

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 16

Newsletter

June 2015

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

Congratulations!!!



Many congratulations to local resident Rebecca Pow on her election as MP for Taunton Deane. For the past two years Rebecca has been a great supporter of this Newsletter by producing the extremely informative and fulsome ‘Gardening Corner’ article (please go to page 20 for this month’s offering). Rebecca has lived in the constituency for the past 27 years and comes from a long line of Somerset farmers. She is a scientist by training, a former BBC, ITV and C4 reporter, specialising in the environment, farming and gardening; she has also worked for the National Farmers Union, standing up for the agricultural community in dealings with Brussels. Although her new duties as our MP will keep her very busy, she has promised not to forget us and, whenever possible, to continue producing her most popular quarterly column for our Newsletter.

Congratulations also go to another of our regular contributors; John Williams, who has been re-elected as Borough Councillor for Neroche Ward.

Well done Rebecca and John!!!

Welcome to the 16th 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)



The main purpose of the Neroche Villages' Newsletter is to communicate useful, important and relevant news and information to Neroche residents, a relatively small and targeted audience.



Newsletters are often taken for granted and can be overlooked as publications that we can do without.

However, a newsletter can pass on valuable information about matters that affect the parish, church and the various social groups, clubs and organisations. The Neroche Villages' Newsletter isn't just about events that have taken place; it can also be used to publicise and promote upcoming events.

It is the responsibility of the editorial team, just us two, backed up by members of the Neroche Communication Action Group, to try to ensure that the newsletter content is accurate, pertinent, timely and presented in such a way as to attract the attention of its readership, the Neroche parishioners.

*However, local residents also have a responsibility. Without suitable material, the Neroche Villages' Newsletter would be devoid of content and interest. Basically, if you don't tell us about it; it won't go in the **newsletter**, or on the **website** or be distributed via the **email alert system** - then parishioners won't know about it! It's a "no brainer", a free forum and free advertising - **why wouldn't you use it?***

All three of the above mediums for news, events and reports are functions of the Neroche Communication Action Group - a small group of volunteers who work tirelessly to keep parishioners informed.

But, as with all such groups, extra help would be greatly appreciated. So, if you feel that you can make a contribution, however small; or you'd like to learn how to maintain website content and use desktop publishing software, don't hesitate - get in touch with us (see back page for contact details).

Meanwhile we hope you enjoy this, the June 2015 issue!

News From Neroche Hall

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

As we move finally into spring, the trustees are, as always, looking well into the future in terms of improving the facilities at the hall, and you may recall that in my last article I touched upon the grant application to replace our old portable wooden stage with a new lightweight version. Unfortunately, we were not successful on this occasion with our application to the Lottery Fund, but undeterred, turned to an alternative option.

Luck plays a great part in life sometimes, and on this occasion it arrived in an opportunity to apply to Taunton Deane for a grant under The Mayor's Fund. This time we have been successful in securing a grant of £1,500, which will be matched from hall funds, thereby enabling us to purchase the new stage. Our old stage was on permanent loan to us from the Take Art organisation, and I'm pleased to report that it will not go to waste and will be re-cycled to another village hall within the County.

In line with the spring theme, we have also recently had a spring clean at the hall, and cleaned all of our 100 upholstered chairs, which, although 'Scotch Guarded', were starting to become a little grubby. Shortly, the main hall floor will be cleaned and re-surfaced professionally, which I am sure will be a big improvement as it has been starting to show signs of wear-and-tear. This is quite a large expense, but is one that has to be budgeted for every few years, in line with other regular maintenance projects. We are also in the process of putting-out-to-tender for some areas to be re-painted, as they also have become a little tired, especially the lower areas of the walls, which seem to become marked more than others.



Further areas for improvement are the toilets, which do need some refurbishment and re-painting as they are looking rather tired in places.

We will have held our Annual General Meeting by the time you read this article, but I hope to be able to publish our reports on the hall website in due course for those who were unable to attend. As always, this and the regular ‘Alerts’ circulated by e-mail are the best source of news for forthcoming events, not to mention the strategically placed notice boards which mysteriously spring up in the local area a week or so before any of our events. If you happen to pass the hall, remember to look out for our noticeboard facing the road, which advertises the larger events.

I’ve already mentioned our recent success in obtaining a local grant, and it is worth adding that such applications have to be well argued and evidenced to prove need and benefit to the local community. In order to support future grant ventures, we are hoping to gain feedback from our community as to how you use the hall and facilities, what you would like to see there in the future, and what improvements you feel would enhance your experience. We are hoping to canvass local residents and regular users with a simple questionnaire, and I hope that everyone will feel free to contribute, as we do value your support and opinions.

Finally, for your diary, our Film Night presentations on the last Friday in June and July respectively are ‘Testament of Youth’ and ‘The Second Best Marigold Hotel’. Details will be circulated nearer the time.



Please refer to the film advert on page? Also, watch out for notices on all Neroche Hall activities in the Email Alert, plus, as always, all the information you need can be found on the Hall website: www.nerochehall.org.uk

Cuts in red tape - Bonus for village halls



The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) says major changes to Government regulations on entertainment licensing, which came into force on April 6, means that village halls will face less paperwork when putting on events, plays, performances and social evenings.

Research by ACRE (*Action with Communities in Rural England*) shows that alongside traditional activities such as WI, gardening clubs and whist drives, village halls are hosting newer crazes such as Pilates and Zumba and have seen a rise in exercise and keep fit classes. ACRE has produced a guide **‘Entertainment in Village Halls’**, available from CCS Village Hall Adviser Nicola Greenslade, which steers management committees through the rules and regulations on licensing, music copyright, cinema and more.

The main piece of legislation affected by the changes is the Licensing Act 2003, which introduced a single system to regulate the provision of entertainment, the sale or supply of alcohol, and the provision of late-night refreshment. ACRE campaigned for changes to this legislation, significantly bringing about the introduction of the Legislative Reform (Supervision of alcohol sales in village halls) Order 2009. The Government recently made further significant changes to entertainment licensing to cut red tape and encourage the performance of live music.

Nicola Greenslade said: *“It’s great news that the Government has reduced the red tape that takes up so much time for the 80,000 volunteers who run England’s village halls. Village halls play an increasingly important role in our communities, serving as a social centre, arts centre, sports centre and, in some cases, providing space for doctors’ surgeries or shops. They are often the hub of community activity providing a space for groups and services that otherwise wouldn’t exist and especially valued by older people, who can be isolated in rural communities with no transport. We hope changes in legislation will encourage more halls to put on entertainment that brings communities together.”*

To get in touch with Nicola Greenslade, the Village Hall advisor, please call 01823 331222 or email: communitybuildings@somersetcc.org.uk

The Coach Trip

(By our Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent)



The year is 1962; the Greyhound Skittles Team has won the league and its members are posing with the winners' trophy and accompanying wives and children prior to embarking on the annual outing to Weymouth. It is a much anticipated day, and the resplendent cream and purple Commer from Frank Parker of Ilminster has been loaded with sandwiches provided by the landlord, and the aisle filled with 'refreshments' (crates of Starkey's beer which the passengers must carefully traverse in order to reach their seats).

Once everyone is seated, Tommy Carter whisks a handkerchief the size of a pillow case from his trouser pocket and blows his nose loudly. The driver responds as a grand prix driver might react to the drop of the starter's flag, and the pride of Parker's coach fleet lurches forward accompanied by the tinkling

of scores of light and brown ale bottles. “We’re off!” exclaim the passengers, and indeed they are. However, it is decided a stop should be undertaken at Misterton and the first of the wooden crates is handed down from the coach door as tenderly as if it contained freshly laid eggs. As the coach gaily purrs over Winyard’s Gap the passengers look forward to their day in Weymouth; for the ladies the beach and seafront bingo; for the men the delights of a seaside Inn. After one further refreshment stop, they finally arrive at the sea front. The ladies head to the bathing beach and the men to the Butchers Arms.



In the 1960s, public houses closed at two o’clock, and the male contingent then reluctantly makes its way to the beach. Within 10 minutes, still wearing jackets and ties, they are asleep to a man. Some simply lie on a beach towel, and once the ladies leave to attend afternoon bingo, they take on the appearance of having been washed ashore from a liner stricken in Lyme Bay.

After bingo, everyone joins for a short promenade and an ice cream, and then it is time for a little more refreshment to sustain everyone for the journey home. It should be remembered that these were different times; beer had a less punishing alcohol content, few people owned cars, and a coach trip was a simple pleasure with no mobile telephones to distract the passengers. In the 1960s the Greyhound Inn skittle alley ran alongside the stream (to the left of the main building looking from the road), and the diamond on which the pins

sat remains an inch or so under the gravel. Sit at one of the picnic tables on a gentle summer's evening and among the gurgles of the stream you may just discern the muted sound of hardwood balls crashing against sycamore pins and a distant echo of the jubilant cry "flopperrr!" as all nine pins are cleared.

