Council listened to the concerns of the many residents who attended the meeting and successfully argued that the application did not fulfil the technical criteria of the General

Permitted Development Order. Approval for the application was refused by TDBC, who commented that the response from the Parish Council was well stated and relevant to the planning issues which were to be considered.

**The Forced Out Action Group** The Parish Council continues to support the efforts of the Forced Out Action Group, and following disappointing responses from the Crown Estate and the Prime Minister to its letters of protest, raised the issue with the Prince of Wales with a personal letter from the Chairman. Although Prince Charles expressed sympathy with the plight of the residents, it was not appropriate for him to become involved.



*Fibre optic enabled cabinet*

**Broadband** The issue of fast rural broadband is discussed on a regular basis by the Parish Council and many of you will be aware that the exchange at Hatch Beauchamp is due to be upgraded this year. At present, there is only one 'Green Cabinet' serving those properties in the Parish from the Hatch Beauchamp exchange, and this is located at the junction of the A358 and the road leading to Battens Farm. When the cabinet is upgraded with fibre optic, properties within a 1km radius may receive speeds up to 24mps, but the speed reduces significantly with distance, to such an extent that properties 1.8km away may only receive speeds of 2mps. In view of this, the Parish

Council is lobbying the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme for an additional 'Green Cabinet' to be located within a 1km radius of Curland and Staple Fitzpaine. Unfortunately, some properties connected to the Buckland St Mary exchange are not due to be included in the original 90% coverage promised by the programme. Additional funding has been announced to increase the coverage to 95%, and again the Parish Council will continue to liaise with the Connecting Devon & Somerset programme to ensure that the more isolated properties are ultimately able to receive the higher broadband speeds.

**Parish Council Meetings** Parish Council meetings are held bi-monthly in Neroche Hall on the second Thursday of the month (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov). At the beginning of each meeting there is an opportunity for parishioners to ask questions or raise matters for consideration, and I would encourage parishioners to come along to the Council meetings and use this opportunity if required. The Parish Council is here to represent the community, and would like to be aware of any issues of concern.



*Neroche Hall, showing the new extension*

# PILATES

Wednesdays 10am - in Neroche Hall

Looking for a sleeker you? Then try this class. It will free up flexibility, increase control of core muscles to help to keep tone, improve posture and lessen risk of everyday injuries.



Contact Sheila on 01460 281729 for more details (Mob: 07593377810)

Wear comfortable clothing, bare feet or socks.  
(Bring a mat if you have one.)

Just 1 hour of low impact exercise could leave you feeling happier and more relaxed.

*PS: Pilates works for men too!*



## Charity Barn Boogie

Following the phenomenal success of the Charity Barn Boogie, organised by local resident HollyJane Harris, in memory of her grandfather, Keith Chubb, HollyJane was able to hand over a cheque for **£3,272.13** to Prostate Cancer UK.

HollyJane wishes us to say a very big **Thank You** to everyone who was involved and to those who supported the event. We are now looking forward to her next grand venture.



*Peter Breslin (Prostate Cancer UK), Nicky Baxter, Georgina Leech, Kathy Harris and HollyJane*

# The Forced Out Action Group

## *The Final Chapter – or is it?*

*By Mark Kemp*

*Dear Tenants and Supporters*

We have reached the point where the current round of evictions has been completed, with the exception of a couple of tenants who are continuing to try and stay in their homes; these are families who have a case regarding their rental agreements. We are unaware of the individual circumstances of the evicted tenants but know that several have been able to remain in the local area.

The final correspondence from the Crown Estate, via Jeremy Brown, was the same old corporate *blah, blah, blah* and didn't answer any questions that were of a human nature, and the fact that tenants were on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) meant they only had to give two months termination notice.

All-of-a-sudden the political supporters went very quiet but I'm sure that was because they had exhausted all avenues. However, pressure still needs to be applied to ensure the remaining tenants are treated fairly and honestly; this must be via the local authorities and our elected representatives. As much as we would like to think that all the hard work put in by the tenants and supporters had a role to play, nothing had actually changed the stance of the Crown Estate or the attitude of Smiths Gore. If you are unhappy with the service provided by the management agents then write to the Crown Estates direct, they might not be aware of things happening on a local level.

The Crown Estate has stated that they will approach this differently in the next phase, so it is up to our Local Authorities, MP, County Councillor and Parish Councillors to take this forward, otherwise the same will happen again; lessons must be learnt from the suffering of the evicted tenants.



*Mark Kemp, Chairman of  
the 'Forced Out Action Group'*

Our legal representative will act on behalf of tenants who think they have a legal case but unless you are eligible for Legal Aid it would be very expensive to take-on the Crown Estate, which is what they rely on.

Types of Agreement, this is an area that all tenants should check. From 1988/9 onwards, tenants will be on an AST, which means you can be given notice to leave at any point after the initial period has been completed (6/12 months); before this date you should be on an Assured Tenancy, which gives you the security of tenancy. If you lived in the property prior to 1988/9, and they have made you sign a new agreement, then this is incorrect and you should request to be put on to the Assured type of agreement (even if you have moved to another property, you are with the same landlord so this type of agreement should carry over). Tenants with an AST need to be aware that they can be given two months' notice to leave or be able to buy their home, which will be the only way you can guarantee security.



*Vicky Pearson, founder of the  
'Forced Out Action Group'*

Having appealed, on several occasions, to the better nature of the Crown Estate and Smiths Gore, and the media coverage showing their ARROGANCE, we can only hope that the next round will be carried out with regard to the moral obligations and taking into account the human suffering of the tenants.

One positive thing that has come out of these proceedings is the fact it brought the community closer together and that new friendships have been formed. We would like to extend our thanks to all supporters and the local community as a whole for the excellent support and assistance they provided. It is not the fault of the new families moving into the area that this has happened, and we are sure they will be part of the local community as were the previous tenants.

**“Thank You” to everyone, from the Forced Out Action Group.**



# 2014 Neroche Boules Championship

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

The committee arrived at 11am to turn the Neroche Hall car park into a boules arena for an afternoon of fun. David Spears and Richard Davis set-off with large signs to set up an alternative car park in Mark Pope's field opposite the hall; many thanks to Mark for cutting the grass and allowing us to use the field. Alison and Anthony Brown arrived with the PA system, and then set about arranging the tables and chairs.



*Mads serving the Bar-B-Q*

So it was time to mark out the lanes. Long discussions were held on the terrain and the siting of the lanes but eventually common sense prevailed and the organiser of the tournament made her decision! The lanes were marked with engineering precision; an architect's measure, string and spray paint were used by Mark Porter, Nicky Baxter, Diana Davies and Peter Kolkowski, "WHAT A JOB!".



*Our esteemed organiser*

Anne Perry arrived with the bar (well the contents of the bar) and David with the BBQ (thanks Marianne Bray for the loan); both very important for

an event such as this. Sheila and Richard Green arrived in style in their Citroen Traction Avant 11BL, registered in Paris 1953 (known in the UK as a Light 15) and placed it in the corner of the car park; Sheila, looking very French in her striped shirt and cheekily placed beret, raised the Tricolour and all was set. Two o'clock arrived but the organiser of the tournament seemed in disarray, however, soon



*Richard, Citroen and Sheila*

things were resolved as the games got under way. We had 20 teams; three of these entered by the Porter family, which caused a little confusion regarding who was in which team

The first round showed the competitive spirit, and the measures were out on many, many occasions! During this time the BBQ was doing well with David in charge, plus he had the support of Madeleine and the rest of the Spears family. Alison was running the Champagne draw, which was won by Peter Kolkowski, number 10. Sheila organised a 'guess the weight of the cake' competition, which was won by Jane Hole, with a weight guess of 848 grams (not a rock cake then Sheila).

The second round continued with even stronger competition between the teams (still confusion within the 3 Porter teams but 'what fun'). Then the 'ice bucket challenge' was issued, and Chris Baxter was auctioned to be 'iced' (I think that's the term); £20 pounds was



*Chris accepting the Ice Bucket Challenge*

the winning bid (thanks Wally). Chris nominated Graham Glasper to take-on the challenge next; so Graham, when is it to be!!!?



*Clearly Tammy is closest!*

Whilst scoring for the semi-final qualifiers was taking place, Anne was overseeing the flight of the paper aeroplane contest in the hall. The competition was very close; the designs you could say

were similar but the atmosphere in the hall was tense for the fly in. John, David and Madeleine's son in law were the runners-up, with the winner being Esther (nee Green) with a wondrous paper engineering design! Back to the Boules - things were getting exciting now it was semi-finals time. **Game One:** Chris (now dry) and Nicky Baxter V Porter Team 3. **Game Two:** Tammy and Peter Ellis V David and Catherine Lodge.



