

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 6

Newsletter

November 2012

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

“Our forests and woods are nature's playground for the adventurous, museum for the curious, hospital for the stressed, cathedral for the spiritual and a livelihood for the entrepreneur.



They are a microcosm of the cycle of life in which each and every part is dependent on the other; forests and woods are the benefactor of all, purifying the air that we breathe and distilling

the water of life. In short, trees are for life.” - James Jones, The Right Reverend Bishop of Liverpool.

Welcome to the sixth 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.

Newsletter Foreword



John Williams, Borough Councillor for Neroche Ward and Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Can I firstly commend the dedicated group of people who put so much effort and commitment into producing this excellent newsletter for Neroche Parish, which is so informative and interesting. As a community you have a newsletter to be proud of, and due credit should be given to those that work so hard to produce it.

As your Borough Councillor for more years than I care to remember, I am very grateful for the trust placed in me at each election, and I feel blessed to represent such a marvellous parish as Neroche. It is a great area with so much beauty and history, which makes it is a wonderful place to live. A fairly recent achievement like the Herepath has opened up beautiful areas of the Blackdown Hills for all to enjoy and to marvel at the views and the flora and fauna.



Planning. Talking of beauty of the area, I am pleased to report that recently Taunton Deane BC adopted the Core Strategy (in old parlance ‘The Local Plan’) for Taunton Deane, which, in my view, gives us the greatest protection possible against unwanted and unplanned development. It does not stop any application being made to us, on any piece of land, which, as the Local Planning Authority we must consider, but it does provide us with the armoury to refuse it if it is not in compliance with the approved plan.

For those that may be concerned, please be assured there is no scheduled development for Neroche Parish, however, some development, particularly affordable housing, could be allowed under an ‘exceptions policy’ but this is very much driven by a proven need.

Police and Crime Commissioner. I wish to just touch on the forthcoming election of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the Avon & Somerset police force area. I am aware from discussion with different people that there is a feeling of “why change?” but could I exhort you to go out and vote as we need the voice of Somerset to be heard, not lose out to Bristol because of lack of interest. For many years we have heard how our taxes to fund the police are concentrated on Bristol, at the expense of Somerset, particularly rural areas. This seems to have improved but what we need is a PCC that will stand up for Somerset, not somebody that will give greater priority to Bristol. In my view, the time for debate about whether a PCC is right or wrong has passed, we now all need to go out and vote on the 15 November 2012 for the best person to represent the whole area.



Council Tax Benefits. I would like also to mention an impending change to funding of Council Tax benefits from Central Government. Although this applies across Taunton Deane (indeed the whole country) I am sure it will have an impact in the Parish of Neroche. As you will be aware, the Coalition Government have embarked upon a stringent cost cutting exercise in which welfare benefits figure highly. Council Tax benefits are administered by Taunton Deane BC, and in common with other authorities, we will have a 10% cut imposed on us, based on last years total. We are required to protect the elderly (no cuts) and consider other vulnerable groups such as disabled and low-income families. When these requirements are taken into account, the 10% cut from Government becomes a 20% cut to the remaining claimants who are not being protected in any way. It is left to each local authority to decide how best to administer the scheme, which we will endeavour to deliver as sensitively as possible, however, it will mean up to a 20% loss for some, which does cause me concern. However, it has to be acknowledged that the benefits bill nationally has mushroomed post 1997, from £2.4 billion then, to just

short of £5 billion currently, and proportionately this is replicated in Taunton Deane. This is a problem that will be difficult, but has to be addressed, as it is unaffordable for the nation

Highway Improvements. An initiative that is being promoted by Somerset County (as the Highway Authority) will, I am sure, be of interest to many. Somerset County are in the process of putting together a much needed and ambitious plan to upgrade the A303/A30/A358 roads, so they truly serve as an alternative route into the West Country. If successful, it will be a major project starting at Stonehenge to Honiton, removing the present ‘pinch points’ and upgrading the A358 from Ilminster to J25 to dual carriageway, with improvements to J25. The council has involved all of the local authorities adjacent to the roads, and discussed the proposals with central Government, as substantial funding will be required. It is now charged by Government to produce a feasibility study, particularly focusing on the potential economic benefits that would accrue from such an investment in the local area, and the much wider West Country as a whole. I applaud the effort being made as we are all aware of the major congestion problems, particularly on the A358, and any attempt at a solution has to be welcomed.



Make Contact Finally, I do try and keep in touch with all Parish Councils in the Ward, apologies for when I do not make it, as I find it a most useful way of hearing any concerns from the community. I can also be contacted at cldr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk , at my office on 01823 356421 or mob 07831 341081. Please do contact me if you feel I might be able to assist or if you would like further detail on any of the issues I have referred to above.



I must add my thanks to the editorial team for allowing me to contribute this article, which I hope, is found to be of interest.

