

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Issue No 9

Newsletter

August 2013

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

Summer Thoughts

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.



Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time.

Welcome to the ninth 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: *Alan Perrior*
(*Neroche Villages' Newsletter Editor*)

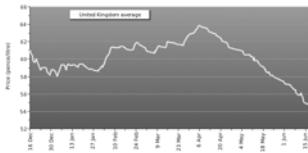


Alan has lived in Bickenhall since April 1997 and [was] volunteered to be editor of the Neroche Newsletter at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2011.

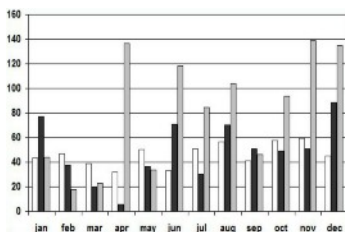
Editor: a person who edits material for publication (dictionary definition).

I like to think that having editorial control allows me to dictate policy and content but, as ever, the reality is somewhat different. The process of producing the newsletter begins about 6 weeks before publication when the coordinator (Wally Torrington) and I have an informal meeting to generate a “wish list” of articles. Generally about half of these come to fruition; the rest go back on the list for next time or fall by the wayside.

Of course, a certain amount of the content is fixed and requires little in the way of editing. For example, we always try to publish useful community information, we regularly publish School Holiday dates, Refuse & Recycling date changes, Events For Your Calendar etc.



Occasionally, we also like to feature slightly more unusual information, which isn't necessarily about the Neroche Villages but may be of interest to its residents. Examples of this type of article have been; the Olympic Torch Relay route through Taunton and Ilminster, the Domestic Central Heating Oil Price chart, local Paralympian medallists, the 2012 local Rainfall chart and 'How To Report Potholes'.



In general, the majority of each newsletter is newly created, quite often the result of good natured prompting. Actually, I'm surprised at

how much prompting is required. The newsletter is delivered free to every dwelling in the ‘Neroche Villages’ and I hope that it is an obvious resource for the community to advertise and report on local events. So why be shy? If you’re planning an event or want to tell everyone about something that happened, just contact us - we’d be delighted to put it in the newsletter.

This foreword wouldn’t be complete without thanking the many helpers who produce, print and distribute the newsletter. It couldn’t be produced without the coordinator, Wally Torrington, the printer, David Symmonds and the distribution team led by Roger Keats - too many to mention individually! Thank you.

If you, the readers, have any ideas or suggestions for articles or features, please let me know by writing to; ***nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk***

Finally, I’d like to state that we are not in competition with, *but we are complementary to*, the Parish Magazine and the Neroche Villages website. The Parish Magazine covers a much larger area, contains more ecclesiastical articles and is a very useful local “Yellow Pages”; and there’s no way that we could compete with the scale and immediacy of the website. But, hopefully we provide a useful service.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

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

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

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

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Our Visit To Frogmary Farm

An article by our youngest ever contributors - the pupils of Thurlbear School's Hazel class recently visited Frogmary Farm in South Petherton. The farm's aim is to produce food efficiently whilst still being mindful of the environment. They also recognise that a huge part of their job is to help people understand where their food comes from, so they put great emphasis on children's education through school visits to the farm.

On Friday the seventh of June, Hazel class went on a visit to Frogmary Farm. First we went to see some stacks of potatoes, and then we went to see some potato machines. There was a potato planter, a machine that turns over the soil.



We went to see a lady called Angela. Angela

talked to us about different kinds of potatoes. For example: Arrow [a small potato.] We found out that for crisps to get their flavour you use flavoured powders.



After that, we walked to a field with tractors in and Andrew gave us some information about them. We saw a combine harvester.

We walked back to the farm and had lunch.

After that we all went to see some animals. We saw cows, pigs, and sheep. Soon after we strolled across the farm and saw thousands of baby chicks.

Then we had a mini harvest festival. There was another lady and she talked to us about seeds, trees and fruit.

We had a fabulous day.

Hazel Class



SCARECROW FESTIVAL 2013

17 August to 25 August

BICKENHALL, CURLAND, STAPLE FITZPAINE

Enter your scarecrow and/or vote for your favourite



Entries £5.00 per Household - Prizes and lots of fun

Contact Mal Lee 01460 234282 - lee.curland@gmail.com

Entries close 12 August

Voting forms in St Peters Church Staple
Fitzpaine during festival

Teas in church 17 and 18 August
Teas en route 24 August

Proceeds to St Peters Church

The Neroche Annual Parish Meetings 2013

By Tim French

The Annual Parish Meetings of Neroche Parish was held in Neroche Hall on 16th May. It was both a pleasant social occasion and an important opportunity for residents to meet with Parish, Borough and County Councillors. It was a great success and very well attended, with around seventy residents present, which John Williams, Chairman of Taunton Deane Borough Council, said was exceptional for the area.

The social part of the evening occurred before and after the formal presentations. Members of local clubs and other groups, plus the church, the Parish Council, the Neroche Project and the WI set up a dozen stands to publicise their activities, and to invite residents to join their particular organisation. It also gave residents a chance to meet Councillors and to catch-up with friends. As they mingled, they were offered wine and cheese donated by Tesco's of Ilminster and Morrison's of Taunton respectively; coffee, tea and home made light refreshments, funded by the Parish Council, were available also, and served most professionally by the Women's Institute.

