

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 8

Newsletter

May 2013

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

Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 16 May 2013

Neroche Village Hall

Doors Open 7.00pm

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



Welcome to the eighth 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 for the Neroche Villages' Newsletter)



Wally Torrington is a Parish Councillor and was a member of the Parish Plan Steering Group. After the Plan was completed and published, he migrated to the Neroche Communication Action Group where he acts as the Project Coordinator for the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, and is also responsible for the Neroche Email Alert System.

In terms of the life of this publication, we have come a long way from the first Neroche *Parish Plan* Newsletter in February 2010 (a small eight-page pamphlet) to the forty-pager Neroche *Villages' Newsletter* that you see in front of you now.

The success of the Newsletter is due totally to the team of dedicated and hard-working volunteers (listed below) who perform tirelessly to bring the final product to your door.

The Newsletter is quite unique in that, up until now, it has not accepted commercial adverts in the body of the publication, and it is delivered free to all 230 households in Neroche.

Since the publication changed its name to the Neroche Villages' Newsletter in April 2011, it has been self-funding. To this end, I would like to thank all the advertisers who have supported the Newsletter by using our publication to circulate their 'flyers', and our many readers who completed the donation slip and sent in their contribution (if you have mislaid your slip then please email me at wallytorrington@hotmail.com and I will send you a replacement).

I'm delighted that, last year, we managed to obtain a small grant from the Lottery Fund to purchase a laptop and software for our editor (please see separate article on page 36).

If you have any comments regarding the Newsletter, favourable or otherwise, why not write 'A Letter to the Editor'. If you would like to join the team then please contact me at wallytorrington@hotmail.com. If you wish to contribute an article, or for your club or organisation to feature in the publication, then please feel free to contact Alan Perrior, our Editor, on nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you all for your continued encouragement and support.

The Neroche Villages' Newsletter Team

Project Coordinator: Wally Torrington

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Folding, Inserting

Advertising flyers etc): The Torrington Household

Delivery Coordinator: Roger Keats

Delivery Team Leaders: Tim French, Chris Cottey, Mark and Victoria Pearson, Ken Bidgood, Chris Newis, Roger Keats, Alan Perrior and Wally Torrington

If you feel you could help in some way or wish to join the team, then please contact:

wallytorrington@hotmail.com 01823 480656

Thurlbear School

On Sunday 27 January the local and school community of Thurlbear celebrated Mrs Heather Barraclough's first year as Headteacher at the school in a special service at Stoke St Mary Church.

Many children and families of the school, staff and parishoners celebrated the life of the school through song, prayer, interviews and talk.



The service was conducted by Rev Paul Reynolds and supported by youth worker, Cheryl Govier. The school is very much looking forward to further joint acts of worship with children playing an active part.

Help the Heroche Hedgehogs

Organisers of a survey into hedgehog hibernation habits are seeking more volunteers to help. This follows the latest results of 'The Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)' ten year trend analysis showing numbers of hedgehogs are falling by three to five per cent annually.



PTES and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society now want more people to join in the Hibernation Survey by reporting hedgehog sightings. "What we urgently need is

more information at the local level to help us better understand the challenges faced by the nation's hedgehogs" says Jill Nelson of PTES.

For more information about the survey and how you can get involved visit www.hedgehogstreet.com

Computers for Rural People Scheme (UK)

Individuals, clubs, businesses, schools and not-for-profit organisations in rural areas that need access to information and services, are able to purchase fully functioning ex-government computers for as little as £130. The computers are being made available through the Arthur Rank Centre. For organisations that need more than one computer; the prices are even lower.



“If you live or work in a rural area, the Arthur Rank Centre can supply a fully functioning computer for as little as £130”

“This scheme gives you a computer at extra-low charity prices.”

“Internet ready laptops and desktops with pre-installed Microsoft software.”

Email and the Internet provide enormous opportunities for those who find it difficult to get out and about, especially when the shops, library or bank are miles away. Yet computers are usually expensive, and few people want to buy one ‘just to see if it might be useful’.



The Arthur Rank Centre started ‘Computers for Rural People’ to provide rural communities, individuals and groups with high quality, fully-refurbished second hand computers at very low cost, to encourage people to take the first step.

So, if you think a computer might be useful, but can’t afford several hundred pounds just to try, the Arthur Rank Centre can help you. For more information and to order your computer, go to:

<http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/communities-and-farming/computers-for-rural-people>

Well! What are you waiting for?

The Colin Croad (Fish'n'chips) Quiz

Eighteen teams contested the latest Neroche Hall Quiz which meant over 100 people took part in the evening. John Lee captained the winners and took the prize of a case of wine, thanks in part to their wide knowledge of literature, a round in which they wisely played their Joker. Not much of a surprise really, with so many teachers from the English Department of King's in their side.

The largest ever order for fish and chips was placed at and collected from West Street, Ilminster. This demanding logistical exercise was masterminded by Richard Davies, Graham Glasper and Tim French. It should be made clear that they were not responsible for any shortage of chips, and our gratitude goes to all those who went hungry without making any fuss.

The scoring was computerised for the first time, thanks to the IT skills of Nicky Baxter. Nicky received much support from husband Chris and a welcome newcomer to his event, Lottie Michaels. Also, playing a vital part in a variety of roles, were Anne Perry, Alison Brown and Sheila Green.



According to our scorers, the 'History' round provided the biggest challenge to our teams and the 'Popular Culture' round received most praise from our younger quizzers. Your question setter has noted their request for more rounds with subjects that appeal to the under-30s.

Having said that, the Quiz seems to be increasing in popularity and thanks to the great support it received, we were able to add £400 to our much-needed funds. In the winter our listed building with its 30ft high roof is not a cheap venue for events.

The date of the next Quiz is **11th October**.

Neroche Parish Hall - Grand Jumble Sale

By the organiser, Rob Larkman

The 2013 Grand Jumble Sale took place in the Village Hall earlier this year. For the first time ever, the weather was against us, and with the Orchard Portman road being closed we suffered a big drop in attendance. However, this did not deter the 28 wonderful volunteers pitching-in and making the afternoon a major financial success, resulting in our second best total, which was only a few pounds off the record. Given the circumstances, an outstanding achievement all round in aid of Hall funds. Much appreciation to all those who donated jumble and many grateful thanks to all the members of the



community who gave their time and effort in support of the event. Once again, immense gratitude to Heat Radiation of Taunton for providing a truck to take all the left over jumble to the re-cycling centre.

Neroche Hall – Safari Supper



Saturday 22nd June – 7.30pm

£15.00 per head

Dine with your neighbours; a starter at one house, a main course at another and a dessert at a third (take a bottle to your first host). Then enjoy coffee, brandy/port and chocolates in the Hall at the end of your meal. An excellent way to meet and enjoy the company of your neighbours and friends.