*Richard, throwing with style*

The semi-finals were highly competitive, with rumblings from the spectators as a few rain drops fell (what wimps) but the players showed their competitive spirit to provide two great contests. The final featured David and Catherine against Chris and Nicky. This became a game of 'ends', with the measure being asked for many times, even for long distances. There were many *Oohs* and *Ahhs* (I think mainly from the competitors themselves) by the time this exciting game had ended, with a mistake by the Baxters, the rain was well on its way. The winners were Catherine and David from West Hatch; they were also the first team to register amongst those first moments of chaos. They were each presented with very nice bottles of sparkling wine, and the runners-up with rather nice bottles of red wine.

So thanks to the committee members, family and friends who helped on the day, without whom we would not have been able to run the event and make it the success it was. Especial thanks to: Norman Banbridge (for helping David with the gap in the hedge, along with the lone of that rather jolly good gazebo for the BBQ); Graham (for cutting the hedges in the car park and making it all look rather nice) - when is the next ice bucket challenge Graham?; Chris Baxter (for his 'let's get into the spirit' announcements and taking part in the ice bucket challenge). Most of all, a very special thanks to all of you who came to support the event, which made it such an enjoyable and successful day, and in so doing, boosted the funds that help run the hall. We all hope you enjoyed the afternoon.



*The Winners!*

*(Ed. A 'very well done' to Jacqueline Kolkowski, who, rather self-deprecatingly, described herself as "the rather disorganised tournament organiser"; congratulations and many thanks on a job exceedingly well done.)*

**Lots more photos on the website [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)**



# Taunton Deane Borough Council News

*John Williams, Borough Councillor for Neroche Ward and Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council, has kindly offered to write a regular column for our Newsletter.*

What a magnificent summer we have enjoyed, lovely warm days, sometimes crisp and sometimes balmy evenings but certainly a time to enjoy living in such a lovely part of the country as we do. Hopefully, this will be extended by one of our lovely ‘Indian Summers’, taking us well into the Autumn before Winter sets in.



**Flood Action Plan.** The excellent weather has allowed good progress on the 20 year Flood Action Plan agreed with Government and all Somerset Councils; the dredging of the Rivers Parrett and Tone well ahead of schedule, works to the River Sowey to take water away from the Parrett/Tone confluence, well in hand. We have also just received the report identifying a suitable location for the flood alleviation dam on the River Tone,



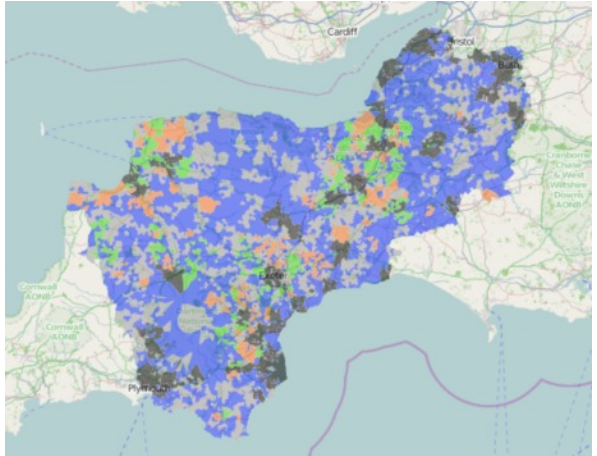
between Taunton and Wellington, which is estimated to hold back 2 million cubic metres of water in times of flood. In addition, a working party has been established to review the feasibility of a Parrett barrage or sluice to prevent the surge of water at high tides up the River Parrett and Tone which causes so many problems at present. All of this and

more is ongoing to try and mitigate the severity of the flooding that wreaked havoc with the settlements and land on the levels and moors over the past two years.



Funding of all of these projects, and future maintenance requirements, is always a problem, and all Councils across Somerset are working together to resolve this with central Government. One thing is certain, it is too big a bill for us locally, and so far I am pleased to say Government has been very supportive as they recognise the terrible disaster that beset the area.

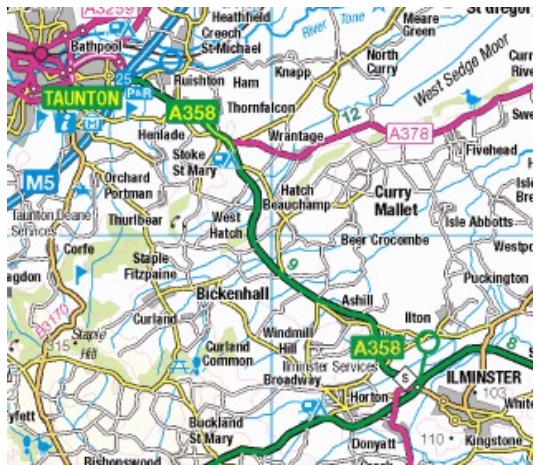
**Superfast Broadband.** There have been very well attended meetings recently at Neroche and Hatch Beauchamp for a presentation on Broadband availability in the area, the numbers attending reflect the keen interest in obtaining a decent service, as it is generally poor at present. Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) have added a new interactive map to their web site, which, by entering your postcode, provides a status report on present progress. The advice is only against the 90% coverage that CDS are committed to provide at present. I can say that CDS have now secured extra funds to raise the bar to 95%, and they are exploring further techniques as to how to provide coverage for the final 5%. To those who are concerned they may not benefit from the current project, I can only say I do not believe all is lost yet, and I give my assurance as your representative that I will be continually pressing the case for improvement. In addition, reassurance given to date that the improvements to infrastructure being made by the CDS programme are such that all properties within the area will receive a service of at least 2 mb/s in 2016. I do appreciate that 2mb/s is not ‘superfast’ but it is a useful speed to work with while, hopefully, they work on improving the technology to deliver a better service yet again.





As regards the extra funding for coverage to 95%, I can confirm that a resolution at Taunton Deane has been passed for an allocation of £380,000 for this initiative as the TDBC contribution towards the funding for Somerset. This provides our contribution towards the match-funding County were seeking to draw down substantial Government grants. I have supported this because I have always been a strong advocate of a decent rural broadband service, recognising the need to provide this as an essential service for the businesses and homes in remote areas, and I will continue to strive to achieve this.

**Improvements to the A358.** I am sure you will join me in welcoming the news that the A358 is now being looked at as a priority for improvements. The Highways Agency is currently carrying out phase 2 of a feasibility study to consider improving the A303/A30/A358 and had initially identified five stretches to look at in detail which did not, at this stage, include the A358.



Government has now recognised the inadequacy and dangers inherent with the A358, and announced that the section between Southfields Roundabout at Ilminster and J25/M5 at Taunton, will also be included as part of the phase 2 review. It is

expected that the Highways Agency will publish their findings in time for the Government's Autumn Statement, which will reveal the next round of funding allocations for future projects. If successful, it should see work start on the A358 in the next two years, rather than possibly 5 to 10 years hence.



Anyone who regularly drives along the A303/A358 corridor will know

that improvements are much needed, and that's why both County and Borough Councils have been lobbying the Government to take action.

There is no doubt, lack of improvements to the A358 and junction 25 have been recognised as major impediments to regeneration plans and economic development in Taunton. Improvement to this road and junction has long been pressed-for, and it is great to see it move up the agenda. The fact it is now being actively considered by the Highways Agency, with the expectation of consideration in the Government's Autumn statement, is a major achievement. Any improvements to this route will be welcomed by motorists and residents, to relieve the daily misery of the intolerable queues and delays and the resultant pollution.

*Please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification or comment on the above or if you have any other queries in respect of Council services.*

[cllr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

## **Neroche Local History Group**

**The History of Hedgerows:  
what they tell us about our local landscape**

**Gavin Saunders  
Director at Neroche Woodlanders Ltd**

**Wednesday 26th November  
Neroche Hall 7.30pm**

**All Welcome      Non Members £2.50**

# Inter-Village Cricket Match

By Wally Torrington

*The competition is played annually between Staple Fitzpaine, Thurlbear, Orchard Portman and Stoke St Mary. It always takes place on Stoke's ground and organised by the cricket club, with the Walker family providing refreshments and awarding the Walker Cup to the winning team. Rules of play are as normal with a few exceptions. Many thanks to our cricket correspondent, Rob Larkman, for the photos and detailed match report.*

What could be better on a Sunday afternoon than watching 'the beautiful game' in gorgeous weather, listening to the heartening sound of 'leather on willow' mixed with the gentle tinkling of tea cups, and glasses containing some slightly stronger forms of refreshment; a quintessential English country setting.