Somerset Community Barn Owl Project

(Neroche Parish Involvement)

In April of this year, the Somerset Wildlife Trust, in collaboration with the Hawk and Owl Trust, launched the Somerset Community Barn Owl



Project; the aim being to get a barn owl nest box in each of Somerset's 335 parishes by 2014 (up to 80 per cent of barn owls nest in man-made boxes!). We are delighted to report that Neroche 'stepped up to the plate' immediately, and all four parishes are having a box installed. The boxes are being hosted by: 'Mount Pleasant' in Curland; 'Myrtle Farm' in Bickenhall;

'Staple Lawns Farm' in Staple Firzpain; and at "a yet to be announced property" in Orchard Portman with Thurlbear. The three-year Project is funded by Viridor Credits Environmental Company, a charity that distributes money from the landfill Communities Fund.

'Fingers crossed' that some of the boxes in the parish become occupied this winter, so that we might be able to report progress in future issues of this Newsletter (hopefully with some pictures). If you wish to learn more, become involved, report a sighting, buy or even learn how to make your own box, then please go to somersetwildlife.org/barnowl or for more general information on hawks and owls go to www.hawkandowl.org

History of the Barn Owl

The barn owl was the most common owl in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries, however, by the latter part of the 1800s they were in decline. Persecution at the hands of man, some debilitating winters and changes in farming may all have contributed to the loss, which continued into the 20th century. By the first census in 1932 there were estimated to be 12,000 pairs in England and Wales. Intensification of agriculture and the use of persistent pesticides caused further losses, and a survey by the Hawk and Owl Trust in the mid-1980s found that the population in England and Wales was down to fewer than 3,800 pairs. It is estimated that there are currently 200 pairs in Somerset.

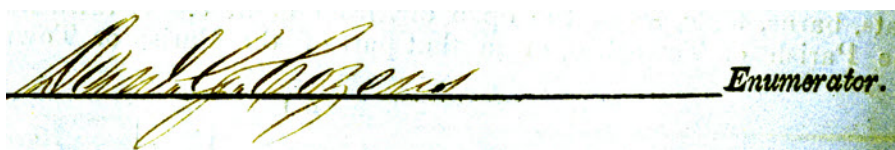
What The Victorians Did For Us: A Brief History of the Census

Kings, queens and governments have attempted to gather information about land, goods and people over the millennia. The Domesday Book of 1085/6 was essentially a survey of landholding for taxable purposes. Other surveys in the middle 1600's such as the Hearth Tax and the Poll Tax were primarily about information to help raise taxes. But it was not until 1800 the first Census Act was passed "*for the taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and the increase or diminution thereof*", and they were to occur every 10 years. By the 1851 census a common administrative pattern had been established.

Most people are familiar with the idea of using the census for looking at family history, but for local historians they are also an absolute goldmine. A study of local censuses in the Victorian period can tell us a great deal about our own villages as they were in the 1800s.

An 'enumerator' collected the census. He (from 1891 it could be a she) was a local who had to be "a person of intelligence and activity; he must read and write well and have some knowledge of arithmetic".

So, from the Bickenhall census of 1851, we can see that Daniel George Cozens was the enumerator for the district of Bickenhall. We can view his copperplate style signature from the front of the enumerators form.



Because he remained in the same village we can collate a social history of Daniel and his family over the decades. He was a master tanner and farmer; the tannery and Tanyard House was next to what is now Bickenhall Farm. Daniel employed ten men, one woman and one boy. We can follow him and his family through the next four censuses. In 1881 Daniel's son Frank had taken over the tanyard. But by 1891 Frank, his wife and his widowed mother had moved to Truro where his wife Mary was born. Frank was working as a decorator.

So, as is usual for the local historian, investigating one subject throws up many more for further research: Why was the tannery situated in Bickenhall? What happened to it? Why did it close? Did the tannery workers find new employment? And so on.....



In 1851 most people worked on the land and at that time agricultural labouring was poorly paid. There were about 37,000 farm labourers in Somerset in 1851. They earned an average of 8s to 10s a week (today's equivalent would be £23.41 and £29.27) supplemented by a cider allowance and occasional bonus at haymaking. The cider allowance meant the wage was nominally worth nearly four or five pounds more than its real value to the agricultural workers. Thus 'payment in kind' was good for the master but not necessarily so for the labourer.

From the abundance of census information available to the local researcher, we can catch a glimpse of what life might have been like. In 1851 Staple



Fitzpaine had 14 farms with a combined acreage of 1030, Curland 8 farms with 706 acres and Bickenhall 6 farms with 574 acres. More than half of the population of Staple Fitzpaine were agricultural workers. In 1851 half of the heads of households had been born in the parish, by 1901 it was down to 23%.