Neroche Hall Annual General Meeting

The AGM for Neroche Hall will take place, in the hall,

Tuesday 11th June 2013 at 7.00pm

Following the Chairman's report, the Committee will discuss the achievements of the past year and make plans for the future.

The Committee wishes to welcome all residents of Neroche Parish to attend and to join in on discussions with the Committee.

The Committee are also actively looking to recruit new members, whether it be to work 'behind the scenes' assisting with the numerous administrative tasks required to run the hall, or to help organise the many varied events that are held in this wonderful building.



Anyone can, of course, approach any committee member, at any time, if they wish to find out more about the hall and its role within our community.

*For further information on the hall go to
www.nerochehall.org.uk*

Potholes

In 1967's 'A Day In The Life' John Lennon sang that there were "4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire". Although we can't match that total, 2,916 potholes were reported to Somerset County Council in the last year. (*Local drivers would be forgiven for thinking that they're all in the Neroche Villages!*)

When the road surface ages it becomes more porous and rainwater penetrates any cracks, the pressure created by car tyres passing over the area forces water further down into the road surface weakening it. Additionally, the worst weather conditions in 30 years have left roads across the country exposed to 'freeze-thaw' which results in deeper than usual potholes appearing. Once a pothole has formed it will grow in size as traffic continually dislodges and removes weakened and broken pieces of the surface.



Potholes requiring attention should be reported by following the links on the website: www.somerset.gov.uk.

When a pothole is reported, Somerset County Council will inspect it within 3 working days, and programme remedial work where required. The website confirms that 95% of reported potholes "*were attended to in accordance with set criteria within the required timescale*".

If the council don't know about the pothole, it won't be fixed!

However, road users shouldn't assume that poor road conditions are a modern phenomenon. The 1752 House of Commons petition for the Taunton Turnpike Trust includes the statement "*The highway from Taunton*

thru Parish of Orchard Portman, Stoke St Mary and Thurlbear to Staple Pound in Parish of Staple Fitzpaine" [had] "*become so ruinous and bad in the winter season that the same cannot be sufficiently repaired without the further assistance of Parliament, and therefore to that end the said highways may be well and efficiently repaired and kept in sufficient repair for the safety of all His Majesty's subjects whose business requires their travel thru the said highway*".



Litter Pick-Up Day – Saturday 9th March 2013

By: Wally Torrington

The Litter Pick-Up Action Group organised another most successful day in March. Fourteen hardy volunteers were blessed with good weather and collected a whopping 35 bags of rubbish from the main roads running



through the parish. But that wasn't all they found, their haul also included: tyres; all forms of car parts; dead animals; and a wallet containing personal belongings, including credit/debit cards - it was handed to the police who will ensure it is returned to its rightful owner. The mountain of collected litter formed one large truck-load and exceeded the amount gathered in last

year's spring 'Pick-Up', however, this was partly due to the autumn event having been cancelled because of poor weather and the hedgerows not having been cut.

The 'Pick-Up' was organised by Jayne Hunt, ably assisted by her two hard working fellow committee members, Alison and Anthony Brown. Jayne: liaised with the local authorities, including the police and Somerset Waste Partnership (they run waste services for TDBC); divided the route into a number of 500 yard 'litter pick-up sections'; allocated sections to pairs of litter collectors; and oversaw the whole operation with military precision.



At the end of the 'Pick-Up', Alison Brown drove the route in her truck and collected all the filled rubbish sacks, held on to the haul over the weekend, and supervised its

Our leader, Jayne Hunt

collection by Somerset Waste Partnership on the Monday.

The Neroche Litter Pick-Up initiative was originally sponsored by Viridor (the waste management company who form part of Somerset Waste Partnership) who provided hi-viz jackets, gloves, bags and litter-picker-sticks. However, some of this kit now requires replacement, so Jayne's husband, Steve, is planning to approach MacDonald's and some other fast-food outlets to see if they would be willing to help.

If you wish to learn more about future 'Litter Pick-Ups' then contact Jayne on 01823 480113 or at jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk. However, if you would rather help in your own time, and at your own pace, then why not contact Anthony who organises the 'Adopt a Stretch of Road' initiative, and he will allocate a section of road or lane, near to where you live, for you to keep free of litter throughout the year. He can be reached on 01823 480441 or at alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk

NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a great home-cooked 2-course lunch. Meet people from the locality, take time out from your busy daily routine *and* enjoy conviviality & friendliness a a community lunch.

**Lunches will take place on Thursdays
at 12.30 for 1.00 pm**

9th May, 6th June, 4th July, 1st August

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

Contact Alison Brown
tel: 01823 480441,
Email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk

Organised by Friends of St Peters Church

Neroche Local History Group: A View on Natural History

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



As we enjoy the natural beauty of our local environment, I am writing in celebration of the hedgerow trees that make our local area so lovely. Previous and current generations of farmers, foresters, landowners and gardeners have left us a legacy of large mature hedgerow trees, with oaks, beeches and ash being the predominate species with others such as black poplar and alder.

Large mature oaks are often the signature trees that dot our hedgerows. Oaks regularly live to be 500 years old, and individuals of 1,000 years of age are known. When you look closely at the older oaks in our hedgerows many have been pollarded in the past, prolonging their lives and making them a productive part of the hedge environment.

An oak produces its first good seed crop when it is 40-50 years old. Large numbers of acorns are produced intermittently in what are known as mast years, these occur every three to five years when a mature tree can produce many thousands of acorns. But very few of the acorns produced by a single oak are successful in growing on to become a mature tree.



Apart from their beauty, oaks provides an amazing habitat for more organisms than any other tree. Their lichens, mosses, fungi, moths, beetles, spiders and many more insects in turn attract a variety of birds and other wildlife.

As we travel about the area most of us would enjoy the large beech trees along the ridge road towards Wellington. Some of these majestic old trees were planted as boundary hedges as part of the 19th century enclosures.

In more recent times ash has often been selected as a hedgerow tree. We would all be familiar with the silhouette of a young ash left to grow up after hedge cutting.

Whilst we are the lucky inheritors of these natural riches there are some potential threats ahead:

Few new beeches are being brought on along the ridge road. There is little opportunity to establish new 'lines' of trees behind the current ones, and the

occasional felling of existing mature beeches because of fear for their stability means there are gaps which are not being filled.

