

*“Working Together for a Better Community”*

# NEROCHE VILLAGES

## Newsletter

Issue No 21

Autumn 2016

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



neroche  
woodlanders

*We manage the forest for wildlife, for trees and for people. Making income from woodland produce will help us to keep the cycle of benefits moving. Winter coppicing, firewood creation and woodland products are slowly growing - there is much to do.*

*At the heart of what we do is the experience that being in the woods helps us to be well as people, and helps the woods to be looked after.*

*Volunteers are what makes Young Wood tick. Shaping the place, looking after the forest, creating spaces for others to come and be.*

[www.youngwood.org.uk](http://www.youngwood.org.uk)

Welcome to the 21st issue of the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, which hopes to satisfy the need identified in the Parish Plan for a 'hard copy' local news and information medium delivered free to every household in Neroche Parish. The aim of this publication is to improve communication within the Parish by providing news and information on a wide variety of subjects and issues.



# Foreword

By: Wally Torrington (Project Coordinator) & Alan Perrior (Editor)



Welcome to the largest edition of the Newsletter since August 2014. It is often said that mid-to-late summer is the quietest period in any local community for activities and news – but clearly not in Neroche Parish! In fact, we had so much material that some articles, which are not time sensitive, we've delayed publishing until the Winter issue in December.



We apologise to those who submitted articles which didn't make it into this issue.

As previously announced, we (Wally and Alan) are looking to retire from working on the Newsletter at the end of this year, with the December issue being our last publication. A small number of volunteers have already come forward to replace us and will form the basis of the new production team. If any more of you fancy getting involved, to a lesser or greater extent (most people will prefer *'to a lesser'*, which is fine), then please make contact with either Wally [wallytorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:wallytorrington@hotmail.com) or Alan [nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk) All that having been said, we are not *'running for the door'*, we will still be here after December 2016, and willing to give a hand if required. If you are *'in two minds'* as whether to get involved or not, then come and have a *'no obligation'* chat, on the basis you can walk away if you don't fancy it. We look forward to your call.



## Inter-Village Cricket Match

Sunday 4th September, starts 2pm, at Stoke St Mary Cricket Ground

Annual Cricket Match between the villages of Staple Fitzpaine, Thurlbear, Orchard Portman and Stoke St Mary, competing for the Walker Cup.

Please come and support the boys!

# World Cup 1966

By Wally Torrington

I was sitting at my computer writing and editing my share of the articles for the Autumn Issue of the Newsletter (a task that Alan and I divide between us) and listening to the radio. I was aware that there seemed to be wall-to-wall coverage of the 1966 World Cup Final; I then realised it was 30th July, the 50th Anniversary of that historic match. That day holds particular memories for me because I was fortunate enough to be at the match, having had the opportunity to purchase a full set of tickets for all

the Wembley matches, which included the

opening ceremony, the quarter-final and semi-final which featured England; and, of course, the final. I still have, in my little box of memorabilia, the programme for the final, the souvenir programme for the whole event, and all the ticket stubs.

And the memories continue into the following month of August 1966, when I was invited to have a trial with Fulham FC who, at that time, was in the old First Division. I was met at the

training ground by the Manager, Vick Buckingham, who immediately asked one of the players, Bobby Robson (later to become England Manager) to take me to the dressing room. After changing, and whilst being 'put through my paces' by the Trainer, Arthur Stevens, I realised that with us, on the pitch, was George Cohen who, a few weeks before, I'd been watching in the World Cup Final.

All so long ago! However, reminiscing over, I returned to the editing.



# News from Neroche Hall

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

The summer tends to see a slight reduction in our planned events at the hall. Our popular film nights are given a well-earned rest as we tend to make the most of the longer days and lighter evenings; but autumn will see the return of our monthly evening of cinematic entertainment. You will be able to view the forthcoming films advertised on our website, and it is worth noting that there are some minor date changes to our regular 'last-Friday-in-the-month' slot. I hope there will be something to interest everyone in the coming months.



The committee is exploring the possibility of obtaining a grant for additional improvements within the hall, especially with regard to the showing of films. This is currently only in the first stages of planning, so it is a little premature to explain more at this time, but I hope that I may be able to do so in my next article.

Many of you will have used or seen the 'committee room' at the hall, which, despite the heating, can be a little draughty. You may, therefore, be pleased to learn that new interlined curtains are currently on order, and should soon be gracing that room. Bespoke curtains are naturally expensive, as they must not only be fit for purpose, but also meet current fireproofing regulations for venues used for hire. This forms part of the committee's continual programme of refurbishment and improvement to the hall's facilities.

We are planning a late-summer fun boules afternoon for the August Bank Holiday Sunday, which, in the past, has proved a popular way to pass an



*A great turnout at the 2014 competition*

afternoon. Details are, of course, on our website but I wish to stress that it is a fun event, open to all members of the community, whether they be young or old. It matters not if you have never played before, as anyone can join in, and you may even surprise yourself with some previously undiscovered latent talent. There will

be BBQ food available to purchase, and good company with whom to play, eat and socialise.