Punch Cartoon 'Victorian Rural Poverty'

I wonder what the 2011 census will show about us to future historians?

Jane Hole,
Chair of Neroche Local History Group jane.hole@tiscali.co.uk

Superfast Broadband

(Background: ‘Connecting Devon and Somerset’ is a project led by Devon and Somerset County Councils to roll out an improved broadband infrastructure. The partnership has secured £32m government funding. Devon and Somerset County Councils will also be putting-in up to £10m each, with contributions from other partners bringing the public sector investment to a total of £53m. The project aims to provide 100% broadband and 85% superfast broadband by 2015, and superfast broadband coverage for all by 2020.)

The following is an extract from an update issued by the project team:

“The Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme is continuing with its procurement process; we are on track to sign contracts in October.



BT is the only supplier to have responded to the ‘Invitation to Tender’. We need to make sure that the bid is excellent value for money. Discussions with BT will continue as part of the procurement process and we will push for the best possible deal for our residents and businesses.

Ensuring our businesses, communities and individuals make the most of improved broadband remains a vital part of the programme. Two suppliers have been contracted to undertake discrete elements of the project, with one contractor responsible for business engagement and skills uplift areas, and a second responsible for community engagement. The two companies will be putting together ‘on the ground’ events, workshops and community liaison work to promote how superfast broadband can change the way we use the Internet.



At present we do not anticipate any delay to the timetable. We are on track to finish negotiations, and providing BT can deliver a tender that gives the best value for our area, we will announce the agreement in October. After

a period of planning for delivery, roll out is due to commence in Spring 2013. The 'Demand Stimulation' phase will be launched in September 2012 with, events and workshops planned throughout the two counties.



Please encourage individuals and businesses in your parish to visit www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk for more information and to "Fill in the survey" so that the level of demand for the new services can be ascertained.

Local Paralympians bring home the Medals



Local rider Debbie Criddle won a Gold Medal in the Team Dressage and two Silver Medals in the Individual Dressage competitions at the Paralympic Games in London. The 46-year-old, who lost an arm and 50 per cent use of her right leg due to a motorbike accident in 1985, put in solid displays on her horse LJT Akilles although she's only been riding him for 18 months. She also won Gold Medals in previous Paralympic Games riding Figaro, who is owned by Debbie's trainer, Nina Venables, an ex-Thurlbear resident.

Debbie is well known in the local 'horsey' world, and officially opened the Neroche Herepath Trail on Saturday 10 May 2009. The 13.5 mile circular trail gives walkers and riders an opportunity to explore and discover the Neroche landscape around Staple Fitzpaine.

Local tennis player Lucy Shuker, who trains at the Blackbrook Tennis Pavilion, got through to the Quarter-Finals in the Women's Singles competition and won a Bronze Medal in the Women's Doubles with her playing partner Jordanne Whiley. Lucy was paralysed in a motorbike accident in 2001; however, in just three years of playing wheelchair tennis, she's gone from complete beginner to Great Britain international and Paralympic medallist.



Young Wood Development

If you volunteer regularly with the Neroche Conservation Volunteers you will be aware of Young Wood - the developing community woodland initiative in the Neroche Forest near Staple Fitzpaine. Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers over the past two years, we have begun to create a fantastic venue for forest school, family events and courses, while reinstating coppice management, which is improving the woodland for wildlife and generating a modest supply of firewood and other material. A short film about our early aspirations can be viewed at:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWNDIB1q6E8&feature=plcp>

Young Wood represents the beginning of a new chapter for Neroche. As one of the legacies of the Neroche Scheme, we are establishing a new social enterprise, based on Young Wood, in order to bring together our social and environmental activities in a working woodland, with the backing of the Forestry Commission. A social enterprise focuses on creating social and environmental change whilst generating the income to be a viable operation, so it is the best model for us to adopt. We intend to register the new company very shortly, with a small group of founding directors from amongst those most closely involved at Young Wood.



Meanwhile we have established a new website for Young Wood, to describe the activities we are developing: - www.youngwood.org.uk



Young Wood is and will remain part of the Forestry Commission public forest estate. We're discussing with the Commission the basis upon which the new company will operate at Young Wood, and we hope that the model we adopt can offer valuable lessons on future viable approaches for co-management and community engagement on public land.

We are now looking for further interest from amongst the Neroche network to help us as we begin to develop the new company. In particular, we're looking for expertise and advice from people with a business, financial, education, or forestry background, to complement the skills we already have. It could be one-off advice, more on-going involvement with community governance, or deeper participation in running the company.