As ash gradually takes the place of oak in our hedgerows, they may face the threat of ash dieback. *Chalara fraxinea* is a serious disease of ash trees caused by a fungus, and has been widespread across Europe since first flaring up in Poland in 1992. It causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and usually leads to tree death. Trees cannot recover but may take some years to die, often by a secondary infection like honey fungus rather than the Chalara itself. A very small proportion of ash trees seem to have a natural resistance to the disease. It is clear that Chalara is now established in the UK, and is here to stay. The question is, how might we



(Beeches on Staple Hill)

contain it, minimise its spread, and try and protect our ash woods. *For more on ash dieback, how to recognise it and what to do: see www.nerochescheme.org or www.woodlandtrust.org.uk*

If you have any views on how we can keep our hedgerow trees for future generations maybe we can start a “conversation” through the kind offices of this community newsletter by writing to the editor.

Plant Survey



Wild plant conservation charity ‘Plantlife’ is seeking members of the Neroche community to help in its annual Wildflower Count this spring and summer. The research, aimed at detecting trends in wild plant populations over time, requires identifying plant alongside a 1 km walk through an allocated 1 km square area within in 5 kms of a participant’s postcode, or examining two specific plots in this zone. If you wish to know more, go to Plantlife’s website at: www.plantlife.org.uk

Neroche Crime Report

Fortunately, we live in a relatively crime-free area, however, earlier in the year there were sightings of various suspicious individuals driving around the parish, visiting numerous properties, under the guise of selling power tools and generators etc. In January there was a sighting of a white van with Irish occupants visiting properties in Bickenhall, supposedly selling chainsaws but snooping around in sheds and garages. This was rapidly followed by another sighting which was reported on the Neroche Email Alert as follows:



“As a follow-up to the Email Alert circulated last week, there have been a number of further reports, this time of a blue van YK 55 PZL with a middle aged Irish male and a child calling at households in the parish. All information was passed to local

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators who, in-turn, contacted the police, who took immediate action. Should you see these or similar individuals then immediately call the police on 101 or, alternatively, call one of our two Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators. Furthermore, the following is a message issued by the police:

This message has been sent on behalf of police officers looking into a number of offences relating to the sale of tools door to door.

There have been a number of incidents recently where persons have been calling on communities trying to sell tools, including chain saws, hedge trimmers etc, from the back of vans. Tools have been later found to be sub-standard.

Firstly, officers would like to remind everyone that they do not encourage householders to buy any items from callers at the door. It is much better to go to formal suppliers and to ensure that guarantees are in place if appropriate. Secondly, they are also keen to receive information about any persons that do come

calling in the area - particularly if they are selling items door-to-door. Please forward any information direct to the police on their general number 101.”

Then, in March, David Symmonds posted the following notice from Avon and Somerset Police on the Neroche Email Alert:

“This message is sent for the information of members of Farm Watch and members of the community on the Blackdowns. It is regarding a vehicle that was seen in suspicious circumstances at around 10.15pm on 4 March 2013. The vehicle is described as a ‘T’ reg black Ford Cougar, partial registration ends in KKG. Person in the vehicle was described as a white male, aged 20-30, tall, stocky build, dark hair and thick eyebrows. It is believed there could have been others in the vehicle but there are no details.

Police would be keen to hear of any sightings of such a vehicle; if it is possible to obtain more details of the registration, that would be helpful. Also, description of any users. Police would like to be able to speak to the driver, so prompt reports direct on the 101 number would be of great assistance.”



If you have information about any crime, phone the police on 101 or you can call anonymously to the independent charity CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111. For general information about Neighbourhood Watch contact our local coordinators, David Symmonds 01823 480208 (primarily Curland and Bickenhall) or Jenny Stewart 01823 480073 (primarily Staple Fitzpaine); in fact, why not keep these numbers permanently by the telephone?

In summary, we received a 'thank you' from the police for our vigilance in reporting the Irish ‘gentlemen’ who were touring the Parish; it enabled the police to prepare a profile of the individuals which helped greatly with their enquiries.

A Few Notes from the Farming Community

As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, Daniel Macey of Underhill Farm, Staple Fitzpaine has kindly penned a few words to give us a better understanding of what life has been like during this particularly difficult period for the local farming community

As spring rapidly approaches, we are all hoping for a better season than the past twelve months mother nature dealt us. On our dairy farm, here in Staple Fitzpaine,



our new farming year starts in the spring as this is the time when we start preparing next winters feed stocks by applying fertilizer to grassland and drilling maize for forage. Maize is usually planted between the third week of April and, at the latest, the third week of May; at the same time we will be harvesting the new spring growth of grass. If all goes to plan and we manage to do this well, with the

sun on our backs, the farm will be set up for the next year.

On reflection, as we approached this point last year, the rain began, so achieving this was very difficult and conjures up memories of a situation we hope not to repeat. We had five weeks of nonstop rain from the middle of April, followed by three weeks of dry weather, allowing us just enough time to catch up with the spring workload. Unfortunately, the rain came again, hampering the most important growth stages of the Maize; this resulted in a very poor wet and messy

Maize harvest in mid-October when we reached only 40% of our target yield. Further cuts of grass in July/August were also hampered by rain and the quality was poor due to the lack of sun during the growth period. As well as problems with the harvest, also from mid-April we would expect to see large proportions of the farm's livestock going out to grass,



however, throughout the whole summer we only had 10% of the farm's livestock out at any-one-time. Keeping livestock in meant we had to start using already reduced winter feed stock, straw for bedding and more dung and slurry was created,

all of which lead to unusual costs. With summer gladly behind us we prepared for a tough, long winter.



From late August the cows start calving, this is our busiest time of year with up to 6/7 cows calving a day, with approximately 250 calved before Christmas, which means lots of night shifts. We rear two breeds on our

farm, Holstein which are for dairy and Aberdeen Angus which are reared for beef. We keep all of the Holstein females for replacements in the dairy heard and all of the Holsteins males and Aberdeen Angus are sold from 3 weeks old for other farmers to rear for beef. This year we had 88 female Holsteins calves born during a 9 week period, these calves will enter the dairy heard as adults in two years' time.



With winter in full swing and persistent wet weather it has been entertaining trying to apply slurry to the fields and keep the slurry lagoon at a manageable level. We even enjoyed some snow this winter which, believe

it or not, causes us farmers a little headache too! Our milk collection is usually at 12 midnight but on two occasions during the snow it was at 3am, which meant being out of bed beforehand to clear the road.

Although the last 12 months have been tough, we have managed to get by. Our thoughts, however, are with our colleagues down on the Somerset Levels who have spent most of the year with 10,000 acres under water. At the time of writing this article, we are moving into spring; since the third week of February we have appreciated the dry weather and hope that this may continue and lift our spirits.



