

“Working Together for a Better Community”

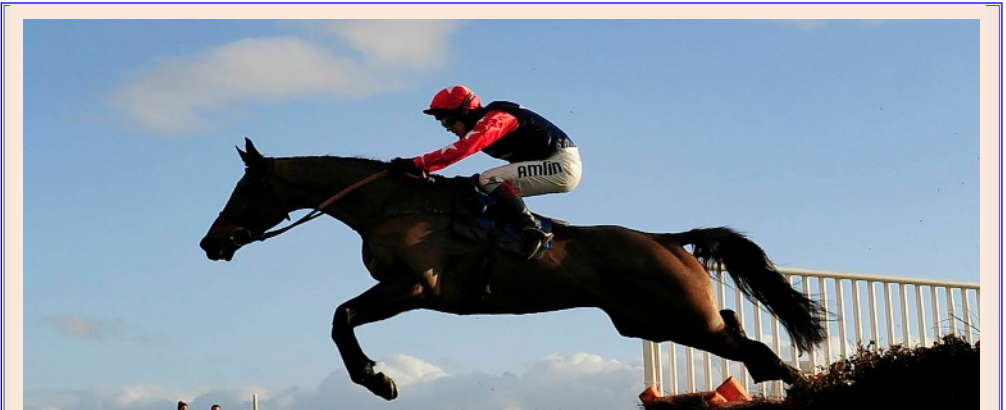
NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 22

Newsletter

Winter 2016

*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 related to 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 or call 01823 337172 or see the article on page 6.

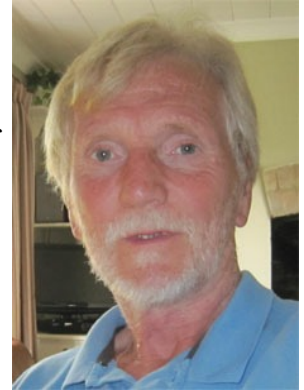
*If you would like **your** company or organisation to feature on the front page of a future issue then please contact wallytorrington@hotmail.com (01823 480656)*

Welcome to the 22nd 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)

Firstly, a most appreciative thanks to Taunton Racecourse for their continued support, and particularly for their ongoing sponsorship of the Winter Issue of the Neroche Villages' Newsletter. Our association with the Racecourse is greatly valued, especially our relationship with the Chief Executive, Bob Young; he is a great supporter and true friend of the local community.



As previously announced, we are retiring from the Newsletter; this bumper 68

page, Issue Number 22, being our last publication. It's almost six years since 'Issue Number 1' was published (just 20 black-and-white pages produced on a home inkjet printer). Four volunteers have stepped forward to replace us, Alan and Sarah Hyde from Curland, and Jacqueline and Mark Wanstall from Bickenhall; they will form the basis of the new production team. If any more of you fancy getting involved, to a lesser or greater extent (most people will prefer 'to a lesser', which is fine), then please make contact with either Wally wallytorrington@hotmail.com or Alan nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk All



Mark and Jacqueline

that having been said, we are not 'running for the door', we will still be here after December 2016, and willing to give a hand if required. If you are 'in two minds' as whether to get



Alan and Sarah

involved or not, then come and have a 'no obligation' chat, on the basis you can walk away if you don't fancy it. We look forward to your call.

We wish to thank everyone who has been involved with the Newsletter since its conception at the beginning of 2011: our regular contributors for their many and varied articles and notices; our sponsors for their generous donations; our advertisers, without whom the publication would not be viable; and to the community as a whole for their unstinting support and encouragement.

It must be said that the whole experience of producing the Newsletter for the past 6 years is made worthwhile when we receive the type of feedback contained in the correspondence below...

Letter to the Editor

28 October 2016

Dear Alan and Wally

I would like to give a huge thank you to you both in recognition of the amazing work you have done on the Neroche Villages' Newsletter. It has become such a positive influence for all our villages; it keeps us informed on local issues, we hear local stories, we learn about farming and forestry, it's a boon for local groups to promote their various activities, and covers many more neighbourhood topics.

Your hard work and dedication have turned a good idea emanating from the Parish Plan into a highly professional, well-illustrated and extremely informative newsletter. It has more than achieved the original aim of improving local communication; it has become an important part of village life. Now, as you both stand down, you have also accomplished another success, that of ensuring its future as you hand over to a new editorial team in the New Year.

Well done and congratulations on your achievement.

Jane

(Jane Hole, Chair of the Neroche Local History Group)

News from Neroche Hall

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



In my autumn article, I mentioned plans for 2017 and several events which we were hoping to put on in the coming months. Some events have come and gone, whilst others are still at the drawing board stage. The Newsletter is an excellent medium by which we can spread the word of forthcoming events, but inevitably the timing of its publication sometimes means that arrangements have not always been finalised. I would therefore commend you to keeping an eye on our website, in addition to looking out for circulations on Wally's Alerts.

It had been our aim to try to organise a New Year's Eve function, however, it soon became apparent that any disc jockey or live performer had been booked well in advance, and such an event would not be viable this year, and so we are planning to address this early next year to ensure we have suitable entertainment to put on a lively function.

As many will be aware, we recently held our Fish and Chip Quiz at the Hall, with the help of the mobile chip cart 'Lazy Ricks' who supplied over 100 meals on the night. The food was excellent and piping hot, and the Hall was full to capacity, which all went to make a very successful evening. The quiz-master was, as usual, our own Colin Croad, who, as always, gave us a full and varied quiz with a wide variety of topics. After a number of years setting the quiz questions for our annual two quizzes, Colin has decided to call it a day and end his reign as our quiz-master. He certainly ended on a big high with a packed hall and twenty teams, some of whom were attending for the first time.



Given Colin's decision, we are urgently seeking a replacement quiz-master in order that the traditional twice-yearly event can continue. If anyone would be interested in taking on Colin's mantle or knows someone who would be interested, I and the committee would love to hear from you. This is a very popular evening's entertainment, which I feel would disappoint many people if it were to fold, so please spread the word. Our next quiz is usually held in March, so time is of the essence. Colin would, I am sure, be pleased to talk to anyone interested to give them an insight into his format.



The Bridge Club has started with a taster session and a couple of evenings playing for fun. As someone who has never played before, other than a game or two of whist in the distant past, together with my wife, who was never played anything similar, we really enjoyed it and found it quite easy to follow the

basics. We are not interested in anything other than having a pleasant evening's entertainment for an hour or two, as is everyone else who has come so far. So if you are a total beginner you will be able to start playing straight away, and not feel intimidated by any of us, as we are all novices. Have a word with Alison Brown or just turn up on the evening (see notice

on page 48, and the website calendar for further details, including time and days when we meet).

Finally, I would like to remind everyone who is a member of our 100 Club that the annual subscription is now due. If you pay by standing order you can obviously continue to do so. Payment can be made by cheque, BACS or cash, whichever you prefer. The 100 Club is now being managed by Diana Davies who has taken over from Jacqueline Kolkowski, and reminders will be sent out soon. Diana would like to move to electronic reminders and payments if possible, and would therefore appreciate it if you sent her your e-mail address. Her e-mail is: dianadavies32@icloud.com

Taunton Racecourse

By Wally Torrington



Set in the heart of the Somerset countryside, and sited within Neroche Parish, Taunton Racecourse is England's youngest jumps racecourse and stages around fifteen race-meetings each season. Their visitors enjoy national hunt racing, featuring some of the biggest names in the sport; but Taunton Racecourse is not just about racing, it boasts excellent facilities for conferences, meetings, parties and events. It is also the perfect venue for your wedding reception. www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

Report from the Chief Executive, Bob Young



"We here, at Taunton Racecourse, consider ourselves to be extremely fortunate to reside in the picturesque area of Orchard Portman, and within the charming parish of Neroche. We pride ourselves in the close relationship we have established with residents across the parish, and are delighted to support local endeavours, including sponsorship of this excellent Newsletter. Many inhabitants from the local community are members of the Racecourse, and we are keen to encourage more to join, so please read-on to learn more about us, and discover the excellent facilities and privileges to which our members are entitled.

We enjoyed a very successful 2015/16 season, with the loss of only one race meeting, despite a very, very, wet spell at the beginning of 2016. The £80,000 facelift recently applied to the Orchard Stand has proved a hit with

customers, and was extremely well received by everyone who has used the restaurant. A table for the day can be booked with admission, a three course meal, afternoon tea and a racecard for £60 per person – along with in-house catering this provides the best value of any course in the south-west by far!

A promotional banner for 'Christmas at Taunton Racecourse'. The title 'Christmas at Taunton Racecourse' is written in a stylized, glowing blue font. Below the title, there is a list of activities: 'Meet Father Christmas before the first race', 'Goodie bags & face painting for children under 16', 'Behind the Scenes tour available', 'Enjoy mulled wine and festive food!', and 'Plus have a thrilling day at the races'. A small image shows a jockey on a horse. A red circular badge on the right says 'Early Bird Offer Admission Only £10* subject to availability'. At the bottom, there is a white box with text: 'www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk All accompanied children under 16 FREE All Car Parking FREE. Courtesy Bus from Taunton Railway Station'. The background features blue and white Christmas lights and pine branches.

Christmas at Taunton Racecourse

Join us on
Tuesday 20th December 2016
First Race: 12.45pm
Gates Open: 10.45am

Meet Father Christmas before the first race,
Goodie bags & face painting for children under 16
Behind the Scenes tour available
Enjoy mulled wine and festive food!
Plus have a thrilling day at the races

BOOK tickets at: www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk Kids under 16 GO FREE

www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk All accompanied children under 16 FREE
All Car Parking FREE. Courtesy Bus from Taunton Railway Station

TAUNTON RACECOURSE

Early Bird Offer
Admission Only £10*
*subject to availability

Highlights of the season ahead include: a pre-festive meeting on December 8th with the Kings College choir singing Christmas carols, and a few themed trade stands on site; a Christmas meeting on Tuesday 20th December with Father Christmas in attendance; our ever popular meeting on December 30th; a Saturday meeting on January 21st; a new Sunday meeting on February 5th; an Easter holiday meeting on April 6th; an evening meeting on April 20th; and to finish off, Ladies Day on April 27th.

Membership at the Racecourse provides tremendous value, with: a record-equalling 59 reciprocal race meetings at 47 different courses throughout the country; free entry to Hickstead for their Derby meeting, the Royal International Horse Show and the All England Jumping Championships; and 2-for-1 Saver Tickets for the Royal Bath & West Show, with full membership facilities applying to both.

The two-course racing lunch available to members from £17 in the Paddock Stand restaurant continues to be very popular. Please remember that members and their guests (up to four per member) have privileged use of the Paddock Stand, which we believe is quite unique in this day and age.