Coming events for your diary this autumn include our popular Quiz Night on Friday 7th October, with fish and chips cooked on site, and a Take Art production on Friday 21st October, starring Son Yambu, who are a vibrant Cuban band. We are also exploring the possibility of a New Year's Eve event, and are hoping to plan a Safari Supper for January 2017.

Finally, if enough people are interested, the hall may start-up a Bridge Club for the winter months, with the possibility of an introductory evening for anyone interested in playing as a complete novice. Tuition would follow if there is sufficient interest. Should you wish to become involved or just get some additional information, please contact



Alison Brown for an informal chat. You can reach Alison through the hall website, as she is currently our Booking Secretary.

Finally, as always, our website address is: [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk)

# *Farewell to Carolyn and Frank Heuff*

*By Tim French*

At the end of June, friends of Carolyn and Frank Heuff held a surprise lunch



for them at the home of Jane Hole and Tim French. It was to give them a fond farewell and to let them know how much they were appreciated for all they had done while living in Neroche Parish.

Carolyn and Frank moved to Park Farm House in Bickenhall in 2002 and, shortly afterwards, established a horse blanket cleaning service. But it was when Frank converted his

*Carolyn and Frank are 3rd and 4th from the left.*

interest in baking into an Artisan Baker's business that most of us got to know him and Carolyn.

From small beginnings, the Saturday morning production of different breads, croissants and pastries grew to become a source of superb baking, with clients from near and far rushing along the narrow farm road to get their weekly supply. Many stayed to have coffee, croissants and pastries served by Carolyn, while catching up with friends. And, on Friday nights, Frank's pizzas provided a great end-of-week supper.

Recently, Park Farm had become a Bed and Breakfast business. It operated to a high standard and was listed in Alistair Sawday's book of *'Handpicked and Inspected Special Places to Stay'*.

Sadly for their many clients, Frank and Carolyn have decided to cease trading and to leave the parish. They will be much missed. Thirteen were at the lunch, all contributed to the food and drink, the weather was fine and we ate outdoors. It was great fun and an opportunity for their friends to tell Frank and Carolyn how much they will be missed.

# *Beyond the Naked Eye*

*By David Spears*

Readers might be aware that I had a joint exhibition with a friend, Mike at the CicCic gallery in Taunton last autumn. The Guernsey museum learned of our show and we negotiated my first one-man exhibition. The museum printed and mounted giant prints of my pictures and put on a wonderful display. They paid for Mads and I, and our friends from the Taunton show, to fly out to give an illustrated talk and a hands-on day for local schoolchildren to bring in their own bugs.



We had brought some video cameras with us to attach to different kinds of microscopes so that the children could see their specimens on large monitors and on a projector.



My friend Mike Crutchley had brought a full size microscope in his hand baggage, which was connected to the projector in a lecture theatre. He showed live water snail eggs on the screen, blown up to the size of beach balls, and the embryos inside the eggs were whirling round like tops.

The kids were enthralled. They also loved the wasps, woodlice, beetles and centipedes that they had brought in. Especially important was the effect we were having on the teachers who accompanied the children. They were unaware of the educational impact that low cost microscopes and proper instruction can have.

We were given the exhibition panels by the museum and when the show ended at the end of June, we hired a van and collected the panels and brought them back to Curland. We hope to arrange new exhibitions at various centres around the country. Thanks to Pete and Jackie Kolkowski for helping the strenuous unloading - those panels are heavy!

I'm a member of the Quekett Microscopical Club which is based at the Natural History Museum in London, and they hold regional meeting around the country from time to time. I was



I was volunteered to start a West Country meeting so I booked a day at the Neroche Hall in early June and invited my long suffering friend Mike to assist me. We installed some sophisticated microscopes and macro systems in the hall and brought in a small aquarium full of garden pond gunge, which turned out to be full of superb micro-organisms, including loads of rotifers and Euglenas (look them up!). We had fifteen people attending, including some from local camera clubs, and a buffet lunch was served, prepared by Mads and Jackie.

We also installed my ancient projection microscope (see photo on next page) which I bought from the junk department at Doniford Farm. I last saw one when I was at school in 1964. I plugged it in and it worked perfectly!

On the day of the Queen's birthday celebrations at the hall, I was called away to the Cheltenham Science Festival by a colleague in the Royal Photographic Society to help man their exhibit. This involved helping children and their



parents to construct a cardboard microscope and take pictures through it using their smart phones. The cardboard was pre-cut and perforated so that when folded up into a box shape, a small plastic lens was squeezed into a hole in the top. Focussing was achieved by twisting a pencil fitted with cardboard cams that was pushed through the box. This lifted and lowered a cardboard flap that held the specimen.