(Editor's note: Since Daniel wrote this article we've had the coldest March in more than 60 years; in fact March was colder than the winter months of December, January and February. It seems that winter hasn't finished with the farmers yet.)

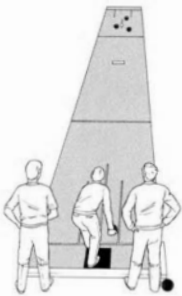
Neroche Short Mat Bowling Club

We have recently learned the tremendous news that our very own Neroche Short Mat Bowling Club has finished top of Division 2 of the Taunton and District League, and, as a consequence, have been promoted to Division 1. I'm sure you would all wish to join the editorial team at the Neroche Villages' Newsletter in offering our heartiest congratulations. Rob Larkman, the Club Chairman, has kindly penned the following article:

The Club has been playing bowls at the Neroche Parish Hall for nearly 25 years and for most of that time have competed in Division 2 of the Taunton & District League. 2012/13 has been a historic season having finally finished top of the league, gaining promotion to Division 1.



Each of the 2 Divisions comprises 8 teams; home and away matches are played between October and March, with a break over the Christmas period. Home matches and practice nights take place on Thursdays, with away games on various other evenings.



The indoor short mat game is played along the lines of normal forms of bowling, with bowls and the target “Jack” but with three marked differences:

- a) Playing mats measure 40–45 ft long and 6 ft wide.
- b) A white wooden block of 15 inches is placed across the centre.
- c) Wooden fenders are placed at each end of each mat.

Basically, when all bowls have been played, the team with the nearest bowl(s) win the point(s). Any bowls that hit the block, do not reach the playing area or go off the end or side are foul shots and taken off the mat.

The format we play is 10 players per team with two games of triples, each player bowling two bowls and, following the mandatory tea and biscuit break, two games of pairs, each player bowling three bowls. Each game comprises ten sub games called 'ends'. The team winning each game scores two points or one each for a draw, with the overall match total earning another two or one point as may be. Therefore, the maximum points per match is ten.

Playing strip is generally grey trousers with white tops; plus we have navy blue club sweaters. Current age range for the club is from 8 to 80+ and we have some 14 registered players. Match fees are £1.50 for home games, supplemented by bringing a prize for the tea break raffle. There is an annual Somerset League membership fee of £5 per head.

We are all stars but like the constellation, sometimes they shine but sometimes they don't. The most experienced player is John Alford who, for many years, played at County level.

If you wish to know more about the Club then please contact Rob at robjoy72@googlemail.com

TAUNTON & DISTRICT LEAGUE
DIVISION 2
FINAL LEAGUE TABLE - 22.03.13

	Team	Matches played	Games won	Games drawn	Shots for	Shots against	Shot diff.	Total bonus	Total points
1	Neroche	14	37	3	575	449	+126	18	95
2	Bradford on Tone	14	34	3	575	468	+107	18	89
3	Ashcott	14	29	5	587	464	+126	18	81
4	Trull	14	30	0	504	465	+39	14	74
5	Combwich	14	25	2	515	503	+12	14	66
6	Kingsmead	14	22	3	499	541	-42	14	61
7	Acorns	14	22	1	447	544	-97	12	57
8	Creech St. Michael	14	16	1	400	664	-264	4	37

Neroche Parish Council



Welcome to the second in a series of articles produced by our Clerk to the Parish Council, Howard Midworth. This contribution looks at the background to Annual Parish Meetings.

The month of May is the time when many Parish Councils organise what is known as the Annual Parish Meeting, which provides the opportunity for all registered electors in the Parish to gather, listen to what is going on, express their views and have their say in local affairs.

The Annual Parish or Town Meeting is unique among the tiers of local government and originates from the pre 1894 days, when a public meeting was held of eligible parishioners to elect, by show of hands, churchwardens and certain parish officers such as the constable, the beadle and local poor law officials. When the Local Government Act 1894 separated the civil and ecclesiastical functions of the parish, the meetings split into an Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the requirement for an annual parishioners meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June, although it does not elect any officials.

The Chairman of the Parish Council calls the meeting and delivers a report on the activities of the Council over the past year. Neroche is a grouped Parish Council, and as legislation states that each separate civil parish must have its own meeting, this requires separate notices to be published for each parish, and the Chairman must open and close separate meetings for Bickenhall, Curland, Staple Fitzpaine, and Orchard Portman with Thurlbear.

Many parishes report that, in these days of electronic communication, local electors no longer turn up for the meeting but others have adapted it into an opportunity for parishioners to meet up with their local Councillors, for local interest groups to have the chance to exhibit the

variety of activities taking place in their area, and for County and District Councillors to brief residents on the progress of various wider schemes that may affect the Parish.

The aim of Local Councils, such as the Parish Council, is to work towards improving community well-being and providing services at a local level. Their activities fall into three main categories: representing the local community; delivering services to meet local needs; striving to improve quality of life and community well-being.



Through a range of discretionary powers, local councils can facilitate the provision and/or maintenance a variety of important and visible local services, including allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, bus shelters, car parks, commons and open spaces, community transport schemes, community safety, events and festivals, footpaths, grit bins, leisure and sports facilities, litter bins, street cleaning and lighting, tourism activities, traffic calming measures, village greens and youth projects.

Recently, the Localism Act 2011 granted eligible Councils the power to use what is known as the ‘General Power of Competence’, which enables them to undertake anything that an individual can, providing it is lawful. The eligibility requirement is for two thirds of Councillors to have stood for election (rather than being co-opted), and to have a qualified Clerk (holding the Certificate in Local Council Management). Neroche Parish Council currently fulfils these requirements, and therefore could resolve to adopt this power if it considered it was required.

This year the Neroche Annual Parish Meeting is being held on 16th May at 7.30pm at Neroche Hall. Therefore, if you would like to know more about the Parish Council and local events then why not come along and find out what is happening in the local area.

Chris Webb

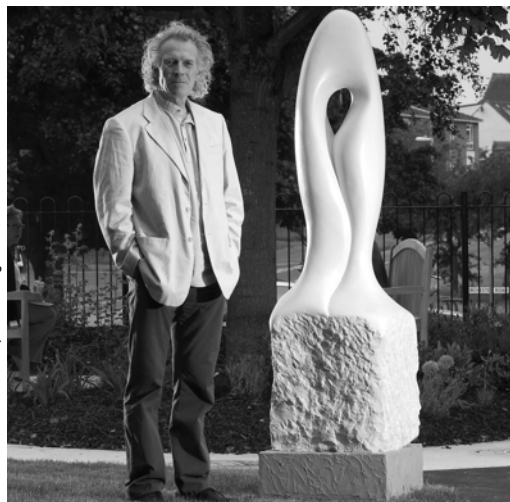
Local sculptor, Chris Webb, has been accepted as an exhibitor at this year's prestigious RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July. Chris will be exhibiting more than ten sculptures, mostly in Portland stone (his favourite material) and bronze.