If you feel you might have something to offer or would like to find out more, please contact me at gavin.saunders@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. As always at Neroche, what we achieve will depend on the mixture of local skills, voluntary and professional, from many backgrounds - we can bring together.

by Gavin Saunders
Neroche Project Manager, Forestry Commission



Neroche Barn Dance and Hog Roast

On 1st September Bickenhall Farm barn was festooned with bunting, hay bales, scarecrows and twinkling lights and welcomed 120 people for an evening of music, dancing and food. The band were great and played with enthusiasm and the skilful caller persuaded even the most reluctant to get on the floor. The dancers were enthusiastic, laughed a lot and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, especially as the food was plentiful and delicious.



Members of both Neroche Hall and St Peter's Church committees gave freely of their time and expertise to decorate the barn and convert it into a wonderful venue for the Barn Dance.

The organisers would like to give special thanks for raffle contributions to The Cookshop, Taunton, Majestic Wine, Taunton Racecourse and The Greyhound Inn and were also grateful that Phil Snow, Landscape Builder and Sarah's Dairy,

Iminster helped with the fund-raising efforts.

The hog was roasted to perfection by Phillip and Ruth Waterman and the delicious food was provided by a small army of local people without whom the event could not have gone ahead. Finally, thanks go to Chris and Sarah Salisbury for the use of the barn and their support, and to Mal Lee who headed the 'Barn Dance and Hog Roast' committee and proved to be a marvellous organiser.



The Neroche Hall Quiz



Colin Croad's latest fund-raising quiz took place on Friday 5th October and was another outstanding success; nearly 100 people took part in 16 teams. This was a fun quiz that benefited from the amount of time and effort that Colin had obviously put into his preparation, coming up with a wide variety of subjects and questions. Colin was ably assisted by

Pat Croad and Mary Darby who kept the scores promptly and efficiently.

Thanks must also go to the 'takeaway' team who took the fish'n'chips order, drove to Ilminster to collect it and still managed to be back in time for the scheduled break after round 5 - and the food was still hot!



Rob Larkman's 'Let It Rain' team were the eventual winners of a closely fought contest which ended with the top 5 teams separated by only 3 points. Final figures aren't in yet but the Neroche Hall funds should benefit by well over £400 from the evening. Well done to all concerned.

by Alan Perrior.

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 At A Community Lunch

Lunches will take place on Thursdays at 12.30 for 1.00 pm

1st November, 6th December, 3rd January & 7th February

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

Automated External Defibrillator for Neroche

In the event of a cardiac arrest immediate first aid is vital – often far too short a time in rural areas for a paramedic to arrive. Minutes saved will save lives.

Working with the management and staff of The Greyhound in Staple Fitzpaine, County Councillor David Fothergill has funded the installation of a portable automated external defibrillator (AED) into the pub.



As part of the move to transfer public health from the NHS to County Council, each County Councillor was given £10,000 to raise awareness of health matters in their area. David Fothergill chose to spend £7,500 on five AEDs at £1,500 each, including training and ‘awareness’ events. The AEDs were sourced by the St John Ambulance who also provided training for staff at each pub.

Councillor Fothergill came up with the scheme saying that his ‘division’ is very rural and it can take some time for emergency services to reach patients. Having an AED available and accessible could be the difference between a life and death in the case of cardiac arrest.

The five AEDs will be installed at the **Greyhound** in Staple Fitzpaine, the **King Alfred** in Burrowbridge, the **Royal Oak** in Stoke St Gregory, the **Bird In Hand** in North Curry and the **Bell Inn** in Creech St Michael. Free one hour first aid awareness sessions, open to everyone living in the area, are to be held at each AED location; the training session at Neroche Hall was held on Wednesday 3rd October. Whilst using a defibrillator without training would not cause someone harm, the training sessions will give people valuable practise and the confidence to use them in case of an emergency.



John Cavanagh, South West Regional Director for St John Ambulance's Commercial Training Division, said *"We welcome how seriously Councillor Fothergill has taken first aid. In a rural area in particular, access to an AED can make a real difference."*

Sadly, up to 140,000 people die in situations where first aid could have given them a chance to live, yet fewer than one in five people know even basic first aid. Thanks to Councillor Fothergill and our expert trainers, people in the North Curry division, of which Neroche is part, won't have to be helpless, and they might save the life of a member of their family, a friend or a neighbour.



As the nation's leading First Aid charity, St John Ambulance believes that nobody should die because they needed first aid and didn't get it."

