

*“Working Together for a Better Community”*

# **NEROCHE VILLAGES**

Issue No 4

## **Newsletter**

May 2012

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

*There is no better place to bring up a family than in a rural environment.*

*There's something  
about getting up at  
five in the morning,  
milking the cows  
and feeding the  
chickens before  
breakfast that*

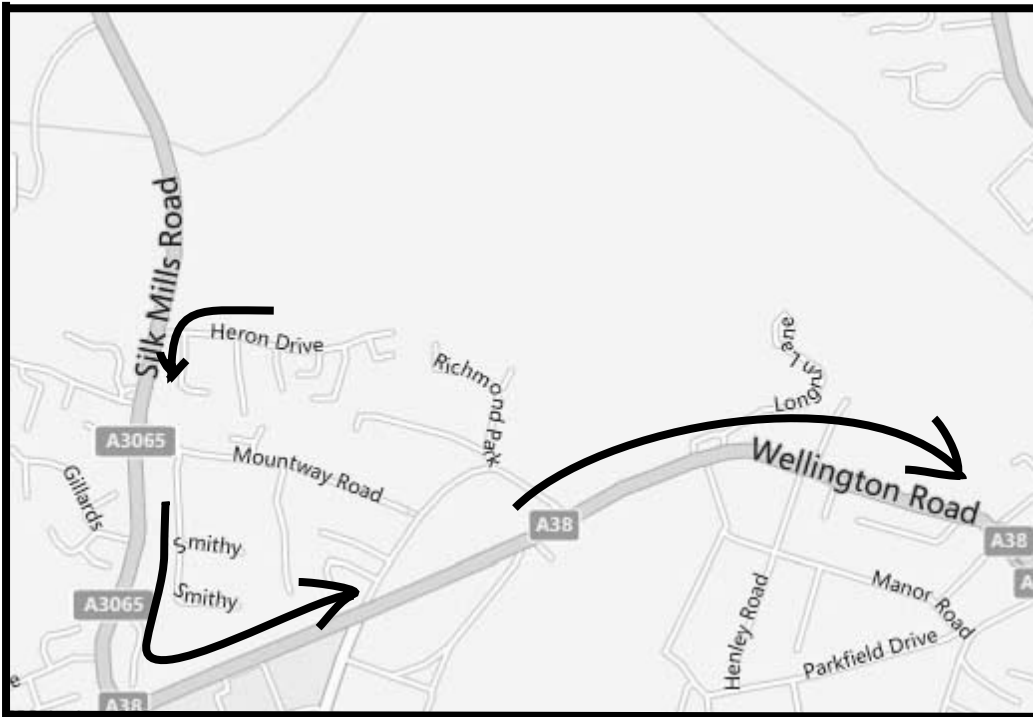


*gives you a lifelong respect for the price of butter and eggs.*

**W**elcome to the fourth 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.

# OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY

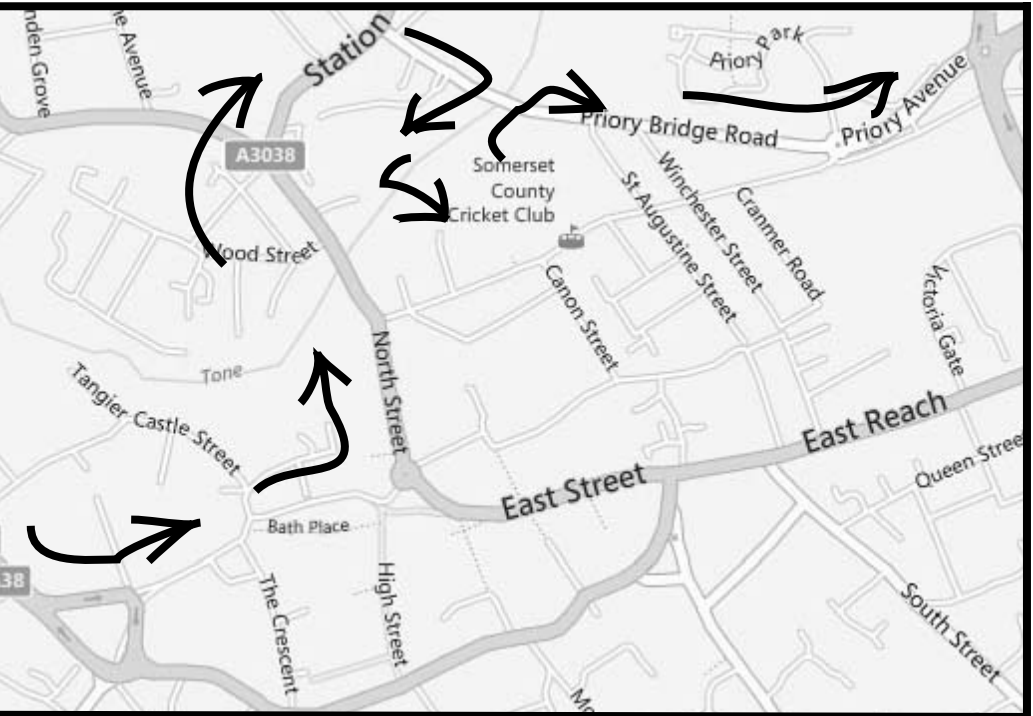
## TAUNTON



The Olympic Flame will be coming to Taunton and Ilminster on the 21st and 22nd May 2012. It is scheduled to leave Heron Drive just after 6pm and be carried by a relay of torch-bearers to Taunton County Cricket Club. There will be an evening celebration at the cricket ground (details still to be announced).

The torch will stay in Taunton overnight on the 21st May before being carried (at just after 6am on the 22nd May) by torch-bearers from Somerset Square to Priory Avenue. The journey will continue (by convoy) to Ilminster where it will be carried by torch bearers from Home Farm Way (just before 7am) to Summerland Park Drive. It will then continue its journey by convoy to Yeovil.





**ILMINSTER**



# **www.nerochevillages.org.uk**

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

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

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

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

## **www.nerochevillages.org.uk**

### Website User Statistics (March 2012)

Average Time on Site	-	6 mins
Average Pages Viewed	-	4.27 pages
Most popular Pages	-	parish council agendas
	-	calendar of events

## VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

This Newsletter (the Neroche Villages' Newsletter) and the Neroche Community Website ([www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)) are produced by the Neroche Communication Action Group.

If you would like to get involved then please contact the Chairman, Tim French, on [tim-french@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:tim-french@tiscali.co.uk) or on 01460 234410.

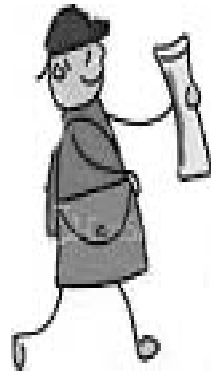


We are particularly keen to get help with developing and maintaining the website.