This year's competition attracted a good gathering of enthusiastic spectators who enjoyed a super display of cricket being played in the traditional spirit, and expertly officiated by umpires Charles Clark, Dave Hingston and Derek Parsons. As regards the results:



*Orchard Portman: Back: S. Gibbons, C. Cherry T. Keyte. Front: T. Bailey, R. Bailey and S. Bailey*

**First Semi-Final:** Thurlbear 62 for 3 v Staple 54 for 2. Thurlbear posted a respectable 62 with Staple finding runs hard-to-come-by and always behind the required rate.



*Staple Fitzpaine: Left to Right: D. Flack, S. Harges, D. Garland, R. Larkman, H. Dunn and M. Grabham*

## **Second Semi-Final:**

Stoke St Mary 63 for 1 v Orchard Portman 64 for 2. A good total of 63 from Stoke was insufficient to stem the solid batting of Orchard Portman who eased through to the final.



**Stoke:** Left to Right: L. Johnston, A. Purnell, G. Johnston, D. Parsons, J. Clark and R. Hingston

retaining the cup that they won in 2013.

Colin Walker presented the Inter Villages' Walker Cup to Richard Bailey, the winning captain of Orchard Portman, to finalise an excellent day and a super afternoon's cricket.



**Thurlbear** Left to Right: W. Barrington, S. Callow, D. Callow, B. Childs, H. Smith, J. Williams

**Final:** Thurlbear 40 v Orchard Portman 41. Thurlbear struggled from the start against the excellent bowling of Orchard Portman but recovered late-on to reach 40. Once again Orchard Portman batted aggressively to reach the required total in the 6th over without losing a wicket, thereby deservedly



Colin Walker presenting the Walker Cup to Richard Bailey, Captain of Orchard Portman

## The Rules

Each team comprises 6 players. Each innings consists of 10 overs with each player limited to 2 overs. Generally, each outfielder bowls 2 overs with the wicket keeper remaining behind the stumps. No LBW's are given by the umpires. The full complement of 11 fielders for each innings is made up of 5 extra players from the other 2 teams. Batsmen retire after scoring 25 runs but can return if remaining wickets fall before 10 overs are bowled.

But of course, as all true cricket fans would agree, the most important part of the day was the splendid tea provided by Victoria Walker, ably assisted by the Bailey family.



# News From Somerset County Council

*Ross Henley, our Somerset County Councillor, has kindly offered to write a regular column for our Newsletter.*



When I was on holiday in Norway this summer, I had a most amusing, but pleasant reminder, that since last year I have been the County Councillor for Neroche. I was approached by a couple who said I was their local Councillor and could I help with an issue at their grandson's school - Castle School. Nicola and I thought it was so funny to be approached like this in a foreign land; however, I was delighted to help them when we returned to UK.

I very much enjoyed attending the Thursday Lunch Club in Neroche Hall recently, and the 'Fish and Chip' Quiz run by Colin Croad. I'm aware that another quiz is coming up shortly and I have emailed David Spears to ask if there is any chance of being on his team again.

## **Superfast Broadband.**



I attended at a meeting in Hatch Beauchamp village hall to discuss the Superfast Broadband roll-out. When you listen to BT and Somerset County Council you would think that everything is marvellous on this issue but when talking to many local residents I often hear a different story. Many local people tell me that, not only are they failing to receive fast broadband but in fact the speed is getting slower. Many of the rural communities I represent are also in areas where the Council and BT are unable to confirm when or even if they will get Superfast Broadband. I often think this policy is an urban one, in which many people in rural areas are being ignored.

## **School Meals.**

I have been spending a lot of time at Thurlbear School in recent months. I have been supporting the school because, since the start of term, through no fault of their own, they have been without the hot free school meals for all under-eight-year-olds promised by the government. I took up this matter for ten schools and reported the issue to The Schools Minister, and following a



call from his department, the schools were provided with hot free school meals the following week. Thurlbear is such a nice school and I'm keen to do whatever I can to support them.

**Healthy Living Grant.** Still on the subject of the school, I have been talking to Vicky Pearson, who I was proud to support during the recent Crown Estates issue. We are talking about awarding a grant for a scheme she is working on at Thurlbear School involving the growing of healthy food. Each County Councillor is given a grant-pot to award to groups in their division which demonstrate healthy living; so, if you can think of any other groups you feel deserve a healthy living grant then please let me know.  
[RLHenley@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:RLHenley@somerset.gov.uk)

**GUESS WHO IS COMING FOR DINNER?**



**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15th**

£17.50 per person plus a bottle of wine per couple

Tickets in advance from Anne 01460234377 or Nicky 01823  
480675

or Richard 01823 480286

or by e mail from [anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk)

A three course meal at 3 different homes finishing off with coffee  
and brandy at the Hall

A great night and so popular so book early

# Taunton Racecourse

By Wally Torrington

*Many residents are surprised when they discover that the racecourse is situated within the Neroche Parish boundary. It is the largest business in the Parish, with 15 permanent employees, which can expand to 200 on race days with the use of temporary staff.*



Taunton is England's youngest National Hunt racecourse and one of the most beautifully located courses in the country, with outstanding views across to the wooded slopes of the Blackdown Hills. There has been racing in Taunton since the eighteenth century, and in the present location since 21st September 1927. The facilities for spectators have been spectacularly improved over the years, from a wooden stand surrounded by mud in the early days to the magnificent facilities that exist in 2014.

Racing takes place between October and April each year, with the season comprising, on average, 15 meetings. At each meeting there is action packed entertainment to suit all budgets; from cheering your horse at trackside with a beef-burger and mug of coffee to watching the racing from a high class restaurant or private box serving Champagne lunch and afternoon tea.

On non-racedays the grounds are put to numerous uses, including conferences, weddings, property auctions, car boot sales, exhibitions, firework shows, caravan rallies, military tattoos etc; in fact, there seems to be no end to the ingenuity of the management to best utilise the course facilities, its 135 acres and 1,000 capacity car park.



If you are interested in learning more about Taunton Racecourse, or becoming a member and enjoying the exclusive facilities of the members stand and restaurant, then contact the racecourse office on 01823 337172 or at [info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

## Ticket Prices

**Grandstand Enclosure** Allows access to all areas other than the members stand and private hospitality boxes. It includes both grandstands, the parade ring/winners enclosure and 'The Orchard' and 'Saddle Room' restaurants. The main racecourse office is also located in this enclosure. Holders of a grandstand ticket can move freely over to the centre course enclosure at the public crossing point in front of the stands. £15.00, or online £13.50 (increasing to £16 on 30th December)

**The Centre Course Picnic Area** Situated on the opposite side of the finishing-straight from the grandstands. There are restricted facilities in the centre course. Picnic tables, toilets and fast food catering facilities are provided. Upgrades to the Grandstand Enclosure are available to allow access across the course at the public crossing point. This ticket is not available on premier fixtures. £10 (available on the day only).

**The Gift Package** An ideal gift, offering great value; it includes an open grandstand ticket, valid for any one race meeting of your choosing, a food and drink voucher for a snack with a drink of your choosing (beer/wine/soft drink), a racecard for the day and a tote £6 betting voucher. Packages must be booked in advance. There is no refund for the gift package as it includes an open ticket. £33.00, or online £29.70

**The Raceday Package** Includes a Grandstand ticket for the chosen raceday, a food and drink voucher for a snack with a drink of your choosing (beer/wine/soft drink), a racecard for the day and a tote £6 betting voucher. Raceday Packages must be booked in advance. £30.00, or £27.00 online (increasing to £31 on 30th December)

**National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs** Reduced admission of £9 on the production of their YFC card at the gate.