The formal part of the evening began with the Annual Parish Meetings of Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine, which together form Neroche Parish. Jon Bell, Chair



of the Council, presented his Annual Report. He detailed the undertakings of the Council and the problems the parish had faced. Progress had been made in obtaining a Traffic Speed Indicator for Staple Fitzpaine; an Affordable Housing Survey was under review, as was a Village Agent Scheme. The Neroche Parish Plan had lead to several thriving groups benefiting the parish, and he particularly thanked those

involved with the Litter Pick-Up Action Group, the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, the Thursday Lunch Club and the Walking Group. He sought volunteers to join those trained to help clear the footpaths and bridleways. The Council's response to severe flooding was discussed (more later). The Council had formed a sub-committee to advise on the budget and the precept (money collected from households for parish use); as a result, the Council was

building-up reserves to cover expenses, including the cost of parish council elections. The Women's Institute was thanked for catering for the event (which was certainly well deserved!).

Jon's presentation was followed by a lively discussion of issues raised by residents. One requested that strimming of footpaths be done sensitively so as not to threaten wildflowers. Others raised matters related to flooding, especially blocked ditches. We were advised that ditches, including those beside the road, were the landowner's responsibility. However, the County Council was responsible for slipways that allow water to flow from the roads into the ditches. In former times a man was employed to clear roadside ditches. This received support and led to an undertaking by the Parish Council to look into the possibility of employing someone, on a part time basis, to clear roadside ditches, using money raised from the precept.

Three invited speakers followed. David Fothergill spoke for the last time as our Somerset County Councillor, as recent boundary changes mean that he now represents another ward. As usual he spoke well, succinctly, and with humour, covering the topics of local flooding, broadband and the defibrillator project. The news about broadband was mixed; some local residents will benefit from the massive investment occurring at the moment but many will see little or no change. The user-friendly cardiac defibrillator is held at the Greyhound Inn (a report on this is in the News Section of the Neroche Villages' website). David was warmly thanked for the help and assistance he has given to the parish.



John Williams, Chair of Taunton Deane Borough Council and our local Borough Councillor, spoke at length about the Taunton Deane Flood Alleviation Project, improvements to the A358, and parking in Taunton. The steps being taken to minimise flooding were very interesting. The residents expressed diverse opinions on several of the issues.

Gavin Saunders spoke briefly about developments affecting Neroche Forest. The Neroche Scheme is coming to an end but a new community based

enterprise has been formed, Neroche Woodlanders Ltd. It will work in partnership with the Forestry Commission, to generate sustainable produce and to create a better woodland environment. A key part is the Community Woodland Development at Young Wood near Winter Well and Badger Street (details of this can be found at www.youngwood.org.uk)

Unfortunately, the newly elected County Councillor, Ross Henley, could not attend, owing to another engagement.

The evening was certainly a success. The Annual Parish Meetings and presentations by the Borough and County Councillor's offered a real chance for residents to find out what was happening, to express their views and request for things to be done. The social side was great and the refreshments were appreciated.

NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHEAS 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 August, 5th September, 3rd October

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

Farm Sprayer Operator of the Year

By Wally Torrington



You will be delighted to learn that we have a farming celebrity living in Neroche Parish. Graham Glasper, who works at Staple Farm, has won a prestigious award as one of the UK's top farm sprayer operators in the acclaimed **Farm Sprayer Operator of the Year 2013 (FSOOTY) Awards**, a nationwide competition sponsored by Syngenta.

Syngenta Area Business Manager, Duncan Woodward said *“Graham has consistently shown outstanding skills and works to a very high standard, to achieve the best possible results. He has proved a worthy winner by demonstrating that best practice can deliver efficient, cost effective and, above all, safe crop spraying”*.

In an article in Farmers Weekly, it stated:

“Christmas trees and miscanthus are two unusual crops that feature alongside combinable crops in the 285 hectares of cropping sprayed by Graham Glasper at Staple Farm near Taunton in Somerset. Spraying is completed with a 3,100 litre Farm Gem front and rear tank set-up.

Mr Glasper has been quick to see the potential benefits of recent developments in hand-held computing, and deploy them in his spraying operation.

The judges very much liked his use of a Patchwork spray monitor to implement electronic single entry spray recording. When exiting a field, the front mounted tank makes it potentially hazardous to passing traffic, so large convex mirrors have been fitted to the front of the machine to make the transition from field-to-road a safe one.”

FSOOTY judge and Syngenta Application Specialist, Tom Robinson, said:

“Today’s sprayers are capable of delivering incredible accuracy, with a wealth of new technology available. But it’s down to the skills of the operators

working to very high standards to achieve the best possible results. FSOOTY focuses on all aspects of farm spraying to identify the very best operators across the UK, and to share their skills and expertise“

...and added:

"The FSOOTY Awards, now in its 28th year, has given due recognition to many of the UK's top operators, and also continually promotes the sharing of experience and best practice with all operators to raise the standard of spraying on farms. Syngenta recognises that the skills of the sprayer operator are paramount in achieving the best results from crop protection products,"

Many congratulations to Graham; give him a wave when you next see him working in the fields.