Pictured right are the Greyhound Inn's current skittle team, some of whom are related to those in the 1962 picture. They were almost league champions, having been runners up this year.



Can any readers name the local residents in all three pictures?

Mothering Sunday Service

By Sue Mcken

Bacon butties and coffee welcomed and warmed the congregation of about 90 people who attended the Benefice Mothering Sunday Service at St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine. Thurlbear School Choir treated us to two songs. Cheryl Govier, Children's and Family's Worker, led us in a lively race passing objects that reminded us of preparation!

The children gave out the beautiful posies that had been prepared by volunteers from all the Benefice Churches and we concluded with more refreshments, including homemade cakes! The collection of donations towards the Vanuatu disaster appeal raised about £170.

Look out for the next 'Benefice Worship for All' to be held in Hatch Beauchamp in the summer term.

News From Neroche Parish Council

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



By the time you receive this latest newsletter, election fever will have come and gone, and both the General and District elections will have taken place.

An election for the Parish Council was not required in Neroche as the number of nominations received was less than the number of vacancies to be filled. As a result, the vacancies on the Parish Council were filled by an 'Uncontested Election'.

The Councillors representing Neroche, with effect from May, are as follows:

Bickenhall Parish:

Adrian Aplin



Chris Baxter



Wally Torrington



Curland Parish:

Marianne Bray



John Parsons



Karen Street



Staple Fitzpaine Parish:

Jonathan Bell



Mark Pope



Lynne Spours

Orchard Portman with Thurlbear Parish:

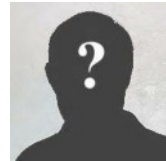
Jason Jackson



Ian Parker



(vacancy)



At the time of writing, there is still one vacancy in Orchard Portman Parish to be filled, and if there is anyone living in that parish interested in joining the Parish Council, then please contact the Clerk to the Council, Gillian Midworth on neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk

The final meeting of the previous Parish Council took place in March, and matters discussed included the new planning application for change of use from an agricultural building to dwelling house at Bakers Field, Curland. This application was submitted in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), which, in certain circumstances, allows for redundant agricultural buildings to be converted into private dwelling houses. Several parishioners attended the meeting to voice their concerns and, once again, the Parish Council objected to the proposal on the grounds that the existing building, since its erection, had not been used for agricultural purposes, and that the land in question was not an established agricultural unit. A decision has now been made by TDBC to refuse permission as the Local Planning Authority does not consider that the site was used for agricultural purposes and therefore does not comply with the criteria of the General Permitted Development Order.

Although the Parish Council receives notification of all planning applications within the parish, it will only respond where it is in the community's interest to do so. The Parish Council takes into account the views and concerns of parishioners and makes observations to the Local Planning Authority based on relevant planning reasons.

Letter to the Editor

Neroche Country Roads

“Wally Torrington’s article in the March Newsletter [page 7, Take Care on Neroche Country Roads] will have been of interest to most car drivers in our parish. In a journey into Taunton, for example, we have much to contend with; bends, dips, important agricultural traffic, and animals coming out from the hedges, are things we have to be prepared for every time we go out. However, I find the most worrying thing on these lanes is the ‘tailgater’. The driver, who would like you to go 10 mph. faster, and if possible, would like to be in the boot of your car. These drivers concern me considerably because they block out one’s rear view too, and while worrying about them one can miss seeing other significant features.

So how do we deal with these drivers? They don’t gain a lot from their behaviour and the danger they cause is considerable in such areas as the bends by Badger Street Farm. Any ideas?”

Doreen Marsh, Curland

THURSDAY LUNCHESES 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 take place on Thursdays at 12.30 for 1.00 pm
4th June, 2nd July, 6th August**

Please phone or email to book (need to know for catering purposes).
Transport / special diets can be arranged.

Contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441,
Email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk
Organised by Friends of St Peter’s Church

STAPLE FITZPAINE, BICKENHALL, CURLAND SCARECROW FESTIVAL 2015



25 July - 1 August

Enter your scarecrow and/or vote for your favourite.

Entries £5.00 Per Household

Voting forms in St Peters Church Staple Fitzpaine during
festival

Teas in church 25 July

Teas en route 29 and 30 July
3 - 7pm at Woodcott, Curland

BBQ to announce winner, 1 August, 6.30 Battens Farm

Contact Mal Lee 01460 234282

lees.curland@gmail.com

(entries close 19 July)

Proceeds to St Peters Church

Charlton Orchards Presentation

By Doreen Marsh

The Neroche Local History Group was pleased to welcome Robin and June Small of Charlton Orchards to the January 2015 meeting. They came to talk about the history, myths and legends of apple growing. Before they began, the Group had a short Annual Meeting, with a report of speakers for the year of 2014. This was followed by a brief report of 'works in progress'. The Group are still researching lost houses in our villages, and also recording the names of men and women who served, in any way, in the Second World War. The treasurer reported a satisfactory balance in the account.



June Small

Charlton Orchards has been a working orchard since the mid-1940s, growing dessert apples, whereas most orchards in the County of Somerset grow cider apples.

June spoke about apples having arrived in Europe from the old silk roads, which came across from Asia into our continent. Farmers were probably selecting good flavoured fruits, and trees which bore well, as long as 8,000 years ago. It paid them to do this rather than sell 'wild apples' which would have been rough and sour in taste.

We know that the ancient Greeks valued apples. Their writers, including Homer, spoke of large orchards. A little later, the Romans too grew many varieties of dessert apples. As they conquered Europe, their apples went with them, and they were instrumental in introducing them into our country.

The early medieval monks had orchards around their monasteries. Whether these were for their own use or were given to others, we don't know. A little later, King Henry VIIIth gave permission



Robin Small

for orchards to be planted in the county of Kent, which, ever since, has been known as “The Garden of England”. So, for many centuries the apple has been valued in this country.

June went on to talk about the medical values accrued to the apple. It has some vitamins and many minerals, most of which are just under the skin. So the skin is really worth eating, in spite of the old superstition, much enjoyed by girls, of throwing the peelings over your shoulder and the shape formed would give you the initial of the man you would marry.

So, according to old lore, apples are helpful for rheumatism, gout, constipation and diarrhoea, among other things. There is too, the oft quoted saying “*An apple a day keeps the doctor away*”. So this is a thoroughly useful fruit but in addition it is delicious!

One very old tradition to do with apples is called Wassailing, where every January there is a ceremony to keep the apple trees in good health. A lot of stamping and dancing-around-the-trees goes on in order to



keep away bad spirits. There is the drinking of a Wassail cup made of cider, and in many ways it is an excuse for a mid-winter party. It happens without fail at Charlton Orchards!

Robin then took over and described the world-wide growth of apples. In many ways the British Empire was responsible for this. Wherever we went we took our apples with us, just like the Romans before us. So they appeared in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. In turn, the inhabitants of these countries developed their own varieties, suitable for their climate and terrain. Apples are also grown in parts of the world where Britain has never been involved, for example Argentina. They, in turn, export, so there are apples available for everyone to eat throughout the year.

Robin also talked about the New Zealand apples, Gala, a mild flavoured fruit, and Braeburn, which has a more distinct flavour. These are now grown in this country but he thought we should not be growing them for long. Diseases endemic in this country would make the fruit less attractive to consumers and eventually it would not be worth orchard owners stocking them.

Robin then went on to describe the two ways new fruits were developed. The first would be done by horticultural scientists in the laboratory, examining the genes of the trees, and working out how to improve a variety or bring about a new variety.



The second way is by chance, when a thrown-away apple core, with its all-important seed, the pip, happens to grow. This could produce something not known before. As example of this, few years ago a motorist caught up in a traffic jam near Bridgwater on the M5, saw an apple tree growing up on the bank of the motorway. He was sufficiently interested to note where it was and later asked the farmer whether he could go over his land to get to the tree. He collected some of the apples and he and Robin tasted them. They were very acceptable. So again, with the farmer's permission, he collected material for grafts, and these were put to a strong root stock, and they grew. We now have a new apple called Christmas Pippin being grown by a Somerset orchard, but NOT Charlton Orchard's, because they are already growing 40 different varieties.

Robin and June were warmly thanked for their talk and we, the audience, were invited to taste the many different apples they had brought with them. Speakers and audience alike were then treated to a cider Wassail cup and apple cake provided by the committee.

This was a very enjoyable evening and an excellent beginning to 2015.