**Accompanied Under 16's** Free

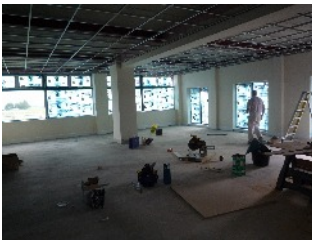
**Book grandstand tickets, racecards and raceday packages online and receive a 10% discount; groups (15 or more) 20% discount.**

## Remaining Fixtures for 2014

Day	Date	First Race	Last Race	Details
Wednesday	29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	1.40pm	4.40pm	Half term Meeting
Thursday	13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	1.10pm	4.10pm	Afternoon Meeting
Thursday	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	12.35pm	3.55pm	Afternoon Meeting
Thursday	11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12.40pm	3.40pm	Festive Fixture
Tuesday	30 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12.40pm	3.55pm	Christmas Meeting

## New Extension to the Paddocks Stand

We have been reliably informed that the magnificent £400,000 extension to the Paddocks Stand is on schedule to be handed over on 20th October, and is planned to be furnished and ready for racing on 29th October. This new addition will provide:



*More spacious Members Restaurant*

*a new under-cover pedestrian visitor access and ticket hall; extra accommodation*

*in the Owners and Trainers Bar; accommodation for circa 70 additional covers in the Annual Members Bar and Restaurant; a terrace added to the Paddock Gallery Café and Bar; and new service areas on the first and second floors.*

The project will not only provide additional accommodation for trainers, owners, annual members and visitors during the racing season, but will also be available for a wide range of conferences and other social activities during the closed season. It will also provide valuable employment in this rural area. The racecourse management are particularly grateful to the British Horseracing Authority for their £50,000 contribution.



*New extension to the left of the stand*



*Paddock Gallery Café and Bar terrace*



## Weddings at Taunton Racecourse



Taunton Racecourse not only holds a licence for civil marriages, but they specialise in catering for wedding breakfasts, evening wedding parties, receptions and dinner dances. They can cater for up to 150 guests for the wedding breakfast and 200 for the evening buffet, reception or dance. Why not go to see them and discuss your individual requirements; they would be pleased to tailor-make your Wedding Day Celebrations.

They offer four wedding packages to suit a wide range of budgets, and you can view them on the racecourse website [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk), ‘click’ on “Weddings” in the drop-down menu. If you have a favourite dish, a particular theme in mind, or just need some guidance on where to begin, please contact [troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk) or call 01823 325035



## Christmas at Taunton Racecourse



Christmas in 2014. This year they are transporting their guests to the amazing world of Narnia for their Christmas parties. For just £33.95 you can enjoy their fantastic four course Christmas menu, a bottle of wine for every five guests, a disco and a chance to win a table for two at a race meeting of your choice. The organiser of the Christmas party will also receive two open race day tickets to any race meeting of their choice. This year's dates are 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th December 2014. Some dates are very busy, so to avoid disappointment book now at [troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk) or calling 01823 337172





# Focus on Local Business

## Paddocks Equestrian

By Kate Baker



There are several equestrian establishments in the parish, including Paddocks Equestrian which is situated on the edge of the Herepath with access to miles of superb off-road hacking.

Paddocks Equestrian is based around a long established, family run livery yard offering competitive rates for DIY, full and part liveries, including holiday and short-stay, and welcomes both “happy hackers” and competition riders. Their facilities include a quality, 60 x 30 metres all-weather arena with a surface of silica sand and shredded rubber (ensuring year-round useability), fully enclosed by post and rail fencing. The arena can be hired by individuals or groups; adjacent to the arena is a cross-country schooling field with a variety of portable fences. Blackdown Hills Riding Club holds many of their events at Paddocks (see article on page 35) including their residential camp which is always very successful and enjoyed by all.



*Blackdown Hills Riding Club members at the 'Breast Cancer Awareness' charity dressage.*

Paddocks has a “live in” supervisor onsite at all times, ample lorry / trailer parking and is also fortunate to have a couple of onsite, experienced freelance instructors, who are able to provide hassle free and enjoyable lessons for everyone from beginners to advanced riders. Stable management days are also available on request for those who are new to the world of horses or who just need a little help and support.

*For more information, go to the website, [www.paddocksequestrian.co.uk](http://www.paddocksequestrian.co.uk) or phone 07525 199906.*

# Blackdown Hills RIDING CLUB

## Charity Dressage Event for Breast Cancer Awareness

*(Well done **Blackdown Hills Riding Club**, you raised over £250.)*

*By Sara Llewellyn*

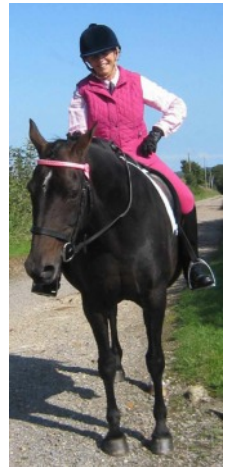
*Many thanks to Kate Baker for gifting us the use of her lovely facilities at The Paddocks, Bickenhall, for the event on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September.*

The Dressage event started at 10.30am with a class of ten competitors all vying for top marks and a red rosette. However I think secretly, what they were really competing for was the prestigious pink rosette kindly donated by Clipperssharp, for the 'Best Turned Out' competitor in pink.



*Tricia Budd on Just Gem*

As I looked round the field I could see that there must have been some very busy/stressed mums and dads who had obviously been working into the wee small hours sewing, gluing and then up at ridiculous o'clock plaiting and braiding ponies and children alike, in pink flowers and ribbons. It didn't stop at the children either, as many of the adults looked as if they had raided their children's dressing-up boxes and local charity shops. I must give them all credit for the thought and effort everyone had put in to get the overall look that would hopefully win them the award, they were all fantastic.



*Jill Perrior on Grace*

Each of the four classes over the day were well attended, so the judges Sally Haddon and Karen Cameron had an entertaining and slightly more complicated job in judging the movements of each competitor as they took their equines around the arena in their various guises. Pieces of pink outfits flew off as horses took the corners, whilst feathered or flowered hats fell over eyes both on horse and rider causing much jollity amongst the spectators.

I had the unenviable task of judging the best pink outfit for each class. This proved very difficult and had the potential of making me very unpopular; it took all morning to complete. I short listed entries from each class and could only make a decision after I had a close up look at the outfits. Who had plaited their own horses? Glued all the sequins on themselves? How would the judges on “Strictly” cope? I think I was more of a Len than a Craig and after much agonising decided on the following class winners; ***Class 1- Bea Perham riding Bonnie, Class 2- Amanda Ryan riding Caspar , Class 3- Olivia Hodges riding Lord Percy, Class 4- Tricia Budd riding Just Gem.***



*Amanda Ryan with Caspar*

Behind the scenes, Jane Palfrey (Blackdown Hills Riding Club committee member), beautifully dressed in a pink Bollywood outfit, had done a fantastic job as caterer, providing tea and cakes as well as lunches for the judges. Set up next to Jane was Charlotte who was doing a sterling job selling tickets for the Tombola. There were some super prizes all generously donated by riding club members and friends. Also present was a budding artist ‘Chrissie’ who at the tender age of 12, spent the day sketching peoples horses and dogs for a small donation; the results of her efforts were fantastic, and I think she has a good career ahead of her.



*Jane Palfrey in the refreshment tent*

The day was fabulous all round; the weather was perfect, the competition was hot, everyone had big smiles on their faces and many rosettes were won. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way; either through a donation, participating in the competition or helping behind the scenes with the organising and stewarding.

*For more photos and results of the actual dressage competition please visit our website: [www.blackdownhillsridingclub.com](http://www.blackdownhillsridingclub.com)*

# Commemorative Window

## All Saints Church, Curland

*By Wally Torrington, based almost entirely on notes provided by Ann Jones*

The window is installed in the former All Saints' Church, Curland. The prominent hill-top site of the Church has likely been a place of religious significance since prehistoric times. A church existed there by the 13th century, intended as a place of worship for people from Curry Mallet who worked in Neroche Forest; in the 15th century a largely new building seems to have arisen. That building was condemned as being “fit for a pig's sty” in the early 19th century, and in 1856 it was entirely

rebuilt by Benjamin Ferrey. The church was declared redundant in 1970, and sold by the diocese in 1989.

The window was paid for by contributions from the parish, and commemorates:

**Victor Harold Dicks**  
**Walter Mountstephens**  
**Wilfred Frank Dicks**  
**Thomas Henry Winter**  
**Ernest Gamblin**

All of whom fought in WW1.

The window depicts St Michael on the left, with flaming sword; Christ risen in the centre; and St George slaying the dragon on the right. It is richly coloured with exquisite landscape and floral decoration; colours are rich reds, purples, blues and greens. The drawing is pre-Raphaelite in style and of exceptional quality; typical of the Arts & Crafts movement. The window was designed and manufactured by Jones and Willis of Birmingham in 1921 (signed bottom left of St George).