Neroche Walking Group - 1st June

A month later than usual we managed our annual bluebell walk in the sunshine; and very beautiful it was too. We walked from the car park at Staple Hill, down to Mount Fancy, across Britty Common and over to Castle Neroche. The tracks and bridleways were full of bluebells, pink campion, white stitchwort and wood anemones. The views go on forever from Staple Ridge and the motte mound at Neroche Castle.



If you are interested in joining this friendly and informal group as we explore our parish, we meet on the first Saturday of each month at 10am at Home Mead field (next to the Greyhound pub). Contact Sheila Green on 01823 480758 or Jane Hole on 01460 234410 for more details.

Neroche Hall Friday Night Film Club

By Nicky Baxter

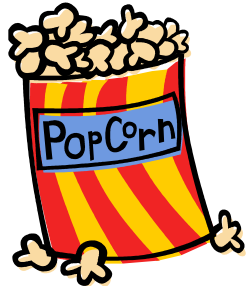
The Neroche Hall committee is very pleased to report the success of its new venture into Friday night film showings. At a much lower price than going to your local cinema, we have been able to bring to you some of the latest films, often ahead of their DVD release dates. Titles have included the very popular 'Quartet', Oscar winning 'Argo' and the "romcom" 'Love Is All You Need', which were very well received by our village audience, together with the wide range of refreshments available throughout the evening.



As a result of this new venture we have been able to greatly improve the hall, with the addition of the new blue upholstered chairs (much more attractive and comfortable than the previous red plastic ones, which are still available to hire for outside functions).

As always, the committee is looking to make further improvements to the hall, including a new sound system to improve the delivery of our films and the sound quality for other hall functions.

Our up-and-coming autumn menu kicks-off with the latest hit film 'The Great Gatsby' (see page 29). The films for October and November are 'Arbitrage' (cert 15) and 'Summer in February' (cert 15) respectively.



We look forward to seeing you at further 'sell-out' evenings.

For further details see the hall website or
Anne Perry 01460 234 377
Nicky Baxter 01823 480 675

Taunton Deane Borough Council News

John Williams, Borough Councillor for Neroche Ward and Leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council, has kindly offered to write a regular column for our Newsletter.



Take Art

I recently met with the Directors of “Take Art”, of which I am a great supporter, to discuss how they might provide extra shows with the Brewhouse, presently closed. They bring a wide variety of quality arts and musical shows direct to the rural areas and I know that the Parish of Neroche benefits greatly from their good work. They are a publicly funded

organisation, and for a relatively small contribution from Taunton Deane Borough Council, we obtain high quality shows across the Deane at low cost to the communities they visit. This is all about taking the arts and leisure out to the rural communities, and is to be commended, as it also gives up-and-coming performers the opportunity to gain the necessary experience performing live. Council funding is always difficult for non-essential services but this is one contribution I do my best to ensure is maintained, as it is beneficial to a number

of Parishes in Neroche and the Deane. Do visit the ‘Take Art’ web site at <http://www.takeart.org> for full details of what’s on.



Summerfest

Taunton enjoyed its own spectacular festival recently, the “Summerfest”. It was a brilliant day (the showery weather aside!) using the best of our public open space in the heart of the town and a wide variety of water based activities on the river. The festivities were spread-out along the riverside using Somerset Square, Goodlands Garden and Castle Green. This, coupled with road closures along North Street and St James Street, devoted our town centre to pedestrians and wide open car-free spaces for the various parades and



activities held during the day. It was great to see the town humming and so many people enjoying themselves, whether just enjoying the music, dancing, or participating in Longbow or medieval Broadsword training. A great time was had, and what a wonderful setting, with the old Castle and other magnificent buildings as the backdrop. I certainly hope this is the start of an annual event, and in the meantime we will be working with organisers to facilitate many more such events and markets to fully utilise the lovely public space we have.

The Development of Castle Green

Much has been said and written about the historic centre of Taunton, the old Castle Green. It was a general and livestock market until around 1930, so was the public open space to which it has now reverted. The work that has been carried out has, I am delighted to say, been recognised nationally by various professional bodies for the quality of the design and workmanship. The wonderful glass bridge across the castle moat linking Castle Green to Goodland's Gardens won top prize from the Institute of Civil Engineers for its design and construction. Britannia Construction were nominated for the quality of their work on this heritage project and secured runner up position. Finally, the Architects have been nominated for the outstanding merit of the design and finish. A project for which I feel we can all be justly proud, having been recognised nationally for the quality of design and construction.



Shakespeare Festival



Talking of further events, an exciting project is coming up shortly on Castle Green. We have secured the first ever Shakespeare Festival in the wonderful setting of Castle Green, the historic heart of Taunton. Two of Shakespeare's best known plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* will each be performed twice between Thursday the 8th and Saturday the 10th August, with an outstanding cast of professional actors. This is a date for your diary; classical plays in a

truly historic setting!