The sculptures will be previewed in Taunton in late May and June at the Memorial Hall (on the corner of Paul Street and Billetfield). This exhibition will also feature workshops and demonstrations; for details go to the Creative Innovation Centre website: www.creativeinnovationcentre.co.uk



Many people will already have seen some of Chris's work without realising it: he recently crafted the abstract sculpture featured in the Priorswood Gardens for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; the giant Portland Stone eggs which were outside the Brewhouse Theatre and now form the centrepiece of the Kingfisher's Nest in Somerset Square; and, many years ago, created the 'Sword In The Stone' which sat in the gardens by the Castle Museum.



Chris has been an artist / smith / sculptor for nearly 30 years and is happiest when carving stone in styles ranging from abstract to organic to figurative. He has been working at his Black Dog studio in Bickenhall for about three years, having previously been based in Blagdon Hill, Wellington and Culm Davy. The Portland

Stone used in his sculptures comes from the quarry on Portland Bill, near Weymouth. Chris chooses the right block of stone by striking it with a hammer to hear it's 'ring', the higher the note the better the quality with fewer flaws.



After almost a year of carving two 2.3 ton pieces of Portland Stone, Chris has just finished his latest commission. These sculptures are of Byrhtnorth and Aethelyled and are destined for a private garden in Shropshire before, eventually, being donated to a museum.

Byrhtnorth was an Anglo Saxon warrior who fought the Vikings in about 850AD and is depicted in the last moments before his death, exhausted and with a broken sword. The Vikings admired his bravery so much that they wrote a poem about him, some of which will be cast into a bronze plaque accompanying the sculpture.

Aethelyled was King Alfred's daughter and has been carved to portray her nobility and standing within Alfred's court.



Chris is having a studio sale in order to clear some of his sculptures (at reduced prices) to make room for his next large commission and is quite happy to chat to visitors about his work at the studio in Bickenhall Farm.



website: <http://www.chriswebb-sculptor.co.uk/>



Personal Reflections on Four Years as a County Councillor

By David Fothergill, our County Councillor

As I write there are just a few weeks left before the County Elections at the beginning of May, at which point, due to the boundary changes, I will no longer be County Councillor for the Neroche Parishes - although I do hope I'll have been elected elsewhere!

So, as my first four years as a County Councillor draws to a close, I thought some retrospection on that period was worthwhile.

The first shock, almost on day one, was learning a whole new language! A quadrennium?! Now that's not a term in everyday use but it's Local Authority speak for four years. Then there was the 'Strong Leader model' but I thought every leader was supposed to be strong?! And then there was the endless acronyms, far too many to recall or mention.

The second and much greater shock was realising the County Council had so much debt to cope with at time of reducing government grants. I could write a whole article on this alone but now is probably not the appropriate place.

One of the privileges I have enjoyed though has been attending more than 350 Parish Councils. Some may say that this could only have been boring but I find them fascinating, and even within the normal business of the Council there are real moments of humour. I remember one Parish Council, to remain nameless, when the Councillors were exercised by the Parish Clock not working, in fact sometimes it did work and others it didn't. This elicited a phrase from one Councillor which will live with me forever – 'the clock never works on a Tuesday'! After much more debate it was established that the Parish Clock never worked on a Tuesday because the bell ringers practiced on a Monday night and stopped the clock so as not to disrupt them!

Other similarly bizarre conversations have involved spitting alpaca's, badgers digging deep in the graveyard and my other favourite – how many filled sandbags could you store in a disused telephone box?



My point in recounting these stories is not to mock any of the conversations but purely to illustrate just how important Parish Councils are in dealing with local problems needing local knowledge to deliver local solutions.

It has been a true privilege to serve the Parishes of Neroche as County Councillor; I will move on with many happy memories but most especially of all, helping to secure the funding for the Parish Hall, it was touch and go but the result is now an asset we should all be very proud of.

With best wishes for the future, and **I look forward to seeing you all at the Neroche Annual Parish Meetings, in the Village Hall, on 16th May.**

PILATES

Neroche Village Hall – Wednesdays , 10-11am (from 8 May)

Isle Abbots Village Hall – Wednesdays, 7-8pm

Spirit Health Club – Thursdays, 7-8pm (members only)

Curry Mallet & Beercrocombe Village Hall – Fridays, 9.30-10.30am

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

**Contact Sheila on 01460 281729 for more details
Mobile: 07593 377810**



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

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

PS: Pilates works for men too!



Not Just Jam and Jerusalem

The Women's Institute (WI) was started in the UK in 1915 to revitalise rural communities and to encourage women to become more involved in producing food during the First World War. Since then the organisation's aims has broadened and the WI is now this country's largest women's organisation.

The WI plays a unique role in providing women with educational opportunities and the chance to build new skills, to take part in a wide variety of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them, their families and their communities. One of our most senior members from Bickenhall WI gathered pages and pages of names on the petition to recruit more midwives.

Other campaigns the WI is passionate about include: no more violence against women, the decline of our high streets and town centres, and environmental campaigns (including fair prices for farmers and the plight of honey bees).

Education is a huge part of the success of the WI and Denman is our very own College. Situated in the village of Marcham near Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Denman House is set in 17 acres of lovely garden and is often referred to as 'The Jewel in the WI Crown'. The College offers accommodation for 84 students (non WI members very welcome too). One of our newer members has just returned from a weekend of bread making.



(WI - Denman College)

Our local WI, Bickenhall and District, formed in 1926, meets on the second Wednesday of each month, a small but happy band of ladies where ages range from 30's to a wonderful 90 years of age – our meetings are always full of interesting conversation, laughter and friendship. We start our meetings with a rousing rendition of Jerusalem followed by WI news and community events. Each month we invite a speaker to join and entertain us - see our programme below. We would be delighted to see you, either as a member or as a visitor (£3). Don't put us in the box of just jam and Jerusalem, come and see



(WI - Christmas Fayre Cakes)

what we have to offer in the way of new skills and knowledge.

July 10th Animal Communication –Kerry Hornett

September 11th You are what you eat – Rhona Gillmore

October 9th “9-5 No thank you” – Mickey Fitzpatrick



(WI-Skittles team)

November 13th Valuation of Antiques - Nic Saintey

December 11th Hands on pottery decorating – Art- to- Art

Contact Fran Alford (our secretary) on 01460 234245 or email Fran on fran.alford@hotmail.co.uk

News from Taunton Deane Borough Council

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.