News From Somerset County Council

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

I have been enjoying getting out-and-about again recently in Neroche Parish. In March, I greatly enjoyed the Quiz Night and Fish and Chip Supper, which is superbly organised by Colin Croad and well supported by others. I feel almost embarrassed to admit that our team won again. It was once more such a well-attended evening, with about 100 people taking part. More recently, I attended a Help for Heroes Coffee & Cake morning at the Greyhound Inn in Staple Fitzpaine. This was such a nice event, and the cakes



were amazing. I like to support Help for Heroes as I come from a service family; my father was a Royal Navy Officer for 27 years. On the same morning,

I also made a return visit to The Artisan Bakery in Bickenhall. The bread there smells so nice, and you see lots of people going up the lane to the bakery on a Saturday morning. I must say, I always consider a visit to the Artisan Bakery a real treat.



Delicious bread from The Artian Baker

Last year I awarded them a grant from my County Councillor Health and Wellbeing Budget, and I'm pleased to report that I was able to do the same this year. It's a lovely walk up the track through the woods to their base, and I was given a really interesting briefing on the work of their organisation.

Neroche Woodlanders.

I also made a return visit to The Neroche Woodlanders in April.

Superfast Broadband.

The superfast broadband debacle goes on. Since I wrote my last article I was a speaker on the platform at a major public meeting held for communities across the Blackdowns. I still say that the current initiative for implementing superfast broadband in our area is an urban plan imposed upon a rural environment. Connecting Devon and Somerset and BT don't seem to understand the frustration felt by so many people in my division who are either in areas awaiting evaluation or, even worse, deemed out of area. I also met BT in London in March, and made the same points; they seem to be in total denial at the failure of their current strategy.



Presenting a cheque to the Neroche Woodlanders



The Herepath.

Finally, I met members of The Blackdown Hills Riding Club who walked with me along a large section of the Neroche Herepath to show me how the tyres placed on the path, and then covered in hard-core, are now poking through the surface. I have met with Somerset County Council to express my strong concerns regarding the long standing closure of this part of the path, and I will be chasing-up the plan drawn-up by the Forestry Commission apropos this problem. It's time that heads were banged together by the County Council, the Forestry Commission and the Crown Estates to sort out this issue once-and-for-all and get the path fully reopened.

News from Bickenhall & District WI

By Nicky Baxter



Molly Kelly

Hello from your local WI, Bickenhall and District. What great news we have. This year is the centenary of the WI in this country. A number of nationwide initiatives are taking place but in my mind the most exciting is a garden party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace in the presence of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall on 2nd June. Each WI drew lots to choose the lucky person to attend. We are so proud to announce we will be represented at this marvellous event by 91 year old Molly Kelly. Molly has been a member of Bickenhall WI for about 20 years or so and was also a member of the WI before she moved to Somerset. She will be escorted by her daughter Maureen, who will be

her care partner. It will be lovely to hear how Molly's day went and to see a photo of what she wore.

Each year the WI nationally holds an annual meeting, and this year is a special one where each WI is entitled to send a delegate to the meeting at The Royal Albert Hall on 4th June. Over 500 delegates will be attending, and there will be two special members in attendance this year. The national WI has stated it is truly honoured to be welcoming HRH The Princess Royal and HRH The Queen to this year's meeting. In addition, this year there are three truly fabulous speakers. Firstly, former wheelchair Paralympic champion, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson; she has won numerous medals



Tanni Grey-Thompson

throughout her career and really represents the WI strap line "*Inspiring Women*" by showing us all what disabled people can achieve. My own personal favourite of the three speakers is Dr Lucy Worsley, whom I have heard speak before. She is curator of royal palaces and presenter of a large number of television programmes on the BBC, most recently appearing with Len Goodman on a series of programmes about dance. The final speaker is Helena Morrissey, who is CEO of Newton Investment Management, with nine of her own children! What a line up! We are pleased we will be represented this year by our own president and inspiring woman, Tricia Dryden,



Lucy Worsley

who I am sure will have much to report back to us.



Helena Morrissey

Locally, we have had a number of varied and interesting speakers: aromatherapy; the Battle of Trafalgar; and Help for Heroes.

May's meeting will be our annual meeting when the new committee will be chosen. We also get to vote on whether we accept this year's national resolution, which, if passed, will call upon the Government to remove the distinction between nursing and personal care in the assessment of the needs of individuals, in order to advance health and wellbeing.

As a WI, we are a very friendly group who always welcome new members. If you too wish to be an inspiring woman, then please come and join us. Our forthcoming presentations will be 'Somerset Folk Songs' on Wednesday June 10th, and a 'Flower Power Craft Evening' on Wednesday 1st July. Both evenings start at 7.30pm.

For further details please phone either Frances on 01460 234 245 or Tricia on 01823 481037.

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 07900 685 303.



Jobs to do...

Now that the soil has warmed up, sow courgette, sweet corn, French beans outside. Keep sowing salad leaves, radish, carrots and spinach. Nip-out side shoots on tomato plants to get a better crop.

Check for aphids, slugs, snails and remove or treat with a biological control. Deadhead bedding and herbaceous plants to encourage continuous flowering. Cut grass little and often. Cut-down decayed daffodil plants. If you water, do so in the early morning or early evening

Gardens to Visit...

There's no better way to pick-up ideas than having a look around other peoples' gardens! During all my years of filming gardening programmes for ITV and Channel 4, I kept a little black book of ideas and tips I picked up whilst visiting gardens all around the country, and bit-by-bit I have introduced many of the ideas and plants that took my fancy into my own garden here in the locality.

I thoroughly recommend a visit to Bradon Farm, which is not far away at Isle Abbots, and is opening for the first time for the National Garden Scheme. It's listed in the famous 'Yellow Book'. All the gardens listed therein open to raise money for nursing and caring charities. I've opened our garden for the NGS for many years, although having been rather busy recently, I have decided to have a break this year but I am sure I'll be back in the future.



Bradon Farm, is a spectacular garden, created imaginatively by the talented Deborah Thomas Jones from a virtually blank canvass. It has a broadly classical, formal style with a parterre, knot garden, pleached lime walk, formal pond and herbaceous borders. There's a pretty new orchard too, and some lovely informal wild flower areas. It's a real treat, and

you are bound to gain some inspiration!

Details: Bradon Farm, Isle Abbots, Taunton TA3 6RX. Open Sunday June 14th 2 – 5.30pm. Home- made Teas. Admission £5. Directions: take the turning to Ilton off A358. Bradon Farm is 1½ miles out of this village on Bradon Lane.

Plant a June Border...

Here are some of my favourite plants for June:

Verbascum Olympicum: structural, impressive, tall candelabra-like spikes of yellow blooms, grey woolly leaves.

Kniphofias: or Red Hot Pokers, come in a range of reds, oranges, yellows and even lime green; vibrant vertical splashes of colour. Varieties include 'Bees Sunset', 'Royal Standard' and 'Tawny King'.

Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant': a good reliable cat mint. Forms a clump with dreamy lavender-blue flowers and aromatic, grey-green leaves. Cut back after first flowering and it will flower again.

Doronicum Orientale: Early flowering bright yellow daisy, long stems and provides rich nectar for insects.





Californian Poppies: tissue papery bright orange flowers come up year after year. Scatter a packet of seeds all over the border.

Combine all these and you will have real wow factor in June. Cover the bed with a gravel mulch and there will be no need to water as all these plants are pretty drought resistant. I leave my whole border throughout winter and cut back in February. It's very easy to manage and most effective.

Happy Gardening!

Litter Pick-Up Event

By Wally Torrington



The Neroche Litter Pick-Up Action Group organised another most successful morning event in March. A number of hardy volunteers (slightly less than last year, due to the sickness of 5 regulars) were blessed with good weather and collected a sizeable haul of rubbish from the roads running through the parish. Even though the group was slightly depleted, the haul of rubbish was excellent.

The 'Pick-Up' was organised by Jayne Hunt, but due to work commitments it was led, on the day, by her husband Steve and Anthony Brown. Jayne, Steve and Anthony: liaised with the local authorities, including the police and Somerset Waste Partnership (they run waste services for TDBC); divided the route into a number of sections; allocated them to pairs of

litter collectors; and then Steve and Anthony proceeded to oversee the whole operation.



At the end of the 'Pick-Up', all the many bags of litter were loaded into Alison and Anthony Brown's pick-up, who held on to the haul over the weekend, and supervised its collection by Somerset Waste Partnership on the Monday (kindly arranged by the DLO at TDBC).

One small section was not completed on the day (the stretch from the Polo Ground to the Taunton Junction) but Jayne, Steve and Anthony planned to return later to

complete the job (I presume this happened).

The Neroche Litter Pick-Up initiative was originally sponsored by Viridor (the waste management company who form part of Somerset Waste Partnership) who provided hi-viz jackets, gloves, bags and litter-picker-



sticks. They are still willing to provide the black bags but some of the other kit has now been replaced from a grant made by the Parish Council.