If you have the appropriate skills then, again, please contact Tim. If you have only the basic skills associated with operating a PC at home then you could

also get involved by helping to keep the website up-to-date (*training will be given where necessary*).

Finally, if your time is precious and you have only the odd hour to spare then why not join the Newsletter Delivery Team who only operate once in every 3 months.



## Answers to the February Quiz

- Q.1 Thurlbear, Staple Fitzpaine and Bickenhall
- Q.2 1940s
- Q.3 1872
- Q.4 Bickenhall, Staple Fitzpaine, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, Curland.
- Q.5 Thursday.
- Q.6 The Spinney.
- Q.7 Marianne Bray.
- Q.8 Thursdays.
- Q.9 British Association for Shooting and Conservation.
- Q.10 7 April



# Events For Your Calendar

## May

- 3 **Neroche Annual Parish Meeting** (see advert on page 15)
- 3 **Neroche Thursday Lunch Club** (see advert on page 19)
- 5 **Neroche Parish Walking Group**
- 10 **Parish Council Meeting** (go to [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 12 **Taunton Racing (Arabian Horse Meeting)** (see page 22)
- 12 **Safari Supper (A Village Hall Event)** (see page 26)
- 13 **Blackdown Hills Artisans' Weekend.** Open day at the studio of local sculptor, Chris Webb (see enclosed flyer)



## June

- 2 **Neroche Parish Walking Group**
- 4 **Queens Diamond Jubilee Celebrations** (see page 7)
- 7 **Neroche Thursday Lunch Club** (see advert on page 19)
- 12 **Senior Citizens Club** (see article on page 23)
- 24 **Goddards Orchard Open Day** (see article on pages 12 & 13)
- 27 **Goddards Orchard Open Day** (see article on pages 12 & 13)

## July

- 5 **Neroche Thursday Lunch Club** (see advert on page 19)
- 7 **Neroche Parish Walking Group**
- 10 **Senior Citizens Club** (see article on page 23)
- 12 **Parish Council Meeting** (go to [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))

## August

- 2 **Neroche Thursday Lunch Club** (see advert on page 19)
- 3 **Neroche Parish Walking Group**
- 14 **Senior Citizens Club** (see article on page 23)

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

*See, also, the many various events listed in the 'On  
Our Doorstep' article on pages 21,22 & 23*



# NEROCHE JUBILEE PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

## SUNDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE:

**10.00am** St Peter’s Church, Staple Fitzpaine, a special service to commemorate the Jubilee followed by light refreshments to toast Her Majesty The Queen.