The results were amazing and we looked at slides of plant sections, bee's legs and spider jaws that resulted in remarkably good photos. Again, as in Guernsey, the kids were greatly enthused and were given their microscopes to take home.

*Bottom of photo - David's projection microscope.*

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## **THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL**

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a great home-cooked 2-course lunch for just £5.

Meet people from the locality, take time out from your busy daily routine and enjoy conviviality & friendliness at a community lunch.

**Lunches take place on Thursdays at 12.30 for 1.00 pm  
1st September, 6th October, 3rd November**

***Early Notice: Christmas Lunch Special - 8th December***

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

Contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441,  
Email: [alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk)  
**Organised by Friends of St Peter's Church**

# *A Pilgrimage to Lourdes*

*By Alison Brown*

Lourdes was a tiny village in the foothills of the Pyrenees where, in 1858, Bernadette Soubirous, aged 14, lived with her impoverished family in a disused prison. One day, Bernadette, accompanied by two friends, went in search of firewood. The friends waded across a river but Bernadette, who suffered from asthma, was not allowed to follow. While she waited she said her prayers. Suddenly, there was a sound of wind. Looking up, Bernadette saw in a niche high up in the rock the figure of a lady, dressed in white and holding a rosary.



The Lady appeared to Bernadette on 18 separate occasions between February and July that year. There are detailed accounts of each apparition; but the important thing is that, when Bernadette asked the Lady who she was, she replied “I am the Immaculate Conception” - a title then unknown to Bernadette, an

uneducated child, but proof that the Lady was indeed the Virgin Mary.

Our Lady also said that she wished a church to be built, people to come in procession and everyone to repent of their sins. She asked Bernadette to wash her face in the mud and to eat some grass as an act of humility. Water has flowed from that place ever since, now known as The Grotto

Now, over five million people respond to Our Lady’s request each year. Some come simply as tourists, some as pilgrims; some sick, some healthy; but all come as equals to where Bernadette prayed, and to listen to Our Lady



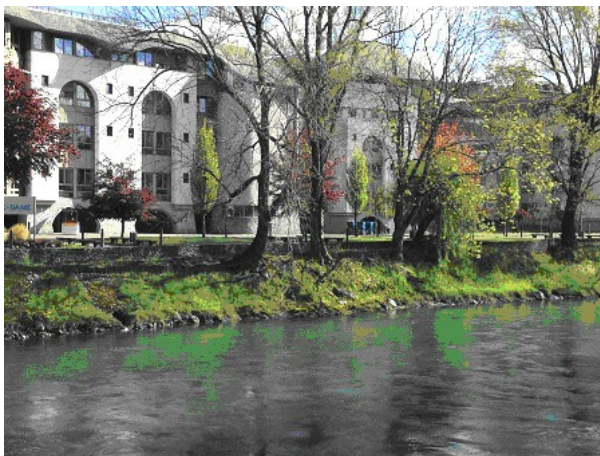
in the secret of their own hearts, to process and to pray. Today Lourdes is a large town on the banks of the River Gave with scores of hotels, but the Grotto is still the focal point of a pilgrim's visit.

Every year in May, thousands of members of the Order of Malta gather together on pilgrimage in Lourdes. I have been fortunate to be involved for many years with the British pilgrimage at this time.

The Order of Malta is one of the oldest institutions of western civilisation. It has been dedicated to the service of the poor and the sick – without concern for race or religion – since it was officially founded in Jerusalem in 1099. It was then that knights from all over Europe built a hospice dedicated to St. John the Baptist for pilgrims to the Holy Land. The administrator was a man called Gerard and he started what is now the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

The Order is Sovereign because its members owned land on the pilgrimage routes; Military because they had to fight the Turks in defence of the Holy Land; and Hospitaller because of their vows to care for the poor and the sick. These days the Order runs hospitals, leprosaria, laboratories, dispensaries and homes for the elderly all over the world. The Order's mission is summed up in its motto "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum" – defence of the faith and care of the suffering.

We take 60 hospital pilgrims (known as HPs) and around 150 helpers/carers, doctors and nurses. There are a number of Anglicans but most are Roman Catholics. We fly from Stansted to Tarbes, the airport serving Lourdes. The helpers stay in hotels, working on a shift basis, and our sick pilgrims move into an empty ward in a purpose built building which acts as a hostel for many pilgrimages. The ward is divided into rooms of varying numbers of beds, and our pilgrims quickly make themselves at home. The building, called the *Accueil de Notre Dame*, has its own central kitchens, and food is



*The Accueil, where our Hospital Pilgrims stay.*



*The Refectory team at the party.*

transported and served in each floor's Refectory.

My job during the week, for a number of years, has been responsibility for the organisation of the Refectory. The refectory usually accommodates a further 40 or 50 sick pilgrims from another pilgrimage at the same time as ours, so the seating for so

many and accommodation of probably 20-30 wheelchairs is a nightmare, not to mention getting hot food to each table in good time! However the food is good and the camaraderie between helpers and HPs throughout the week is uplifting.