The next Litter Pick-Up Day has been provisionally set for 5th September. If you wish to learn more about future 'Litter Pick-Ups' then contact Jayne on 01823 480113 or jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk. However, if you would rather help in your own time, and at your own pace, then why not contact Anthony Brown who organises the 'Adopt a Stretch of Road' initiative, and he will allocate a section of road or lane, near to where you live, to keep free of litter throughout the year. He can be reached on 01823

480441 or alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.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.



Increasing our Stock of Council Housing

Bearing in mind the huge local housing waiting list of around 3,000 families, we are proud to be building Council houses in Taunton Deane for the first time in over twenty years. In total, 105 new Council houses are in process of construction or about to start: 60 in Creechbarrow Road, 4 in Bacon Drive, 7 in West Bagborough, 8 in Normandy Drive and a further 26 planned at Rockwell Green. To support this strategy into the future, we have included in our budget, £1 million per annum for 5 years, specifically to add to our Council housing stock.

Positive News on the Old Livestock Market Site, Firepool

Legal and site acquisition details are presently being dealt with as a matter of urgency, and it is hoped that public consultation on a proposed scheme should commence in the next few months. This vital project is being progressed in accordance with the ‘Town Centre Rethink’ document that was approved by Council last year.



Starting earlier on site is a new housing development on the old Priory Bridge Road car park, it is due to commence imminently. This will be a mix of townhouses

and flats, 49 in total, and excellently sited adjacent the River Tone but in a truly sustainable location adjacent the railway station and near the town centre.

The Northern Inner Distributor Road is progressing well, notwithstanding technical problems causing some delay; it will provide a vital new road link around the town centre. It also provides the main access to the Firepool site which is essential to ensure the new development on the livestock market site can be built and then opened with full access and car parking.

Upgrading the A358

I am pleased to report that progress on this continues, and only recently the Department for Transport issued a feasibility study on the upgrade proposals for the A303/A30/A358, and concluded that it represents “*very good value for money*”. Three sections of the route were prioritised for early commencement, one of which is the dualing of the A358 from Southfields Roundabout (on the A303) to junction 25 of the M5. This is excellent news and requires it to be completed by 2020.

I have seen reports this development could be postponed but if this were to happen, it would be a travesty, ignoring the needs of the local residents suffering congestion and air quality, and the motorists that suffer this road; moreover, in terms of cost-to-value-ratio it scores as one of the highest of all projects in the SW that were considered. If postponed, it would completely undermine our efforts to boost our economic development locally.

In my view, the other major milestone past is the Highways Agency formally becoming ‘Highways England’ as from the 1 April 2015. This establishes them as a ‘stand-alone’ company, with a remit to deliver the agreed programme, and the budget to cover it. This hopefully offers some protection and reassurance that the funds so far allocated will be available to deliver much needed road improvements.

There are concerns about the new road, which I acknowledge, but if the wish is to see traffic massively reduced from about 30,000 vehicles per day on the existing road to about 3,000, then we do need to look at the best way of delivering the scheme for the greatest benefit. This would help reclaim the busiest road in Somerset, after the M5, as a road for local traffic.

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

Women's World Day of Prayer

By Alison Brown

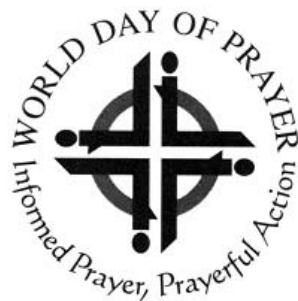
The Women's World Day of Prayer (WWDOP) took place at St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine on Friday 6th March.



This year the service was written by the women of the Bahamas Islands and was used by congregations all over the world, on the same day, to celebrate God's goodness and to pray for the people of the Bahamas. It was the turn of members of St Peter's to host the benefice-wide annual WWDOP service and we endeavoured to bring a little bit of the Bahamas to Somerset. Calypso music set the scene, enhancing the marvellous themed decorations around the church.

The theme of "*Do you know what I have done to you*", coming from John 13, was central to the service. The radical love shown by Christ in washing the disciples' feet was movingly dramatized for us by Rev. Paul Reynolds & Phil Albrow.

A congregation of over 40 was present, and many aspects of Bahamian life were shown on a screen before and after the service. The service was ably led by Nicky Baxter, with different voices in the service being taken by ladies from across the benefice. A lovely mix of hymns and songs, some with words written by the Bahamians, gave deeper meaning to the proceedings, which were enhanced by the musical accompaniment of Julie Pope.



After the service, lunch was provided in the church. Recipes from the Bahamas included soups, Bahamas rum cake, mamma's carrot cake, coconut cheesecake and pineapple pudding. Thanks go to all who contributed in many different ways to create an interesting and spiritual morning, during which we were able to relate to the people of the Bahamas and to be aware of other WWDOP services around the world at this time.



Neroche Local History Group

The Archaeology of Hinkley Point

**Rachel Bellamy
South West Heritage Trust**

7.30pm at Neroche Hall Wed 27th May

All welcome Non Members £2.50



Neroche Local History Group

**The Lost Houses of Curland, Bickenhall
and Staple Fitzpaine**

**Presentation of new research by members of
Neroche History Group**

7.30pm at Neroche Hall Wed 29th July

All welcome Non Members £2.50

A Few Notes from the Farming Community

By Mark Pope

As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, Mark Pope of Staple Farm has kindly penned a few words to give us an idea as to what he is up to at this time of the year (written at the beginning of April).



It looks like spring is beginning to arrive. The crops are starting to wake up, the grass is growing and the days are getting longer and warmer. During this past winter Mother Nature has been kinder to us all.

We have had a few decent frosts which are always good. For our crops, the cold and frosts will reduce the levels of aphids and other pests that have come through the winter. Aphids can be a real problem to arable farmers as they can harbour a virus that is passed onto the crops causing yellowing and stunted growth.



The cold also helps us with disease carry over. Last year we had a very mild and yes very wet winter causing a large carry-over of disease and pests.

The Somerset levels have had a lot kinder winter this year and things are beginning to get back to some sense of normality,

however, the recovery will take a couple more years yet to get the productivity back in to the land.



My work with the terrible floods of last year has moved on to help produce a long term plan. Part of that plan you will have seen was the dredging carried out last year. The plan will also be looking at the whole catchment from up in the Blackdowns right down to the sea.

On the farm we are giving the crops a good feed of fertiliser to help the plants grow. We have also been busy planting Christmas trees; these will not be ready for about 8 to 10 years. As I write this, some fields are starting to get a yellow tinge to them, that being the flowers of oil seed rape.

We have also been working with our neighbours, moving out dung into large heaps to be spread in the autumn. Some of these heaps have now been spread on to ground going into Maize and other spring crops.

As all you gardeners will know, the soil around here is very sticky, and also gets very cold, so patience is essential.

If we go into fields too early we will just make a mess. The same applies to the cattle farmers around here; cattle down in the vale are already being turned out, from winter housing. Up here it won't be until mid-April when the ground is dry enough and has sufficient grass growing.

All we can now hope for is a continuing warming-up for spring, with some warm April showers to get everything growing - followed by a warm mainly dry summer.



Pancake Supper

By Alison Brown

The annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in aid of St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine took place on Tuesday 17th February at Neroche Hall. A jolly



crowd of around 45 local residents gathered for a traditional supper of jacket potatoes, with chilli con carne and other embellishments, followed by superb pancakes with a choice of toppings. The pancakes (100) were made by

Jenny Stewart from Staple Fitzpaine, who must be congratulated on her skills, and thanked for the marathon effort that this must have involved (most of us would take some time to make 10 pancakes, let alone 100!).

A pancake tossing competition caused great hilarity and a lot of fun, with flying pancakes all over the place. The competition was judged by Jenny and Lizzie Horsey, and it seemed the ladies had somewhat better skills than the men....possibly to be expected. The winner was one of our new residents in Bickenhall.....a lady of course!

An intriguing quiz was set by Nicky Baxter, in which many struggled to find the answers, and a certain amount of bargaining took place!





The evening finished with a lively singalong, led by Magnus Stewart and Julie Pope. The whole evening was well attended, great fun, and successfully raised funds for St Peters, due to the hard work and generosity of the cooks, and the efficient organisation by Mal Lee.

Colin Croad's Quiz (with Fish'n'Chips)



There was a full-house attendance for the Fish'n'Chips quiz at Neroche Village Hall on Friday 20th March 2015.

As usual, Colin came up with an interesting and challenging set of questions but wasn't able to stop David Spears' team, **'Left of Centre'** from trouncing the opposition again.

Colin was ably assisted by scorers, Madeleine Spears and Marianne Bray.



It'll be interesting to see if David and team can extend their winning run at the next Fish'n'Chips quiz later this year.

'Left of Centre' comprised; Ross Henley, David Spears, Mary Bambridge, Jill & Alan Perrior and Jane Dewick.