We have just experienced the worse period of bad weather that most of us can remember. Last year was particularly wet and so far this year the cold, wet weather persists. On 1st March the BBC weatherman announced that it was the first official day of spring; I looked forward in hopeful anticipation. On 20th March he announced that we had reached the Spring Equinox, but still the weather continued to be decidedly wintery. Since then we have had bitterly cold winds from the East and half the country covered in very deep snow. Will it ever end and true spring arrive, to be followed by summer? Hopefully, by the time you read this, winter will be a past memory.



Flooding

The good thing I can say is that despite the recent very heavy rain, the unprecedented flooding of late last year has not re-occurred, we must be

thankful for small mercies. Not least that the renewal of a major length of drain at Orchard Portman carried out by the County Council has been successful in preventing flooding of the road which had previously blocked one of the main routes into town so repeatedly.

Planning, Development and the ‘Adopted Core Strategy’

Some months ago I wrote about Taunton Deane Borough Council having achieved the milestone of gaining an approved ‘Adopted Core Strategy’. This is our local plan but only allocating proposed areas of housing and employment growth Borough wide. I feel it is worthy of further comment because, as the Planning Authority, we are now refining this planning exercise. Formal consultation for Site Allocation and Development management Plan Policies (SADMPP) are being conducted which invites interested parties, generally landowners or developers, to submit proposals for potential development. Our Forward Plan Officers will assess them against established sustainability criteria. As noted previously, this does not impact on any settlement in Neroche Ward. There are only five settlements across the Deane that have been classified as having sufficient services to warrant modest expansion. The projected growth across the five settlements is 250 dwellings of which 25% should be affordable. For example, villages nearby in this category are Creech St Michael and North Curry as they have shops, school, surgery, pub and bus services therefore deemed capable of coping with additional houses.

I have received considerable representation from these communities because willing landowners or developers have put forward all manner of sites that potentially will take many more houses than the allocation proposed. This has obviously caused great concern to some residents but sites will be assessed against the sustainability criteria to determine an allocation to meet the needs of the village. A lot of sites will most likely not be selected in this process.

Villages that are minor settlements but have boundaries allocated, for example Corfe, Staple Fitzpaine, Hatch Beauchamp and Stoke St Mary will have no site allocations. However, limited infill applications within the village envelope may be permitted. All other settlements without any settlement limits will be classed



as open countryside. Development will not normally be permitted unless 'special exception' circumstances apply. I hope it can be seen that we should not anticipate a rash of new development in Neroche Parish!

One final point on planning, I am sure most will have seen concerns raised in the national press that planning rules are to be liberalised by Government; with the fear that this, in turn, will encourage development to run wild across our green and pleasant land! As the Leader of the Local Planning Authority I am certainly not aware of any such plans. However, the risk comes when Local Planning Authorities do not have an Adopted Core Strategy in place. This requires a five year supply of available and deliverable land for the housing development planned. I am delighted to say we have our Adopted Core Strategy and our five year supply of land. It does mean we have to be ever vigilant to keep adding to this latter requirement to avoid the risk of appeals being won. The Site Development Plan Process I described above is absolutely essential to feed into the five year supply. In this way we ensure we are in control of future development and it is not determined through the appeal process by independent Inspectors.

If anybody has any questions or would like clarification on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Parish Meeting in Neroche Hall on 16th May

Somerset County Council Elections

Thursday 2nd May 2013

Your Vote Counts

USE IT!



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

Thursday 16 May 2013

Neroche Village Hall - Doors Open 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, and it must take place after 6.00pm

The Annual Parish Meetings is one of the most important local events of the year. An occasion when: residents can make their voices heard; meet their Parish, Borough and County Councillors; learn more about local, social and sporting activities; and be updated on the progress being made by local Action Groups. 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. There will be guest speakers, and stands for all the clubs and social organisations in the parishes to advertise their activities. It is most important that as many local residents as possible



attend. This year's event will be taking place during the evening of Thursday 16 May 2013 in the Neroche Village Hall.

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

Neroche Annual Parish Meetings

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

Thursday 16th May 2013 - Neroche Village Hall

Open 7.00pm - Formal Presentations Start 7.30pm

Jon Bell, Parish Council Chairman

Presenting: The Annual Report

David Fothergill, Somerset County Councillor

Speaking on: *Local Flooding Issues; Broadband; Defibrillator Project, and introducing his successor.*

John Williams Lead of Taunton Deane Borough Council, and Neroche Ward Councillor

Speaking on: *The TDBC Flood Alleviation Strategy; Improvements to the A358; Parking in Taunton (important to us as 95% of local journeys to Taunton are by car)*

Gavin Saunders – Neroche Project

Speaking on: *Neroche Forest Issues*

Stroll around the stands (representing numerous local clubs, organisations and groups), speak with club representatives, event organisers, Action Group members and meet your Parish, Taunton Deane and Somerset County Councillors

This is the most important local event of the year.

Your attendance and support is essential;

please be there!!!



***FREE 'cheese-and-wine' and other
refreshments served all evening***



Take Art - Friday 15th March at Neroche Hall

Only Take Art could give us a concert that brought Amadou Diagne, singer and guitarist from Senegal, Griselda Sanderson, fiddle player from Scotland and Omer Makessa, percussionist from Martinique to a rural Somerset hall!



70 plus people gathered to hear a wonderful evening of song, percussion and music. We also listened as African, Caribbean and Northern European music and song met in harmony and watched the wonderful interaction between the trio.

The evening was complemented by a plentiful supply from the bar and homemade snacks for the audience.

After the demise of the Brewhouse, Take Art will become ever more important in helping us bring entertainment and class acts to our local village halls.



Neroche History Group invites you to a different way of looking at rural history

Time & Tide Theatre Co Present

Two Nations

A journey from the time of agricultural change to the industrial revolution and beyond, through the eyes of the common man in story, song and music. Drawing on the writing of Cobbett, Disraeli, Blake, Kingsley, Hardy etc.

Music and lyrics from traditional Somerset & Dorset songs.

Wednesday 22nd May at 7.30pm at Neroche Hall

Everyone Welcome

Non members £2.50

Goddards Orchard Garden, Staple Fitzpaine Open To The Public

Summer is here and once again the garden of Goddards Orchard is opening under the National Garden Scheme. The NGS raises money for charities such as Cancer Research and MacMillan Trust as well as providing apprenticeships in gardening for young people.



This half-acre cottage-style garden is on a slope and has some narrow pathways and steps. The small woodland is wildlife friendly with seats for resting and watching. There is a streamside walk which continues through the natural grass/wild flower meadow and then on to the large vegetable garden.