Here's hoping for another exciting and successful season ahead, with some thrilling racing for us all to enjoy; I look forward to seeing you here."

Bob Young

Taunton Racecourse Owners Club

Why not enjoy the thrill of racehorse ownership with the Taunton Racecourse Owners Club, visit your horse regularly, watch him run during your membership and enjoy the benefits of going racing as an owner. The membership is limited to a maximum of 25 people, so a personal experience is guaranteed.

This year's horse is called Prince Mahler and is 6 years old. He is graduating from Novice Company with us and already has an official rating of 100. He has had a good summer break and will be ready to run in November, the beginning of the membership period. We will start him off with 3 mile hurdle races and then he may even go chasing next year. There are plenty of options open to him, and he is proven in soft ground. On paper he is the best horse we have started with in our 4 years of existence, let's hope he lives up to it.



Membership costs £399 and lasts from November 2016 until the 30th April 2017. This is a real opportunity to get involved in racehorse ownership at a reasonable one-off cost, with no hidden extras. For further details on the horse or the club please contact Martin Higgs on 07831 752056 or email businessclub@tauntonracecourse.co.uk or visit the racecourse website at www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk/racing/racecourse-owners-club

A promotional banner for the Taunton Racecourse Owners Club. The banner features a jockey in a yellow and blue outfit riding a dark horse. The text on the banner includes the Taunton Racecourse logo, the event name 'NEW YEARS RACEMEETING FRIDAY 30TH DECEMBER 2016', and a price offer of '£10 Early Bird Offer'. A green bar at the bottom states 'Admission only £10* when purchased Online before 20th October' with a small note '*Subject to availability'.

Fixture List for 2016/17

Thursday	24th November	12.45pm	3.25pm	Autumn Racemeeting
Thursday	8th December	12.30pm	3.50pm	Festive Fixture
Tuesday	20th December	12.45pm	3.50pm	Christmas racemeeting
Friday	30th December	1.00pm	4.00pm	New Years Racemeeting
Wednesday	11th January	1.10pm	4.10pm	Two for One Racemeeting
Saturday	21st January	1.45pm	4.30pm	Bathwick Tyres Saturday Racemeeting
Sunday	5th February	1.50pm	4.50pm	Bathwick Tyres Sunday Racemeeting
Tuesday	21st February	2.20pm	5.20pm	Royal Bath and West Racemeeting
Thursday	2nd March	2.00pm	5.15pm	Landlords Racemeeting
Monday	20th March	2.20pm	5.20pm	Bathwick Tyres Free Racemeeting
Thursday	30th March	2.00pm	5.15pm	RNLI Racemeeting
Thursday	6th April	2.05pm	5.40pm	Family Race Day
Thursday	20th April	5.35pm	8.05pm	Evening Racemeeting
Thursday	27th April	2.10pm	5.10pm	Ladies Day



Macmillan Coffee Morning

By Wally Torrington



The 'T' shirted members of the greater Coffee Morning Team who were available to serve on the day: Tricia Dryden, Brenda Crossley, Candy Janes, Debbie Hards, Pauline Phelps, Jacqueline Kolkowski and Nicky Baxter

The ladies of Neroche Parish organised a terrific Coffee Morning, at the Greyhound Inn on Saturday 24th September, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support; their hard work was rewarded with an excellent turnout from local residents.



As well as coffee and tea there was a great selection of cakes and pastries to feast upon; all donated by a wide variety of people living in the local community. There was also a stall for purchasing cakes to take home, which did a roaring trade (I even saw the Greyhound's very own chef buying a couple!).



Wyn Ballance manning the cake table

established that an impressive total of nearly £600 was raised for the charity.

Thanks must go to Marina and Dave for allowing the event to be held in their premises; they could not have been more helpful and accommodating. Their continued support to the community, in so many ways, is greatly appreciated by us all. The ladies were also grateful to Chris Baxter for helping with the bunting and balloon decorations; and for the assistance given by Lubo and Magda who work at the Greyhound.



Brenda Crossley doing a great job selling the cakes for taking home

Congratulations must go to all those involved in making the Coffee Morning such an outstanding local community success. And many thanks to all the local residents who turned up and supported the event.

Well done everybody!



A wonderful selection of cakes and pastries.

The Autumn Quiz (with Fish'n'Chips)

By Alan Perrior

- Q: Where was the quiz held?* *A: Neroche Village Hall*
Q: When? *A: Friday 7th October 2016 @ 7.30pm*
Q: Who was the Quizmaster? *A: Colin Craod*
Q: How many teams entered? *A: 20 (a record for the quiz)*
Q: Who won? *A: Not Poldark*
Q: How was the food? *A: Hot and tasty (another excellent job by Lazy Ricks mobile catering van)*

Yes, Colin triumphed again; he produced another fun quiz full of interesting and challenging questions. A quiz that generated some laughs, some groans and lots of heated debate.

The quiz was won by 'Not Poldark' with a score of 77 points; 2 points clear of 'Famous Five'; with 'Crooked Furrow', 'The Educators' and 'Curland Trotters' all a further 2.5 points behind.



Colin Craod - quizmaster



'Not Poldark' - The Winning Team

The winning team were made up from the core of David Spears' old team (David having been persuaded to step down this year). The team members were; Ross Henley and Alan & Jill Perrior, ably assisted by Norman & Sara Llewellyn.

Amazingly, 'Not Poldark' didn't have a maximum score in any of the ten rounds; nor did they actually win any of the rounds outright. However they were, by far, the most consistent team across all the categories; except, that is, for the 'Hobbies' round in which they were one of the lowest scoring teams – perhaps their only hobby is quizzing!

With regard to the 'Hobbies' round; only one team knew that, in Bridge, "a set of four cards played by each player in turn, during the play of a hand of cards"

is known as a ‘Trick’ – it may be a good idea to go along to Alison Brown’s regular Bridge sessions (*see advert on page 48*).

However, credit must go to the teams who did manage top scores of 10 (out-of-10) in the various rounds. In fact, ‘Famous Five’ and ‘Crooked Furrow’ achieved maximum scores in both the ‘Alliterative Answers’ and ‘Twins’ rounds. Other teams with maximum scores were ‘The Educators’, ‘The Garden Shed’ and ‘Never Too Late’.

The quiz consisted of ten rounds of ten questions each; the 100 questions produced 15 “full houses” when every team gave the correct answer. There were also three questions that baffled everyone; and a further three questions garnered correct answers from only one team (although not the same team each time). The ‘Twins’ round was particularly interesting, in that everyone seemed to know



Norman Llewellyn collecting the winners' prize



Twenty teams enjoyed the quiz and the hot food.

more about 1960’s East End villains, Ronnie and Reggie Kray, than about the founders of Rome or which French town Taunton is twinned with!

As usual, there was a rash of teams changing answers from correct to incorrect, thus

causing their scores to suffer. The most popular “correct-to-incorrect” change was for the question, “What is the world’s most popular board game?” Several teams couldn’t resist writing ‘Monopoly’ and then changing it to ‘Chess’ or ‘Scrabble’. (*Hint: always go with your first instinct!*)

The three **questions** that baffled everyone were;

1/ Sport: *The Grand Prix motor racing circuit ‘Bremgarten’ is in which country?*

2/ Weddings: *In the film 'Four Weddings and a Funeral', whose funeral was it? Name the character and the actor.*

3/ Dancing: *Which style of dancing features the 'Electric Slide' step?*

Answers;

1/ **Switzerland** (*it isn't surprising that nobody got the answer, the last Grand Prix held at the circuit was in 1954!*)

2/ **Gareth, played by Simon Callow**

3/ **Line Dancing**

If you knew the answers to any of these questions, and weren't at the quiz; **WHY NOT?**

Congratulations on another enjoyable quiz to Colin and his scorers, David and Madeleine Spears. Colin will be a hard act to follow, *see Richard Davies' article on pages 4 and 5*. It would be a shame if such a successful and popular event did not continue. Details of future quizzes will be published in the Newsletter and the Email Alert system.



Scorer Madeleine Spears and Quizmaster Colin Croad

Our Somerset County Councillor

By Wally Torrington



Ross at the Macmillan Coffee Morning

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Ross Henley, the Somerset County Councillor who represents our parish, was unable to produce his usual column for this issue of the Newsletter. However, have no fear, he has been very much out-and-about in the local community in recent months: attending the Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Greyhound Inn (see the article on page 10); entering the Autumn Quiz in the Hall (see the article on page 12); representing our views regarding the reduced bus service running through Staple Fitzpaine; and monitoring progress of the A303 Improvement Scheme at the recent Highways England presentation. Thanks for your support Ross, and we look forward to reading your next article in the March issue.

More Fruits of the Forest

By Gavin Saunders, Jenny Archard and Rachel Wootton
of the Youngwood Team

The leaves are turning autumnal again, meaning, unbelievably, another year is nearly over. At Young Wood, Neroche Woodlanders have had a busy summer, bringing a wide diversity of people to enjoy the wildness and the peace. Now



First charcoal burn - 16th July 2016

we're preparing for a busy winter's management work. The summer saw the completion of another set of adult and family sessions, working with participants from from Halcon and Priorswood estates and hostels run by Taunton Association for the Homeless. We also brought together practitioners from across the South West for a Wildness and Wellbeing day, discussing the value of wild places for promoting mental health and social cohesion. There is growing interest in this type of work, to help tackle depression, help improve social skills, help parents communicate better with their children, and build self-confidence, as well as enabling people to learn more about nature.

Meanwhile, on the practical side, we took delivery of a charcoal kiln, and have begun making Woodlanders' own charcoal, from the produce of our coppicing work. In 2017 we will begin marketing our charcoal properly, so if you're interested in buying the most local, sustainable hardwood charcoal possible, please get in touch via our website (www.youngwood.org.uk).



Woodlander's charcoal

(cont'd on next page)

We also take commissions for house signs, benches, decorative spoons and bowls, all made with greenwood from Young Wood.

We've had a successful programme of day courses this year: fire by friction, spoon making, rustic stool making, and mammal tracking. Each course had no more than 6 participants, making for a relaxed atmosphere and plenty of individual tuition. We'll be advertising a new programme of courses very soon.

It's always been our intention that by being at Young Wood, we make the woods richer in wildlife, and the evidence suggests that's beginning to happen. By keeping small glades open, widening rides, cutting coppice and creating new paths, we're providing more places for plants and insects to thrive, and we're discovering more all the time. This summer we had new finds of Greater Butterfly Orchid amongst the hazel stools, and Bird's Nest Orchid under the deeper shade.