Take Art, 'The Tenant of Wildfell Hall'

By Anne Perry



Madeleine Ryan as Helen Graham

Friday March 6th saw a drama performed at Neroche Hall by Butterfly Psyche, a professional Theatre Company from Bath. The story of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Ann Bronte was performed by just two actors in simple dress that did not change throughout the performance. There was no scenery, only clever lighting and the Directors's choice of performing in front of the two tall church windows at the back of the hall, which gave the perfect backdrop.

The story centres on Helen Graham, who marries Arthur Huntingdon who turns out to be a gambler and a drunkard. In the 1750's women could not easily leave an unhappy marriage, as they lost all money, property and entitlements as well as any access to children. Huge moral issues were raised. Helen Graham went against convention and left her husband, returning to him only when he became critically ill. In the months away from him she met Gilbert Markham, whom she eventually allowed into her affections. This adaptation played him as funny, slightly buffoonish but honest and very likeable. After the death of her husband, they meet up again. Both Madeleine Ryan and Kristoffer Huball played the story without fault. . .such talent that I am sure we will see them again on screen or stage.



Lesser known than most of the other Bronte stories, many still regard *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* as the best of them all, and Ann the most interesting of the three Bronte sisters. Each actor portrayed the many characters by altering their voices and their stance. It is true to say that the audience were mesmerised

and engaged throughout. The pace was steady and the emotions and pathos felt by all. The performance was directed by Shane Morgan and adapted by Alison Farina. We have to thank Take Art yet again for enabling us to experience professional performers at our humble village hall.



You may think from the photograph that the three people shown are having a jolly time. In fact they are the Director Shane Morgan, with actors Madeleine Ryan and Kristoffer Huball, who had just finished an hour and a half performance, and who very kindly took questions from the audience; such was the interest in the event.

Thank You

We wish to thank all our readers who contributed to the production costs of the Newsletter by completing the form included in the March edition and forwarding a donation. The Newsletter is produced by just the two of us, and delivered in 'hard copy' free to all 230 households and businesses in the parish by a terrific team of volunteers. The only costs incurred are circa £800 per year for printing, the maintenance of a laptop and its software, and a few minor expenses for postage and other ancillaries. The Newsletter is a self-funding, not-for-profit enterprise that depends on donations to cover a significant amount of its costs. If you made a donation then very many thanks from the both of us; if you forgot or mislaid your form then it is not too late, just make out a cheque to 'Neroche Communication Action Group' and send it to Wally Torrington, Myrtle Farm, Bickenhall TA3 6TS.

Many thanks for your continued support,

Wally Torrington (Project Coordinator) and Alan Perrior (Editor)

Message from the Rural Beat team members

By Eamonn Leniston – PCSO

As from the 30th March 2015, Avon and Somerset Police have introduced completely new beats. The Rural Beat team now consists of beat Managers PC 276 Adrian Hooper and PC 1146 Maria Jennings, and PCSOs, myself, Eamonn Leniston 8466 and Lynsey Gamblin 8784 (*below, left to right*).



Adrian has been a beat manager for some time and I am pleased to be back on my old beat, which is something I have been trying to do for a few years. My colleagues and I look forward to seeing some old and new faces on the beat in the coming months. We are also keen to increase the number of members of the Horse Watch and Farm Watch schemes (see below). Please feel free to call us if you wish to join or have any concerns relating to police matters. We are always pleased to hear from you.



Horse Watch

We work closely with the equine community through its members and volunteers to help keep them informed of any horse or rural related incidents. This process is supported by the Horse Watch scheme.

Rural crime which includes offences against the equine community is a continuous problem. You can help Avon and Somerset Horse Watch to help you and your community by informing your regional/local co-ordinator of anything suspicious or by getting involved yourself.

The success of the scheme relies on the dedication of its members. Their commitment to their horses provides a basis on which to build a range of measures which can help to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime. If you're interested in becoming a member and would like more information on this scheme please email: horsewatch@avonandsomerset.police.uk



Farm Watch

Rural crimes can really be reduced by the use of Watch schemes. By using your knowledge and awareness of what is happening on and around your land, you can help to reduce crime and deter criminals.

In rural areas, farmers are at the greatest risk of crimes such as theft and vandalism. Although these crimes happen at all levels of our society, they can have a major impact on the day-to-day running of a farm.

The aims of the scheme

- To reduce local opportunities for theft of livestock and dead stock.
- To reinforce the community spirit so that everyone can contribute towards the protection of their property.
- To introduce early warning systems in farming and countryside areas.
- To improve the intelligence flow between the agricultural communities and the police.

Benefits of the scheme

- A reduction in crime and the fear of crime impacting on the community.
- Suspicious people and vehicles can quickly be reported to the police and other members of the countryside communities.
- Information and advice can be quickly and efficiently circulated between the police and the community.
- A crime vigilant community in partnership with the police will create a safer environment.

The scheme relies on farmers working together, and with us, by getting involved to help share information and to show the criminals that you are being proactive in tackling crime. Suspicious activity should be monitored and recorded discreetly and reported to us quickly and accurately.

Important: Where a serious crime is in progress, do not attempt to confront the suspect by yourself. Call 999 immediately and wait for the police to attend.

If you wish to join the Farm Watch Scheme or are looking for more information please contact: ruralcrimeteam@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Rural Living Show

By Wally Torrington

The 3rd Rural Living Spring show took place at Taunton Racecourse on 28th and 29th March. The event showcases the south west's best rural crafts and lifestyle design, clothes, jewellery, food and eco stands. There were over four thousand visitors – down on last year's show due to the inclement weather, but with virtually all the stands inside the Taunton Racecourse building, it was a comfortable and cosy show for those that braved the weather. The event raises money for St Margaret's Hospice, and awareness for this most important of local charities.



Among the features of the Rural Living Spring Show was: over 100 indoor stands, with many more outside; plant and garden marquees; eco-friendly and sustainability stands; ideas for both home and garden; food hall, with cafe and a tasting area for local produce; craft demonstrations; vintage market;

children's entertainer; and on Sunday, classic car day and charity fun run.

Opened on the Saturday by the Mayor of Taunton and his wife, the show set-off with a Mayoral tour. On the Sunday, Rachel Gilmore started the NSPCC Chicken and Egg 5k Fun-Run; despite the gales, the winners were Will Jasper as 1st Egg, and Paul Bishop as 1st Chicken. Around 20 Classic Cars came to the event, with a beautiful Riley winning the prize for *'The Car the Public Would Most Like to Take Home'* owned by Mrs Janet Pipes of the Riley Motor Club (photo with Alice Sumption who presented the Prize).



The show is the sister event of the Annual Christmas Show at Kings Hall School, Taunton, due to be held this year in November (28/29th) and is supported by Priorsfield House Business Centre and Kings College.

Neroche 'Bake for Heroes' Event

By Wally Torrington

On a lovely sunny Saturday morning in April, a 'Coffee & Cakes' event was held at the Greyhound Inn to support 'Bake for Heroes', one of the fundraising initiatives being run by the Help for Heroes charity.

A 'Coffee & Cakes' morning was an inspiration born of a presentation given to



the local WI by Help for Heroes Regional Manager, Richard Lupton. The majority of ladies that helped organise the event and produce the cakes were members of the WI (albeit this was not an official WI event).

The display of 'goodies' to have with your coffee was quite stunning and most appetising; a wonderful spread of all types of cakes and pastries, including: Victoria sponge, cupcakes, coffee sponges, carrot cake, rock cakes, fruit cake, apple



cake, chocolate tiffin, rocky road, lemon drizzle, ginger cake, meringues plus many others. At the end of the event, for a further small donation, supporters were allowed to take a plate-full of cakes away. There was also a stall covered in delicious cakes for sale to take home, and I must admit to buying a load for the freezer, to enjoy in the coming weeks.



Nicky Baxter with the wonderful 'Guess the weight of the Cake' prize that she made

Nicky Baxter produced a most professional looking iced cake for the ‘Guess the Weight of the Cake’ competition, which was won by Tina Warren (5lb 3ozs).



The event was exceptionally well supported. The main part of the Greyhound’s restaurant was full from 10.00am to well after 11.30am when it was due to finish. Some stayed for the duration, whilst there was also a steady stream of local residents popping in for a quick coffee or calling-by on their way to or from shopping etc.

Our County Councillor, Ross Henley was there, as was the Help for Heroes Regional Manager, Richard Lupton, who was delighted with the support local people had given to his organisation.



Richard Lupton saying a few words of thanks to both the organisers and supporters.

Thanks must go to: all the ladies who helped organise the event and baked all the wonderful produce; to David and Marina for allowing the event to be held on their premises; and to all the



**FUNDRAISING
IN SUPPORT OF
HELP for
HEROES**

local residents who supported the morning so well in their large numbers, and contributed to the

wonderful total of £453 that was raised for Help for Heroes. Well done everybody! For more information on the Help for Heroes charity, go to www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Can we do this every Saturday please?