Jon Bell, Neroche Parish Council Chairman, commented, *"I would just like give our thanks to David Fothergill for obtaining this facility for the community, St John's Ambulance for the training and advice they have provided and of course, David and Marina at the Greyhound for agreeing to host the AED and allowing their staff to train to use it."*

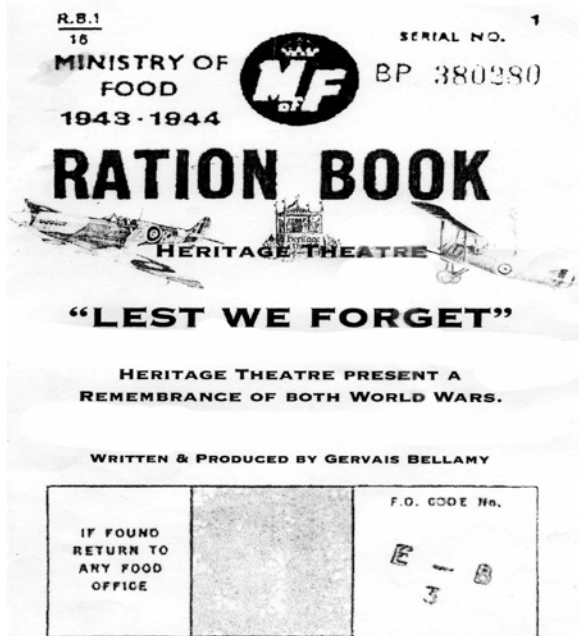


The Parish Council have arranged to insure the AED and will consider any issues raised at the public training sessions, such as a map of local properties or some alternative means of knowing where places are, in the event that it is needed at someone's home. Parishioners may have views on this and if so should speak to one of their councillors."

This is an important new village facility and, remember, it's there for anyone who needs it.

Neroche Hall, Bickenhall

Friday 9th November at 7.30pm
presents



On Friday 9th November (Remembrance weekend) we have invited the Heritage Theatre Company to perform their tribute to all service men & women as well as the civilians who were involved in two world wars. This company, whose president is Professor David Bellamy the botanist (seen on many a TV Programme) have performed across the country. We hope as many in our community who wish to take part will attend this event and join in the songs and listen to famous voices of that time. Appropriate food will be served in the interval, although so far we have been unable to locate any egg powder or snock.

Put 9th November indelibly in your diaries and bring your ration book with you if you still have one and dress up if you wish to.

Tickets £8.00 to include light supper. Family ticket £20.00 to include two adults and two children. Tickets sales: Colin Croad 01823 480 429.



NEROCHE HALL CHRISTMAS FAYRE

**SUNDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2012
2.00pm – 4.30PM**

**Featuring Father Christmas, and other festive
entertainment including carol singing.**

**Lots of ideas for Christmas gifts.
If you would like to book a table to
sell or display your wares contact
Alison Brown 01823 480 675**

A fabulous start to the festive season.

Neroche Local History Group

Invite you to a talk on:

The Falklands Conflict

*The Six-Month Period Following
the Ceasefire*



A presentation portraying the aftermath of war, focusing mainly on the logistical challenge faced by the Armed Forces, immediately following the ceasefire, to feed circa 4,000 troops during a South Atlantic winter, with inadequate facilities, insufficient equipment and limited rations, plus all the difficulties of operating an 8,000 mile supply route from UK.

(Illustrated with film, slides & music.)

7.30pm on Wednesday 7th November 2012
Neroche Village Hall

Everybody welcome - Non-Member £2.50

**Well done to all those who helped or contributed
to the Neroche Villages Diamond Jubilee
celebrations earlier this year.**

30TH August 2012

Alison Brown, organiser



Dear Alison,

I am writing to thank you for transferring the donation of £424.39 from the Neroche Parish Jubilee celebrations to The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust. Please accept this email as acknowledgment of receipt. If you require a paper copy please let us know.

Sir John Major has asked me to reply on his behalf. We are delighted that the Neroche Parish have chosen to support the Trust in this very special year, and would like to thank everyone involved in the celebrations. This donation will go towards our ambition of developing a number of iconic programmes that will help transform the lives of people of all generations across the Commonwealth.

In this way The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust aims to create a lasting tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's remarkable sixty year reign as Head of a Commonwealth of more than 2 billion people living in 54 countries, and Queen to 16 Realms, and to thank her for a life time of public service.

Lastly, I will also like to draw your attention to our website: www.jubileetribute.org where you will find information on the Trust and, in the future, details of the programmes that your kind donation will help us to finance.

Best wishes,

Rosemary Mitchell

Director of Operations, The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

I find living in one of the Neroche villages is good place to be. There is a good community feeling and a lot of mutual support. Having a Parish Plan, brought about by the hard work of Tim French and his colleagues, helped to further this. Also, the excellent monthly Parish Lunches held at Neroche Hall bring people together in a friendly way. At these lunches one can see the caring that goes on for the few people who are unable to help themselves as they once would.



So what are the disadvantages? For me I think the petty crimes that we are reminded of by the organisers of Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Can we help ourselves rather more with regard to this? As far as we can tell, some car drivers are cruising around looking for things to pinch. Perhaps by taking down the car numbers if one is suspicious? If nothing happens the numbers can be destroyed; if something untoward occurs at least there is a number to be given to the police to check out. Being familiar with neighbours' cars would be useful too.