Greater Butterfly Orchid

Over the coming year we will be running a series of events to search out as many species of all kinds that we can, in a Lottery-funded project called 'Meet the Neighbours'. Look out for dates in the spring on our website www.youngwood.org.uk

Anyone is welcome to join us on volunteer days at Young Wood, on the fourth Wednesday of each month. We also run volunteer days on other local nature reserves on the second and third Wednesdays. Take a look at www.ncv.org.uk for details of upcoming dates.



Gavin Saunders



Jenny Archard



Rachel Wootton

The 'Greyhound Art Group' Exhibition

By Wally Torrington

The Greyhound Art Group held their first exhibition in the Greyhound Inn from 23rd September to 30th October. It was a showcase of work by a group of amateur artists who meet at The Greyhound each week to paint. The artists made themselves available at various times throughout the period of the



exhibition to discuss their art with visitors, and to answer their many questions.

I popped-in to view the exhibition on the first Saturday, whilst attending the Macmillan Coffee Morning. I was unaware it was taking place, until tipped-off by one of the ladies serving the cakes. I was very much taken with the high quality and variety of the artwork on show, plus the number of entries displayed; a wonderful selection.



Brian Gould

As soon as I returned home I produced a notice for the Email Alert to inform the community the event was taking place, and to encourage locals to pay the exhibition a visit; those who went along were not disappointed.

The Greyhound Art Group was started a few years ago with a small





group of people, all of whom had an interest in recreational painting. Over the past year-and-a-half more have joined the group, and it has started to evolve and develop. They now have about eight members, all of whom love art and like to paint.

The group has recently joined the membership of 'The Society for all Artists'. Fiona Walker told me "*Painting in company gives us the motivation to keep trying new subjects and mediums, with the encouragement*

and comments from the group. None of us are professional artists, we like to call ourselves 'pub artists' as we meet in the pub where we paint, chat, have coffee and often round our morning off with lunch. Even though we are amateur artists, we wanted to have purpose to our painting, and therefore decided to hold a small exhibition to showcase our work. I am sure that those who visited the exhibition will agree we displayed a very diverse spectrum of work for them to view."



Alan Kingett



Some paintings were for sale, and at very affordable prices, because the Group wants art to be available to everyone. There were also a few prints and some cards available to purchase.

If you would like to find out more about The Greyhound

Art Group and what they do, when they meet, or anything else, then contact Fiona or one of the other members (contact details below).



Tim Bowers, Barbara Hemmings, Fiona Walker, Brian Gould, Alan Kingett and Katherine Creasey

Fiona was keen to mention that neither the Group's weekly meetings nor the exhibition would have been possible without the hospitality of Marina and everyone at The Greyhound Inn, allowing them to use the facilities.

The Group would like to say a big THANK YOU to them all.

The Greyhound Art Group Members Contact Details

Fiona Walker

01823 333020 or 07783 792390

fionawalker66@outlook.com

Tim Bowers

01823 324454

veronbow@yahoo.co.uk

Brian Gould

01823 335354

brian35@hotmail.co.uk

Angie Patch

01460 74405 or 07889 151518

Barbara Hemmings

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Katherine Creasey

01460 234663 or 07948 729208

katherinecreasey@hotmail.co.uk

Alan Kingett

alan.kingett@sky.com

Gordon Watson

01460 53992

gordonwatson10@btinternet.com

News from Neroche Parish Council

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



To begin, I would like to welcome Clare Canape to the Council. Clare, who has filled the vacancy created by Ian Parker's resignation, has lived in the Parish for many years, now residing at Bow Green. She is well known within the community and I hope that she finds her time on the Council rewarding. The Council now has a full complement of members.

Housing Needs Survey

The results of the Housing Needs Survey have now been collated and analysed. The survey has identified a small need for affordable housing in the Parish. The Community Council of Somerset will now discuss the findings with the Housing Officers at Taunton Deane. It is important that the results of the survey tie-in with the need already identified by Taunton Deane, and anyone who completed the survey indicating a requirement for affordable housing should also ensure that their details are on the Housing Register.



Footpath Maintenance

Somerset County Council Rights of Way team has arranged for contractors to repair parts of the footpath at Middleroom Lane that have been suffering from erosion. Although the path is on Forestry Commission land, responsibility for the surface of the footpath remains with Somerset County Council.

You may have read of the financial difficulties facing the County Council; I can foresee that more services will be devolved to Parish level. Although a small Parish such as Neroche does not have the resources to take on any additional services, one area in which the Parish can assist is footpath maintenance. Somerset County Council runs a volunteer strimmer scheme which trains volunteers and provides access to a strimmer so that footpaths can be kept clear. Mark Palmer, a new member of the Council, has

volunteered to join the scheme but any additional help would be appreciated.

Another way in which parishioners can assist is to become a Parish Path Liaison Officer (PPLO). This role involves walking the footpaths on a regular basis and reporting any faults or obstructions to the Rights of Way team. The PPLO role complements the SCC's 'Adopt-a-Path' scheme, which is open to anyone, whether they are walkers, horse riders or cyclists, and any public right of way can be adopted. Volunteers are simply asked to use their chosen path as often

as possible and report any problems. Anyone taking on a path is offered the loan of gloves, secateurs and hi-vis jackets so that they can help maintain the path by cutting back vegetation or brambles if they wish. For more information about the 'Adopt-a-Path' scheme or becoming a PPLO, please call 0300 123 2224 or contact rowvolunteers@somerset.gov.uk or view the leaflet online at www.somerset.gov.uk/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-with-the-public-rights-of-way-team



A358 Improvements

You may have noticed cameras at certain locations on local roads and footpaths in recent months. These are part of the 'assessment of potential route options' for the A358 improvement scheme. Other investigations include: assessing the profile of the routes; potential environmental habitats; traffic surveys; and public rights of way usage.



**highways
england**
driving forward

Highways England is currently examining the proposals and testing a range of options. It is likely that a series of public exhibitions will be held in February 2017 to unveil the possible routes, and seek public opinion on the options.

Annual Parish Meeting

Planning for the Annual Parish meeting, which will take place in April 2017, will start in the New Year. Every year the organisers endeavour to arrange presentations that are relevant and of interest to the Parish. The Parish meeting is an opportunity for everyone to participate and if there are any topics that you wish to see discussed, please contact any of the Councillors or me at nerochepec@nercochevillages.org.uk with your suggestions.

An Early Autumn Walk in Curland

By Alan & Doreen Marsh



Queen Anne's Lace

Queen Anne, hardy enough for some to flower throughout the year but with nothing to match the grace of the earlier seasonal display.

Ribwort Plantain, a rather drab small plant but a successful one, is always around on low roadside banks. Rather more exciting was the pretty red stemmed Herb Robert, still in flower but past its best. Little Robin, again with pink



Herb Robert



Yellow Nipple Wort

flowers but smaller than those of Herb Robert and without red stems, scrambled among the grasses. Dying Stinging Nettles were too much in evidence and they do not die gracefully! In one place, Horse-Tails, another bully in hedgerows, stood tall against the Hawthorn where wet conditions favoured this primitive plant. The Yellow Nipple-Wort was still around and just a few very faded flowers of the Violets we had noted with pleasure in spring.

When we first walked the lane beside our cottage, almost forty years ago, we used to find Rosebay

Willow Herb. This was a flower very familiar to us on London's bomb sites during and after WWII. Now it is the Greater Willow Herb that prevails, standing tall with its pink flower heads. By September, these have been replaced by plumes of feathery seed-heads. This plant is food for the caterpillars of the Elephant Hawk Moth. We have not seen this handsome moth for years, but we did see a badger's track through the hedge, and we see badgers too. Is that why we never see hedgehogs any more, not even flat ones on the road.



Rosebay Willow Herb

The plant world and the animal world (both big and small) has changed over the years, and not for the better.

Neroche Hall Boules Competition

By Wally Torrington

On Sunday 28th August, irrespective of all that the inclement weather could throw at them, the stoical and determined Neroche Hall committee, between the showers, went ahead as planned and staged their Annual Boules Competition; they were rewarded with a most successful and enjoyable event.



Chief organiser Nicky Baxter, with Sheila Green who entered into the spirit of the event with her French outfit

The committee, as a whole, did a sterling job, with Nicky Baxter 'at the helm'. A friend of Alison Brown, Kate Golding from Woolavington, volunteered to run the stats and scoring; precision and accuracy proved to be all important in this task, especially as three teams recorded equal points, requiring a three-way play-off for the final.

I must say, although I'm not an expert in the sport, the standard of play appeared to be very high; and, whether or not it was my imagination, the ladies seemed to be doing far better than the gentlemen!



Players line-up for the three-way play-off for the final

Mike and Rosemary from Bickenhall were finally declared the winners, with Chris and Margaret from Slough Green the runners-up.



Winners, Mike and Rosemary Graham

To ensure everybody was fed, David Spears rapidly built a small temporary shelter, to ensure he stayed dry whilst preparing and cooking the sausages and burgers for the Bar-B-Q

In summary, another great local community social event, plus the opportunity to raise much needed funds for Neroche Hall.



David Spears slaving over the Bar-B-Q

'Taste the Harvest' Day

By Wally Torrington



Our leader, Mark Pope

On the morning of 27th September, Mark and Julie Pope hosted a 'Schools, Food & Farming' event at Staple Farm for 300 school children.

The young visitors were divided into approximately 15 groups, each led by a volunteer adult leader (recruited mainly from the local Neroche community) who guided the children round a number of educational stands, strategically placed about the farm. One group was formed into two ranks by its leader, and taught to march from stand-to-stand; the calling-out of "left, right, left, right" could be heard ringing-out

across the farmyard and fields. The stands included: Cooking, Wildlife, Local Nature and Farm Machinery.



At the Cooking Stand, instruction was given on how to prepare and cook a dough-twist, or 'damper'. Each child cooked their twist on the end of a hazel

stick held over an open fire. At the Wildlife Stand they were given a presentation on local wild animals including birds, the dormouse, squirrels and deer; they were also taught how to identify various trees and hedgerow plants. At the Local Nature stand they were shown a collection of earth worms (of which, apparently, there are 27 varieties) and told that a piece of land the size of a football pitch could be home to circa 2.5 million worms. A magnificent





display of farm vehicles was on show at the Machinery Stand, covering all aspects of work carried out on the fields. Some children, whose group found itself with a spare ten minutes, also got the opportunity to play hide-and-seek in the Christmas tree plantation.

The day finished with a short, fun service, comprising singing and audience participation.

Mark, Julie and the 'Schools, Food and Farming' group would like to thank the many local volunteers who turned out to assist (plus those from further afield), West Country Grain, The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SW, and The Crown Estate for their sponsorship. It was a terrific day, and a great time was had by the school children and volunteers alike.