Unexpected Visitors 'Drop In'!

By David Hemmings, Staple Lawns Farm.

We often get visitors 'dropping in' to see us, however, after the events of an evening last month, this phrase has taken on a whole new meaning!!



It was a glorious day on Monday 13th April, albeit a bit blustery. At around 5.00pm we were thrilled to be watching the first swallows checking-out the farm buildings, when suddenly we heard and felt two extremely large thuds, which shook our wooden bungalow. We rushed to the window and, to our

amazement, spied a plane that had taken a nose dive into the turf, just yards from our property!

Immediately we could see the occupants were moving, so, with a quick sprint to their aid, and checking that the fuel had been turned off, we were able to assist them emerge unscathed from the shattered cockpit. The two friends, who share the aircraft, had been on a trip and were returning to Dunkeswell when, after flying through an unavoidable thick bank of cloud, ran into difficulties; the engine cut-out and then failed completely. After gliding

around for a short while (thankfully both are very experienced pilots) the field next to our home was selected as their emergency landing strip. After manoeuvring as best they could, at the moment of landing a gust of wind literally blew the aircraft over



the paddock hedge, spun it around 360 degrees and embedded it safely, although extensively damaged, nose down into the ground! We believe the plane to be a write off, with the front end now looking more like the nose of Concorde, although not meant to be!

After dusting themselves down, taking some very deep breaths, and reflecting



The lambs checking that the aircraft was correctly prepared for transportation

on what might have been, cups of sweet tea were dispensed, during which the pair recounted, with a mixture of relief and disbelief, on what had just occurred. Amazingly, they seemed more concerned about the damage to our grass than their wrecked plane but I assured them that I've seen worse divots during a bad round of golf! The pilot and his passenger were then driven back to Dunkeswell,

from where they were able to get back to families and friends and recount their adventure!

The plane was recovered a few days later, but whilst still in the paddock it was quite a conversation piece with visitors, the postman and delivery drivers.

Names have been withheld to avoid blushes, (I wouldn't want to embarrass them); the chaps both come from Devon.

NEROCHE FILM NIGHT - Friday 29th May

£6 entry - Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

Bar and Nibbles available

The Theory of Everything (PG-13)

Starring Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones and based on the book 'My Life with Stephen' by Jane Hawking. This is an exceptional film about an exceptional person and well deserving of all the awards.



2015 Annual Parish Meeting

By Wally Torrington



The hall rapidly filling-up

should be congratulated for putting on such a super evening.

The proceedings started at 7.00pm with members of the public strolling around the many stands which were manned by local clubs and organisations, these included (in no particular order): The Blackdown Hills Natural Futures Project; Neroche Woodlanders; The Gardening Club; The Neroche Litter Action Group; The local Walking Group; The History Group; Neroche

On the evening of 23 April, Neroche held a most successful Annual Parish meeting, with circa 80 members of the local community in attendance. The APM is the most important annual civic event held in the parish, and it must be said that this year's meeting lived up to that billing; all those involved



Parish Council Chairman, John Bell

Council; Neroche Hall; Neroche Communications Action Group; Cygnet Hospital (Orchard Portman); Community Council for Somerset; St Peter's Singers; and the Thursday Lunch Club. This was followed by the Parish Council Chairman, Jon Bell, delivering his annual report, then two formal presentations: the first was on Local Housing Needs, presented by a team from the Community Council of Somerset



The Woodlanders stall



The WI ladies serving their delicious refreshments

and the Wessex Community Land Trust Project; the second, on Highways and Road Safety Issues, presented by retired Road Safety Officer, Terry Beale. The report and both of the formal presentations were very well delivered, extremely thought provoking and generated lots of questions and discussion.

local dignitaries, including: John Williams, Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council and our Borough Councillor for Neroche Ward; Ross Henley, Our County Councillor; and a number of our Parish Councillors. Also in attendance was David Noad of Smiths Gore who was there to answer questions on Crown Estates matters, particularly the recent flooding works that have been carried out in Bickenhall.

The event was well supported by



All snacks and beverages served to visitors during the evening were free-of-charge. The WI carried out a sterling job providing refreshments of tea and coffee accompanied by a wide variety of delicious cakes and pastries. There was also a selection of wines donated by Tesco and Morrisons and a cheese buffet subsidised by a voucher from Sainsbury.



John Williams chatting with Katie Baker

Thanks must go to all the volunteers who helped to



Doreen Marsh & Jennifer Stewart (what a lovely photo)

organise the event, produce the food, worked behind-the-scenes in the kitchen, set up the hall and clear-up at the end of the evening. Also, our gratitude to the supermarkets that helped sponsor the refreshments.

In summary, the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting was a great success and a credit to our community.

Thurlbear Primary School

By Steve Gillan

Thurlbear Primary School are currently undertaking a 3D Art Project in the Spring with a local artist, to create a new home for the old school bell in the form of a miniature organic chapel-like structure in their field. The Bell will be housed in the top part, with the four sides made of reliefs of the four School Saints: St Thomas, St Mary, St Peter and St Michael.



This fantastic sculpture is truly a school community project, as it has been built by pupils from every class, teachers and parents. The materials have also been donated by the parents of the school, along with funding from the active PTA. *“It will be lovely to have the history of the school bell preserved for the current and future pupils of the school.”* stated Steve Gillan, Deputy Headteacher, *“The inclusion of all our pupils in this project has been fantastic, and it is has been a wonderful thing to watch, as it has slowly developed over the weeks!”*

The creation is inspired by St Thomas’s Church (the Church next to the school), and will be a visible tribute to all the learning has happened at the school in the past 150 years.

A Scurvy Tale

By Madeleine Spears

We are all aware of the fact that the plants in our gardens and surrounding farms are often brought in from other parts of the country or even the world. Many of them have been modified over generations by selective breeding. We also need to be aware of the ways in which they invade the countryside around us and why some grow in one area but not another. One that has caught my eye recently was in flower early this year - the Danish Scurvy Grass – Cochlearia danica. Apparently, they are a British species despite the name.

Danish scurvy grass

While travelling up and down to Bristol a few years ago, I was aware that early every spring a mass of small white plants were growing along the edge of the motorway and the exit slip-roads. Not wanting to stop on these rather hazardous places to inspect them, I was delighted to find that there were similar plants on the edge of the road as you leave the Southfield roundabout going into Ilminster. The plant turned out to be scurvy grass. They are still there and increasing in number.



Scurvy Grasses



There are several different types of scurvy grass, and separating them into different species is a little difficult as they are capable of interbreeding. They are in the same family as the more familiar brassicas such as kales and oilseed rape but at a cursory glance look very different. Oilseed rape is in full bloom at the time of writing and is one of the crops important to farmers in the Neroche area.

Oilseed Rape fields in Neroche



The colour and shape of the plant is quite different, but if you look at the flowers in detail, you will find that they are similar.

Oilseed Rape



Scurvy Grass

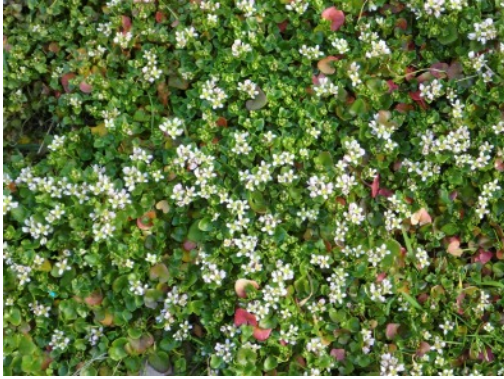


There are actually about 30 different species of scurvy grass of which about 7 have been found in different parts of Britain, but only three are commonly found in Somerset; the English, Common and the Danish scurvy grasses. But where have the scurvy plants come from? They weren't always along the motorways preferring waterways and preferably coastal locations.

Richard Mabey, in his 1996 book "Flora Britannica", describes the movement of the plants along the railways, roads and motorways up to 10-15 miles a year and highlights the M5 as one of the motorways along which they are spreading. The interesting thing is that he refers to Cheltenham as being the main region of the M5 where the Danish scurvy grass was found and now it is down around the M5 in Somerset. The spreading is probably because of the air currents created by vehicles along these highways and the fact that the small light seeds can be caught up on the underside of these vehicles. But will it spread across the parishes of Neroche, as stray oilseed rape plants crop up along our roads?

The answer is “probably not”. Remember, its normal habitat is coastal areas. Neroche will probably be less likely to see many of these plants because the one thing that encourages the growth of the Danish scurvy grass is salt. These plants can exist where other plants have been killed by the high levels of salt remaining after the winter on roads that were heavily salted. As only a few roads around Neroche get salted it is less likely that they will see Danish scurvy grass growing here. We are more likely to see it around Somerset Coastal towns such as Watchet.