The activities during the pilgrimage are various. Of course processions and services figure prominently, but also: taking a bath to wash in Holy Water; lighting a candle in memory of loved ones; prayer at the Grotto; and also picnics, shopping, sightseeing around the town and leisure time at one of many cafes in Lourdes. Many of our HPs are not able to go on holiday unless they have accompanying care, so this time away from home is much appreciated, as is the care they receive on pilgrimage. Our HPs are expected to make a contribution to the cost of the pilgrimage; however, no one is turned away through lack of funds. Some generously pay more which helps to pay for those with no money.

Questions I am asked many times are "do you see any miracles? Or do you know of any cures?" The miracle of Lourdes was the visions of Bernadette and subsequent miracles and cures are well documented. We find the miracle of Lourdes is shown in the care that people offer to each other, the spirituality found at the Grotto, the generous giving of time by many volunteers, and the realisation that one's own troubles are very small compared to many of those who visit Lourdes.

Please visit: [www.orderofmalta.org.uk](http://www.orderofmalta.org.uk) to learn more about the activities of the Order or contact me if you know of someone who would like to visit Lourdes

# 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.*

## Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding natural Beauty

In Somerset, we are blessed with major areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), including the Quantocks, Exmoor National Park and, of course, our very own Blackdowns, of which Neroche Parish forms part. I'm aware that many Neroche residents enjoying walking the local area, so, for those who might enjoy venturing a little further, I thought I'd include a few words about The Quantocks. What I did not realise was the Quantocks have a special place in history as the first designation of its kind in the country; the Blackdowns AONB, by comparison, is a relative newcomer, at 25 years old, having been designated in 1991!



The Quantock Hills has just celebrated its sixtieth birthday as an AONB. Shared between the three local Somerset districts, many look north up to the wild tract



of upland running east west, made up of moorland heath, natural wooded combes, and planted forest; home to a variety of wildlife.

Traditional grazing by wild deer, ponies, sheep and sometimes cattle, keeps the top of the hills open. Livestock mostly

belong to commoners (farmers and small holders with grazing rights). Although

the Quantocks still have relatively few landowners, all are involved in sympathetic management of the area, supported by Natural England and the AONB Service. The recent appointment of a Health and Wellbeing Officer to join the team, illustrates the varied benefits such a relatively wild tract of land has to offer.

## Somerset Waste Partnership Recycling Changes



The Cashless Trial which is a no-cash, card only pilot, was put into effect and has been very successful. It was rolled-out at Taunton (Priorswood) Recycling Centre from earlier this year. The only part of the Taunton Recycling Centre that is still taking cash is the “Re-use Shop”, which sells re-useable salvaged items. The Taunton Recycling Centre was chosen as the pilot site because the level of transactions, although considerable, is manageable, and the staff is experienced in handling payments by plastic. If all continues to go well, it is likely that the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) will consider rolling-out the same arrangements to all SWP Recycling Centres later in the year.

Also, earlier this year, the SWP Recycling Centres started charging for asbestos and plasterboard disposal. The charges for these are £12 per sheet (or equivalent) for asbestos-containing-materials, and £4 per sheet for plasterboard or plaster; payment must be made in advance, on-line, by debit or credit card. Asbestos must be sealed in thick plastic before being taken to a recycling site. More advice on handling these materials is available on the SWP website.



Nearby authorities continue to limit the use of their recycling facilities to residents only. Increasingly, our facilities are becoming more congested, especially at week-ends. The SWB has therefore taken the decision to implement a permit scheme for Somerset residents who visit our recycling centres in a commercial type vehicle or use a trailer to transport their household waste.

The permits, which will be available free of charge to Somerset residents, will restrict access of such vehicles at peak usage times. The permit scheme will be implemented towards the end of the summer, with publicity beginning to appear at the recycling centres and in the local press soon. Remember, if you drive a van or use a trailer to transport your household waste to site, keep an eye out for the permit information. Non Somerset residents will not be eligible to apply for a van or trailer permit.

## Annual New Homes Completion Figures

Meeting the demand for new housing in Taunton Deane has seen the greatest number of annual housing build completions achieved in Taunton Deane in the past year since the turn of the century. Completions stand at a total of 883, and includes both open market and affordable housing.



Of the 883 total, the number of private homes completed stands at 678, while the number of affordable homes has risen to 205, which is ahead of the annual target. A similar number has been achieved for the past three years. The figures show how Taunton and its economy are growing, with figures sharply up on past years. Since 2008, the number of housing build completions now stands at 4,529.

Around two thirds of the new homes built were delivered on sites identified in the Council's Adopted Local Plans, and 29% of completions were on land developed previously (brownfield sites). Nearly 500 new homes were built in-and-around Taunton, with the rest in various locations across the Deane.