**6.30pm** St Michaels, Orchard Portman, a special Evensong preceded by ringing of church bells.

## MONDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: *(all events take place either in the field behind Neroche Hall or in Neroche Hall)*

**12.00pm** A bring your own picnic (field).

**2.00pm** Neroche Jubilee Fancy Dress Parade for adults and children.  
*(The theme is either the jubilee or the Olympic games.)*  
Followed by the Neroche Inter Parish villages games and competitions for the whole family.

**7.00pm** Rounders Match, BBQ and Bar. Music and dancing in the village hall with songs and tunes celebrating 60 years of the hit parade.

**10.00pm** The lighting of the Beacon.  
*(approx)*



To help us with our planning it would help us to know roughly how many people are likely to attend. Please detach the below and send to Alison Brown, Batten’s Farm, Bickenhall TA3 6TS.



Name: ..... Phone no: .....

No of Adults: ..... No of Children: .....



*If you would be willing to help with organising the event then please let Alison know.*



# The Neroche Local History Group

By Alan and Doreen Marsh

The Neroche Local History Group was founded in the summer of 2007 on the initiative of Jane Hole of Curland. From the beginning, it was decided to have a programme including invited speakers and reports from our members on their research.

Early on we were fortunate to be able to explore Perry Hall Farm at Staple Fitzpaine, between tenancies, under the guidance of Dr. Richard Brunning. Tanya James, Community History Officer for the Neroche Project, encouraged our research and gave constant support. Also, in



those early days, Ted Rooke spoke about living in Britty Farm in Neroche Forest as a child in the 1930s. Our group surveyed the now derelict farm and it's buildings. It was

then possible to produce a detailed plan of the farmstead. This work was subsequently a basis for a chapter in the book 'Along The Wild Edge' published as part of the Neroche Project.



Another part of the Neroche Project was an archaeological dig carried out on the site of the deserted Plaistreet Village in Bickenhall; our members assisted in the trenches and with pot washing. In the following spring an exhibition was mounted by Tanya James at Neroche Parish Hall. We also helped with geophysical surveys at Plaistreet and at Castle Neroche.





Our programme of talks has included: Taunton's Almshouses and Charities by Jean Allgrove; the Portman Family by Tom Mayberry; the Poor Laws by David Hawkins; and An Iron Age Settlement at Blackbrook by Steve Membury. Home-grown contributions have covered: Village Friendly Societies; The Almshouses at Staple Fitzpaine; Local Deer Parks; A History of Curland and Staple Fitzpaine; Schools, Taxation and Censuses; and lots more!



What of our future plans? We are arranging to record memories of villagers who were young in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; much changed in those days. Today more opportunities are available to villagers and living has, in many ways, become easier.



However, there have been losses, for example: we no longer have a village shop and post office in Curland; the village school at Staple Fitzpaine has closed and children as young as 4 years now go by bus to Thurlbear; dairy farming has almost disappeared in the locality; and very few people are employed in farming today.

We look ahead to many more opportunities for historical research chronicling the constant changes to which rural life has been subjected in our villages. All the villages in the shadow of the Blackdowns appear on a map of Somerset commissioned for Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>.



***If you wish to get involved with the History Group, even in just a small way, or are interested in attending one of their presentations, then contact Jane Hole on 01460 234410 or [jane.hole@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jane.hole@tiscali.co.uk)***

## Interview with Colin Croad - Neroche Hall Fish'n'Chips Quizmaster

*Q. When and why did the quiz start?*

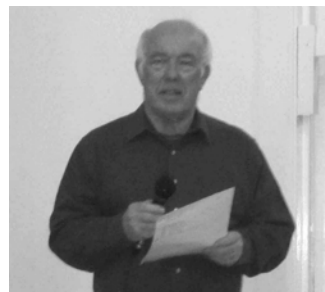
**A.** When I first became Chair of Neroche Hall in 2001, we had a brain-storming session on fundraising and I suggested a quiz. We didn't want all the committee and helpers cooking food, serving and washing up; we wanted them taking part in the Quiz. We hit on the idea of fish and chips, purchased locally.

*Q. Who was the first quizmaster?*

**A.** Mike Michaels was already running a regular quiz at The Greyhound and as he was previously our Treasurer, we invited him to become quizmaster. He was a great success and we were well-supported. Memorably, on one occasion, when his recording equipment failed, he whistled various pieces of music which we then had to recognise.