If any of our readers would like to register as a volunteer for future events, then please contact Mark on markpope@staplefarm.co.uk



The volunteers at the end of a most enjoyable and rewarding day

Neroche Has a New 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’:

“Hi, I’m Gary Larsen and I’d like to introduce myself as the new Village Agent for your area. I’ve taken over from Trudi, so I have some big shoes to fill!

For those who I have already spoken to on the telephone, you may be wondering where the accent comes from; I’m a Liverpool boy, born and bred, but have been living here in the West Country for the past forty years. My background is in policing, having joined Merseyside Police straight from school; working in Liverpool City Centre in the 1970s, certainly gave me a good



grounding before moving to Bristol to join the Avon and Somerset Police Force.

When the time came for me to retire, I joined Victim Support and worked for them for ten years, managing and developing volunteers across Somerset. More recently, I have been supporting Age UK clients, and advising them on benefits and support to which they are entitled.

Somerset

Village

Agents



In the short time that I have been a Village Agent, I have been able to assist members of the local community with varying issues, such as: transport to doctors' appointments; liaising with the British Red Cross for ambulance transport; obtaining the correct benefits;

and dealing with carers' issues.

If you have any problems or issues 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 07931 018019, and see how I can help, or email me at gary@somersetccc.org.uk”

Village Agent Hot Tips

Don't forget that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service will carry out a free home safety check to ensure your smoke alarms are up to date and working correctly

For anyone on Pension Credit, Wessex Water is offering a discount of around 20% off their bills. I have application forms and can supply them to anyone who gives me a call.

For more information on all the good works carried out by the Community Council for Somerset, go to www.somersetccc.org.uk

Focus on Local Business (1)

'MooGardening'

By Wally Torrington

Mary Bambridge is a local, self-employed gardener who trades as 'MooGardening'. She moved to the area in 2013 and settled in Curland with her husband Norman. Readers will remember that we've previously published a couple of articles on her son Greg; in 2014 when he gained two prestigious national awards (his Duke of Edinburgh's Gold and Queen's Scout) then earlier this year when he graduated from Bangor University with a BSc in 'Zoology with Herpetology'.



It is clear that Mary is a principled gardener; whilst wishing to please her clients, she is also keen to operate in a way that cares for nature, helps wildlife and is environmentally friendly (a responsible attitude which is sure to resonate and find favour with the majority of garden lovers). Mary started her business in 2015 and has been busy from the start, therefore, if you wish for Mary to come and give you a hand with your treasured plot, you are advised to get in touch with her soon.

Mary chose 'MooGardening' for her business name as a nod to her nickname 'Moo'. When little, her eldest child called her Mooma, and over the years it was shortened to Moo, and it has just stuck. Her son's girlfriend drew the friendly cow logo which Mary really loves, and the rest, as they say, is history.



Mary has changed career from health care to horticulture, but the communication, counselling and mediation techniques she

practised for many years have proved to be invaluable transferable skills. Gardens can be emotive and are a real expression of the owner's personality. Her approach is to work with her customers and translate their wishes into realistic plans, which reflect something of themselves.

When I met with Mary to discuss her business, she said...



A bug hotel that Mary made using old Victorian drainage pipes

“Most people just don't know where to start, so I provide options they can choose from, and divide the garden into mini 'projects' so it isn't overwhelming and doesn't have to be achieved all at once. Gardening is always long-term and ongoing and though some 'quick fixes' can be done, it's better to look ahead to the next season and eventually all-year-round interest will be achieved.

I use organic methods for pest and disease control, and I advocate encouraging biodiversity by, for example, choosing bee-friendly plants and creating wildlife habitats. I think my favourite word is 'Mulch'! It seems to be one of my stock solutions for most things – weed control, moisture retention, and an attractive finish to a bed. I am a volunteer Compost Champion for Viridor which involves promoting the benefits of composting garden and kitchen waste, and explaining the best way of going about it”.

Mary is continuing her studies this year at the Cannington Centre (part of Bridgwater College), having gained an HNC in Horticulture with distinction last June. It has really extended and grounded her knowledge in scientific fact, which can only serve to benefit her clients.

Mary is a member of The Gardeners Guild, which is the UK network for professional gardeners holding nationally recognised qualifications. It helps consumers find a gardener who is skilled and reliable.



*The Trade Network For
Qualified Gardeners*

Mary has also achieved recent success at the Taunton Flower Show. Together with her friend Charlotte Fellingham of Garden Geek, she won the Kearle Cup in the Ready, Steady, Garden competition. Additionally, in conjunction with Bridgwater College and Somer Breeze Landscaping Company, she helped build a show garden which was awarded a Silver Medal. Clearly it is not just Mary's customers who recognise and appreciate her ability and skills.



How fortunate we are to have such a conscientious, responsible and well qualified professional gardener living and working within our midst. If you need help with your garden you may consider giving her a call.

To contact Mary call 07773 434675 or email mary@moogardening.co.uk

(Please see page 41 for more on the 2016 Taunton Flower Show)

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

..... is **YOUR** website covering the local parishes of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine.

The website contains a wealth of information, including: local news; a 'What's On' page; details of local clubs, societies and organisations; information on local churches; a history of Neroche; maps; useful telephone numbers and links to local websites.

So, if you need to know where, when and what is happening in the area and who to contact, you'll find it on the website.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Mal Lee Opens Her Studio in Curland for Somerset Art Weeks

By Our Local Arts Correspondent

In September, One of our talented resident artists, Mal Lee, who is a member of our local community, held an exhibition of her work as part of Somerset Art Weeks. Her personal studio has a warm and relaxed atmosphere, which made visitors feel most welcome. All the exhibits were



for sale, and a healthy number of red dots (indicating that a painting had been sold) showed how much her work is appreciated.

“Fascinating and inspiring work” was one of the comments left in the visitors’ book at Mal Lee’s exhibition when she opened her studio for Somerset Art Weeks. The exhibition comprised an exciting collection of predominantly acrylic paintings, which are largely abstract but have a great deal of focus on the energy and beauty of natural forces.

The work was mostly created in the past twelve months, and was influenced by visits to Sri Lanka, Wales, West and East Sussex, Devon, Somerset and a course at Newlyn College of Art, led by Anthony Garratt. Mal works in a variety of styles, and all her work has a strong sense of colour. There were powerful evocations of storms and seascapes in contrast to an



The Exe Estuary

exciting take on the London skyline from Hampstead Heath, and some intriguing smaller vibrant abstract paintings. Particularly striking were the cold greys and blues in a picture inspired by a February trip down the Exe estuary.

The picture of Lyme Regis was striking in its use of colour, emphasising the solidity and security of the Cobb and harbour.



Lyme Cobb

Abstract painting is not to everyone's taste, and the exhibit 'Blank Canvas' with highlights of black gloss paint, throws down a challenge - and I am sure there was a broad range of response to it. Mal told me that the painting could loosely be described as abstract impressionism, as there is a sense of composition in the piece.

Mal started painting seriously only three years ago, and this was the second time she had exhibited for Somerset Art Weeks. She was especially pleased that a number of visitors from 2015 returned this year to see how her work had evolved; and were delighted with what they saw.

The studio is in a converted outbuilding, which makes a fabulously light and airy space in which to work, and creates a most attractive gallery. Mal wishes to thank those who came to the studio; she really enjoyed chatting to the visitors and talking about her work and local art in general. Do contact her if you would like to see some of her work, or to have a chat about what you are doing Lees.curland@gmail.com. Perhaps her lead will encourage more local artists to show their work in the future.

The exhibition in the Greyhound Inn, which ran at the same time, shows this is quite possible. A group of venues in the Neroche Villages would attract more visitors in Art Weeks, and would develop another area of interest within our community. If you were not able to visit this year, you should certainly do so if Mal exhibits again in 2017. I for one certainly hope she will.



Cove

The Inhabitant of Crimson Hill

By Our Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent

As the main road winds through Wrantage it is overlooked by Crimson Hill, a tree lined scarp that reveals the origin of its name on late summer evenings when leaves reflect the setting sun back across the West Moor. Yet this epithet belies the dark Victorian structure that broods deep beneath its deciduous canopy, for the hill hosts an eerie abandoned tunnel. This subterranean passageway was carved and blasted out by a small army of navvies in the 1830s as part of the waterway which linked Chard to the Taunton and Bridgwater Canal. It is 1800 yards from end to end, and it holds a secret.



North Entrance to Crimson Hill Tunnel

The Chard Canal opened in 1842 but was soon eclipsed by the railway, and the 13½ mile route closed within 25 years as an economic failure. Most of its sections have decayed or were filled-in long ago, but the longest of the canal's three tunnels lies silent, largely as the last barge crews left it. The southern entrance was completely blocked-off in Edwardian times, however, the tunnel remained open at its northern end; inviting anyone feeling sufficiently adventurous to splash and squelch into its depths.

Thus it was in the early 1980s that your correspondent entered the damp 19th century passageway with a group of friends equipped with torches and Wellington boots which turned out to be too short. The first 40 yards or so were unremarkable, apart from a set of footprints tinged lightly with algae, which were visible beneath the water; but as we ventured further in and daylight receded the temperature dropped, literally and emotionally. We trudged along through ten inches of mud topped with a foot of water, while the single track of prints continued into the darkness ahead, seeming to beckon us to follow. To walk into that dark, dripping edifice alone must have required an imagination immune to the primeval fear of darkness.

Approximately halfway along its length the tunnel widened to provide a passing-place for barges, and beyond it we discovered roof falls piled on alternate sides. A Wrantage local had described to me how as a child he'd seen bomb craters on the hilltop caused by a fleeing Heinkel the previous night, and it is possible we had stumbled across the product of the explosions as they reverberated down



Passing Place Midway Through the Tunnel

forty years earlier. Fascinated, we peered carefully around the heaps of stone and soil into the gloom, yet were unwilling to venture further for fear of disturbing the obviously unstable roof. Our unidentified predecessor had not been thus deterred; the canal bed rose clear of the water at this point and it held



'Legging' a Canal Barge through the tunnel

his footprints as they continued into the silent void of this somewhat unnerving cavern.

Our boots filled with mud and water, we waded the half a mile back to daylight. On returning home that evening, I telephoned the police and shared my concern that someone may have become trapped deep in the tunnel (although admittedly the tracks we had observed could have been made a year or more earlier). The call-taker chuckled and said, *'Well we haven't any reports of anyone missing but I'll let you know if we do'*. He hadn't clarified the tunnel location or asked my contact details; his attention likely transferred to more pressing matters as he switched to his next call.

The footprints led inwards and did not return, and the tunnel has no other exit. Today, when I drive past the spot where the canal once crossed the A378, I wonder who it was that walked alone into Crimson Hill, and why they did so. And whether he (or she) is still there.