*Please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarification or comment on the above or if you have any other queries in respect of Council services.*

*[cldr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk)*

# *Neroche Take Art - Cuban Rhythms*

*Music and Dance from Son Yambu*

*Neroche Hall - Friday 21st October at 8pm*



**Son Yambu** play authentic Cuban Son, the intoxicating fusion of Spanish and African rhythms that gave rise to Salsa. The band features a new generation of Cuban musicians who are all passionate about maintaining the traditions of the genre, continuing the Buena Vista legacy that put Cuban music back on the map. They give this irresistible music a contemporary edge, bringing their audiences a truly sensational, authentic Latin music experience.

*‘Absolutely tremendous.... if you don't start to move to this there is no hope for you! Extraordinary music.’* Sean Rafferty, BBC Radio 3

**Son Yambu** have gone from strength to strength; playing Glastonbury Festival, Manchester Jazz Festival, Cheltenham Music Festival and Africa Oyé Festival – to name but a few!

**Tickets £10 (Early Bird Tickets are £8 if booked before 7th October)**

Tickets on sale from 19th September - contact Sheila Green  
(01823 480758 or [sfgreen@btinternet.com](mailto:sfgreen@btinternet.com))

A dance session is available before the event, from 6.45pm to 7.30pm, for a small extra charge (of £3). Numbers are limited for this so early booking is essential. Keep an eye on the hall website for details: [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk)

**Bar and Nibbles available.**



# Moviola - Friday Film Nights in Neroche Hall

**Friday 16th September at 7.30 pm** (Note: not last Friday of the month!)



## Golden Years

(cert 12a)

An Ealing Style comedy caper filmed in Bristol and the West County with a plethora of well known names- Una Stubbs, Virginia McKenna, Simon Callow, Sue Johnston, Alun Armstrong, Phil Davies and Bernard Hill.

Law abiding pensioners Arthur and Martha Goode refuse to take the injustice of old age lying down and so take back what is rightfully theirs. They undertake a spree of bank robberies combined with a tour of National Trust properties. When the local bowls club is threatened, their friends join the rank of bank robbers.

**Friday 28th October at 7.30pm**

## Love and Friendship

(cert: u)

A well received and recommended film adaptation of Jane Austin's novella Lady Susan.

Recently widowed, a scandalous Lady Susan arrives at the home of her estranged in-laws creating havoc in her wake.



Described as delicious, witty and great fun, the film channels and embellishes the source material's subversion. Kate Beckinsale gives a mesmerising performance as the central character - oh so wonderfully wicked!

**Tickets: £6.00** - Bar and nibbles available.

# *Broadband Update - July 2016*

*By Tim French*

I understand that there is a curse that goes “May you live in interesting times”. Well it’s happened to us. Three important and interlinked matters have come to pass in the last few months that affect when properties in Neroche Parish will finally receive superfast broadband.

First, at the May meeting of Neroche Parish Council, Matt Barrow, from Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS), updated councillors on the current plans for bringing superfast broadband to Neroche Parish. He said that there is a commitment to achieve 95% coverage by the end of 2017. Funding is in place for this roll-out and the contract is currently out to tender. But, as we know from past experience, this figure usually relates to the region served by CDS as a whole, not to individual areas, so what will happen to some of us must still be in doubt. Certainly, the CDS website still shows areas in the parish not in the area listed to receive an upgrade.



Matt Barrow also said that there should be 100% coverage of the CDS area by 2020 but no funding for this phase is yet in place. This is a real worry and it’s worth remembering that CDS has never yet delivered, on time, any previous government commitment on broadband to Neroche Parish.

Second, at the same Neroche Parish Council meeting, Mr Barrow outlined the CDS voucher scheme for properties with slow broadband speed (details can be found on the CDS website). As an interim measure, those with broadband speeds of less than 2mps will qualify for a voucher of up to £500, which can be used to fund the installation of a new broadband connection using a solution from an approved list of providers. This is likely to be by way of a satellite or wireless connection. At the meeting, Cllr Lynne Spoor also gave a report on the broadband event that she had attended, which covered many of the issues raised by Matt Barrow. As a result of both presentations, the Council agreed to explore whether there was sufficient interest in our community to collectively use the Broadband Voucher Scheme to obtain better broadband speeds locally. Lynne undertook to do this. She offered to approach potential suppliers so that a public meeting could be arranged to discuss the options available and to ascertain the level of interest in the community. She has used the parish email