# Heroche Friday Film Night

(in association with Moviola)

**Friday October 31st at 7.30pm**

## THE BOOK THIEF (12a)

While subjected to the horrors of World War II, young Liesel finds solace in stealing books and sharing them with others. In the basement of her home her parents hide a Jewish refugee. Based on the best selling book of the same name, this film is a must see.



**November 28th @ 7.30pm**



## JIMMY'S HALL (12a)

Jimmy Gralton (Barry Ward) returns to his native Ireland in the early 1930s after a decade away in the United States; he's seen for himself the depression and the Wall Street ruin. His brother has just died and initially he has no plans other than helping his mother with the small family farm. But soon all the young kids – bored to tears with nothing to do thereabouts – are begging him to reopen the hall he built as a co-operative project with locals: more fun, more laughs. Gralton astonishes everyone by producing a wind-up gramophone he's brought back from the States, with the latest jazz records, and teaches them some cheeky, sexy dancing – an entertainingly surreal moment. But reopening the hall reopens old wounds: a spark is rekindled with Oonagh (Simone Kirby), a woman with whom he was once and is still in love, and it redraws the battle lines with the tough guys of the old IRA who are now part of an authoritarian political establishment. Jimmy's Hall is now a focus of discontent and a dangerous alternative power base.

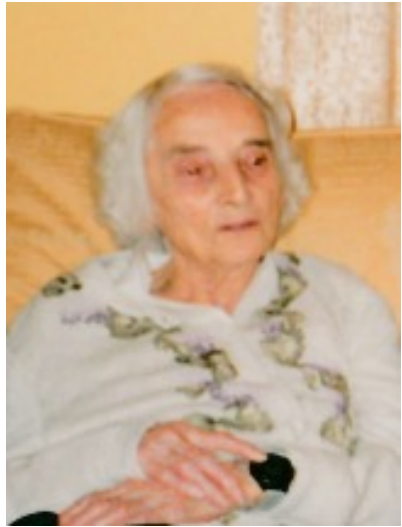
Tickets £6.00 - Bar and nibbles.

Nicky Baxter 01823 480675 or [anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk)

# Bickenhall & District Women's Institute

*By Nicky Baxter*

[Dorothy Sydenham](#). The summer saw the sad death of former member Dorothy Sydenham, who had, until the past year, lived most of her life in our parish. It was a great honour for Bickenhall & District WI to provide the refreshments for the reception at Neroche Hall following Dorothy's funeral at North Curry and Curland Methodist Chapel. It was so comforting to share stories about Dorothy and the past; and it was lovely to see the array of photographs that were available to view. Thank you to Brenda Crossley and Jenny Stewart for arranging the afternoon; to Di Grabham for the flowers (Dorothy loved flowers); and to all members who made cakes and served teas on the afternoon. I really do believe it was just what Dorothy would have wanted.



*Dorothy Sydenham*

[Annual Summer Outing](#). Several members enjoyed a visit to the Norman Lockear Observatory near Sidmouth, where they learned about our solar system.

The planetarium brought the night sky to life as different star constellations were named and explained. It was a lovely day, with some members having a picnic beforehand and enjoying the glorious surrounding coastal countryside. It was hoped we would also be able to visit the nearby donkey sanctuary but we ran out of time.



*Norman Lockear Observatory*

[Forthcoming Events](#). Forthcoming events, in which Bickenhall & District WI are taking part, start with skittles matches in the County Knockout Tournament and in local friendly matches. Let's hope we get through a few rounds or even win the competition this year.

A number of members are looking forward to a fashion show organised by the Somerset Federation of WI, which is taking place at Bradford-on-Tone Golf Club. A few members are also attending the County Annual Meeting at Westland's in Yeovil, this year's speaker will be former MP and travel journalist Michael Portillo.

A trip to the recently re-opened Brewhouse Theatre to see Murder on the Nile has been organised. Plus, there is our annual County Carol Service, which takes place at Wells Cathedral; a wonderful part of Christmas celebrations, which is also popular with HABs (husbands and boyfriends).



*Michael Portillo*

WI Centenary. In the last newsletter I mentioned the centenary of WI in Britain. County plans are well underway and will be celebrated, in part, by a pageant entitled Alice in WI Land, which will take place next year in Yeovil and Taunton. A number of members will be taking part in this spectacle.

90th Anniversary of Bickenhall & District WI. In addition to the centenary of the WI nationally, October 2016 will see the 90th birthday of Bickenhall & District WI. This is, I think, something to be proud of. We will be planning our own festivities and commemorations for this, and members are already saving towards a celebration meal. The 80th birthday meal was in-house at Neroche Hall when members were served by HABs, all wearing dinner jackets.



*Bickenhall & District WI, 80th Birthday Meal 2006*

If you would like to be part of this amazing history of a women's organisation, we meet on the second Wednesday of the month (except August) usually at Neroche Hall. We always welcome new members to our friendly group of women.

# Scarecrow Festival

By Wally Torrington



*1st Prize – ‘Waiting for the School Bus’*

were announced: **1st ‘Waiting for the School Bus’; 2nd The Unicycling Juggler’; 3rd Alice in Wonderland.**

An enormous amount of hard work, ingenuity and imagination went into the ideas, themes and building of the scarecrow entries. As part of her speech at the prize-giving, Mal said “*The Neroche Village Scarecrow designers have excelled themselves this year – the variety, skill and humour of the entries has been outstanding. I have heard nothing but praise and amazement from people who have been amused by the scarecrows and are already*



*3rd Prize – ‘Alice in Wonderland’*

This year another most successful Scarecrow Festival was held in the Parish, and congratulations must go to Mal Lee who acted as the main organiser for this superb event.

Alison and Anthony Brown generously hosted a Bar-B-Q at Battens Farm on the evening of the last day of the event where the prize-winners



*2nd Prize ‘The Unicycling Juggler’*

looking forward to next year. The teas in the church and at Woodcott were a great success – and tonight’s Bar-B-Q is the perfect way to round off a fun week”



There were a total of 13 entries in the competition plus two additional scarecrows that were not included in the voting, which took place over 8 days. 64 voting forms were submitted, however, we are aware that lots of locals toured the exhibits as couples and in friends and family groups; therefore, the number taking part in the public adjudication was probably well over a 100.



*Rev Paul Reynolds accepting 1<sup>st</sup> prize on behalf of Thurlbear School*

Also in her speech at the Prize-giving, Mal thanked those who sponsored the festival: Battens Farm; Bickenhall Farm; The Artisan



*Nicky Baxter accepting 3rd Prize*

Baker; and the Greyhound Inn. She also praised her team of helpers, including: Nicky and Chris Baxter; David Symmonds (who cooked a most delicious Bar-B-Q); Alison and Anthony Brown; and John Lee for all their help and support, including, preparation, printing, cooking, serving, and much more (apologies to anybody I've missed out). And a special thanks to the kind soul who cleaned the sign-post by the 'Waiting for the School Bus' scarecrows.

The Festival was not just another example of a great local event; it also showed the many commuters and others who either visit or just pass-through our parish, what a vibrant and active community we have.



*Enjoying the Bar-B-Q and 'refreshments'*

It's not too early to start thinking about ideas for next year's event; why not 'have a go'?

*Photographs of the rest of the entries can be seen on the Community Website at [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*

## Gardening Corner

*Rebecca Pow, a local a journalist, broadcaster and PR consultant specialising in gardens and rural issues, has kindly agreed to write a regular column for our Newsletter. Rebecca opens her garden, Tuckers Farmhouse in Stoke St Mary, by appointment for groups of 10 or more. [www.rebeccapow.com](http://www.rebeccapow.com) 07900 685 303.*



For the first time over the past few months I have had a problem with deer coming into my veg patch. There is a significant deer population in the woods all around us including Thurlbear and the Forest of Neroche, and whilst I am quite happy for them to venture into the far end of our paddock, where they look so content quietly grazing in the early morning mist, I am not so keen on them availing themselves of my precious produce. I have noticed that there are certain things deer seem to have a penchant for, I know they like roses but I wasn't aware of their special liking for dwarf French beans (mine in particular).



Since the family are rather fond of these beans too, and since I had gone to some effort to grow them, I was determined to try and protect them. Consequently, I erected a complex array of barriers, including: plastic trellis; horticultural fleece; a criss-crossing of sticks; and even a homemade scarecrow. The latter comprised an old crash helmet, complete with goggles, posed on a stick. I thought the 'human' element might do the trick in scaring-off the

deer, and indeed this, together with the other defences, seemed to work.