*Q. How did you become the quizmaster?*

**A.** Mike couldn't make a particular quiz night due to the demands of his job in General Practice. I volunteered to take over as I had previously organised an annual quiz in South London to raise money for Save the Children Fund. It was that experience which demonstrated what a great fundraiser a quiz can be.



*Q. How would you define a good quiz?*

**A.** A good quiz is one where every team scores at least 5 or 6 out of 10 in most rounds. To achieve this you need a wide range of subjects and questions. I always try to frustrate previous winning teams so they don't carry off the prizes every time.



*Q. How often are the Fish 'n' Chips quizzes held?*

**A.** We now hold the quiz twice a year, in early Spring and Autumn.

*Q. Where do you get the questions?*

**A.** The questions come from a range of sources. For a couple of months I make notes of various scraps of information in the papers or on television. 'Pointless' has some good questions and so do 'Eggheads' and 'Mastermind'. I always try to verify answers with the help of the Internet.

*Q. What happens to the quiz profits?*

**A.** All monies raised go towards the Village Hall general fund; hopefully we will soon invest in comfortable and upholstered stacking chairs. As we need at least 100, such a purchase will cost us over £3,000. We now make about £300 on each quiz evening so in over 6 years since I have been running the quiz, they must have made around £4,000.

*Q. Who organises and runs the quiz night?*

**A.** The quiz is very much my baby - I set the questions, put out the road noticeboards and flyers, my wife keeps the scores. I also buy the prizes and we try to ensure we have decent wines and chocolates (this last quiz for instance, we spent £35 on prizes). John Lee, our last Chair, was particularly keen for the prizewinners to have something worth taking home.



The fish and chips are a combined effort from Richard Davies, Graham Glasper and Nicky Baxter. Every function normally involves all the committee members but it is much better if one person is responsible

for pulling it altogether.

*Q. When is the next quiz?*

**A.** The next quiz is on **Friday 5th October**, which I have just realised is my wedding anniversary! How did that happen?

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*The 17th February quiz was a great success. Thanks as always to Colin Croad, our superb quiz master who never fails to expand our knowledge, and also to Pat Croad who looks after the scoring.*

# GODDARDS ORCHARD OPEN DAY

Goddards Orchard's garden, situated at the rear of the Greyhound Inn, is open on 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 under the National Garden Scheme. As well as the flower garden there is a woodland area with stream and meadow for fun as well as the vegetable growing area. Tea and cakes will be served and there will be plants for sale. Dogs are welcome on leads.

The NGS has its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with over 3,000 open gardens across England and Wales. In the past 10 years they have donated 22 million pounds for nursing, caring and gardening charities. These include Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Hospices. Brian and Dianne Hood have been persuaded to open Goddards Orchard's garden to the public this year and hope to raise lots of money for these caring charities. All entry fees will go to the NGS, the profit from teas will be shared between the NGS and St Peter's Church in Staple Fitzpaine.



Brian and Dianne Hood bought Goddards Orchard from the Crown Estate in 1990 when it was just a barn for conversion plus over half an acre of farmyard, old orchard and field. Over the years the land has evolved into a cottage-style garden with narrow pathways, steps, island beds and ponds.

The adjoining woodland garden encourages all types of wildlife and the stream runs through. Log piles offer winter homes to many creatures and the natural flora is encouraged, including nettles for the butterflies!

Recently the adjoining field has become an area where Brian is growing vegetables, in fact so successful that they have been putting out their surplus for sale at the farm gate. Brian grows his vegetables in a traditional way and his hobby of cider making and beekeeping means that there is always cider and honey available for sale, along with vegetables when in season.

(Location and Parking will be clearly signposted on the day.)

**ngs** gardens open  
for charity

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# **Garden Open Goddards Orchard**

**Staple Fitzpaine, Taunton**

**Sun 24 June**

**Wed 27 June**

**1.30 - 5.30pm**

**Adm: £3**

**Children: free**

**Plants for Sale**



***Annual Meeting for the Parishes of Bickenhall,  
Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, Staple Fitzpaine  
and Curland - 3rd May 2012 at 7.00pm***

*In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, every  
English Parish must hold an Annual Parish Meeting  
between 1st March and 1st June each year.*



**T**he Annual Parish Meeting will take place in Neroche Village Hall on 3rd May 2012 (doors open 7.00pm to view stands; formal presentations start at 7.30pm). It is one of the most important local events of the year. An occasion when you, the residents: can make your voices heard; meet the Parish Councillors; learn more about important local issues; be updated on the progress being made by local Action Groups; and be briefed on social and sporting activities. It is also an opportunity to find out about all

the excellent work going on in the parishes and the wide variety of Activities that are taking place, and, more importantly, become involved if you so wish. The Parish Council Chairman will deliver her annual report, followed by short presentations by the Police on Neighbourhood Watch, the Somerset Super-Fast Broadband Project, and the Neroche Jubilee Committee. Before and after the formal part of the meeting you will be free to circulate among the numerous stands manned by members of the many Neroche Parish clubs, social organisations and action groups. It is extremely important that as many local residents as possible attend this event.