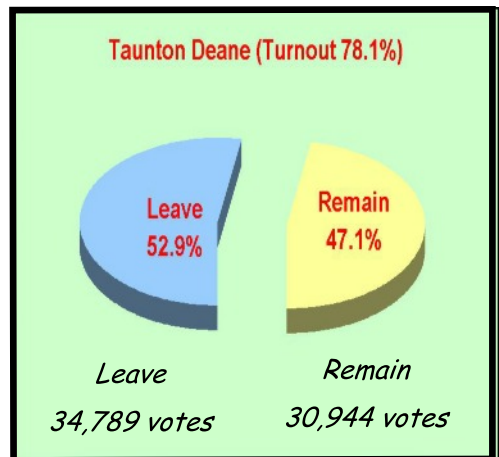
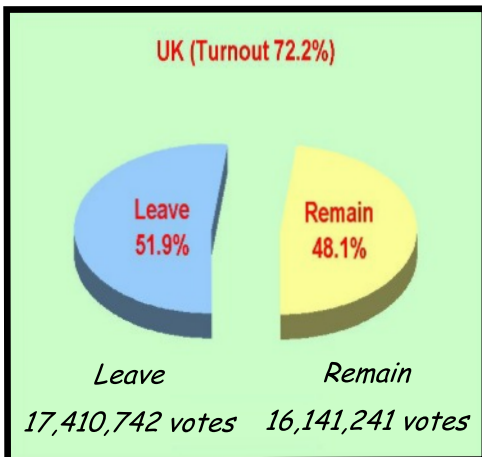
alert system, run by Wally Torrington, to ask people with a slow broadband speed to contact her, and let her know if they are interested in joining-together to use their voucher, if a viable scheme is found.

Lynne has so far had a disappointing response with both tasks. She contacted one of the fixed wireless operators, Airband, which is putting in its system in Dartmoor for CDS. They agreed to come up with a date for the public meeting but nothing eventuated, in spite of her contacting them several times. She has finally got hold of them and has received an undertaking that they will provide a date in August. (*Editor: At time of going to print, no date appears to have been set.*) Luckily there are other firms on the CDS list who provide fixed wireless technology. Also, Lynne has received only forty replies to her broadband voucher scheme initiative. This is disappointing as many residents have a broadband speed that would entitle them to a voucher and it seems an idea worth exploring. Unless more wish to join in, there will be insufficient funds available to make the scheme viable. If you are interested, please send your completed survey form to Lynne Spoons. Details of how to do this is on the Neroche Villages website, as well as on email alerts.

Finally, there is the referendum result and its possible effect on funding for the two broadband timetables mentioned above, as both include European Union funding. I understand that that for the 95% coverage scheme is safe but that the rest awaits political decisions yet to be made.

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## EU Referendum Vote Results



# *Hatch Beauchamp and Neroche Garden Club*

*By Wendy Morris*

Recently, members of the Garden Club have continued their full and varied schedule, by enjoying several outings to gardens and nurseries, as nature springs back into life after months of cold and wet weather.

On 9th May, we visited the magnificent landscaped gardens of Forest Lodge in Pen Selwood. Our tour of the three acre gardens began at the house, which is perfectly positioned to look over the well manicured lawns and lake and to entice visitors to explore further. The garden is open for the NGS (National Garden Scheme).



Our next trip, on 15th May, was to the idyllic gardens of Sue and John Prideaux. Set in the

glorious rolling countryside of Beercrocombe, with wonderful views of the surrounding area, we strolled through the garden admiring the herbaceous borders, shrubs and very productive vegetable garden. Our wildlife expert Madeleine Spears was on hand to answer members' queries regarding some of the less familiar insects.



On 24th May a visit to Hurst Brook Plant Nursery, which specialises in Peonies and Irises, was very rewarding, as we were given an excellent talk on the different types of these plants and their care.

The outing to Ivy Farm on 5th June gave members the opportunity to relax in beautiful surroundings on a glorious sunny afternoon. Again we admired the herbaceous borders, shrubs and climbers before enjoying tea on the terrace. Local beekeepers, Frank and Ann Ronicle, were on hand to answer queries about the care of bees and the different species we saw.

On Sunday 3rd July, garden club members visited Bulford in Staple Fitzpaine, the home of Peter and Tami Ellis. Our tour began at the front of the house which has a long and fascinating history dating back to 1480 and looks out onto an

area of manicured lawn, planted with roses, shrubs and trees, including a magnificent Acer and Magnolia and a pond containing Water Lilies.



From there we followed a path, which led down through borders comprising an interesting range of perennial plants, including Calla Lilies, Jerusalem Sage (Phlomis) and Pachysandra. Crossing a bridge over the stream, which borders the gardens,

we admired a Tulip Tree in full bloom and a superb Mulberry tree.

We then walked on through a delightful wild flower meadow planted in 1998,



containing a wide range of grasses and wild flowers, to the well established Noah's Wood arboretum, and concluded our afternoon walk wandering among trees such as Ginkgo, Californian Redwood and Larch, together with a variety of fruit and nut trees.

Later, sitting in the sunshine on the terrace, we recharged our batteries with a generous tea, and reflected on a very enjoyable afternoon.

*Looking ahead; on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm we have a talk at Hatch Beauchamp Parish Hall "From Plant to Plate" by Sue Applegate from Greenshutters Nursery and Hurstbrook Plants. She is a brilliant speaker.*

*New members will always be made welcome by the Garden Club; please contact Wendy Morris: [staplemead@waitrose.com](mailto:staplemead@waitrose.com)*



# News from our MP

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



It certainly has been an unprecedented time on the political front. I am sure future generations will study this period in political history, dissecting its every detail, and there will be no shortage of material! I can't quite believe I have been right there in the midst of it, and how quickly the political scene can change.