On the note of scarecrows, I was tickled by the array of scarecrows dotted

across the parish of Neroche for the Scarecrow Competition [*a separate Scarecrow Competition article is featured on page 41*]. Around every corner in Curland and Staple Fitzpaine was a new surprise. My favourite was the little gathering of Thurlbear Scarecrow Students, waiting by the bus stop near the Greyhound Pub. It brought back fond memories, all three of my children having been to Thurlbear School (and looking not dissimilar to the scarecrows on some days!). By the way, I was pleased to catch up with some old pupils at the inter-village cricket match at the end of the summer, played on the relatively new cricket ground at Stoke St Mary. A very charming English affair! [*A separate Village Cricket Competition article is featured on page 26*]



I have much enjoyed visiting many flower shows all over Taunton Deane during the summer and early autumn. It's wonderful that these events are still so popular, from small village affairs to larger town shows like that held in



Wellington, which attracted hundreds of entries. Competitors came not just from the town but from its rural hinterland too, including many children's exhibits, which is heartening as these will be our gardeners of the future, and anything we can do to encourage them to care for their environment (and especially our bees) is welcome. Amongst the cornucopia of flowers and vegetables was one of my favourite entries – a melon grown from seed (probably 'Russian Giant') a real achievement. The secret is lots of regular tomato feed and copious quantities of water.



## JOBS FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

### Flower Beds & Borders

If you haven't already done so, hurry to lift summer-flowering bulbs such as gladioli as well as plants including fuchsias, marguerites, and pelargoniums (bedding geraniums) and all the other half-hardy bedding perennials, before we get any frosts. Give the plants a tidy, cut them back by around half to keep them compact and then pot-up in good quality potting compost and put them in a well-lit frost-free location. If you don't want to bother lifting summer bulbs, try mulching thickly with about 6" of compost.



*Tulipa 'China Pink'*

It's still not too late to plant tulips, in fact I have planted them as late as December before now, and they still flower successfully. Also, add some colourful winter flowering plants to tubs. Pansies or cyclamen work well together

with some contrasting trailing ivy or ajuga.

As I've mentioned before, I leave my beds and borders until next February to do my mass garden tidy up, because it provides shelter for overwintering insects such as ladybirds, and food for the birds, although I do cut back anything that looks really mushy and unsightly.



*Clematis Viticella Etoile Violette*

A special note on Clematis. I have quite a number of clematis (mainly viticellas) and I cut them all back in mid February/March. Many people get 'hung up' on the complexities of clematis pruning,



so my advice is to chill out! Don't be alarmed that the majority of your clematis are turning brown and losing their leaves, this is perfectly normal for 90% of them, as only around 10% are evergreen. You can actually still plant out clematis in December and January if you purchase fully-hardy, mature potted specimens.

## Vegetables and Fruit

Hopefully, you have already sown your overwintering broad beans (‘Aquadulce Claudia’ is a reliable variety) and I have put-in some overwintering salad crops, which are covered with fleece. Winter cabbages, carrots and leeks are all doing fine. Compost any cleared areas of the veg patch to breathe new life into them for next season.



*Broad Bean (Aquadulce Claudia)*



*Multi-coloured Beetroot ‘Rainbow Mix’*

Start looking at what you might grow next year. One crop that has already caught my eye is the new-for-2015 multi-coloured beetroot ‘Rainbow Mix’ from Suttons Seeds of Paignton. These would not just add colour to meals but would look great in the veg patch, and may even entice children to eat them!

If you have old, unproductive crowns of rhubarb in the fruit garden, lift and divide them, and replant in well-prepared soil with plenty of home-made compost and a handful of bone meal.

I love pottering in the garden during winter, it is the ideal time to get the place sorted out and organized for the following year, and anything you can do now will pay dividends when the spring comes around again.

**Happy Gardening!**

# Hatch Beauchamp & Neroche Garden Club

By Wendy Morris and Maureen James

I believe I said in the last newsletter that October was our final meeting this year. Which it isn't!! We have David Usher advising on, among other things, all aspects of pruning both fruit trees and ornamental shrubs. This will be at Hatch Beauchamp village hall on Wednesday 26 November at the usual time of 7.30pm.

David Usher lives in Taunton and has long experience in speaking to garden clubs. He is a great believer in involving his audience, inviting questions, comments, feed-back. He has 35 years practical experience with 18 as Head Gardener at Hestercombe where he was responsible for the restoration, development and care of the Jekyll garden. Wendy will be sending the usual reminders in good time. As this really is our last meeting this year, we are planning to make it a bit festive with mulled wine and mince pies. Bring a guest with you for £2.50 - what a bargain evening!



*One of the Midney Gardens*

On 17th August, we had a very pleasant afternoon at Ivy Farm and to my enormous relief I still had enough in bloom to look like a garden! Thank you to everyone who came along and for the lovely cakes and nibbles.



*Tearooms at Midney Gardens*

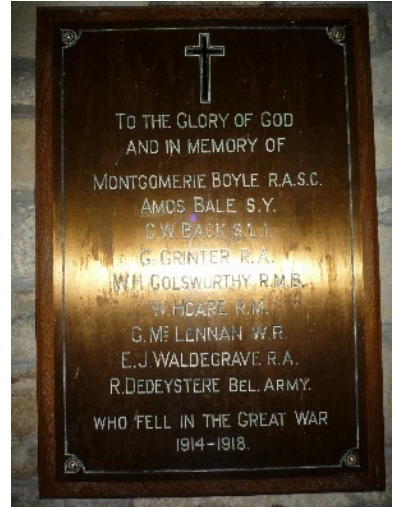
In September we had a lovely afternoon at Midney Gardens in Somerton, where we were made very welcome by Alison & David, who have transformed what was once part of a quarry into a series of delightful garden areas full of interesting and unusual plants and trees. Finishing with afternoon tea and home made cakes in their little cafe area. A small intimate garden with lots to see as well as plants to buy. Well worth a visit!

New club members are always welcome - just contact Wendy on 01460 234445, Joy on 01460 234237, Derek on 01823 480465 or Maureen on 01823 481111. Any one of these will be pleased to relieve you of £5.00 which will be your intro to a year of gardening delights.

# A First World War “Roll of Honour”

By Alan Marsh

Many readers of this Newsletter will be aware of the plaques displayed in Saint Peter’s Church, Staple Fitzpaine that commemorate the men from Bickenhall and Staple Fitzpaine who gave their lives during the Great War.



Curland’s sacrifice is recorded in the Memorial west window of All Saints’ Church, now a private dwelling (A full story of the window is on page 37).

In addition to these parish-wide initiatives, there is another rather different record, a personal endeavour by two persons unknown. For many years a hand-painted, hand-written, ‘Roll of Honour’ listing the “*Men from These Parishes Serving*” hung in the Mission Hut beside St. Peter’s Church (it is emphasised that the list is of all those who served, not just those who perished). The parish council met there in the late 1970’s into the 1980’s, until a leaking roof and an unsafe floor drove them elsewhere. The then Parish clerk, Aylmer Haldane, rescued the ‘Roll of Honour’ and kept it safe





until he left for New Zealand. From then on it has been in the care of the author of this article..



*St Peter's Church Mission Hut*

Allied cause, Portugal and then the USA in 1917 might also have had their flags displayed. Even so, it lists many men from “These Parishes” but does not name any individual parish. Most, but not all, of the servicemen traced so far are from Bickenhall, Curland, and Staple Fitzpaine (the upstart parish of Neroche has yet to be invented!).

The complete list of names can be found on the following page. If any reader can help with more information about those listed, or others who served in the Great War, please contact the author at [alanmarsh9@btinternet.com](mailto:alanmarsh9@btinternet.com) or by correspondence to Poole's Cottage, Curland, TA3 5SE. If and when such information is made-use-of in any future publication, due acknowledgement will be made.

A panel 40cm by 80cm has, at the top, the flags of the Allies: Japan, France, Belgium, Britain, Tsarist Russia, Italy and Serbia (please see the illustration below). Italy did not enter the war until 1915, so perhaps that is the year the project was started. Below, in a shield, there are two columns of names; in total 78 men and with a Regiment or Arm of the Services noted in 42 cases. The ‘Roll of Honour’ may well not cover all four years of the Great War. If it had, perhaps late entrants to the



*The 'Roll of Honour'*

This is local history to be proud of: “**We Will Remember Them**”, and hopefully **More of Them**, with your help!