Does anyone else have bright ideas to fight crime BEFORE it happens?

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Marsh



Neighbourhood Watch

How does Neighbourhood Watch work?

If you join Neighbourhood Watch, you will get to know your neighbours. You'll pay attention to the cars normally parked on your street, and to which of your neighbours is having work done on their house. You might even know which of your neighbours is away for any length of time.

Using that information, you're more likely to know when something unusual is happening on your street, or when something just doesn't look right. By keeping an eye out for your neighbours, you can help police stop crimes from happening.

What you can report using 101

Call 101 to contact the police to report less urgent crime and disorder or to speak to your local officers. For example, call 101:

- if your car has been stolen
- if your property has been damaged
- if you suspect drug use or dealing in your local area
- to report a minor traffic accident
- to give the police information about crime in your area
- to speak to the police about a general enquiry

Please mention when making any report that you are in a Neighbour Watch scheme.

When you should use 999 instead

In an emergency always call 999.

You should call 999 if:

- a crime is in progress
- someone suspected of a crime is nearby
- there is danger to life
- violence is being used or threatened



If you call 101 but are reporting an emergency, you will be directed to the 999 service.

The website http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/safety_advice/safer_homes has useful information about crime prevention precautions, including sections on: Bogus Callers and Rogue Traders, Home Security and Protecting Your Valuables.

*Your local co-ordinators are **Jenny Stuart** (01823 480073) for the Staple Fitzpaine area, and **David Symmonds** (01823 480208) for Curland and Bickenhall.*

If you are not already a member and wish to join, please contact either of the above. Alerts are sent out by email when any local problems have been reported.



Somerset Community Oil Buying Scheme

The Community Council for Somerset launched the Somerset Community Oil Scheme at its AGM in September 2011. The scheme uses the model of a local buying syndicate for domestic heating oil, but rolls it out across the whole county of Somerset, harnessing the purchasing power of the many rural communities who are without mains gas, so that together, oil buyers should be able to make significant savings.



This scheme has been tried and tested by other Community Councils in the country and experience has already shown that it is possible to save around £35-£40 on a single order of 1000 litres.

The scheme also aims to achieve environmental benefits for Somerset – delivery tankers guzzle a lot of fuel and the more deliveries they can make in one place, the less fuel they use, and the fewer tankers there are on Somerset's small country roads, the better!

Subscription fees: Annual membership is £20 for domestic users, £30 for community buildings, schools and churches; and £100 for business users. Orders can be from as little as 500 litres, and during any month of the year except December. Subscribers can place as many orders as required during the year.



(Editor's note: Above information edited from the Community Council for Somerset website; www.somersetccc.org.uk where information can be found on this and many other community initiatives.)

Domestic Central Heating Oil Price

Are you paying too much for your oil?

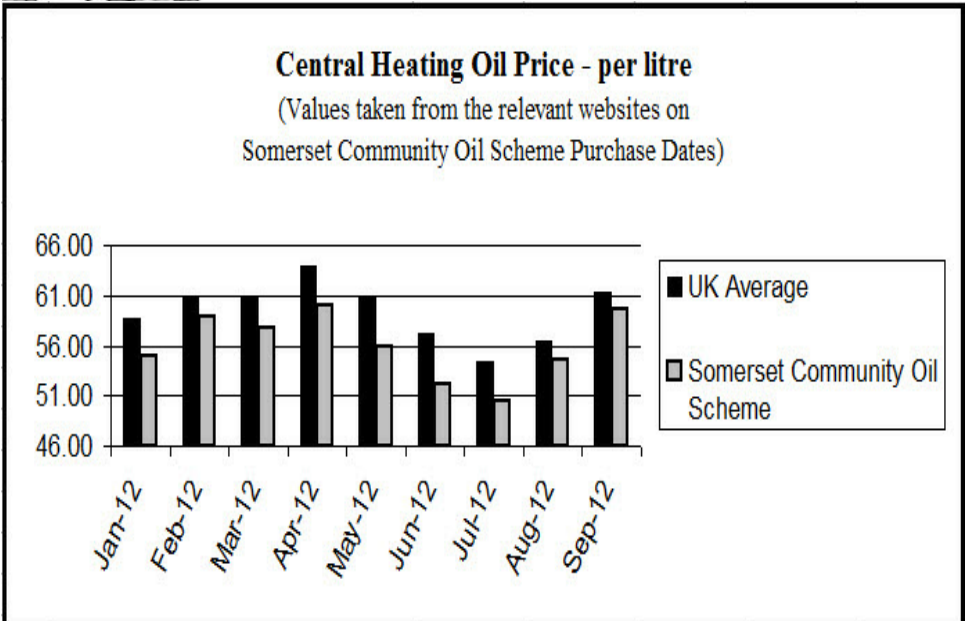
After hearing about the Somerset Community Oil Scheme I thought it would be worthwhile to see how the scheme works (see page 22) and what benefits might be achieved. The chart (below) shows the 'UK Average' and the 'Scheme' price per litre for those days in 2012 when the scheme purchased oil for its members. When referencing the chart, please note that daily price changes, by several pence, are common.