Northern Inner Distributor Road

We have recently received the great news that funding for the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) has now finally been approved by Central Government. It was not an easy process but the availability of £15.2m of central funding, with the



balance of £7 million provided by Somerset County Council and developers' contributions, is an incredible boost to our local economy. It will be a major driver of our local economy with a £22 million contract starting imminently but it is truly the key to unlocking our major strategic employment site adjacent the main line railway station. This site has the potential for 4,000 jobs, 700 homes, and retail and leisure opportunities fronting the river. The NIDR is much more than just a new road through Taunton, it truly opens up a previously inaccessible major site for the new development planned.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification or comment on the above. cllr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk

News From Somerset County Council

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



Hi everyone. I was really pleased when I was asked to write for the Neroche Villages' Newsletter. By means of introduction, I am Ross Henley and I am your new County Councillor. At the recent election, a boundary review took place which placed Neroche Parish in a new Division called 'Blackdown and Neroche'. This is a huge division and includes the following areas: Hatch Beauchamp; Neroche Villages; Stoke St Mary; Ruishton; West Hatch; Otterford; Churchstanton; West Buckland; Corfe; Pitminster; and a bit of Wellington East. As you can see, it's a big old area. I have been County Councillor for a large part of this area for the past 12 years for 'The Blackdowns and Wellington East', and have always loved the mix of urban and rural. The bits of the division which are new to me are the Neroche Villages, Ruishton, West Hatch and Hatch Beauchamp, I love attending both parish council meetings and village events in the area I already represent, and look forward to doing the same in my new area, which I feel very privileged to represent. I would also like to pay tribute to my predecessor for this area, David Fothergill, who did an excellent job as your County Councillor. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the next few months.

Ross can be contacted on rlhenley@somerset.gov.uk

The Chicken Explosion

Hens are hot! It's now estimated that 500,000 households in UK are keeping chickens in their back gardens. Keeping a few chickens

has always been a part of country living but hard economic times are also driving the trend. People are realising that they can save money on eggs by having their own hens. A large family that eats lots of eggs could save as much as £200 a year;



Wow! Why aren't we all doing it? Find out more at

www.yourchickens.co.uk and www.countrysmallholding.com

Chairman's Report for the AGM of Neroche Hall 11th June 2013.

By Richard Davies

Editor's note/apology: Due to space constraints this is a (heavily) edited version of Richard's report. The full, original text can be viewed on the Hall website in the 'News' section; refer to www.nerochehall.org.uk

As I prepare to write my report for this year's Annual General Meeting I am struck by how much we have achieved as a committee, not only in relation to the variety of events that have been promoted, but also the general improvements that have been made to the hall itself.



Over the past year, there have been several highlights and events worthy of a brief mention:

September's Hog Roast and Barn Dance was one of the most successful events of the last year.

Heritage Theatre's 'Lest we Forget' in November was a remembrance of both world wars portrayed by sounds and songs from the time.

December's **Christmas Fayre** offered a variety of gifts, arts and crafts.

January's **Jumble Sale** remains one of the Hall's biggest fund raisers.

With virtually a capacity attendance, Colin Croad's **Fish and Chip Quiz Night** once again tested the contestants' grey matter.

The **'Take Art' Amadou and Griselda** production proved very popular with the audience.

The **Thursday Lunch Club** continues to be the most popular of facilities for the local community and is achieved by a band of volunteers who give of their own time and energy to this worthy project.

New Hall projects include:

The new **Pilates Class** being run on Wednesdays for a limited number of sessions. It's hoped that if it continues to be well supported it may become a regular feature.

The latest major project is **'Film Night'**, which is held on the last Friday in the month, and is operated by a company called Moviola. The committee were successful in obtaining a grant from the Lottery Fund to purchase new chairs and

blackout blinds/curtains. All future events will benefit from this long overdue purchase.

I am pleased to report that the Hall has retained the Hallmark One rating following the assessors visit last year. The hall has to be examined in a number of key areas to qualify for this rating and this achievement is testament to the committee's hard work and effort as well as being a mark of quality.

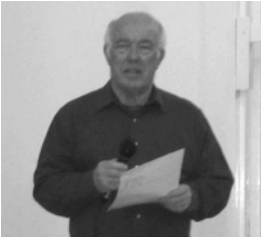
The maintenance of the hall, to preserve it for future generations, is the main aim of the Trustees and this naturally comes at a cost, hence the need for fund raising events. Major projects this past year have included the re-surfacing of the main hall and entrance lobby, the insulation and painting of a refurbished storeroom together with the purchase of new chairs as previously mentioned. A section of new wooden fencing has recently also been completed and funded due to a generous donation from the Gardening Club.

I would finally like to pay tribute to my fellow trustees and committee members, without whom none of the aforementioned would have been possible, for the help, guidance and friendship they have given me this past year. It is, as they say, all down to 'team work' but without a good team it just doesn't work - needless to say I have a 'good' team!