***YOUR ATTENDANCE AND SUPPORT IS  
ESSENTIAL; PLEASE BE THERE!!!***

# Annual Parish Meeting

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

*Neroche Parish Hall*

*Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012*

*Open 7.00pm to view stands*

*Formal Presentations Start 7.30pm*

## **Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Followed by short presentations from:

~

### **The Police on Neighbourhood Watch**

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### **The Somerset Super-Fast Broadband Project**

~

### **The Neroche Jubilee Committee**

~

Throughout the evening there will be stands around  
the hall representing numerous local clubs,  
organisations and groups; including:

**History Group; Walking Group; Police; Communications  
Action Group; Design & Planning Group; Litter Pick-Up  
Group; Roads, Traffic and Transport Group; Café Fitz;  
Queen's Jubilee Committee; Neroche Hall; WI;  
Thursday Lunch Club; Broadband; Parish Council**

*Refreshments will be available*

## Neroche Parish Council – New Chairman



Jonathan Bell will take over from Marianne Bray as Parish Council Chair at the next meeting, which is the second Thursday in May. Marianne's final duty will be to chair the Annual Parish Meeting on 3rd of May 2012. Jonathan has been a parish councillor, representing Staple Fitzpaine, for about ten years.



The chair normally holds office for two years, often preceded by two years as vice chair. However, as there is a regular turnover of councillors, this pattern is often disrupted. There is usually a rotation of the chair between the four parishes and it was actually Bickenhall's turn to provide the new chair but, on this occasion, it was agreed to advance the rotation by one position (and Jonathan volunteered!).

The main duties are to chair the bi-monthly meetings, set the agenda with the Parish Clerk and check the minutes. However, there is also an important function as a figurehead for the council, should the need arise. The chair is the initial point of contact for both parishioners and for outside agencies.

### *Jonathan's comments –*

There has been a lot of activity in the parish in the last year or two, largely in relation to the parish plan which I hope will be a big help in the changing times to come. It has certainly been good to see so much interest in local issues from so many people and I hope this will continue. It will also be good to have strong local support for making this a vibrant community. I'm sure the parish council will do what we can to facilitate this, although our powers are, in practice, limited. In national terms we are a small council and unlikely to take on any new powers arising from the drive towards localism. We will, of course, continue to work closely with our district and county councillors, who kindly give up their time to attend most of our meetings.

On a personal note, my wife and I have lived in the village for nineteen years, having previously lived in Wellington. We have many local friends and try to take a full part in the life of the village.

I look forward to what I hope will be a successful term as Neroche Parish council chair.



## THE ONE AND ONLY

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



**THE ARTISAN BAKER** (the 'one and only' bakery in Neroche Villages). Healthy additive-free bread freshly baked at the Park Farmhouse 'Micro Bakery' in Bickenhall.

If you have recently driven along the road where the Neroche Parish Hall is sited, you will have noticed the rustic signboards inviting you to call in to buy freshly baked bread. A 'ramblers' dream after a long walk, or perhaps if you are driving home from the School run and fancy something nice for lunch.

Frank Heuff, 'The Artisan Baker' at Park Farmhouse, Bickenhall has managed to fulfil his life-long ambition by beginning a hobby-cum-home business to bake quality additive-free bread. He noticed the absence of a rural bakery and, being Dutch, decided to offer bread on a small scale to those who appreciate good food. The response has been amazing – even the odd cyclist will call in on a Saturday to re-fuel with a croissant or two!

Those who attended the Christmas Fayre will remember Frank's products sold out completely and provided a launch pad for his business that has continued to grow by word of mouth.



The Artisan Baker only uses Organic flour, sourced from Shipton Mill in the heart of the Cotswolds just outside Tetbury (which is by appointment to HRH The Prince of Wales). Current specialities include: Granary cob, Pain de Campagne, Focaccia bread, Sour-dough, French stick and Pain au raisin plus delicious mouth-wateringly good Croissants (made with genuine French butter and French flour). Bread boxes are also available to order, **delivered for free** to the local area.