Danish Scurvy Grass in Watchet



How about the name? Scurvy is a condition that develops when an individual lacks vitamin C in his or her diet. Over a prolonged period this results in the inability of the body to produce collagen a connective tissue in the body.

Collagen is important in the formation and repair of support tissues and therefore, besides lethargy, symptoms of scurvy include the development of spots and loosening of teeth. Death can eventually result. Current diets usually include sufficient vitamin C to prevent this but historically, sailors and soldiers suffered scurvy when away from home for long periods. This caused considerable problems. Limes were eventually used by sailors following the work of James Lind in 1753 who found that eating them prevented scurvy.

Scurvy grass is so called because it had been used to control scurvy rather than to cause it. Our ancestors knew nothing about vitamin C, but noted cause and effect. If scurvy grass was eaten, scurvy didn't occur. Sailors and troops did not have access to fresh foods containing vitamin C including scurvy grasses hence the problems they suffered. It has more recently been found that chemicals related to vitamin C are found in scurvy grass thus confirming the folk knowledge which had largely been forgotten but kept alive by the common name of the plant.

The season for scurvy grass is almost over, but next spring, keep your eyes open while moving around the Neroche area and note whether it has moved up the hills to invade our road edges, but it is not advised that we should eat it, especially if it is growing on the roadside.



Neroche is Allocated a Village Agent

By Wally Torrington

The Somerset Village Agent project is a Community Council of Somerset initiative. It uses paid, part time, highly trained individuals living in the parish 'clusters' they support. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals, and statutory and/or voluntary organisations

Somerset
VILLAGE
Agents

which offer specific solutions to identified needs. Village Agents work with all ages, dealing with a wide variety of issues, although a considerable number of their clients are elderly and involves social care matters. Helping to solve these problems may, ultimately, help the elderly to

remain living independently for longer. Village Agents also have the role of helping to shape services by feeding back to the appropriate body information about gaps in service e.g. transport provision. They can also motivate and support a community to respond to a local need by working together to address issues e.g. by helping them to set up a coffee morning for a group of lonely people or start a volunteer car scheme.

The following is an introduction forwarded to me by our new 'agent':

"My name is Trudi Morgan and I am your new Village Agent. I have been an Agent for over two years, covering the Parishes of Stoke St Mary, Corfe, Pitminster, Churchstanton and Otterford, and I am delighted now to be working also within the Neroche Parishes. I work part time and my main role is to signpost and direct people to the appropriate services or agencies, and to answer any queries they may have. I've also had great success working with the British Red Cross, delivering 'Everyday First Aid Courses' to all my



Parishes. I also helped to set up a Car Sharing Scheme in Blagdon Hill and Angersleigh. My background is Nursing and my speciality A&E work. I also did a sideways step, career wise, by doing a Travel and Tourism Diploma and taking a Degree in Humanities in my forties. I thoroughly enjoy my role as a Village Agent and have met over 160 clients since I started two years ago.

If you have any problems with which you feel I can help, perhaps by directing you to the right people, services or agencies, or if you have any other queries, please contact me. All calls and advice given are treated in strict confidence. Please give me a call on 07908 160736, and see how I can help, or email me at tmorganva@somersetcc.org.uk “

Neroche History Group

Collecting Village Memories of World War Two

By Jane Hole

A group of people who had lived in Staple Fitzpaine, Bickenhall and Curland as children during WW2 came together so we could collect and record their memories. Amongst the stories told were the following anecdotes:

“Evacuees from London were frightened by the silence of the countryside and the sound of cows”.

“Despite rationing, no one had memories of real shortages: there was always milk; people grew their own vegetables; there rabbits to catch; many had a couple of pigs in the yard. So none went really hungry.”

“There were memories of earning pocket money by collecting rosehips and blackberries for the people in West Hatch who made preserves. A horse and cart would be used to collect the berries from near the Methodist Chapel in Curland. We were paid sixpence a pound”.



“One of the most fascinating memories was the night when hundreds of German incendiary bombs were dropped along the ridge near Staple Fitzpaine and Castle Neroche”.



Woodland Bomb Crater

her life’ as the trees caught fire behind her house.

The newspaper cutting below, taken from the letters page of the Western Daily Press, was brought to the meeting. Several of the parishioners, who were children during the war, have vivid memories of that night. One, who as a young girl, lived next to the woods and remembers ‘fleeing for

Decoy Saved Taunton from the Luftwaffe

“I read with interest the Saturday essay by Rod Morris last week telling the story of the decoy town at Blackdown on the Mendips.

I wonder if anyone remembers the night when the Luftwaffe bombed our own Blackdown Hills. I was about 14 at the time, and living a mile up the road when many high explosive and hundreds of incendiary bombs landed between Staple Fitzpaine and Castle Neroche, mostly on the common. As far as I know, the only casualty was a horse who hurt himself when he jumped a hedge, but the next day Lord Haw Haw, the traitor broadcaster, told us that Taunton had been flattened.

Everyone said that the common was deliberately lit, possibly by the Home Guard, as a decoy; if that was the case, it certainly worked.

The whole area has been replanted and, with a network of tracks and paths, is a haven for wildlife and a place of peace and quiet for people. What would have happened to Taunton without that decoy doesn’t bear thinking about.”

Fred Collins, Triscombe, Minehead.

Broadband Update - May 2015

By Tim French - Neroche Communication Action Group

In the previous edition of the newsletter the broadband developments planned for Neroche Parish were outlined and there were instructions on how to use the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) website to get information about our own premises (this article can be found on the Neroche Villages website). There was gloomy news for many. Likewise, there was real concern that the plight of rural communities was being ignored in spite of very active lobbying. Since then more information has become available, some of it encouraging but some worrying.



1/ The good news comes from a document published by the government at the time of the Budget, that looks at the future provision of broadband services nationally.

The problems facing rural communities are examined in depth. It sets a higher standard for broadband speed that must be available to all, namely 5 Mbps, which is much higher than most premises in the parish receive. But when this new universal service provision will be achieved, and how it will come about, is another matter. However, this speed would allow faster browsing of websites and the streaming of television programmes.

It is nothing like the service currently existing elsewhere or the extraordinary speeds planned in cities and towns. (See “The digital communications infrastructure strategy” at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-digital-communications-infrastructure-strategy/the-digital-communications-infrastructure-strategy).

2/ Information is becoming available on some of the alternate systems on trial for bringing superfast broadband to rural areas.



A satellite based system is being trialled which can provide complete broadband cover to an area at 25Mbps. However, it costs much more than currently available broadband packages for a reasonable download data allowance and this would be in addition to telephone and line rental

costs if a land line telephone was kept. *(See article on Neroche Villages website for details of the system and costs.)*

A system that uses radio signals, beamed from a local access point, is spreading towards us from Cornwall and Devon. Its standard package offers fast broadband (10–25Mbps), with a 100Gbit data allowance for £25/month. Details are available on the firm's website at www.wildwestnet.co.uk



BT has been trialing in Yorkshire a system called fibre to the remote node (FTTRN). It uses small cabinets that can be attached to telegraph poles to shorten the run of copper wire cable between homes and the remote node, subsequently improving speeds (google FTTRN for further information).

Information about other systems on trial, using new technology to enhance the speed of the existing copper wire telephone network, is currently not available.

3/ Unfortunately, the news is bad on getting a fibre optic connection from the Hatch Beauchamp exchange to the green box on our side of the A358. In spite of the best efforts of John Williams, our TDBC councillor, it seems we will have to wait 18 months, at least, before the cable will cross the road. This will further delay some of the 01823 numbers in the south of the parish getting improved broadband speed.

Please use the Neroche Villages website for further information on broadband developments between editions of the newsletter.

Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood

By Gavin Saunders

The Spring is marching on with a vengeance in the woods, as the plants rush to complete their flowering before the tree canopies darken. The wild garlic is lush and pungent, the wood anemones are in full flower, and the first early purple orchids are showing colour.



Meanwhile we're busier than ever at Young Wood. We held a very enjoyable open day on 1st April with over 50 people enjoying the delights of an Easter egg hunt, tea and cake, and having a go at green woodworking.

We've now launched our Shareholder Membership, offering local people the chance to have a stake in our growing nature-based community. A shareholding can be bought for anything from £5 upwards, plus an additional £5 annual subscription. See our website if you are interested in being involved.



The photo (on the left) shows volunteers from the Environment Agency, on a work-day placement at Young Wood, cutting tipi poles.

Our Wild Learning sessions are continuing every Tuesday, helping Taunton residents from the Halcon and Priorswood estates find new interests, respite and confidence in the woods.

Volunteer sessions at Young Wood take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month - all are welcome. Meanwhile Conservation Volunteering events also take place on the second and third Wednesdays on other wildlife sites across the

hills – contact us for more details. To get in touch, email Gavin on gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org, or phone 07760 665378. Or find us at www.youngwood.org.uk

Neroche Woodlanders offer a range of colourful and interesting training courses for the general public, in all aspects of woodland crafts, natural history, bushcraft and environmental arts.