Our Secretary **Nicky Baxter** has maintained our minutes and agendas in her usual inimitable way, her husband **Chris** is also frequently to be found helping at events. Our Treasurer, **Anne Perry**, has again consistently managed to maintain our financial affairs. It would not all be possible without our experienced Booking Secretary, **Alison Brown**, whose diary never appears to leave her side. **Colin Croad** continues to be involved in many events including his valuable role as our quizmaster in chief and in the management of the 100 Club, which continues to be a popular fundraiser. **David Spears** has continued to be the committee's advisor on all matters electrical and technical and is currently looking to improve our sound system so that we can achieve a better quality of sound for our films currently shown by Moviola. **Sheila Green** has been involved with many of our events, anything involving food and drink seems to be her forte. **Graham Glasper** has provided the youth and muscle on the committee this past year especially when we are setting up for events or clearing down afterwards.

Finally, it is with regret that we will see **Tim French** leave the committee this year, after a long association with the hall, in order for him to pursue his other main interests within the Parish, borne out of the Parish Plan.

It is my hope that others will be encouraged to come forward and become involved with this valuable community resource as it is essential to maintain and ensure the hall's stability and future for subsequent generations.



Each Fish'n'Chips quiz normally attracts about 100 quizzers in 17 teams and raises over £400 towards Neroche Hall funds. The last four quizzes have been won by four different teams;



captained by John Lee, Rob Larkman, Alan Perrior and Mike Donovan. Quizmaster, Colin Croad, organises two quizzes per year, one in February and the other in October.



The average house price in Neroche Villages is approx £474,000 (according to the 'rightmove' website in early June 2013). Nationally, the average house price is less than £170,000.

3,000 vehicles per day use the road between Taunton Racecourse and The Greyhound Inn at Staple Fitzpaine. During the last 'Litter Pick-Up' in March 2013, 35 large bin bags of rubbish, along with various car parts, dead animals and a wallet were collected along this stretch of road.



The Neroche Herepath is a circular route of 13.5 miles, mostly through forest tracks and green lanes, with Staple Fitzpaine at its centre. The Herepath Trail provides safe, off-road riding and walking in an area with spectacular views and scenery. It incorporates both new and existing public bridleways, which have been significantly improved, and new sections of permissive bridleway. The Herepath was officially opened on Saturday 10 May 2009 by local Paralympian Debbie Criddle. Herepaths, often known as



'Snippets'

People's Paths, were originally important trade and communication routes between settlements during the ninth century.

Lib Dem Ross Henley won the recent Somerset County Council election for the Blackdown & Neroche electoral division, with 1,035 votes. A total of 2,895 votes were cast, which represents approximately a 37% turnout from an electorate of 7,893.



The Thursday Lunch Club started in March 2011 and usually caters for about 40 people, including 8-10 helpers. There are two vegetarian regulars at the lunches, the catering team try to cater for special dietary needs if informed beforehand. As well as donating surplus funds to the

Church, the Hall, British Legion & other worthy causes, the lunch club also has a collecting box for Open Door, the charity that feeds & cares for the homeless in Taunton. £300 was donated to Open Door last Christmas.



In June, local Domestic Central Heating Oil prices returned to the same as a year ago; ie, 55p per litre. The price peaked at 66p per litre in April 2013.



22 June 2013

36 guests

12 hosts

6 houses

Coffee & Chocolates at Neroche Hall



Another successful **Safari Supper** - Congratulations to the organisers.

Goddards Orchard Open Garden for the NGS (National Gardens Scheme)

By Dianne Hood

We had two wonderful sunny afternoons and it was good to see so many people relaxed and smiling in the sunshine and sitting around on the many seats provided. Some people stayed for several hours, pausing for a rest and then going back in a different direction. On Wednesday afternoon



one of our colonies of bees decided to swarm 15 minutes before opening, but they stayed quietly in the lilac tree until we were ready to put them into a new home later in the evening. This caused a lot of interest as the bees hung over one of the pathways but no-one was stung and a lot of people learned a little more about bees, and the honey we had for sale almost sold out. Our cider-making equipment was on show and quite a few people enjoyed a sample of the cider we make. This was followed-up by a fascinating Exhibition on the History of Apples and a Nature Quiz in the summerhouse – a good time for a rest. Thanks go to Alan Marsh for his excellent work.

The whole of the garden is very natural, with flowers growing out of places you could never plant them, a woodland that feels very magical with exciting corners, random animals and places to sit, and our riverside walk is there to enjoy what nature has given us. The path through the meadow grasses take you back to childhood days when the sky was blue and the grass came up to your chest.

But best of all is the retreat back to have a cup of tea and cake, provided by the Bickenhall WI, which we all appreciated. It was pleasing to see so



many people meeting acquaintances in the garden and marquee, enjoying the refreshments and chatting. It was a village social event.



Thanks to all who helped, but especially to Magnus Stewart, our stalwart at the entrance gate, and Jennifer Stewart who has done so many things I cannot list them. We made nearly £500 for the NGS charities. Brian and I thank all who managed to come along and give their support.