Currently only open on Saturdays – just look out for the board. Simply call in, or telephone (01823) 480878 to order your bread box for delivery to your door. (Local area only)

## NEROCHE LITTER ACTION GROUP

The latest 'litter pick-up' took place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March and concentrated on the road from Staple Hill to Orchard Portman. The group adopt a commonsense approach to the safety aspects of litter picking on this busy road, by enlisting the help of the local Police Community Support Officer (Lynsey Gamblin) to put out the appropriate signs and generally monitor the operation. Viridor Waste Management also help by providing high-visibility jackets, gloves, pick-up grabbers (as modelled by Margaret Robinson in the photograph) and waste collection sacks.

The action group and other volunteers met at The Greyhound at Staple Fitzpaine at 10:00 and the road was divided into segments, identified by markers, each segment being allocated to a part of the group. (Some of the connecting roads are included in the exercise if there are sufficient helpers and time).



On this litter pick a resident of Curland worked on the stretch of road from the village to Crossways Farm. Three residents of Orchard Portman undertook their stretch and the rest of the road was covered by thirteen helpers in 6 segments. Ideally a few more helpers would have been welcome as with only two per segment it was a busy time for all.



However, on the day, the largest amount of any 'litter pick-up' to date was recovered and the collection truck provided by Anthony & Alison Brown could not manage it all in one run. Approximately 25 large plastic sacks of litter was recovered together with large amounts of car bumper parts, bits of numbers plates and wing mirrors; there were also 4 traffic cones and some plastic 5 gallon drums. The general litter included the usual plastic bags and bottles, glass bottles, various drinking containers, crisp bags,

paper bags, fish& chip/burger/fried chicken boxes, newsprint, drink cans, cigarette packets and the odd boots/shoes. The most unusual item was a kettle, unlike a previous exercise when a microwave oven was extracted from a hedge. Orchard Portman litter appeared to be more up market with a number of Champagne bottles recovered; something to do with a successful day at the racecourse perhaps? The litter pick ended at 13:00, slightly later than the planned 12:15.

**The Litter Action Group's Aim is to keep our area free from rubbish and maintain the AONB status. Well done to all those who turned out on the day.**

**If you wish to be involved in the next 'pick-up' please contact Jayne and Steve Haynes on [jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk)**

**NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHESES  
AT NEROCHE HALL**

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

**Lunches will take place on Thursday  
12.30 for 1.00 pm**

**3<sup>rd</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June (prov), 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2<sup>nd</sup> August,  
6<sup>th</sup> September, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 6<sup>th</sup> December**

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

Organised by Friends of St Peters Church

## BICKENHALL & DISTRICT WI

With our President unable to attend, Di Grabham presided over the meeting on 14th March 2012. The business of the month was dealt with. Members showed interest in an outing to Exeter Cathedral in July for the flower festival to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee and for the one day visit to Denham College in October.

Josie reported on her coffee morning fund raising for the Teenage Cancer Trust stating it had been a great success, with a significant sum being raised. Members of the trust begin their journey from John O'Groats to Lands End by pony and trap, to raise money for this worthwhile cause on 17 April. We have been given maps showing how their journey will progress, and it is hoped that we can show our support by cheering them on when they travel through Wiveliscombe on 10/11 May.

Fon Cousens, an expert in many crafts, came along to teach us the basics of crocheting. The name crochet is derived from the French croche meaning hook, and crocheting has been around since the sixteenth century. It took the great Irish Famine of 1846 to give crochet its greatest impetus when nuns taught pupils and the proceeds from the sales of crocheted articles was very welcome. It soon became, along with playing the harpsichord, one of the graceful accomplishments of the well born lady. A very enjoyable evening and hopefully our members, with some practice, will become accomplished ladies. Thank you Fon, you were brilliant.



Competition: A homemade craft item – First Brenda Crossley , Second Nicky Baxter, and Third Frances Alford.

## On Our Doorstep

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

**Blackdown Hills AONB Countryside Events Programme.**



**Blackdown  
Hills AONB**

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

**13 May. 'Orienteering'.** *Staple Hill.* A variety of Courses available for beginners up to experts.

**26 May. 'Introduction to Green Woodworking'.** *Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine.* Learn how to work with unseasoned wood the traditional way, with Tim Beazley.



**8-9 June. 'Butterflies, Moths and Wildlife Weekend'.** *Staple Hill.* See the Moths and Butterflies of this lovely flowery grassland woodland reserve.

**10 June. 'Guided Butterfly Walk'.** *Staple Common.* A guided walk on Staple Common, Wessex Water land and Mount Fancy.