News from our MP

Even though she is now extremely busy with her duties in Westminster, our MP, Rebecca Pow, has not forgotten us, and has agreed to continue producing a regular article for our Newsletter.

Our new Prime Minister has ‘set out her stall’ as she means to go on, with “*fairness and a nation that works for everyone*” at the heart of all she does. They are sentiments I very much endorse.

Fairer Funding for Local Schools. As usual, I divide my time between the constituency and Westminster but always with the interests of those ‘back home’ at heart. So, just recently, I was

pleased, for example, to ask Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, a question in the chamber on her commitment to fairer funding for our school pupils, with particular reference to those in rural schools such as Thurlbear and Hatch Beauchamp. As you will know, this is something I have campaigned for since my election, in a bid to right the historic injustice whereby pupils in



Thurlbear School



Somerset are allocated £2000 less per pupil than those in the best funded (mostly urban) schools. I was encouraged to hear that addressing the funding formula is still very much on the agenda, and is coming under the microscope with criteria such as sparsity of population (as in rural areas) being given due

weighting in the consideration of how to bring more fairness to the situation.

Help for Local Small Charities.

Whenever I can, I take the opportunity to speak in debates that are relevant to Taunton Deane. Hence I spoke in support of a new bill (The Small Charitable Donations and Childcare Payments Bill) going through The House that will make a difference to many small charities in the area, especially those relying on small cash injections, such as those gathered through bucket collections or sponsorships through bike rides, walks, and all manner of ingenious fund raising ideas people come up with.

The tweaking of the current legislation will enable these charities to avoid the complex and time consuming gathering and input of personal details required in order to qualify for the relevant gift aid. Some small charities haven't the manpower to deal with this, and so often don't claim what they are entitled to. The changes should help a plethora of small charities, such as the local West Hatch Scouts, some church fund raising activities, individual health charities and many other worthy causes. It will also benefit amateur sports clubs, like our local cricket, bowls and tennis clubs, since aid can now be claimed on money raised in more than one location, whereas previously claims could only be made if the relevant fund raising activity took place in one location only.

These are small changes to the law but their impact will be significant, and I was pleased to support the Bill.

Local Tourism.

I also spoke in a recent debate drawing attention to the important contribution tourism makes, especially to our rural areas, and the impact that leaving the EU may have on this.

Across the area a number of businesses are engaged in tourism, whether it be B&B enterprises, open gardens, country house hotels and pubs such as The Greyhound Inn and The Farmers Arms, both of whom offer accommodation as well as providing fine food. The total value of tourism in Somerset is an incredible £1.28billion, employing over



35,000 people, which is 10% of the workforce, so it's important to ensure that, as we negotiate exiting the EU, people are encouraged to take holidays at home but also foreign tourists are still made welcome and get the message that this is a great part of the world to visit. Areas that need to be addressed to ease this will be visas, airport passenger duty, perhaps the issue of VAT on the tourist trade, and a plan for seasonal migrant labour which is so vital for the industry (also crucial for our farmers and growers).



Over the summer, the tourist trade here benefited from the weak pound but this is not necessarily set to continue, so every other avenue must be pursued to aid the industry. Part-and-parcel of this is ensuring that this region gets the relevant infrastructure and connectivity upgrades required so that visitors can get here easily, and our businesses can operate effectively. To this end, I have had meetings with Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, and Road Ministers John Hayes and Andrew Jones, to keep the pressure up for the best possible outcome relating to the A358/A303 upgrades. These have to be right, both for this area and for the wider SW. Rest assured, I have made my presence felt!



Art in The Area. What an arty lot we have salted away in the countryside locally! Many talented artists took part in the popular Somerset Art Weeks, and I very much enjoyed perusing the exhibition by the Greyhound Art Group in the Greyhound Inn. As a patron of 'Art Taunton' I am working with key stakeholders to expand the cultural offer in the area and this network of local talent indicates that there is a strong base on which to build.



Visiting the Greyhound Art Group

Staying on an artistic theme, there's still time to enter my 'Design a Christmas Card' competition – open to all ages. Please send in designs to my office. The winner will be featured in the Gazette and, of course, the design will be printed up as the MP's Christmas card.

Local Events. I was delighted with the success of my first 'Older Peoples Fair', held recently at the Brewhouse Theatre and attended by hundreds of local residents, with a number of Neroche Villagers' faces in evidence. With a focus on health and wellbeing, over 30 organisations took stands, offering advice to help us remain fit and well as we age, as well as ideas on where to go and how to fill-up spare hours if you have any. The event also turned into a positive place for the organisations themselves to network, and I know that a number of mutually beneficial links were made.

OLDER PEOPLES DAY FAIR
Hosted by REBECCA POW MP & THE BREWHOUSE

- Helpful advice on activities, hobbies, services, volunteering opportunities and a whole lot more besides!
- Taster sessions throughout the day
- Focus on Health & Wellbeing

A wide variety of organisations offering helpful advice

As always, please get in touch if I can be of assistance with any issues you have. You can follow me on Facebook/Twitter or contact my office on 01823 443062 or rebecca.pow.mp@parliament.uk

Neroche Parish Council Meetings

Dates of 2017 Council Meetings for your Diary

Thursday 12th January

Thursday 9th March

Thursday 11th May

Thursday 13th July

Thursday 14th September

Thursday 9th November

Neroche Litter Action Group

By Jayne Haynes

On Saturday 3rd of September, a group of volunteers gathered for the twice yearly litter pick up. We had fine weather again for this collection. In two hours we filled 21 bags with rubbish from the roadside. The vast majority of the litter came from fast food outlets, namely Costa, MacDonald's and various supermarkets.



"Catch the Community Spirit"

On this occasion we welcomed a new additional leader to the group, Meg Van Heck. Meg has been a regular volunteer at past events. She is keen to support future collections when any of the key leaders are unavailable to organise one of the pick-ups. Meg also has some additional important links with local residents, and on this occasion John Binnie supported the roadside collection of full rubbish bags and their disposal. So a big thank you to John.

**KEEP
GREEN
AND
PICK UP
LITTER**

Our volunteers attend litter pick-ups on a regular basis, and for the past four years have remained committed to the two main events each year, in April and September; as well as adopting roads within the parish to carry out their own regular rubbish pick-ups. This keeps our roadsides looking very clean and tidy and protects the wildlife from this litter.

Viridor kindly donated the jackets, and on this occasion, TDBC cleaning department supplied the bags. We have, at present, a good supply of pick-up sticks; our latest donation was from the Neroche Parish Council, which has been excellent to replace some of the older, worn sticks.

I want to say a big thank you to everyone on behalf of the Neroche Litter Action Group. We plan to collect again in April 2017; the date will be advertised well in advance in this Newsletter and on the Email Alert.



The 2016 Taunton Flower Show

By Joy Larkman

Many of you will have visited this year's Taunton Flower Show without realising the degree to which many Neroche residents were involved in ensuring it ran smoothly and, as such, contributed greatly to its success.

The Taunton Show, which started in 1831, is the oldest, longest running flower show in the country. I have been a Committee Member and Competition Tent Steward at the show for the past 5 years,



The Competition Tent

an excellent response to my request for help, the schedule was completed on time. The show organisers were delighted with the way Neroche residents (amongst others) 'came to the rescue'.

This summer, In late June, our wonderful Chief Steward passed away suddenly, and after the initial shock, I volunteered to take over the responsibility for trying to find fifty stewards to cover the two and half days of this year's show. I approached the ever-helpful Bickenhall & District WI, our local Garden and Folk Dance Clubs, plus friends and family; thanks to an

My own particular domain, The Competition Tent, is where the public bring their entries of Produce, Cookery, Crafts, Photography and Floral Art; it also houses the Children's Section. This year we had a record 2,600 entries. It takes from Tuesday until Thursday morning to organise and set-up the tent (the show is open to the public on the Friday and Saturday). Meticulous measuring is required to ensure all categories are allocated sufficient space to guarantee that every entry can be displayed 'to its best advantage'. For example, in the Horticultural Section,



Another view of the Competition Tent

there has to be adequate room to accommodate: huge onions; all sizes of cabbages; enormous leeks; entries for The Longest Runner Bean; and many other ‘giants of the garden’!

The area for the Craft, Cookery and Art exhibits is an example of where the allocation of space has to be flexible, so that it can be ‘juggled’ as exhibits arrive.



Cookery attracted fifty sponge entries this year, which gave the judges a real challenge. Fairy Shoes was a special category; one pair came in a tiny little box, whilst another was displayed on a decorated tree stump, which demanded yet another last minute reorganisation.



The Children’s section is astonishing, a sight to behold; so much effort and talent, combined with an emotional mix of anticipation and excitement. The standards they achieve and the quality of their entries is often breath-taking. It is a category open to the under 17 years; and with the tremendous

support they receive from their parents, it engenders the atmosphere of a great family occasion.

Next year there are plans for the whole Competition Marquee to be extended another 20 feet, to accommodate an anticipated increase in entries.



I have numerous stories to tell. My favourite being of a regular gentleman competitor who travels from near Plymouth on

the Thursday to deliver his entry, comes back on Friday after judging to obtain the results, then returns again on Saturday for the presentation of his substantial



prize money and trophies; he is in his 80s! A total journey covering circa 450 miles; true dedication.

It's a pleasure to be involved with such an amazing show, supported by wonderful volunteers giving up their time. It is a remarkable, awe inspiring and magical annual event; and every year just gets better.

Well done Joy! We will now be rushing to put the dates for next year's event into our diaries; they are Friday 4th and Saturday 5th August 2017. Some of our readers may even be tempted to put their names down as volunteer stewards; if so, contact Joy for more details robjoy72@googlemail.com

Pick Your Own Christmas Tree



Staple Farm, Staple Fitzpaine

**Sunday 4th December 2016
10am to 3pm**

Stroll through the plantation with your family, select a Christmas tree, then it will be cut for you while-you-wait; what could be fresher? You can then take it home immediately or, for a small charge, have it delivered during the following week. The freshest tree you will ever buy.

‘Merlin Gifts’ will have a stall selling stocking-fillers.

All the family and dogs-on-leads welcome.

Mince pies, other small eats and warm drinks available all day.

(Don't Forget Your Wellies!)

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

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



Well Done To Our Sports Men And Women For Great Achievements

Cricket. Heartiest congratulations to Somerset County Cricket Club for achieving runners-up in the County Championship, I appreciate they must be bitterly disappointed that they did not secure the championship title, but it is still an enormous achievement to be runner-up. Great



SOMERSET
COUNTY CRICKET CLUB

team effort secured this with some fantastic games throughout the season, so I reiterate my sincerest congratulations. It is also worth noting that the Club and the Council, by working together, have maintained the wonderful asset of the cricket ground, right in the centre of Taunton; *'a jewel in our crown'* acting as a huge driver for the local economy. Particularly so when the Club has been successful in attracting international matches, and we are currently working with them to ensure successful hosting of South Africa's team for a match next season; A great achievement that will be an enormous attraction for residents and visitors to Taunton.