Having spoken to many of the businesses based locally, I appreciate that this has been an uncertain time, and what is required now is a period of stability. I am pleased that a prolonged leadership campaign was avoided, and the new government has commenced work immediately, so that signals of reassurance can be given to business and to international investors that the UK is open for trade.

## Agriculture and the Countryside

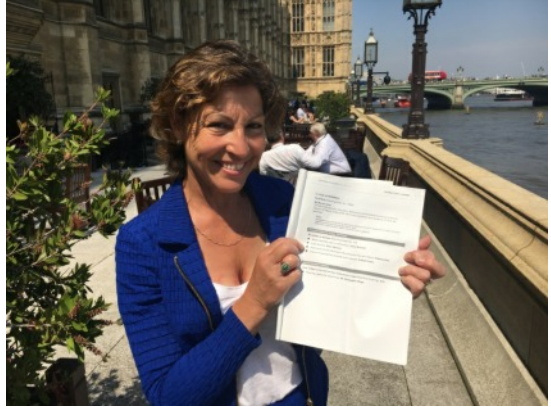
I have been engaging with local farming and environmental groups to discuss the future of this beautiful and productive countryside. It is imperative that rural areas like Neroche are not penalised in the post EU world. 40% of the EU budget was devoted to supporting rural areas, the environment and agriculture, and a suitable framework of support must be put in place for them to continue to thrive and to protect biodiversity and landscapes.

A productive on-site meeting was held just across the A358 from Neroche Parish, at Home Farm, Curry Rivel, Attendees included: farmers from this area; Farming and Wildlife Adviser Ben Thorne; and others working in the agri-environment sector, including Chris Sperring, who is responsible for running the highly successful Somerset Barn Owl project, with which Bickenhall, Curland, Staple Fitzpaine and Orchard Portman with Thurlbear are all closely involved [*please see separate article on page 38*]. Many feel that future rural

support might be linked more closely to the delivery of public goods and services (food production but also access, water management and flood control for example) as well as biodiversity, and I am feeding-in ideas to the new Secretary of State at Defra, Andrea Leadsom. The NFU are holding meetings throughout the summer, together with many other interested parties, to gauge views. It is important that protections remain for our special areas too, including for the Blackdown Hills AONB. Do send ideas to me and I will ensure they filter into the decision making departments.

### Pow Presents Petition

I was delighted to present my petition to the House of Commons calling for the restoration of the much loved Wellington Monument, the iconic landmark located in the Blackdown Hills and visible from far and wide. I was overwhelmed by the enormous backing for the petition, with over 1500 people signing it personally. This kind of support helps in making the strongest case to government and potential funders for a restoration project. The National Trust has spent a year carrying out detailed survey work



to assess the structure, coming up with a range of repair options, and they will be deciding how to proceed shortly.



Grist was added to the mill when the current Duke of Wellington himself got in touch, having seen the related monument publicity, and he too signed the petition. In a particularly memorable moment, he took me to see the gargantuan painting in the House of Lords of his famous

relative, the Duke of Wellington, depicted at the Battle of Waterloo. The Monument commemorates the Duke, one of our 3 greatest war heroes, and his success at the battle. The obelisk (the tallest 3-D structure of its kind in the world) was finished in 1817, so its 200th anniversary will be next year.

## Positive Prospects

I was pleased to host an event in Parliament with Prospects, the company based in Taunton working to help the long term unemployed get back into work. They were sharing their remarkable success stories with others in similar employment businesses in the wider South West.



For many people, confidence building is an important part of the journey back into work, and amongst the raft of innovative schemes Prospects have devised to help boost confidence are specially organised forays into the Forest of Neroche. I have been out on one of them and it is clear how working together with others improves communication skills but also how restorative the sheer power of nature can be. All of this is helping people to find their feet, succeed in interviews and eventually secure a job, which in turn gives them confidence for a better future.

Talking of the Forest of Neroche, in my capacity as Chair of the All Party Ancient Woodland Group, I spoke recently at an Ancient Tree Forum with special reference to the magical ancient oak trees hidden in the Forest (some are over 500 years old). These trees are living relics of the past, with a diverse wildlife associated with them, and unique soils beneath. They are the equivalent of our rain forest, with only 2% remaining nationally, and I am making a case that they should be protected, in line with scheduled monuments and listed buildings.

Just to illustrate how varied my life is in politics, as Chair of the All Party Animal Welfare group, I recently found myself speaking in a debate on the appalling activity of dog fighting. It is shocking that this activity is still prevalent in our society, with the associated inhumane treatment of animals it entails. I called for much harsher sentences for those caught, to act as a deterrent, as well as changes in the licensing for breeding to act as a brake as well.