Home Deliveries to Neroche Households



Since the early 1970s, a small local enterprise has been making home deliveries to Neroche residents; for the past 9 years it has been owned and run by Keith Bailey and Rachel Down. They operate two full-time vans and deliver all dairy products, potatoes, eggs and newspapers. There is no extra cost in having an order brought to-your-door, other than a small delivery charge for newspapers.



Seven-days-a-week, in the early hours of the morning, Keith and Rachel collect their daily stock from Taunton, and aim to deliver to the Neroche Parish area between 5.00am and 7.00am. They have never failed to show, even during floods and heavy snow storms. However, in recent years, the number of customers using the services of Keith and Rachel has declined and has brought into question the economic viability of continuing with the business.



If you would like to discuss the possibility of placing an order and having fresh food and/or newspapers brought to your door, then give Keith or Rachel a call on **01460 432745**

With village shops being in decline, it would be a great shame to lose this service; as they say *“if you don't use it you'll lose it”*. If you would like a reference regarding the quality and reliability offered by 'Bailey and Down' then contact Colin Croad colin.croad@tiscali.co.uk who lives in Curland, and has been using their services for years.

Neroche Local History Group - Recent Meetings

By Doreen Marsb

In our first meeting of 2013, Peter Darch, now living in Devon, spoke of his training as a forester in Neroche Forest, between June 1961 and March 1962. He arrived here at the age of 16, from Bristol, and lived with Mary and Harry Weaver in a cottage beyond Underhill Farm most of the time he was here. He was trained by Mr. James Fowler, the area's head forester who lived in Forest Lodge Staple Fitzpaine. Peter described his fellow foresters as "a lovely bunch of men". The work in the forest was hard but the foresters worked as a team and it was enjoyable. Some had special skills such as great ability with an axe. He recalled "never washing very much. We must have been very sweaty and smelly, but we were all like it".



In March, Mrs. Celia Fitzhugh of North Curry gave us



a well-illustrated talk about her village, where an enthusiastic group of local historians have amassed a considerable amount of material. Much to our envy they have their own archive room above The Pavement Café in the village where they can work and store archives safely. There is a strong link between North Curry and Curland as they hold the archive photos of Curland Methodist Chapel, which closed at the turn of the 20th and 21st, century and worshippers now attend North Curry Methodist Chapel. We were pleased to help the historians there by naming

many of the people in photos taken as far back as the 1930s.

Celia described the background to the building of the attractive Queen's Square in the village and also described the many industries, some connected with the willow growing in the area. We also learnt about the numerous shops that were in the village until quite recently. At one time they had "The Bijou Cinema", (affectionately referred to by local people as "The Bye Joe Cinema") where films could be seen for a few pence.

At our third meeting, in May, we, and many guests, enjoyed a performance of



“Two Nations”, given by Time and Tide, an excellent local amateur company. The title of their production was taken from Benjamin Disraeli’s book “ Sybil: or, The Two Nations” when he exposed the wealth of some of the population and the extreme poverty of the poor. This was particularly so in the counties of the

south-west of England. Drawing on the observations of writers like Cobbett, Blake, Hardy and Barnes and folk songs of Dorset and Somerset, they explored

“what others did not see, heard what others did not hear, and understood what others did not wish to know... ”. The three men and two women in the company sang and played well and it was very entertaining, but also thought provoking. Some in the audience



were heard to say that it wasn’t so different right through to the 1930s, and as a local history group, we were conscious of the fact that they were singing about conditions we had explored in our own recent investigations in our villages.



As a local history group, we have two current projects :

a] we are hoping to put on a map the location of cottages and buildings that have disappeared. If anyone knows of any we would be very pleased to hear about them.

b] we also want to list the names of residents of the villages of Bickenhall, Curland and Staple Fitzpaine who lived here in the mid-20th century. The beginning of the century is easy to record because we can rely on the census material of 1901 and 1911 (which are available online), but for 1950 say, we have to rely on the memories of local people. Curland and Staple Fitzpaine records are nearly complete but we have much work to do for Bickenhall.

“Roof Over Our Heads” Concert St Peter’s Church

By Alison Brown

A most enjoyable and successful concert took place on 24 May in St Peter’s Church, Staple Fitzpaine, to raise some funds towards the roof repairs created by the theft of the lead-covering on the North Aisle roof.

The idea for a concert came from the singer Rosie May Giblett, our very own aspiring folk and blues singer, who was born and brought up in Bickenhall, and known to many of us for her lovely voice. Rosie May, who is now trying to make her way in the tough world of professional musicians, and sings at gigs as far afield as London



and Bath, has compiled a short CD entitled “Roof Over Our Heads” and put together this concert herself to help us raise funds for the roof, for which we are so grateful.



Around 60 people listened with increasing enthusiasm to, firstly, Leonie Evans, a friend of Rosie, who kindly gave her time to sing for ‘Our Roof’. Leonie sang a mixture of songs from several different countries and accompanied herself with guitar. Coffee, teas

and fairy cakes were sold during the interval with the opportunity to buy Rosie’s first CD.