Football. Also, we must not forget the amazing achievement of our great Taunton Football Club, the Peacocks, who, against all the odds, won against South Hemel Hempstead Town, two leagues above them, so bringing them up against a National League Team, Barrow. This brings them into FA Cup first round football for the first time in 35 years. By the time of reading this article, the result will be history, but congratulations for a great feat, win or lose!



Paralympics. For great individual achievement we have Lucy Shuker, Paralympic tennis champion and three time Olympic medal winner at the Tokyo, London and Rio Olympics; Lucy trains here in Taunton.



Hockey. Maddie Hinch, hockey goalkeeper for England and for Great Britain. In her last two major



finals, which were decided by penalties, Maddie excelled by helping her team to the most un-English of feats - penalty shootout victory! Anybody that watched the saves in Rio, I am sure will agree they were fantastic; in fact ‘heart stopping’ moments. Maddie also lived and was educated locally, so congratulations to both our local champions.

**We sometimes forget what a wealth of talent we have locally.
All of the above are certainly worthy of our admiration and support.**

Hinkley Point C - Go Ahead

On the 15th September, the Government announced the momentous decision to go ahead with the construction of Hinkley Point C. This is clearly welcome news for the local and regional economy. The desire for all parties to make the most of being the first part of the country to host a project of this type and magnitude, remains as strong as ever, and we continue to engage with Government, EDF Energy, their contractors, businesses and colleges in preparation for the works ahead.

Activity on the Hinkley Point site itself continues apace, with 750 workers on site at present, and estimated to peak at 5,000. The announcement will allow ramping up of the workforce, with likely consequential demand on housing and services, so impacting locally. Funding is available to TDBC to help deliver housing initiatives (£700,000) and we are already working on a strategy to draw-down this funding from EDF Energy. Taunton provides the rail gateway to the Hinkley Point C site, and our plans at Taunton Station will create a first

class transport interchange, providing fast access to the site from London, Birmingham, Bristol and beyond, including the SW peninsula. The planned investment in Junction 25 will also enhance our motorway connections to two regional airports.



Proposed Layout of Hinkley Point 'C'

local people benefit from training and employment opportunities, and local businesses can bid for contracts, adding real value to the local economy.

Somerset Chamber of Commerce have been working with companies and EDF Energy to ensure

Regionally, it is anticipated the boost to our economy will be near £4bn, comprising £1.5bn during construction and £2.4bn during operations.

Hinkley Point C is committed to using local suppliers and traders, wherever possible, and is particularly interested in local small-to-medium sized enterprises of all disciplines. If of interest to you, do register with the Somerset Chamber of Commerce as they vet and hold an approved list that EDF then approach. We have a wealth of SME's (small and medium-sized enterprises) operating from homes in the Blackdowns, so please do make application for consideration.

Well Done to Somerset County Council Highways.

It was brought to my attention the very poor state of the road from Taunton to Staple Fitzpaine, particularly as it passes through Winterwell, and on to Frost Street, with many potholes, and deep water-eroded gullies at the edge of the road. This is a particularly narrow stretch of highway, so these problems were making it worse. I am pleased to note this has been dealt with by County Highways, and made a first class job of it as well.

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.

cldr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Hatch Beauchamp & Neroche Garden Club

By Maureen James

It seems the sunny summer days are now in the past and the weather has a decidedly autumnal feel. However, the garden club has made the most of the summer and been really lucky with all our members' garden visits - every one has been enjoyed in lovely weather. So thank you to all who provided hospitality and an interesting selection of plants and arrangements.

These casual afternoon teas and chats do seem to have been popular, and we will plan some more for next year, as well as the usual 'away visits' - Pen Selwood - Hurst Brook Plants etc were well received, as was September's visit to David and Amanda Acland's Western Cottage Garden in Wadeford, near Chard.



David and Amanda Acland's Western Cottage Garden

Our last meeting of this year was a talk 'From Plant to Plate' by Sue Applegate of Greenshutters Nursery. As well as the history of the nursery, she gave a really thought provoking talk illustrated with graphs and photos - some lovely ones of traditional hop picking in Kent in the 1950's. She also brought along some Greenshutters brochures, which include some good special offers! The nursery is literally just 'up the road' and well worth a visit.

Members have also been invited to complete an 'online' survey on the thorny subject of food waste. It only takes a few minutes and could ultimately make a huge difference to our attitude to perishable food.

The garden Club is now going into hibernation for the winter, and our next event will be the AGM – Wednesday 22 March 2017 at Neroche Village Hall. A reminder will be sent to members in good time. We have had some new members join this year and want to carry on the trend, so please do get in touch with our Communications Secretary - Wendy Morris on 01460 234445 and she will be pleased to take your £5.00 off you, and add you to the mailing list for all the updates and news.

*Thank you to all members for your support and please recruit some more!
With best wishes from H B & N Garden Club*

Calling those interested in learning Bridge or stimulating the brain cells!

Neroche Bridge Group is up and running and would love to see some more participants to make it viable long-term. A very experienced teacher, Mike

Dobson from Stocklinch, has agreed to teach us and is brilliant with beginners, which largely, we all are.

We meet on a Wednesday evening at 6.30pm in the Committee room of the hall. The session finishes at about 8.00pm allowing time for busy people to be able to eat and to attend a meeting!

At the time of writing,, two Bridge evenings have taken

	♠ 9 5 3 2		
	♥ Q 10		
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	♣ 9 2		
♠ 7		♠ A Q J 10 4	
♥ J 9 8 7 6 5		♥ 4 3 2	
♦ Q 2		♦ 3	
♣ J 10 5 3		♣ K Q 7 6	
	♠ K 8 6		
	♥ A K		
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place, one with Mike Dobson instructing, and the second a practice session for what we had learnt. This is very necessary as we are complete beginners. Cost of the instructed sessions is £5 per head. It is intended that Mike Dobson will be teaching most sessions for the moment. There will also be the occasional meeting where we practise together on our own.

We have only just started to learn this fascinating game and some of us had no Bridge knowledge whatsoever. **These evenings are intended to allow everyone to improve their game and would be especially useful for beginners.** So, whatever your level, please come and join in.



*If you are interested, please contact Alison Brown, to book in.
Tel: 01823 480441, email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk*

Attendance is flexible within reason, and we aim to have fun!

A Beginner's Guide to Local History Research

Neroche History Group is keen to encourage those of you who would like to start a bit of local research, but are not sure how to begin. Have you wondered about the history of your house, your village, your local area or are just generally interested? Come along with members of the History Group to Somerset Heritage Centre and find out how to get going.



Visit to Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton Wednesday 23rd November

Time to be confirmed – it will be in office hours. If you cannot make the 23rd there will be other opportunities to join a History Group visit.

Places are limited so please book by contacting Jane Hole
jane.hole@outlook.com or phone 01460 234410

THURSDAY LUNCHEAS AT NEROCHE HALL

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a great home-cooked 2-course lunch for just **£6**.

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
8th December, 5th January, 2nd February**

Note: Lunch on 8th December is the 'Christmas Special'

Please phone or email to book (need to know for catering purposes).
Transport and 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

Childhood Memories - Staple Fitzpaine

By Ian Fowler



Ian Fowler has jotted down some childhood reminiscences from the 1950s when he was a young lad living in Staple Fitzpaine. As with all memories from the dim-and-distant past, they often come-to-mind as individual short snapshots, which is exactly how Ian has recorded them. If you wish to contact Ian then he'd love to hear from you ianjfowler@hotmail.com

In 1955, at the age of 9 years, I moved, with my father James (Jim), mother Nora and sister Yvonne, from Priddy on the Mendips to Forest Lodge, Staple Fitzpaine. My dad became Head

Forester of Neroche Forest.

I attended Staple Fitzpaine School where the headmistress was Mrs Wynn Metcalfe; her husband was Bill and they had a daughter named Sally. I don't recall any other teachers but I believe Mrs Emily Spiller was the school cook, assisted by Mrs Peppard. If I remember correctly, the meals were brought in and served from large silvery trays and big silvery tubs. I recall we also had a small bottle of milk each morning at break-time. Mrs Spiller lived in a cottage in the lane which ran past the Old Vicarage, just on edge of the village, her husband worked for a local farmer; they had three children, Gordon, Christine and David. Mrs Peppard lived in the cottage down the little lane which ran alongside the pub.

The school play yard seemed quite large at the time, with 'monkey bars' at the far end where we would all clamber and show off our skills (or lack of). The yard had a tarmac covering; so, should anyone tumble they



I

My father, Jim, in 1951

were in trouble. I remember, also, on sports days, doing the pole vault on this surface! The toilets were also in the yard.



*Back: Mrs Metcalfe, Ian Fowler, Brian Lake, Raymond Sparks, Christine Ransome, Marion Sparks, Anne Pearce, Doreen Cottey, Michael Mountstephens, David Spiller, John Somers, Mary Bale.
Middle: Tony Fogwell, Susan Cox, Jeffrey Rogers, Susan Duke, Kathleen Coates, Rosemary Carter
Front: Nigel Mockridge, Royston Somers, Varny Somers, ? , ? , Michael Mockridge, David Fogwell
Seated on the Ground: John Price, Richard Flack*

Not surprisingly, I cannot recall anything we were taught but I do remember receiving a few swift whacks with a ruler across the hand. Mrs Metcalfe would always hold on to the hand being whacked in case the culprit pulled it out of range. I think this punishment was for us naughty boys as I cannot recall the girls receiving it. I was not at Staple Fitzpaine School for long; by Christmas term of 1957 I was attending Chard School.