My thanks go to everyone who responded to the feedback request in the last newsletter. This feedback shows that while Neroche villagers often 'beat' the 'UK Average' price, the 'Somerset Community Oil Scheme'



price was only beaten twice! However, it should be noted that relatively few villagers actually responded, so it's perfectly reasonable to expect that more people also beat the prices on the chart; they're just keeping quiet about it!

by Alan Perrior (editor)



Those who visited the NGS Open Day at Goddards Orchard , in Staple Fitzpaine, in June, will have seen and admired the cider press which has been so lovingly restored by Brian and Dianne Hood. Here, local apples are turned into cider with no power source other than “elbow grease”; a true ECO project. - editor.

Restoration Of The Victorian Cider Press - by Brian Hood



I purchased the old apple press for £100 at a farm sale near Wedmore in 2004. It has a single winding handle on a double gear and is believed to be about 150 years old. It was in a derelict state, standing 10ft high it was fixed to the beam of the old barn that it was in with just one big old nail.

After I got home, the metalwork was stripped down, the gears and worms were cleaned, painted and greased back into working order, not a hard job as the metal wasn't rusted having been stored in a dry shed during its long life. Once brushed with a wire brush it only needed painting with a good metallic paint to bring it back to a good condition. The handle that winds the head down is very worn and bent, so we only use it to lift the head up and down, not when putting pressure to the cheese. We have a very large spanner for this purpose, it is 6ft long and is very heavy but is ideal for turning the centre spigot to exert extreme pressure causing the full weight to come down onto the cheese, thus pressing the juice out.



The timber head is made of elm and the base is oak. The head was in good condition and only needed a good brushing but the base was badly rotted so we treated the timber, put shuttering around it and filled the cavity with concrete to give it stability. This has certainly worked because it has not

moved and it acts as a solid base on which the tray stands and takes the pressure from above. The tray itself was rotten too but was used as a template to produce a new oak tray, complete with spout. The first tray that was made dried out and the apple juice leaked through, so a year later it was taken to pieces and the oak boards were drilled, metal bars passed through and tightened to clamp the boards together. An outer surround was added to contain the liquid and it now works well.

How it works: After passing through an apple mill the apple pulp (pomace) has to be contained in a cloth to hold it in place. This is done by placing a slatted board, usually made from acacia wood, onto the centre of the tray, placing a square frame on top of the board, then spreading the cloth over and into the square, the pomace is then shovelled into this square until it is about 4” (75mm) thick when the remainder of the cloth is folded over on top of the pomace to make a good solid square. Another board is placed



on top and the same process is done with the next cloth until about 8 frames are completed. By this time the top frame is about 1m high and the weight is already causing the apple juice to be squashed out of the lower frames filling the bucket with fresh apple juice. Lastly a solid board is placed on the top of the cheese (as it is now called) and the handle wound to bring the head down onto the top. It does not need much pressure before the apple juice is pouring out of the spout like a waterfall. Now we use the spanner to wind the head down more heavily. Eventually the pressure presses the pulp down to half its size and resembles pressed cardboard.



The fresh juice tastes delicious and is poured into the barrel to ferment naturally. It's hard to believe that these sharp-tasting cider apples can produce such a pleasant fresh apple drink. However, it is best not to drink too much! It is a simple system of pressing apples that works very well and has been used for pressing apple pulp every year since we bought it. **The cider can be purchased from Goddards Orchard in Staple Fitzpaine.**

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 2012/13 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) :

10 Nov. ‘Mushroom Foray’. Meet at Queen’s Arms, Pitminster. Hunt for wild fungi and learn how to identify a huge variety of local mushrooms.

10 Nov. ‘Hedgelaying Course’ Meet at Village Hall Yarcombe. Learn to lay hedges in the Devon style.

17 Nov. ‘Ancient Tree Mapping’ Piddle Wood, Staple Fitzpaine. Learn the stories of our ancient trees, their history and ecology, and take part in a new census of these elders of the forest by mapping the oaks in Piddle Wood.

1 Dec. ‘Camp Fire Cooking’ Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine. Learn how to gather wood, light a fire, and gain experience of a variety of cooking methods, including cooking meat, making bannocks, cooking on sticks and using a Dutch oven, culminating in a shared meal

13 Jan. ‘Walking Around Hackpen Towards Ashill’ Meet at Hemyock. A walk on lanes and tracks in this quiet corner of the Blackdowns.