All money from the entry fees go direct to the NGS, as does 10% of proceeds from the delicious teas and cakes that will be provided by Bickenhall WI.

ngs gardens open
for charity

Do come along and give your support.

Parking in Home Mead, next to the Greyhound Inn.

Goddards Orchard Garden, Staple Fitzpaine

OPEN on Sunday, 30 June
and Wednesday, 3 July 2013
2.00 – 5.30 pm

Entry: Adult £3.50 Children Free
Dogs allowed on leads
Teas / Cakes / Plants for Sale / Exhibition

Taunton Vale Polo Club

When driving along the Staple Fitzpaine to Taunton road you will no doubt have seen the sign for the Taunton Vale Polo Club ground, however, I doubt that many of us know very much about the Club and how it originated. Nick Harrison-Sleep, the Honorary Secretary, has kindly provided an article to enlighten us on an organisation that has been established in our Parish for over a hundred years and is the second oldest polo ground in England. You may wish to note the “Have a go at Polo” advert at the end of this article.



An excerpt from The Club Official Handbook - 1939:

“When two keen polo players find themselves in a district, no matter where it may be, in which polo is not played, one maybe sure that their first action is to try to get six or more others to join up, and then start their favourite game.

Thus, when Mr J C de Las Casas, one of the well-known Tiverton team of brothers, and Major Jones Mortimer came to Taunton and met out hunting in the winter of 1910-1911 it was not long before a meeting was called to discuss the formation of a Polo Club, and in February 1911, the Taunton Vale Polo Club originated. After careful examination of various localities, an old pasture field, situated at Orchard Portman, 2 miles from Taunton was selected, a small wooden hut was erected for the use by the players, and a groundsman engaged for three afternoons a week at a salary of 10/-.



Tournaments, which were started in 1912, proved a great success and improved the quality of the local Polo; in 1913 the Taunton Vale Team was successful in the Ward Jackson Cup (Blackmore Vale), the Portman Challenge Cup, the Houldsworth Cup, and the West Somerset (Dunster) Junior Cup. The War, of course, brought Polo to an end; but the Club was revived in 1920, and a

second ground secured adjoining the first. The latter, in addition to its picturesque surroundings, and thanks to the unremitting care of Secretaries and groundsmen, has now become one of the best in England. Thanks to the mat of old grass it rarely becomes at all slippery and is also quickly drying after rain.

The Club has been exceptionally fortunate in the gentlemen who have so kindly acted as Honorary Secretaries and who have directed their whole hearted attention to the enjoyment of players and spectators and the improvement of the ground.

The Taunton Vale Polo Club specially cares for players from abroad, who are always welcome, and also for the younger players. The club has regular Ladies' Polo playing amongst the members and great keenness is shown, and some of the ladies are very successful and show the men how polo is played."



More Recent History:

When reading the 1939 excerpt above, it is striking how much is still true and how the Club has developed. We still play for the same Taunton Vale Polo Club cups, the Club still attracts and welcomes visitors from abroad and our Ladies now form a very strong nucleus of players in 'mixed' polo and in Ladies polo. The Club continues to be exceptionally fortunate in the gentlemen who have acted as officers of the Club. Sir Henry Farrington will be long remembered.

Now, in its one-hundred-and-first season, Taunton Vale Polo Club is still Somerset's premier polo club. The club, under the present Chairman, Justin Stanhope-White, instigated the 'have a go at polo' days which gives you a taste of playing polo, under the instruction of qualified coaches, and riding actual polo ponies which you play in a game at the end of the instructional day. Full details are available on the Club website on www.tauntonvalepolo.co.uk. At present, the club has some 60 playing members and the season starts in mid-April and runs through to mid-

September, with play each Wednesday afternoon and Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Teas are available and entry is free, so come along and have a look!

'HAVE-A-GO AT POLO' DAYS

Learn to play polo in a day.

Our next days are: Sunday 28th April & Sunday 19th May 2013, starting 10am

Includes: pony hire, refreshments and lunch.

You will be taught by HPA Club Instructors

Students must be able to ride before enrolling.



Please call Katrina for further information, on 07939 598 654
or email haveago@tauntonvalepolo.co.uk

Awards for All – Big Lottery Fund

By Wally Torrington – Newsletter Project Coordinator

I'm delighted to be able to inform all our readers that the Neroche Communication Action Group has secured a grant for £1,000 from the 'Awards for All – Big Lottery Fund'. The monies have been allocated for the purchase of computer equipment and associated software. This means the editorial team will have a dedicated computer upon which to produce the quarterly Neroche Villages Newsletter. Any remaining cash will be used to help cover production costs. This fantastic news, however, is by no means an indication that the Newsletter is financially secure. We must continue with our fundraising efforts to ensure we are able to continue publication in the medium to long term.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Neroche Friday Film Night *(in association with Moviola - entry £5)*



Following Neroche Hall's first Friday Film Night showing of **'Quartet'** (cert 12a) on 26th April 2013, the next films to be shown will be;

Friday 31st May 2013 at 7.30pm **ARGO (cert 15)** **Winner of 3 Oscars, including Best Picture.**

Based on a true story...



Tehran, 1979. Students demanding the extradition from the US of the former Shah to face trial have laid siege to the US Embassy, taking 90 hostages. However, six American diplomats have managed to escape to the Canadian Embassy, and are in hiding. Exfiltration expert Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck) devises a daring ruse: posing as the Producer of a fake Canadian "Star Wars" type movie project filming in the Iranian desert, he plans to smuggle the six out as production crew.

Friday 28th June 2013 at 7.30pm **LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED (cert 15)**

Love Is All You Need is a warm, funny, heartfelt meditation on the birth pangs of starting a new life. Set at a picture-perfect summer wedding in Sorrento, the film stars Pierce Brosnan as Philip, a lonely, middle-aged English widower and estranged single father living in Denmark, and Trine Dyrholm as Ida, a Danish hairdresser recuperating from chemotherapy, who has just learned that her husband is leaving her for a woman half his age from his accounts department. The fates of these two bruised souls intertwine as they embark for Italy to attend the wedding of his son, Patrick, to her daughter, Astrid.



Further details:

Nicky Baxter 01823 480 675 ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk,

Anne Perry 01460 234 377

Neroche Hall website; www.nerochehall.org.uk

On Our Doorstep

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

Blackdown Hills AONB Events Programme.

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership produces a programme of activities titled 'Blackdown Hills Countryside Events'. The published programme for 2013 is packed with a variety of activities; why not join them on one of their programmed events (for full details of these and many other events, go to www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk):

18 May. 'Photography on Two Wheels'. Pounds Farm, Hemyock. Combine your interest in photography with the pleasure of a guided leisurely electric bike ride.