Fishing for minnows and sticklebacks was a great favourite with me and my chum Raymond Sparks (recently deceased) and we would spend hours wandering up and down the stream looking for the best spot. We would go upstream as far as Park Farm, where Mr Wallbridge and his family lived, and downstream as far as a Cliff Mountstephen's house near Neroche Hall. We also made our own bows and arrows (the flights were feathers, often plucked from the bantams my dad used to keep). We would seemingly travel miles on our pushbikes, often being away most of the day, and took some cake or biscuits to keep us going. When I say miles, the outer limits were the mound at Castle

Neroche to the south, and Thurlbear straight to the north. Great fun going too fast down the hills, hoping we would stay on the road. Scrumping apples from George Cottey's orchard was another pastime, and we would eat vast quantities of the Morgan Sweet variety. I and a few others would go birds' eggs collecting in the season; totally illegal now, but I had a fair collection at one time. Our favourite conker tree was opposite the school, and much time was spent throwing sticks into the branches. We invariably made a lot of noise and Mrs Metcalfe would come out and tell us to clear off. You didn't argue

There was, and may still be, an open type cattle barn in a field down the lane which led from George Cottey's farm, where we



Mrs Counsell's shop and Post Office in Curland

used to play cowboys and Indians. One day I was there with Raymond Sparks, and we had homemade spears with sharp points. Raymond said to me "*stay where you are Ian and I will see how close I can get my spear to you*"; well, it ended up in my cheek and drew plenty of blood. We rushed home and my mum magically fixed it. I still bear the scar and we didn't admit to a soul how it really happened. Boys-being-boys, from time to time we would buy cigarettes from the local pub or from Mrs Counsell's shop in Curland, and we had to pretend they were for our parents. Another Friend, John Somers, was very good at this; he lived at Frost Street Farm and we spent a lot of time playing there in the farm buildings and in the hay barn.

During this period, the landlord at The Greyhound Inn was Bert Neale or Neil, with his wife and a lady named Phyllis; I'm not sure if she was friend or family. Bert kept some pigs in an outhouse behind the pub. He had some friends who visited them from time to time who were called Towning. Ken was the son, and when he was down Bert would take us to Bridgwater to Starkey, Knight and Ford brewery to collect some 'stuff' which he used as pig feed. Ken and

his family were from London, and everything about the countryside was alien to them; it was great fun pointing out where real milk came from and showing him the different birds and wildlife of which he knew very little.

There was a skittles alley outside the pub and, on occasions, I would earn a few shillings acting as 'sticker upper' (standing the skittles up after they'd been knocked over). This usually took place when the teazle pickers had been 'rained off', and had spent some time in the pub eventually moving to the alley for a game.



St Peter's Church 1957, my sister's wedding: I was 11 and 4 months

My elder sister, Heather was married from St Peter's Church in July 1957 and the reception was held in a marquee on the pub lawn. The vicar was Reverend



John Leonard Morrhall. Reg Pring from Taunton was the paperman and had a large round. Many years later, when Bunny Salter took this over I would occasionally help deliver the papers and visit my old stomping ground. I seem to remember we used to buy our milk from Andrew Grabham at Staple Farm. The Austin car in the photo belonged to George Cottey. He gave my dad permission to drive it around. It had a dickey seat (situated in the boot) and I would

often sit in this as we drove through Taunton and around the countryside.

Many wonderful childhood memories, from a time when life seemed so simple and uncomplicated.

If you have a story to tell, send your notes to wallytorrington@hotmail.com

Focus On Local Business (2)

Bickenhall Farm Livery and Training

Bickenhall Farm Yard has now been taken over by Gaynor Lomas who has relocated her 'Livery and Training' business to Bickenhall after many happy years at Netherclay. Gaynor has been self-employed since starting her Livery Business in 1989, she also taught riding at a local riding school near Wellington.



One of Gaynor's favourite views; through her horse's ears from Castle Farm on the Herepath.

Although she did not come from a horsey background, it has proved to be her passion. Apart from being employed at an IT company, as Production Manager, for five years, she has always been involved in the equine industry, gaining valuable experience from working in many different countries with various equine disciplines.

spaces in order to provide a quiet, relaxed environment, to ensure the horses (and clients!) health and happiness. This also leaves Gaynor a little more time to pursue her passion of teaching and coaching. Gaynor is an accredited trainer and offers private tuition from grassroots through to the more advanced level riders, both at Bickenhall and at other venues across the area. Many of her clients compete successfully at different levels, including Riding Club competitions, Dressage, British Eventing and even Endurance.

Although the buildings and land at Bickenhall are spacious, Gaynor has limited the number of livery

Gaynor is also involved with the Pony Club and trains young people both for their riding and stable management/welfare. Helping the young to learn the "right way", enjoy what they do and to inspire them is high on her agenda.



Local top trainers are being booked to run Clinics at Bickenhall Farm Livery, these clinics are always such an inspiration to young and old alike! (See facebook page www.facebook.com/Gaynor.B.Lomas for news).

Gaynor took over the Bickenhall Farm Yard lease in July this year and, having been lying empty for several months, nature had taken over so there was an enormous amount of work to do before it could be used as a livery yard again. The arena has been overhauled and brought back to the original fence line and now has a top class riding surface. Cattle were brought on to the fields, by a kind local farmer, to eat the overgrown grass; topping was done, fences put up, water-troughs put in, hedges trimmed and cleaning and painting done! Bickenhall Farm Livery is now ready for the winter and the horses, just! Gaynor offers her apologies if your summer barbecues were interrupted by the drone of the pressure washer; enough noise was made for all the neighbours to know that a lot of work, clearing up and renewing things was going on.



Before



The Stable Yard

After

Gaynor would very much like to thank Lindsey Whyte, who has surpassed her job description, the many local farmers and EVERYONE who helped make the move to Bickenhall smoother, without whom she would still be painting!! The local support and encouragement has been fantastic, Gaynor especially appreciated all the friends and neighbours who took the time to drop in.

*If you would like to know more or arrange a visit
please ring Gaynor on 07710614139*

The Farming Calendar

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 25th October).

The winter barley, oil seed rape, wheat and beans have all been gathered in. This year the long dry days made the harvesting a lot less stressful, albeit it was not one of our best years for crop yields; we suffered from last year's wet, and then a colder spring, thus hampering early growth. That's farming for you; we cannot control the weather,



The autumn has also been dry and mild, enabling us to get next year's oilseed rape, wheat and beans planted and sprayed. This time we have tried a different planting technique with some of our 'wheat after grass' (a 2017 wheat crop following a 2016 grass crop). Instead of ploughing or cultivating the ground to bury the old grass, we have merely sprayed-off the grass,



Strip Till Drill

and then used a machine called a 'strip till drill', only preparing the ground in front of where the wheat seed is planted. The theory being, less soil is disturbed, thereby improving its structure and reducing run off. I

will keep you posted throughout the year.

The other system we will be trialling this year, is growing what is known as 'cover crops' (a mix of black oats and clover). We have sown these in fields in

which we will be planting spring barley. The idea being, the cover crop will hold the nutrients in the ground and also allow better drainage through the soil during the winter. This has to be good for both us and the environment. Again, I will keep you posted on how it goes.



We are now in our mammoth hedge-cutting season, and this will take Graham until December; so far the dry weather is helping here also.

It is during the autumn and winter months that we look to sell our crops. It is all traded on a global market, with many factors affecting the price. At the moment the biggest influence is currency fluctuation, as most wheat is traded in dollars. One of my daily jobs will be to monitor the Chicago grain markets to see what is happening.

You will have also noticed we have some ‘woolly’ visitors on the farm’s grass fields. They are there to graze, which will help to thicken-up the grass for next year. They will be with us until December.

We are also starting to make plans for cutting our Christmas trees. A few will be felled at the end of November; these are mainly for Schools and Churches, and one for a village square. The vast majority will be cut in December, ensuring they last all the way through the festive season. We are also making plans for planting the next batch of trees.



Coir Rolls

Some of you may have noticed a number of odd looking rolls in some of our fields.

These are known as coir rolls and have been placed there with the aim of slowing the flow of water into the rivers. The theory being, if in the upper catchment area a number of these schemes are implemented, it will allow more time for the water lower down to flow into the rivers and out to sea.

Neroche Garden Butterfly Watch

By Doreen Marsh

Following the most successful Wild Bird Watch carried out in the Parish during the spring (the findings of which were published in the Summer Issue of this Newsletter) it was decided, due to popular demand, to carry out a similar survey of butterflies.

We are fortunate living in this area that there are always butterflies around in our gardens during the summer. Many locals were greatly enthused by this venture; the only problem was the difficulty in putting names to the many butterflies spotted. Below are photographs of those that were positively identified.



Gatekeeper



Red Admiral



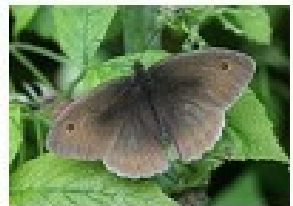
Peacock



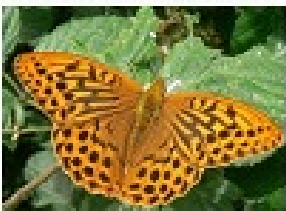
Large White



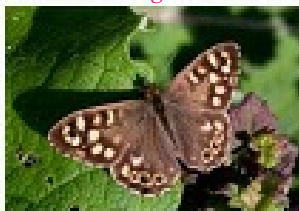
Ringlet



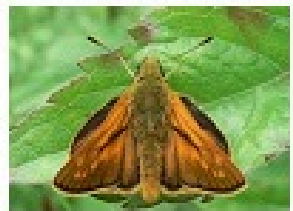
Meadow Brown



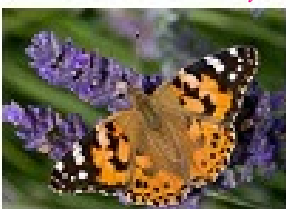
Silver-Washed Fritillary



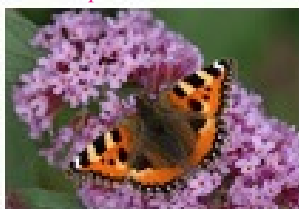
Speckled Wood



Skipper



Painted Lady



Small Tortoiseshell



Small White

Superfast Broadband Update

October 2016

By Tim French

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS), the group that commissions broadband infrastructure development in our area, has recently put out tenders for work to provide superfast broadband to communities that have so far missed out. In addition, the government gave a commitment to improve the rural broadband service, both in the Queen's Speech in May and at its party conference. It seems possible that most, or all, premises in Neroche Parish will be getting a much better broadband service within the foreseeable future.

Connecting Devon and Somerset News

By the end of this year, phase one of the scheme to provide superfast broadband to 90% of the CDS area will have finished, with most of Neroche Parish having no improvement. However, according to the CDS website



www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/connecting-devon-somerset-launches-procurement-extend-phase-two-superfast-broadband-rollout), CDS has called for tenders for phase two schemes to extend superfast coverage to 95% of premises in its area. The procurement has been divided into six lots to encourage greater competition from a broader range of providers and technologies. They could use fibre, wireless, satellite or a combination of technologies depending on the area involved.

The scheme will deliver Next Generation Access broadband services (a minimum of 30 Mbps) and, for some, ultrafast broadband (of speeds greater than 100 Mbps) to homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset in predominantly rural areas. The successful tender will have to achieve as much Next Generation Access coverage as possible by the end of 2017. Suppliers will also be asked to ensure full service commencement by 2019. We should know what is happening in Neroche Parish by the end of December.