Rosie May sang for the second half of the concert, sometimes accompanied by her band, at other times playing her guitar with great skill. She has a lovely haunting voice and sang a number of songs about the area and the church. She has written most of her own lyrics as well as music. A resounding encore



was given at the end of her performance which was enjoyed by us all. **Thank you Rosie**

Footnote - quoted from 'Rosie May' on her website:

“All the songs on ‘Roof Over Our Heads’ were written with the acoustics of a church in mind. This EP is more ambient and meditative, with inspiration from old English folk songs written in admiration of one’s local landscapes, with medieval influence in the melodies.

I wrote this album to raise money for a little church near where I grew up, called St Peter's in Staple Fitzpaine, Somerset, which was recently the victim of lead thievery from its roof and consequently suffered water damage through the rainy winter. 100% of profits go to St Peter's!”

The ‘Roof Over Our Heads’ CD is still available for just £3 from Rosie May’s website and all profits go to St. Peter’s Church. Buy the CD or download the EP from rosiemaymusic.bandcamp.com

All contributions towards the Roof Appeal gratefully received!



St Peter's roof under repair



NEROCHE HALL QUIZ

With Colin Croad (*and fish and chips*)

Teams of up to 6 - £2.00 per person
(fish and chips extra)

Friday 11th October 2013
7.15pm for 7.30pm start
(Bring your own drinks and glasses)



Taunton Flower Show

The Taunton Flower Show is not only a traditional British flower show but includes attractions for the whole family. From exciting arena events to the spectacular floral marquee, the absorbing play area and Chelsea style designer gardens, the show appeals to all ages.



The Taunton Flower Show opens its gates to visitors from far and wide on the 2nd and 3rd of August. Tickets are £12 for the Friday and £10 for the Saturday (10% discount on-line). Children up to 17 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult. We hope to see you there.

Neroche Parish Council

Welcome to the third in a series of articles produced by our Clerk to the Parish Council, Howard Midworth. This contribution looks at the question “What is Localism?”.



WHAT IS LOCALISM?

Localism is the phrase for a policy initiative from Government to try and ensure that decisions are made as close as practical to a local community that is affected, and aims to push decision making down to the most local level, wherever possible.

There are also a number of concepts which you may have seen or heard in the media, which are defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as:

The Big Society - the vision of a society where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility, and use it to create better services and outcomes.

Decentralisation - the process of giving away power to individuals, professionals, communities and local institutions.

Localism - the ethos of doing everything at the lowest possible level and only involving central government if absolutely necessary.

The aims flowing from these concepts are:

- Communities and town and parish councils could use local knowledge to provide better tailored local services
- Central government is an enabler: informing, enthusing, networking and supporting

- Shifting power from central Whitehall to local public servants, from bureaucrats to local communities and individuals
- Helping people and their locally elected representatives to achieve their own ambitions
- Giving local authorities the formal legal ability and greater confidence to respond to what local people want
- Making it easier for local people to take over amenities they value and keep them part of local life
- Ensuring local community groups with ideas for improving local services get a chance to change how things are done
- Giving people a new way to voice opinions on local issues

The ways in which these aims can be achieved is through a number of new community rights, including:

- ***Community right to buy*** – the ability to list public and private land & buildings as assets of community value.
- ***Community right to challenge*** – parish councils can express an interest in taking over running a local authority service.
- ***Community right to build*** – local communities can take forward their own plans for development without the need for a conventional planning application.
- ***Neighbourhood Plans - communities can have greater influence in deciding where facilities and housing should go through local referendum.***

The Government enshrined these various community rights in the Localism Act 2011, which gives Town and Parish Councils certain powers should they wish to take advantage of them.

Whilst Parish Councils can now adopt powers to undertake a much wider variety

of activities, the major question, as always, is how they will be funded and by whom. Taking on new projects and delivering services can generally only be funded through the parish precept or Council Tax charge, therefore the key question for both Local Councils and communities is whether the community is prepared to pay an extra amount on its Council Tax bills in exchange for services that the local community would find useful. The Council would then have to decide whether it had the capacity or resources to undertake the activity.

Ultimately, the community is able to decide how much it may be prepared to pay for what level of local services.

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



Following the Neroche Hall's Friday Film Night's successful showing of 'Quartet', 'Argo' and 'Love Is All You Need', the next film to be shown will be on Friday 27 September 2013 at 7.30pm.;

THE GREAT GATSBY (cert 12A)

This adaptation of a literary classic stars Leonardo Di Caprio and is directed by Baz Luhrmann. The film captures the spirit of the Jazz Age and, as a subject now studied by GCSE history students, may be of interest to them, as well as our normal audience. This is a lively, sumptuous, visual film with grand sets, detailed period dresses and spectacular scenery with impeccable direction and marvellous cinematography. Compared to the previous Robert Redford/Mia Farrow film, this is truer to the spirit of the book and is said to more reflect the themes and morals from the classic F. Scott Fitzgerald tale.



*For bookings and further details:-
Anne Perry 01460 234 377
Nicky Baxter 01823 480 675*

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) :

8 Aug. ‘Woodland Music Morning for Under 5s’. *Forest Glade Holiday Park.* A chance for little ones to discover the magical world of the woodland, with music, songs and exploring in the woods surrounding the Holiday Park.