**30 June. 'Midsummer Botanicals'.** *Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine.* A beginner's introduction to some wildflowers of the wood.

**14 July. 'Natural Sculpture with Michael Fairfax'.** *Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine.* Have you ever started whittling a stick with a penknife and wished you knew how a proper sculptor would approach it?

**15 July. 'Wildflower Sketching and Ecology'.** *Meet at Staple Hill Car Park.* Join ecologist David Allen and artist Liz Gregory at Yarty Moor Nature reserve.

## On Our Doorstep *(continued)*

**22 July.** *'Make A Country Stool (Adult and Child)'*. *Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine*. Take the opportunity for some inter-generational working by spending some quality time in the woods.

**29 July.** *'The Great Ragwort Pull'*. *Staple Common and Ruttersleigh*. Lend a hand for the biggest ragwort pulling event this side of the Blackdown Hills.



...and the list goes on. For full information on all courses, events and details of how to apply, please go to [www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk)

### Taunton Racecourse.



We are most fortunate to have England's youngest National Hunt racecourse, and one of the most beautifully located in the country, situated within Neroche Parish. It has outstanding views across the course to the wooded slopes of the Blackdown Hills, with excellent access from all areas of Neroche. There can be no better way of entertaining your family or friends than a day at the races 'The Sport of Kings'. For full details of fixtures, ticket prices, facilities, etc go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

### Car Boot Sales.

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



### Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton.

Some stunning shows from February onwards, including: *'The Diamond Jubilee Concert, Live From Buckingham Palace'*, *'Ballet Cymru Present – The Tempest'*, *'An Evening With Tony Benn'*, *'La Boheme'*, *'Barry Steele as Roy Orbison'*, *'Herman's Hermits'*, *'As You Like It'*. For more information on these and many other concerts go to [www.thebrewhouse.net](http://www.thebrewhouse.net)

## On Our Doorstep *(continued)*

### The Square and Compass, Ashill.



The Square and Compass hosts a vibrant and diverse range of musical events, spanning the full range of musical styles. Events from May onwards, include: **Buddy Whittington (Guitar Legend of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers), Chris Wood (BBC Radio 2 Folk**

**Singer of the Year 2011), Andy Fairweather Low, Albert Lee and Richard Digance.** For full information on these concerts and many others, go to [www.squareandcompasspub.com](http://www.squareandcompasspub.com)

### Stoke St Mary Senior Citizens Club

Despite its name, Stoke St Mary Senior Citizens' Club isn't just for residents of Stoke St Mary; neither is it restricted to Senior Citizens. It is open to all residents of the Seven Sowers Benefice and beyond. So if you are mature but young at heart, enjoy light conversation, tea and home-made cake and want something different by way of entertainment each month don't miss out on a lively social afternoon.

The February club meeting included musical entertainment by former music teacher David Andrews with an exciting and stimulating journey through the years, from Fats Domino to Cliff Richard, via Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Chuck Berry and Bill Haley.



In March's meeting, the main feature was a talk, with illustrations, by Adam Vasey, one of the four Park Rangers for Exmoor National Park. He talked about the work involved in keeping the Park as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty and the difficulties in balancing the needs of visitors, local housing and business against the preservation of open spaces and conservation of wildlife, such as the Red Deer and Exmoor Ponies.

Stoke St Mary Senior Citizens' Club meeting dates are listed on the [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk) website, just click on the tabs **What's On**, then **Coming Events**, then **Calendar of Events**. Or call Yvonne Welch on 01823 480671, and forget about the club name!

# NEWS FROM NEROCHE FOREST

## **Neroche and the Forestry Commission**

As local people know, the Neroche Forest has had a high profile in the last few years as a good example of a multi-purpose forest, offering recreation and social benefits to the community, while also becoming richer in wildlife and continuing to grow timber.

The Forestry Commission (FC), like other Government agencies, has had to make substantial savings in its running costs and, as a result, staffing and administrative structures have changed. Locally, this means that the Neroche Forest now forms part of an enlarged forest 'Beat', covering the Blackdowns, East Devon, West Somerset and the Quantocks. The new Beat Forester for the area is Nick Salter, who is based on the Quantocks. Meanwhile, Brian Turley remains as the local ranger based at Mount Fancy, albeit now covering a larger patch.

Inevitably these changes mean that FC staff will be thinner on the ground, with a larger workload. We must ask you to bear with us if this causes any delays in dealing with issues or answering enquiries. For emergency matters to do with the forest, you should contact Brian Turley on 07769 671105 or Gavin Saunders on 07760 355009. Despite this squeeze, however, there remains much to report about the positive things happening at Neroche.