# The Full List of "Men from These Parishes Serving" Transcribed from the 'Roll of Honour'

Name	Regiment/Service	Name	Regiment/Service
Captain Boyle	Army Service Corps	Eli Yard	Somerset Light Infantry
Amos Bale	Somerset Light Infantry	Walter Yard	Yorkshire Light Infantry
Fred Board	Army Service Corps (T)	Harry Cox	Somerset Light Infantry
Joseph Blackmore	Royal Marines	Noah Blackmore	Grenadier Guards
Isaac Blackmore	Royal Marines	Harry Chamberlain	Devons
Henry Blackmore	Welsh Borderers	Sydney Yard	Yorkshire Light Infantry
Charles Back			
Bertie Dicks	Army Service Corps (T)	<b>NB-Any omissions above of the Regiment/ Service are by the original compiler of this record.</b>	<b>All the above entries are in a neat hand and in non-fading ink.</b>
William Gamblin	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dorsets	The list is continued below in a different hand and using a fading ink.	No names are listed alphabetically nor is Regiment/Service noted.
Samuel Gamblin	Army Service Corps (T)	Tom Tutcher	
Herbert Grinter	Royal Navy	William Granger	(continued)
William Goldsworthy	Royal Marine Artillery	Charles Newton	Evan Morgan
Herbert Henshaw	19 <sup>th</sup> Hussars	Sidney Dicks	Albert Cottey
Harry Hoare	Somerset Light Infantry	James Bale	Edgar Bale
William Hoare	Royal Marines	George Bale	Ernest Matravers
James Hake	Royal Horse Artillery	Walter Bale	Jack Leigh
Herbert Knight	Somerset Light Infantry	Walter Knight	
George McLennan	Wiltshire Regiment	Frank Knight	
Elias Marks	West Som. Yeomanry	Arthur Knight	
Herbert Marks	Motor Transport ASC	Louis Knight	<b>Correction-ADD to L/h List- below WADHAM</b>
John Marks	Somerset Light Infantry	Frank Perry	
Tom Marks	Somerset Light Infantry	William Dicks	Edward Woolfrey-in
Fred Matravers	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dorsets	Arthur Dicks	Royal Artillery
William Mountstephens	Royal Artillery	John Spiller	and
Frank Morgan	RAMC	James F. Hooper	Christopher Yard-in
Fred Newman	RAMC	Tom V. Newton	Inniskillin Dragoons
Thomas Pain	Motor Transport ASC	Samuel Yard	
William Perry	Somerset Light Infantry	Tom Winter	
Charles Perry	Somerset Light Infantry	Fred Cottey	
Arthur Ralph	Scots Fusiliers	Albert Garland	
William Ralph	Royal Engineers	George Grinter	
Robert Sheat	RAMC	Ernest Gamblin	
George Tuck	Somerset Light Infantry	William Grinter	
William Welch	Somerset Light Infantry	Charles Ralph	
Frank Welch	Royal Navy	Sydney Ralph	
Earle Wadham		Ashton F ?(very faded)	

# Highley Farm Tractor Trundle

By Wally Torrington

On Sunday 21st September, the Highley Farm (Upottery) tractor trundle came ‘trundling’ through our parish, and what a wonderful sight it was to behold. Thirty seven tractors, some with trailers, formed the cavalcade, with the oldest being an Allis-Chalmers model ED40 made in the 1960s. They left Highley Farm around 11.00am for the



12 mile journey to the Farmers Arms, West Hatch, passing through Curland and Staple Fitzpaine; they stayed for a 30 minute ‘pit stop’. A number of our local residents found it extremely interesting talking to the owners about their tractors, the restoration work they’d undertaken, and other

‘trundles’ they had taken part in. The convoy then ‘trundled’ back the 14 miles to Newcott Farm, Yarcombe (via Bickenhall and Curland) for a ploughman’s lunch and tea. They were on the road (and some fields) for about three and a quarter hours in total, and covered at least 26 miles; a remarkable feat for some of the older tractors.



As well as having lots of fun, and taking the opportunity to show-off their wonderful machines, the main aim of the ‘trundlers’ was to raise money for the Devon Air Ambulance (a total of £806 was achieved, £150 more than last year).

<http://www.daat.org/donate>

Jacqueline Kolkowski of Curland, who first drew my attention to the fact this event had taken place in our parish, is extremely taken with whole concept of a tractor rally, and has now requested a tractor for Christmas; can anyone oblige?



# Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood

**12 Nov 14 'Practical conservation at Mount Fancy Farm Reserve'**

**Location: Mount Fancy 9.30 am - 3pm**

This is a maintenance work-party for this popular and interesting reserve. Join us for a day of habitat management such as selective scrub control that keep the reserve in shape for its wildlife including threatened butterfly species. We usually have a bonfire with baked potatoes!



*In the last ten years the small tortoiseshell butterfly has declined in numbers by 77%*

**Cost: Free; Location: Park at Staple Hill Forestry Commission car park (ST 246159) and walk down to the reserve entrance.**

**For more information:** See the Neroche Woodlanders website: [www.youngwood.org.uk](http://www.youngwood.org.uk)

**26 Nov & 10 Dec 14 'Volunteering With the Neroche Woodlanders'**

**Location: Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine ST256197**



A day of volunteering at Young Wood community woodland. There will be a number of different jobs to do over the day. During 2014 we will be improving the site facilities for use by groups spending time in the forest for bushcraft and woodcrafts. We are aiming to improve habitats for wildlife and continue to lay the foundations for traditional management of this woodland into the future. All tools and

instruction provided. As the fire is going all day, feel free to bring your potatoes wrapped in foil for a warming lunch! Wear suitable outdoor clothes, and boots. Bring packed lunch and water. Hot drinks will be provided. Please let us know if you are able to attend.

This event is provided by: Neroche Conservation Volunteers. Contact: Nick Milton / Gavin Saunders / Anne Elliott-Day Tel: 07840 737127

[info@nerochewoodlanders.org](mailto:info@nerochewoodlanders.org) or [www.ncvolunteers.org](http://www.ncvolunteers.org)

# Tales from the Forest

By Gavin Saunders

The first signs of autumn colours are beginning to appear in the forest, and the squirrels, dormice and voles are making short work of the hazel nuts. The last few late summer flowers, like black knapweed and devil's-bit scabious, are splashing a little colour across the grassy rides, and there's a good crop of blackberries in the bushes. On chilly mornings the glades are draped with cobwebs hung with dew.



*Young Wood Roundhouse*

Deep in the middle of Young Wood, Neroche Woodlanders' Wild Learning sessions are working with a new crop of adults from the Halcon, Lambrook and Priorswood estates, and residents from hostels in town run by Taunton Association for the Homeless. The

groups, which meet every Tuesday through the autumn and winter, are learning green woodworking skills, taking part in coppicing work, practicing cooking wholesome meals over the campfire, and learning more about woodland wildlife. Meanwhile, Family sessions on regular Saturday dates are helping all sorts of families to spend quality time together in the woods.



*'Wild Learning' in Young Wood*

Currently, we are fitting our work around Wessex Water, who are running a new water main through the woods. They have used a powerful drilling machine to tunnel the void for the new mains pipe across the valley near Wych Lake and up through Young Wood, minimising the adverse effects on the environment.

Our volunteer sessions take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, sometimes at Young Wood and sometimes elsewhere across the forest and higher up the hill. All are welcome – if you are interested in volunteering with us do get in touch – email Gavin on [gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org](mailto:gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org), or phone 07760 665378. Or find us at [www.youngwood.org.uk](http://www.youngwood.org.uk)



# 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 Events Programme.**

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership produces a programme of activities titled ‘*Blackdown Hills Countryside Events*’. The published programme for 2014 is packed with a variety of activities; why not join them on one of their programmed events (for full details of these and many other events, go to [www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk))



### ***01 Nov 14 ‘Blackdowns Mushroom Foray 3’***

**Location: Wambrook**

Hunt for wild fungi and learn how to identify a variety of toadstools, from the weird to the wonderful. After the walk, you can choose to join David for a mushroom appetiser in the pub. Cost: Adults £5, under 18s £3. Optional appetiser £3.