23 May. 'Nightjar and Bat-walk' Blackdown Common. A walk over Blackdown Common with local naturalist Richard Whiteside using an electronic bat detector.

1&2 June. 'Wildflower Weekend' Goren Farm, Stockland. Stretching over 70 acres, Goren Farm has the largest selection of protected meadows in the Blackdown Hills area.

14 June. 'Evening Walk Around Luppitt' Village Hall, Luppitt. A circular walk from Luppitt through Hense Moor and along Hartridge; a lovely and wild part of the Blackdowns.



6 July. 'The Blackdown Woodland Fair' Park Farm, Wrangway, Wellington. Poll climbing, tree felling, and horse logging

competitions, children's games and tree climbing, bar and local food, archery, hundreds of stalls, demonstrations and lots more.



17 July. 'Cycling With Children in the Summer Holidays' Hemyock Parish Hall. Gain confidence and tips about cycling with your family this summer holidays on the roads. Electric bike hire is available.

20/21 July. 'Backyard Fish Farming Weekend Course' Upper Hayne Farm EX15 2JD. Learn how to grow fish in your back garden, field, poly-tunnel or shed. Camping space available.



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.

Admission Prices to Racecourse (All inclusive of VAT).

Grandstand Ticket £15.00 (access to all areas other than members & private hospitality boxes). Centre Course/Picnic area £10.00 (Available on the day only). Full time students under the age of 25 admitted free on production of student photo ID. Day ticket for junior members (16 to 24) £9.00. Accompanied children under 16 admitted free. All Car Parking free.

Race Day Packages

The race day package is an ideal gift offering great value; it includes a Grandstand ticket to the meeting of your choice, a food and drink voucher for a snack with a drink (beer/wine/soft drink) of your choosing, a race card for the day and a tote £10 betting voucher - all for £30

Packages must be booked in advance. To purchase, call now on 01823 337172 or book online.

For full details of fixtures, ticket prices, facilities etc. go to www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

Ilminster Arts Centre

The Ilminster Arts Centre is situated at the Meeting House in Ilminster. It has a full programme of exhibitions, concerts, workshops, crafts and produce markets, and a thriving craft shop and café. For full details of their forthcoming events and extensive programme, go to www.themeetinghouse.org.uk



Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton.

You will have probably heard the sad news that The Brewhouse Theatre has closed. If/when a buyer is found and the theatre re-opens, we will continue to advertise their events.

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; The Small Fakers, Connie Lush, Verden Allen, Band of Friends, Hells Bells, The Nightporters, Albert Lee &*



Hogan's Heroes, Dire Streets and The Producers. And hoping to book: Slim Chance; John Otway; Larry Miller; Dr Feelgood; Hayseed Dixie; Paul Young; Robbie Mackintosh; Selector; Chris Jagger and many more.

For full information on these concerts and many others, go to www.squareandcompasspub.com

The Great Teasel Hunt

By: Gillian Widden

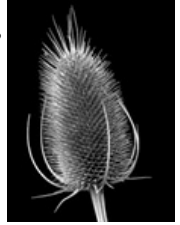


Dried Teasel flower head used to raise the nap on cloth

I am a member of Blackdown Hills Artists and Makers (<http://www.bhaam.org.uk>), and I'm making some work in response to the growing of the 'hooked' teasel (*Dipsacus sativus*), which was used to raise the nap on cloth. For part of my



project I plan to recreate the teasel stacks (as seen in the photo in the Farmer's Arms), but in a slightly different way, and using hedgerow teasels.



I need **thousands** of teasels to recreate this work. I have been collecting teasels for some time now but still need more and the weather has not been on my side, as the plants are now bending over and starting to rot. My other problem is finding teasels in significant numbers to make it worth my while trekking across the fields and returning to the car

with my haul! So far my best finds have been on the banks of rivers and small streams. I have collected some teasels on the Levels, but obviously it's easier to do most of my collecting locally.

If anyone has seen teasels growing in significant numbers in this area, where I can gain reasonable access from a parked car (walking is not the problem, it's carrying them back again!). If you can help I should be most grateful if you contacted me at widdeng@aol.com

Horse Toolkit

A new information pack about the equine infectious disease Strangles is being made available as an all-in-one toolkit for horse owners. The 'Strangles Speak Out' pack has been produced by the Redwing Horse Sanctuary welfare team.

A free copy can be ordered from welfare@redwings.co.uk or by phoning 01508 481008

Events For Your Calendar

May

- 2 Taunton Racing (go to www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)
- 2 Somerset County Council elections
- 4 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 9 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 11)
- 9 Parish Council Meeting (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 11 Taunton Racing (go to www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)
- 16 Annual Parish Meetings (see pages 30, 31)
- 19 Have-A-Go At Polo Day (see advert on page 36)
- 22 Time & Tide Theatre (see advert on page 32)
- 31 Friday Film Night - Argo (see advert on page 37)

June

- 1 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 6 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 11)
- 11 Neroche Hall AGM (see advert on page 8)
- 22 Safari Supper (see advert on page 7)
- 28 Friday Film Night - Love Is All You Need (see advert on page 37)
- 30 Goddards Orchard Garden Open Day (see article on page 33)

July

- 3 Goddards Orchard Garden Open Day (see article on page 33)
- 4 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 11)
- 6 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 10 WI Meeting (see article on pages 26, 27)
- 11 Parish Council Meeting (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)

August

- 1 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 11)
- 3 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www.nerochevillages.org.uk)

For further information on what is happening in the parish go to the community website www.nerochevillages.org.uk

See, also, the many various events listed in the ‘On Our Doorstep’ article on page 38, 39, 40

Usual collection day	Revised collection day
May	
May Day 6 May – Friday 10 May	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 11 May
Spring Bank Holiday 27 May – Friday 31 May	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 1 June
August	
Summer 26 August – 30 August	All collections one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 31 August

Mobile Library

Mobile libraries provide a service to communities where there is no static Library and have a selection of books on many subjects, novels, children's and large print books and other materials, such as DVDs and music CDs can be borrowed on request. You can also access the Internet on the mobile libraries, please ask the mobile library driver for help. Wheelchair access is available on all vehicles. For information about this service, contact Libraries Direct on 0845 3459177 or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries

7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 30th July, 27th August

Bickenhall Noticeboard	13.25 - 13.35
Curland Old Post Office	13.45 - 13.55
Staple Fitzpaine Greyhound Inn	14.05 - 14.20



School Holidays

It is always useful 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 regarding family holidays and road traffic.

25 May to 2 June 2013
24 July to 1 September 2013



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 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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