## **Young Wood**

After many years of running activities for volunteers, families and school groups in the Neroche Forest, staff at the Forestry Commission and local people are now focusing much of their efforts on creating a new, permanent base for these activities at Young Wood, which forms part of the forest east of Wych Lodge. This winter we have begun a modest





programme of coppicing, cutting some of the overgrown hazel on the rides, and generating firewood, poles and pea sticks in the process. Alongside this, we've had a wide variety of groups visit the wood, including our regular volunteers helping with the coppicing, family groups from Taunton coming for family play sessions, and members of the public doing training courses.

Meanwhile, we have regular volunteer days at Young Wood, doing a variety of work, on the fourth Wednesday of each month. These days are open to all, with tools and instruction provided, but please book a place in advance by calling the number below. For details of all courses and events, see the Neroche website [www.nerochescheme.org](http://www.nerochescheme.org) or call 01823 680846.

### **Herepath**

A major upgrade of part of the Herepath is due to take place in the April and May. The stretch of bridleway between Staple Lawns and Staple Park Farm will be being surfaced and partly re-routed to improve this previously muddy section. If you use the trail please look out for notices about temporary diversions.

### **Longhorn cattle in the forest**

The cattle return to the forest in early May. The herd is now split between two graziers – John & Jo Binnie at Ruttersleigh Farm, and Russell & Becky Batchelor at Churchstanton. The Binnies' animals will graze the Ruttersleigh and Staple Common part of the forest, while the Batchelors' part of the herd will be at Wych Lodge, Mount Fancy and Staple Hill. As ever, local people should be assured that access to the forest is not affected by the presence of the cattle. However, the animals should be treated with respect and dogs should be kept on leads when passing by the herd. Any suspicious behaviour near the cattle should be reported immediately to 01823 680846.



***Feedback and ideas about the forest – your forest – are always welcome.***

Gavin Saunders - Neroche Project Manager



## GUESS WHO IS COMING TO DINNER?

Neroche Hall Safari Supper is on Saturday May 12th

A starter at one house, a main course at another and a dessert at a third home...finishing up with brandy, mints and coffee at the hall...surely the best way to meet and enjoy the company of your neighbours and friends.

**Tickets £15 from Colin 01823 480429**

*Come to an evening of good food, fine wine and friendly banter.*



*A bottle of wine (between 2 people) should be given to the host of the first course.*



## SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

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



**21 July to 2 September 2012**

**27 October to 4 November 2012**

**22 December to 6 January 2013**

**9 February to 17 February 2013**



## Household Recycling & Refuse Collections Bank Holiday Day Changes for 2012/13

### Easter 2012 and May Bank Holidays

Usual Collection Day	Revised Collection Day
Good Friday 6 April	Saturday 7 April
Easter Monday 9 April – 13 April	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 14 April
May Day 7 May – 11 May	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 12 May

### Diamond Jubilee, 4 and 5 June 2012

Usual Collection day	Revised Collection day
Late Spring (moved due to Diamond Jubilee) Monday 4 June	No change on 4 June – Monday collections as usual
Queen's Diamond Jubilee Tuesday 5 June – 8 June	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 9 June
Summer 27 August – 1 September	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Sat. 2 September

### Christmas and New Year 2012/13

Usual Collection day		Revised Collection day	
Monday	24 December 2012	No change, usual collections	
Tuesday	25 December 2012	Thursday	27 December 2012
Wednesday	26 December 2012	Friday	28 December 2012
Thursday	27 December 2012	Saturday	29 December 2012
Friday	28 December 2012	Sunday	30 December 2012
Monday	31 December 2012	Monday	31 December 2012
Tuesday	1 January 2013	Wednesday	2 January 2013
Wednesday	2 January 2013	Thursday	3 January 2013
Thursday	3 January 2013	Friday	4 January 2013
Friday	4 January 2013	Saturday	5 January 2013

No change to subsequent dates, all collections resume on usual days.

Garden waste collections are suspended from Monday 24 December 2012 and resume from Monday 7 January 2013 on usual days.

Revised collection days above also apply to clinical waste collections.

In severe weather, check our website or local radio for information.

All recycling sites are closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

[www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk)

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



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

### ***Websites:***

**Neroche Villages** – [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)

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

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

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

**The Church of England Seven Sowers Benefice** – [www.sevensowers.org.uk](http://www.sevensowers.org.uk)

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

### ***Email Information:***

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

### ***The Parish Magazine:***

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

***Many thanks for taking the time to read this Newsletter.***

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

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