My only concern for our parish is that a CDS Update in September (www.nerochevillages.org.uk/neroche-news.html#broadband) states “*the phase two intervention area is comprised of premises that have received no superfast*

Next Generation Access under phase one, are outside of central urban areas that CDS are encouraging to be served by the market, and have not been identified ... as part of a private commercial rollout". This may affect some Orchard Portman and Netherclay properties which are shown on the CDS website 'Where and when' map as being commercially covered. Refer to the website: www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/where-when/.

The Voucher Scheme update

In May Neroche Parish Council discussed the Broadband Voucher Scheme, details of which can be found on the CDS website . It allows premises with slow broadband to get a £500 grant to be used towards funding a new broadband connection from an approved list of providers. Refer to the website: (www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/cds-broadband-voucher-scheme/)

The council decided to see if there was sufficient interest in our community to collectively use the scheme to obtain better broadband speeds locally. Cllr Lynne Spoons has contacted a fixed wireless operator, Airband, who would be interested if sixty premises were committed to join in. Several email alerts have publicised how to get involved but so far less than fifty have expressed an interest. Time is running out. If you wish to pool your voucher with others in the community, please send Lynne your name, address (including postcode), the speed test result and confirmation that you wish to pool your voucher to lynne.spoons@btinternet.com as soon as possible.

If you require more information then please contact Lynne on the above email address.

The Greyhound Pub Quiz

1st Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm

Quizmaster: Paul Hart

Teams of 6 - £1 per person

(Why not have a meal at the pub before the quiz?)

A Good Result For Neroche Parish Walking Group

By Jane Hole

A long section of Middle Room bridleway in Curland Parish has recently been resurfaced. This very positive action means the route will remain a part of the extensive network of walking paths within the parish.

Middle Room is one of those difficult pieces of land, sloping downhill, it is clay based and takes a heavy bashing from our high rainfall and frosts in the winter months, leading to the type of erosion you can see in the photo. If the erosion is allowed to continue, over time the route will degrade until it becomes impossible to walk.

I can vouch that the lower section of Middle Room used to be almost impassable by walkers having nearly lost my boots there some years ago! It was reinstated as part of the Herepath route by the Neroche Project in 2008/9.



The path before repair



The path after repair

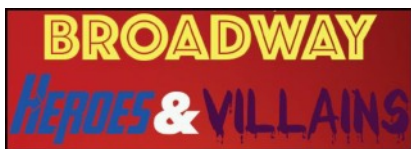
The erosion in Middle Room was highlighted by Jane Hole on behalf of Neroche Walking Group at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

Following the Meeting, our concerns were drawn to the attention of the Rights of Way Department at Somerset County Council. An inspection visit was made and the repairs carried out.

A good result for the whole parish!

TAOS Cabaret Group -

By Alan Perrior



To paraphrase an old saying, “Why do villains have all the good tunes”?

The Taunton Amateur Operatic Society concert at Neroche Hall, on 23rd September, was very well-received by the audience who were treated to an evening of classic songs from musicals featuring Heroes and Villains. It was generally agreed that the ‘Villains’ songs in the second half were far more lively and rumbustious!

Mark Shelvey, the evening’s pianist and musical director, should be congratulated on producing a concert with so many outstanding performances; one of the many highlights being ‘Cell Block Tango’ from ‘Chicago’ – definitely in the ‘Villains’ section!



Hannah Deason-Barrow

Other ‘stand-out’ performances were Tracy Skinner’s rendition of ‘Don’t Cry For Me Argentina’ and Hannah Deason-Barrow’s ‘Don’t Rain On My Parade’ – who needs Julie Covington and Barbra Streisand?

Tony Blackshaw is also worthy of mention for his excellent renditions of ‘C’est Moi’ from ‘Camelot’, ‘My Name’ from ‘Oliver’ and ‘Bring Me My Bride’ from ‘A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum’.



Tony Blackshaw

The concert was in aid of St Peter’s Church funds, and the organisers would like to thank: TAOS for the fabulous entertainment; John Lee and Roger Keat for running the bar; the PCC and church members for the tasty nibbles in the interval; and everyone who helped with setting-up and clearing-away.

On behalf of Taunton Amateur Operatic Society I was delighted to inform Ann Bartlett that her name was picked out of the competition drum by Jeremy Tustin, Director of our next show, ‘9 to 5’, and that she has won two free tickets to see the show in April 2017.

Corinne Alexander (TAOS Assistant Secretary)

News from Bickenhall & District WI

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

As mentioned in Tricia's report in the Autumn Issue of this Newsletter, October 2016 was a very a special Month for us; on the 26th we celebrated our 90th birthday. We marked the occasion with past and present members of our WI, individuals from the Neroche community, other local WI's, and a Somerset County Federation Trustee. It started with a celebration service in St Peters Church, led by the Reverend Mary Godin, with hymns, poetry, prayers and music played by Julie Pope; Di Grabham and Madeline Spears presented a power-point



Past and Present Presidents

Back: Nicky Baxter, Di Grabham Front: Rosemary Grabham, Jenny Trude, Pauline Phelps, Tricia Dryden (current President) and Jean Male

montage of Bickenhall WI through the ages - it brought back many memories. We ended with an inspiring address by our President, Tricia Dryden, about the history and achievements of our small WI. One particularly memorable success was the installation of a telephone box on Curland green, due to the lobbying by our WI. We have also been fundraising to help with the maintenance and upkeep of our residential college 'Denman'; the afternoon cream tea held by Wynn Balance and the car boot sales attended by Pauline Phelps raised £263. The service concluded with a rousing rendition of Jerusalem. A small exhibition was laid-out at the back of the church; the most popular exhibits were the scrap books and the items retrieved from the archives for the occasion. We then adjourned to the Greyhound for fizz, cake and, of course, tea. Molly Kelly, one

of our longest serving members, cut the celebratory cake, followed by games and entertainment, which involved a lot of laughter and noise!

Unfortunately, our September speaker on 'Crystals for Health and Happiness' could not attend due to ill health. Instead we were given a most amusing talk by Michael Malaghan on his career as a TV scriptwriter, journalist and author.

Our October meeting was attending an ABBA tribute event at Oake Manor Golf Club, in aid of 'Denman'. Our 'Dancing Queen' that evening was Wynn Balance!

We have won our first round match in the County Skittles Competition, beating West Buckland WI; our competitive spirit is now beginning to show!

We have knitted over 50 twiddlemuffs; these are made to support dementia patients in a project across Somerset WI's. They are effective in minimising agitation and help with stimulation. Thanks to Brenda Crossley for coordinating our contribution to the project.



Brenda Crossley with our contribution of twiddlemuffs

meetings which are held on the second Wednesday of each month. For more information contact tricia@witchlodge.co.uk

A note for your diary, our Christmas Bingo will be held in the Greyhound on 16th December, 6.30pm for 'eyes down' at 7.00pm. Watch out for further details in the Email Alert.

We would be delighted to welcome new members to our

**CAROL SINGING AROUND THE VILLAGES OF STAPLE
FITZPAINE & CURLAND SATURDAY 17TH DECEMBER**

Meet at Staple Farm at 6.15pm to start at 6.30.

All welcome, transport provided. Bring a torch & wrap up well!

Please call Alison 01823 480441 or Julie 01823 480282

if you would like us to visit you.

*A fun way to get into the spirit of Christmas. You do not have
to sing well! All donations given to charity.*

St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine

ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE

WEDNESDAY 21st DECEMBER

at 7.00pm

Carols and Readings to Tell the Story of Christmas

St Peters Singers Neroche Handbells

All Welcome

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

*For further details contact Mal or Alison, Churchwardens
on 01460 234282 or 01823 480441*

CHRISTMAS DAY AT ST PETER'S CHURCH, STAPLE FITZPAINE

Please join us for

A Family Service with Holy Communion

At 10.00am

To celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ

All ages welcome



Neroche Friday Film Nights

Friday 25th November 2016 at 7.30pm

Money Monster (cert 15)

TV financial advisor Lee Gates (George Clooney) and his producer Patty (Julia Roberts) are at the top of their game on CNBC, with the show 'Money Monster', that advises working class people on which stocks to buy and sell.

When Lee Gates promotes a high-tech stock that mysteriously crashes, he is held hostage on live TV by Kyle Budwell (Jack O'Connell), a janitor who lost everything investing in that stock. Lee soon figures out there is more to the mysterious crash than meets the eye, and works to find out truth.



The Friday Night Films for December, January and February will be announced, via the Email Alert system, nearer the date.

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.



Christmas Holiday

17th Dec 2016 to 2nd Jan 2017

Half Term Holiday

11th Feb 2017 to 19th Feb 2017



Household Recycling & Refuse Collections for December 2016 to February 2017

28th Dec 2016 collection moved to 29th Dec 2016

4th Jan 2017 collection moved to 5th Jan 2017

To view the actual dates, go to

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



Events For Your Calendar

November

- 23 *History Group Visit (see page 49)*
- 24 *Taunton Racecourse Autumn Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 25 *Friday Film Night (see page 66)*

December

- 3 *Walking Group*
- 4 *Pick Your Own Christmas Tree (see page 43)*
- 7 *Greyhound Pub Quiz (see page 60)*
- 8 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 49)*
- 8 *Taunton Racecourse Festive Fixture (see page 9)*
- 9 *Taunton Racecourse Victorian Christmas Party Nights (see page 9) - also on 10th, 16th and 17th December*
- 16 *WI Christmas Bingo (see page 64)*
- 17 *Carol Singing Around The Villages (see page 65)*
- 18 *Drinks and Nibbles party (details to follow in Email Alert System)*
- 20 *Taunton Racecourse Christmas Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 21 *St Peter's Carol Service (see page 65)*
- 25 *St Peter's Christmas Day Service (see page 65)*
- 30 *Taunton Racecourse New Year Race Meeting (see page 9)*

January

- 4 *Greyhound Pub Quiz (see page 60)*
- 5 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 49)*
- 7 *Walking Group*
- 10 *Parish Council Meeting (see page 39)*
- 11 *Taunton Racecourse Two for One Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 14 *Safari Supper (details to follow in Email Alert System)*
- 21 *Taunton Racecourse Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 27 *Friday Film Night (details to follow in Email Alert System)*

February

- 1 *Greyhound Pub Quiz (see page 60)*
- 2 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 49)*
- 4 *Walking Group*
- 5 *Taunton Racecourse Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 21 *Taunton Racecourse Race Meeting (see page 9)*
- 24 *Friday Film Night (details to follow in Email Alert System)*



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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Printed by 'Parish Magazine Printing' - 01288 341617