26 Jan. ‘Woodland Sound Sculptures’ Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine. Explore the world of sound in the forest! Meet

well-known sculptor and sound artist Michael Fairfax, and some of his amazing resonant wooden musical instruments (hollow, stringed and percussion).

17 Feb. 'Make a Rustic Hedgerow Chair' Buckland St Mary.
Discover how West Country folk used to make, strong, comfortable hedgerow chairs with materials from hedges, woods and gardens.

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. Racing for the second half of the 2012 season starts on the 30th October, with further meetings on 15th & 29th November,

and 13 & 30th December.

Admission Prices to Racecourse (All inclusive of VAT).

Grandstand Ticket £14.00 (access to all areas other than members & private hospitality boxes). Centre Course/Picnic area £9.00 (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.

Raceday Package.

The Race Day Package is an ideal gift idea, offering great value; it includes: an open 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 booster voucher", all for £27. 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

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.



Ilminster Arts Centre

The Ilminster Arts Centre is situated at the Metering 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



Some stunning shows from November onwards, including: **Buddy Holly and the Cricketers**, **M5 Charity Concert**, **Ralph McTell**, **Wind in the Willows (Christmas Show)**, **Carols by Candlelight**, **Dick Whittington (Community Show)**, **One Night of Elvis**, **Karen Carpenter tribute**, **The**

Johnny Cash Roadshow and many more.

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 November onwards, include: ***Dr Feelgood***, ***The Producers*** and ***The Fab Beatles*** ***Christmas Party Night***. For full information on these concerts and many others, go to www.squareandcompasspub.com



Events For Our Calendar

November

- 1 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 13)
- 3 Neroche Parish Walking Group ([www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 7 The Falklands Conflict (see advert on page 18)
- 8 Parish Council Meeting (www.nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 9 Heritage Theatre (see advert on page 16)
- 13 Senior Citizens Club (see article on page 30)
- 15 Taunton Racing (www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)
- 29 Taunton Racing (www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

December

- 2 Neroche Parish Walking Group ([www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 3 Neroche Hall Christmas Fayre (see advert on page 17)
- 4 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 13)
- 13 Taunton Racing (www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)
- 30 Taunton Racing (www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

January

- 3 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 13)
- 5 Neroche Parish Walking Group ([www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 6 Parish Council Meeting ([www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))

February

- 7 Neroche Parish Walking Group ([www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 7 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see advert on page 13)

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

*See, also, the many various events listed in the ‘On Your Doorstep’
article on pages 26, 27 and 28*

United Parishes Senior Citizen's Club

(Stoke St Mary's Senior Citizens Club)



The Harvest Lunch on Saturday 22 September was amply catered for by Karen Dingle with help and waitressing by her usual associates. Starters were either a delicious home made soup and rolls or fruit juice. This was followed by a plateful of both ham and beef, salad served with roast and boiled potatoes and side dishes of pasta in spicy tomato sauce and beetroot. For dessert Karen gave us each a choice of caramel cheese-cake, summer berries pavlova or apple pie, all home-made with lashings of clotted cream followed by coffee and mints.



The Rivertone barber shop singers provided the entertainment with a mixture of old songs and even older jokes, the sing-a-long melodies including songs from WWII to the 1970's. Following generous applause the Rivertones kindly gave two encores before joining us for another round of eating with tea and a wide selection of home-made cakes, again all made by Karen.

After the raffle and showing a certain reluctance to move, let alone go home, the afternoon closed about 4.45pm with our Harvest Lunch being declared a great success by all.

Reinstatement of Mobile Library Service

The mobile library service is operating again in our area. Updated routes are available on the www.somerset.gov.uk/mobilelibrary website.



All mobile library enquiries can be answered by phoning 0845 3459177.



2012 – 20 Nov, 18 Dec	2013 – 15 Jan, 12 Feb, 12 Mar
Bickenhall (opposite Dairy Farm House)	1.25pm to 1.35pm
Curland (Old Post Office)	1.45pm to 1.55pm
Staple Fitzpaine (Greyhound)	2.05pm to 2.20pm

2012 – 21 Nov, 19 Dec	2013 – 16 Jan, 13 Feb, 13 Mar
Thurlbear (school)	11.50am to 12.20pm

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

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		No change, usual collections	
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.

Natural Christmas trees under 6ft can be collected. If you pay for garden waste collections you can put them out on normal garden waste collection days for composting. Otherwise, take to Recycling Centre or put out the tree on your normal refuse collection day between 7 and 18 January 2013 for disposal. Place the tree next to your bin or sack. **Remove all decorations.**

Recycling Centres and Community Recycling Sites

See our website or call Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9188 for recycling site opening times. All sites are closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, and, this year (2012), will close at 4pm on Monday 24 December and Monday 31 December.



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:

27 October to 4 November 2012
22 December to 6 January 2013
9 February to 17 February 2013
29 March to 14 April 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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