‘Blackdowns Wildland Safari’ Saturday 13th June - £35



A day-long trek into the depths of the Neroche forest - one of the wildest, most remote places in Somerset, led by local naturalist Gavin Saunders. Delve into the natural and human history of the landscape, its plants, trees, animals and land form, and absorb the special atmosphere. An energetic adventure of a day, involving walking over all terrains. Meeting point close to Young Wood will be advised nearer the time. Bring packed lunch and drink. Difficult terrain, no toilets. 10am-4pm

‘Neroche Botanicals’ Friday 26th June - £35

Whether you’re a beginner, want to brush up on what you used to know, or are looking for professional development, this is a perfect introduction to the typical wild flowers and shrubs of limey soils in the Blackdowns. An accessible, enjoyable introduction to field botany: names, families, habitats and more. Bring packed lunch and drink. Meeting point will be advised. Moderate terrain, no toilets. Handouts provided. 10am-4pm.

‘Green Woodworking, an introduction’ Friday 17 July- £65

Learn the beginnings of the bodger's craft. Select, cut, cleave and shave green wood straight from the woods, using traditional tools in a peaceful woodland setting, and come away having made your own piece. No previous experience necessary. Small group size, personal instruction. Hot drinks provided around



the campfire; bring packed lunch. Easy terrain, compost loo on site. 10am- 4pm

‘Fire by Friction’ Friday 24th July - £65

Make the components of a traditional bow drill – bow, drill, hearth, bearing block, ember pan and tinder. From cutting the sticks to making a campfire. Learn the basics of this challenging yet hugely rewarding ancient skill. Small group size, personal instruction. Hot drinks provided around the campfire; bring packed lunch. Easy terrain, compost loo on site. 10am- 4pm



‘Wild Tracking’ Saturday 19th Sept – free, as part of Blackdown Hills Natural Futures (limited spaces so booking required)

Learn how to tune in to wild animals – identifying footprints, droppings, dens, bones, and other signs in the wild. Make a plaster cast of an animal track, and meet the skulls of most of Britain’s wild mammals. Moderate terrain, compost loo on site. Hot drinks provided. Suitable for children over 10 years.

**For more information and booking go to www.youngwood.org.uk
Email gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org, phone 07760 665378.**

NEROCHE FILM NIGHT - Friday 26th June

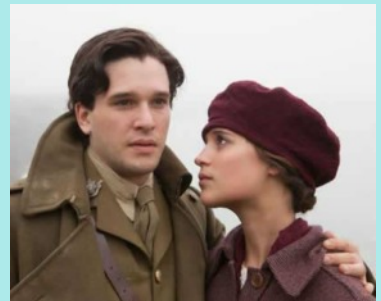
£6 entry - Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

Bar and Nibbles available

Testament of Youth (PG-13)

A searing story of love and war and based on the true memoirs of Vera Brittain in the first world war.

Starring Alicia Vikander and Kit Harington the film has received great reviews for its rich, dark, romantic and beautiful direction by James Kent.



May Day Dinner Dance

By Colin Croad & Alan Perrior

On Friday 1st May, Neroche Hall hosted a fundraising dinner/dance and all present voted it a roaring success.



Live music was provided by the King's College Big Band who, at the end of their excellent set, received a standing ovation - not least because everyone was dancing and joining in the fun.



The Big Band, which included their musical director on bass guitar, nearly raised the rafters in every sense of the

expression. We really do have some talented young musicians and vocalists in Taunton, capable of playing dance music to a very high standard.

During the evening they played a wide range of musical styles and genres with a confidence and verve that belied their tender



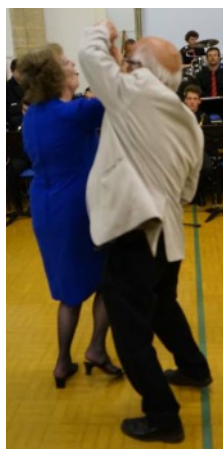
years. Everyone appreciated, applauded and (most) danced to everything from Dean Martin's 'Sway' to Pharrel Williams' 'Happy'; from the Bond theme 'Skyfall' to Peggy Lee's 'Fever' and Eddie Floyd's 'Knock On Wood'. The crowd only allowed them to leave, after a rousing encore of 'Sway', when the musical director insisted that they had to get back to the college before they



were locked out of their dormitories!



The ladies who provide the food for the lunch club each month, put their already high reputation to the test and, as usual, triumphed. Especial thanks to Marianne Bray, Jane Hole, Sheila Green and Tricia Dryden who planned, purchased, prepared and served the Chicken Basque main course. The desserts were home-made (and totally indulgent) pavlovas and treacle tarts with cream, and were

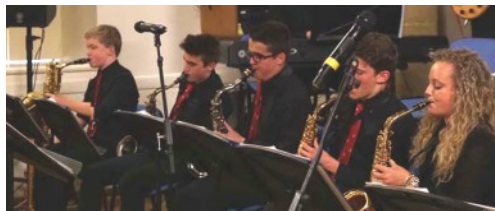




made by committee members and friends. They had great support from other members of the Committee and friends of the Hall.

Their hard work (and it is hard work) provided a special evening for us all, as well as raising much needed funds, for the upkeep of the hall.

*Postscript by Richard Davies
(Chairman of Neroche Hall Trustees):*



The Neroche Hall AGM was held on the Tuesday following the event and the Chairman paid formal tribute and acknowledgment in his report to the Band for their brilliant live music and spirited performance, together with his thanks to all members of the committee and volunteers for their efforts in planning and delivering such a successful event. Hall funds have been increased by over £700, once all costs are deducted, and this will go a long way to maintaining the fabric of the building for all our community to enjoy in the future.

NEROCHE FILM NIGHT - Friday 31st July

£6 entry - Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

Bar and Nibbles available

The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (PG)

Of course we have to show the second film about 'The Marigold Hotel' with its all-star cast and "feel good" factor.

Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Dev Patel, Maggie Smith, Penelope Wilton and Celia Imrie are all, as Rotten Tomatoes puts it 'effortlessly charming'.



Email Alert Parish Notices

If you wish to be kept informed of all that is happening in the community (including: crime alerts; road closures; community activities; local events; important meetings etc etc) then why not add your email address to the 280 plus individuals that have already signed-up to the service.

Your details will be kept secure, as all Email Alerts use the BCC address system so that nobody sees the full list.

If you are not on the list, then you are missing-out on 'up-to-the-minute' information on all that is important and happening in the immediate area in which you live.

To join, send an email to: wallytorrington@hotmail.com with the message "please add me to the list".

We look forward to you becoming a fully-informed Neroche resident.

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.



Summer Holiday

Tuesday 21st July 2015 to Monday 31st August 2015



**Household Recycling & Refuse Collections
for June 2015 to August 2015**



No Changes Scheduled For This Period

To view the actual dates, go to

www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc/sites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf

Events For Your Calendar

June

- 3 Greyhound Quiz
- 4 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (advert on page 11)
- 6 Neroche Walking Group
- 10 WI meeting, 'Somerset Folk Songs' (article on page 18)
- 13 Neroche Woodlanders, 'Wildland Safari', (article on page 52)
- 17 Wednesday evening Church Service
- 26 Neroche Woodlanders, 'Botanicals', (article on page 52)
- 26 Neroche Friday Film Night (advert on page 54)

July

- 1 WI meeting, 'Flower Power Craft' (article on page 18)
- 1 Greyhound Quiz
- 2 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (advert on page 11)
- 4 Neroche Walking Group
- 9 Parish Council Meeting (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 15 Wednesday evening Church Service
- 17 Neroche Woodlanders, 'Green Woodworking', (article on page 52)
- 19 Closing date for Scarecrow Festival entries
- 24 Neroche Woodlanders, 'Fire By Friction', (article on page 52)
- 25 Jul to 1 Aug Scarecrow Festival (advert on page 12)
- 29 Neroche Local History Group (advert on page 27)
- 31 Neroche Friday Film Night (advert on page 57)

August

- 1 Neroche Walking Group
- 1 Scarecrow Prizegiving and Bar-B-Q (advert on page 12)
- 5 Greyhound Quiz
- 6 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (advert on page 11)
- 19 Wednesday evening Church Service
- 22 Thornfalcon Classic Car Show
- 28 Neroche Friday Film Night



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

Local Communication and Information

Websites:

Neroche Villages – www.nerochevillages.org.uk

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

Neroche Hall– www.nerochehall.org.uk

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

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

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

Email Information:

The Neroche Communication Action Group runs an Email Alert System for sending information to those wishing to receive it. It forwards information of a general nature about local events and issues - please contact Wally Torrington at wallytorrington@hotmail.com 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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