9 Aug. ‘Evening Walk Around Buckland and Quants Woods’. *Forches Corner.* A circular walk from Forches Corner along woodland paths, lanes and tracks through woods and fields on the Blackdown’s steep northern scarp.

14 Aug. ‘Clearance of the Wood Pastures with the Neroche Conservation Volunteers’. *Ruggin Nature Reserve.* Clearance and raking of vegetation at the wood pasture in Ruggin Nature Reserve.

23-24 Aug. ‘Dads and Lads Overnight’ *Seville’s Croft, Hemyock.* An exciting overnight experience that will strengthen father and son relationships. Includes teambuilding activities, fire-making, nature watching and woodcraft. Evening meal, breakfast and camping equipment provided.



28 Aug. ‘Volunteering with the Neroche Woodlanders’. *Young Wood, Staple Fitzpaine.* A Day of volunteering at Young Wood Community Woodland. There will be a number of different jobs to do during the day.



7-8 Sep. 'Aquaponics Weekend Course'. Upper Hayne Farm. Learn how to grow fish, vegetables and fruit for the table, in an integrated system, in your back garden, poly tunnel, greenhouse or shed. Camping space available with use of hot shower.

24 Sep. 'Horse Logging Taster Session'. Park Farm, Wellington. A day in the wood with horses, discovering the art of horse logging, the sustainable way to extract timber. You will be given the chance to 'have a go'.

28 Sep. 'Owls, Bats, Badgers and Glowing Mud'. Seville's Croft, Hemyock. We'll use an electronic bat detector to try and locate bats then we'll walk through the woods to see glowing mud (yes, really!). Includes owl and badger watching/spotting.



20 Oct. '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 (Next meeting 14th November).



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 events and extensive programme, go to www.themeetinghouse.org.uk

Fri 9 Aug. **JAZZ.** Mike Denham – From Rags to Riches

Fri 23 Aug. **LATIN** – Esperanto

Fri 4 Oct. **FOLK** – Flying Folk Evening

Fri 11 Oct. **CLASSICAL** – Evropska Quartet

Fri 25 Oct. **JAZZ** – All Star Special

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 August onwards, include: *Sunday 18 August, The Night Porters. Saturday 12 October, Albert Lee & Hogan's Heroes. Saturday 25 October, Dire Streets.* For full information on these concerts and many others, go to www.squareandcompasspub.com



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.

The One and Only Pub in Neroche Villages

The Greyhound Inn at Staple Fitzpaine



The Greyhound Inn is Grade II listed and was originally a 16th century Coaching Inn. Overlooking the church and within easy reach of Taunton it has since been extended into a series of rambling, interconnecting bars and function rooms with a rustic mix of flagstone floors, exposed timber beams, open fires and natural stone walls.

The landlords, David and Marina Wright, have been at the pub for over 6 years but have more than 20 years experience in running wine bars, restaurants and pubs, most recently in the Devon and Dorset area.

The pub has built up a reputation for the quality of its food and is kept busy catering for locals, passing trade and customers from Taunton and beyond. It is especially busy on those days when local sporting events are taking place at the Polo ground, Taunton racecourse or Somerset County Cricket Club.

David & Marina are proud that all the food is homemade and freshly prepared with locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. The meat is supplied by Riverside Butchers of Taunton, the fish comes fresh from Phil Bowditch of Brixham and the desserts are supplied by a local patisserie.

As well as looking after the normal pub trade, David & Marina support and provide facilities for local clubs and organisations such as the WI, local skittles team, Polo Club and Local Action Groups, including the newsletter team and can cater for functions such as wedding and christening parties.

And, if that wasn't enough, they even look after the Automated External Defibrillator which was installed at the pub last year. Thankfully, it hasn't been required yet but 3 of the pub staff have been fully trained in its use.



Finally, when you next visit the Greyhound, don't worry too much about the resident ghost. The Grey Lady hasn't been seen for 2 years – or rather, no one admits to seeing her recently!

Events For Your Calendar

August

- 1 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 8)
- 2-3 Taunton Flower Show (see page 26)
- 3 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see [www. nerochevillages.org.uk](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk))
- 8-10 Shakespeare Festival (see page 14)
- 17-25 Scarecrow Festival (see page 5)

September

- 5 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 8)
- 7 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www. nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 12 Parish Council Meeting (see www. nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 27 Friday Night Film Club - 'The Great Gatsby' (see page 29)

October

- 3 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 8)
- 5 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www. nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 11 Neroche Hall Fish 'n' Chips Quiz (see page 26)
- 25 Friday Night Film Club - 'Arbitrage' (see page 11)

November

- 2 Neroche Parish Walking Group (see www. nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 7 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 8)
- 14 Parish Council Meeting (see www. nerochevillages.org.uk)
- 22 Friday Night Film Club - 'Summer In February' (see page 11)

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 30-32

Household Recycling & Refuse Collections Bank Holiday Day Changes for 2013



Usual collection day	Revised collection day
August	
26 th August – 30 th August	All collections one day later including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 31 st 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

27th August, 24th September, 22nd October

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.

24 July to 1 September 2013
26 October to 3 November



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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