Booking essential. 11am - 2pm. Location: Cotley Inn, Wambrook, at ST 297 077. For more information: contact David Allen on 01404 861394 or email: [leo@leoallen.plus.com](mailto:leo@leoallen.plus.com)

### ***01 & 02 Nov 14 ‘Corrymoor Farm Open Weekend’***

**Location: Stockland**

Visit the farm that produces the famous Corrymoor socks, and stock up with socks and other gifts for Christmas. Delicious refreshments will be available all day. This is an



opportunity to see the angora goats and walk the farm in lovely East Devon. Stout shoes are advised. Cost: Free admission. Location: Corrymoor Farm, Stockland, EX14 9DY. For more information: please see [www.corrymoor.com](http://www.corrymoor.com)  
10am – 4pm

**08 Nov 14, 6 Dec 14, 3 Jan 15, 7 Feb 15 ‘Hedge Laying Courses’**

**Location: Yarcombe**

Learn to lay hedges in the Devon style. This is a very ‘hands-on’ course, taking place in the East Devon countryside. Each pair of students will team up with an experienced hedge layer to lay a length of hedge on a Devon bank. Suitable for complete beginners and intermediate hedge layers with an eye to taking part in our annual ‘Skills of the Hills’ competition. Cost: £40. Booking essential. Location: Meet at the Village Hall, Yarcombe. For more information: email [hedgecourses@bhha.info](mailto:hedgecourses@bhha.info) or see the web site [www.bhha.info](http://www.bhha.info) 9am - 4pm



**05 Dec 14. ‘Carols Under the Stars’**

**Location: Wellington Monument**



Experience the magic of the Blackdown Hills at night-time and join-in with Christmas music under the stars at Wellington Monument. A special chance for the whole family to experience the approach to the Monument lit with torches and to join with the Blackdown Community Choir singing favourite carols in a unique location. Mince pies and drinks will be on sale from Smeatharpe WI. Cost: Free. Booking not required. Location: Wellington Monument. Map ref: ST 143 167. Please note parking is limited to spaces at the National Trust car park. Please car share where possible. For more information: Contact the Blackdown Hills AONB team on 01823 680681 / [blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk](mailto:blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk) 7.30pm – 9pm

**06 Dec 14 ‘Make Your Own Rustic Rudolph!’**

**Location: Hemyock**

From living wood to a rustic wooden Rudolph (stands about 30cm high). Maximum 6 people. Full step-by-step tuition provided, using simple tools in a heated workshop. Wellies required for harvesting the wood. Cost: £40, to include a home-cooked lunch. Booking essential. Location: Seville’s Croft, Hemyock, EX15 3QX. For more information contact Richard and Alison Whiteside, 01823 680931 10am – 4pm

## 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: **Nov 6, Luka Bloom**, from Ireland via New York, the talented brother of Christy Moore; **Nov 7, Dave Kelly Band**, founding member of the Blues Band; **Nov 13, Dr Feelgood** probably the most



influential band in British pub rock; **Nov 21, Dire Streets**; **Nov 30, Focus**, (tickets selling fast); **Dec 27, The Great Pretender Christmas Party**, the best Queen tribute, back for the Christmas bash; **Dec 31, New Year's Eve Party**, with The Producers doing their, not often seen, party 'letting their hair down' set. It was the place to be last year, tickets including food. For full information on these concerts and many others, go to [www.squareandcompasspub.com](http://www.squareandcompasspub.com)

## 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 (9.00am 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](http://www.themeetinghouse.org.uk)

**ILMINSTER**  
**arts centre**  
AT THE MEETING HOUSE

## Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton

**Richard Digance 25th Oct 2014; The Chris and Pui Roadshow 1st Nov 2014; Craobh Rua 1st Nov 2014; A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen November 10th & 11th 2014; Gentle Men, Roy Bailey and Robb Johnson 14th Nov 2014; Taunton Thespians, Murder on the Nile 18th - 22nd Nov 2014; Craig Campbell 29th Nov 2014; Let There Be Christmas 4th Dec 2014; The Nutcracker Dec 11th - 13th 2014.**



Check out the online box office at [www.tauntontheatre.org.uk](http://www.tauntontheatre.org.uk) for forthcoming shows and events and browse the show list. Tickets are also available from Taunton Tourist Information Centre, Paul Street, Taunton, and from the Brewhouse Box Office direct. Telephone 01823 283244

## The Hatch Jazz Club, Hatch Beauchamp

**20th December 2014** marks the welcome return of the world renowned Jazz musician, **Pete Allen** for a Christmas extravaganza - with the added bonus of mulled wine, mince pies and lots of Christmas cheer. Pete Allen specialises in New Orleans and Dixieland Jazz and is an honorary citizen of New Orleans. *An event really to be looked forward to!*



**21st February 2015.** As a change from **Trad Jazz**, the club has booked local band, the **Ruishton Small Big Band**, who will be playing **Swing** type music in the style of the ***Glen Miller*** and ***Benny Goodman*** bands and others of that era.

Tickets for the above concerts, at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall, are priced at £10 and can be purchased in advance from Tony Green, or on the door. The evenings start at 7.30pm. For further details, contact Tony Green on 01823 481111 or [tonygreen@fsmail.net](mailto:tonygreen@fsmail.net)



# Thurlbear Primary School

*By Heather Barraclough (Headteacher)*

Thurlbear Primary School has just begun another busy term following the summer holidays. In July we said goodbye to 31 Year 6 pupils who have now started at their new secondary schools: Bishop Fox's, Heathfield and Castle. We have had our new children start in our Foundation Stage class along with some other new pupils who have joined the school in other year groups. The school now has a total of 210 pupils on roll!

The school was very pleased with the SATs results for pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2, achieving results above the national average. 52% of our Year 6 maths pupils achieved the higher Level 5 grade (Level 4 being the expected level) with 10% achieving Level 6. These results were also reflected in reading and writing.

In Key Stage 1, 97% of pupils achieved Level 2 in Reading and Writing and 93% Level 2 in Maths. Once again, pupils have achieved higher than the national average at Level 2 and the higher Level 3 grade with 37% achieving Level 3 in Reading, 23% in Writing and 27% in Maths.

This term we are introducing the New National Curriculum as outlined by the government. As a school we have planned whole school areas of learning encompassing the new expectations in English and Maths. This is an exciting time for the school as it now has more freedom in planning a curriculum for the children of our school. We look forward to a hardworking and exciting year!

## School Holidays

It is always useful to know the school holidays dates. The dates below include, where appropriate, the weekends either side, as these are equally affected by school breaks, especially regarding family holidays and road traffic.



**25<sup>th</sup> October 2014 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014**  
**20<sup>th</sup> December 2014 to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015**



**Household Recycling & Refuse Collections  
for November 2014 to January 2015**



Usual Recycling and Refuse Collection Days - No changes this quarter.

# Events For Your Calendar

## November

- 1 Neroche Walking Group (*see [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 5 Greyhound Quiz (*see advert on page 2*)
- 6 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 11*)
- 9 Remembrance Service at St Peter's Church (*see advert on page 6*)
- 12 Practical Conservation at Mount Fancy Farm (*see advert on page 52*)
- 13 Parish Council Meeting (*go to [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 13 Taunton Racing (*go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)*)
- 15 Safari Supper (*see advert on page 29*)
- 26 Volunteering with the Neroche Woodlanders (*see article on page 52*)
- 26 History Group Talk (*see advert on page 25*)
- 26 Gardening Club Talk (*see article on page 47*)
- 27 Taunton Racing (*go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)*)
- 28 Neroche Friday Film Night ('Jimmy's Hall'; *see advert on page 38*)
- 30 Select/Pick Your Own Christmas tree (*see advert on page 13*)

## December

- 3 Greyhound Quiz (*see advert on page 2*)
- 4 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 11*)
- 6 Neroche Walking Group (*see [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 10 Volunteering with the Neroche Woodlanders (*see article on page 52*)
- 11 Taunton Racing (*go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)*)
- 12 WI Family Bingo (*see [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 17 Carol Service St Peter's Church (*see advert on page 6*)
- 20 Carol Singing Around the Villages (*see advert on page 6*)
- 25 Christmas Day Service St Peter's Church (*see advert on page 6*)
- 30 Taunton Racing (*go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)*)

## January

- 3 Neroche Walking Group (*see [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 7 Greyhound Quiz (*see advert on page 2*)
- 8 (date tbc) Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (*see advert on page 11*)
- 8 Parish Council Meeting (*see [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)*)
- 30 Neroche Friday Film Night (*Film to be confirmed*)

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



## ***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. 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](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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