## Productivity

Time will undoubtedly be challenging in our brave new post EU world and so I am continuing to lobby the relevant Ministers on securing funding for the range of infrastructure projects I've been working on with stake holders, including the A358 upgrade. It is more essential than ever that these key projects come to fruition as they will not only improve the lives of locals but also play a part in making the area the best place to do business, which in turn will reflect on the local economy.



Finally, I am always delighted to welcome groups to visit Westminster. Amongst those coming recently have been the History Society from your neighbouring parish of Stoke St Mary, accompanied by Tom Mayberry, Chief Exec of the SW Heritage Trust based in Taunton. The group visited on the very day our new Prime Minister was declared, making it a very pertinent day indeed for the History Society to make their visit.

If there is a group from Neroche Parish that would like to arrange a visit, please contact my office. I am also considering arranging a Pow's Parliamentary Tours trip in the late autumn, approximately £20/head for coach travel. If you are interested in booking a seat, please contact my office.

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

*(Ed: You may be interested to learn that, in July, Rebecca was appointed as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Housing and Planning Minister, Gavin Barwell; well done Rebecca!).*

## ***SOMERSET ART WEEKS 2016 - OPEN STUDIO*** *17 September to 2 October*

**Mal's Studio, Woodcott, Curland, TA3 5SF**

I am presenting a series of paintings that have developed from my previous work. I continue to use textures and colour to create expressionist paintings inspired by nature and light. I paint for pleasure and enjoy experimenting



with different techniques to understand how to create different effects, and to understand what works well, and importantly, what does not.

My studio has a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere, and visitors are very welcome. All the exhibits will be for sale - do please come and have a look.

## *Moviola - Friday Film Nights in Neroche Hall*



*Friday 25th November at 7.30 pm*

### *Money Monsters*

*(cert 15)*

A thriller that will have you on the edge of your seats! Directed by Jodie Foster, with a sterling cast including George Clooney and Julia Roberts; what is there not to like? George Clooney is a TV financial show host whose programme is hijacked as a protest about the corruption of the money markets. Julia Roberts plays the producer who tried to keep everyone calm to avert catastrophe.

**Tickets: £6.00** - Bar and nibbles available

## *Neroche Hall - Ooh la la!*

Enjoy an afternoon of:-

### **Boules**



**Sunday 28th August 2016 at 2.00pm**

£6.00 per team of two (*Under 16 free*)

- *everyone can play* -

Prizes, Bar, BBQ, Games

*For further details, contact Nicky Baxter  
(01823 480675 email: [ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk))*

# *West Country Accents: Goin' or Gone?*

*By our Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent*

In the 1960s a Somerset farmer might tell a straying dog walker to, 'Get awf muy laand', yet in 2016 many are more likely to inquire, 'You do know there isn't a footpath through here?' West Country accents seem to be changing; Devon trawlermen, whose fathers and grandfathers communicated with a colourful variety of accents, possess a less distinctive twang. In Cornwall, the famed indifference toward tourists is practised with a diminishing burr. Metropolitan television directors wishing to cast a 'West Country' character increasingly produce homogenised accents traceable to nowhere, except perhaps the Padstow restaurant where they were served by an Australian student.



*Paul Dirac*

Yet Historical linguists have discovered the original accent of an educated 16th Century Englishman had more in common with Rambling Syd Rumpo than the polished enunciations of Burton and Branagh. Admiral Nelson spoke with a Norfolk accent and was proud of his association with that county (and presumably flattered Lady Hamilton by telling her she looked 'boootiful...')

Yet, when Bristol's Paul Dirac jointly won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1933, he was roundly criticised by peers for his strong local accent. More recently, Professor Colin Pillinger, whose Beagle 2 Mars lander sadly crashed (the accent of the Martian land owner who objected to his Beagle on their land is

not recorded) was gently disparaged in his Telegraph obituary for his West Country brogue which ‘seemed more appropriate for a presenter on *One Man and His Dog*’.

Snobbery or good reason? Research into pronunciation bias indicates that some accents produce significant reductions in GCSE oral assessment scores,<sup>#</sup> and studies repeatedly demonstrate employer bias against non-RP accents. Aspiring extras auditioning in Bristol for the recent Star Wars movie were advised to disguise their accents. How differently the *The Empire Strikes Back* might have ended had Darth Vader offered a musically twanged, ‘Luke my ‘ansome, A’m your ole man!’

Would anyone miss the inflections that used to identify a native of this peninsula? Perhaps we should quietly put West Country accents away for good, like the cropped trousers of the 1990s that bestowed upon their wearers the air of having escaped from an institution, and in their haste mistakenly dressed in the clothes of a more diminutive inmate.

But before consigning West Country modulation to the bottom drawer of linguistic history, we might reflect on an accent that combines egregious over-articulation with an arrogant disregard for others; marking out a class of confident, supercilious Englishman. Not the Etonian utterances bumbled out by Boris, but those spat out by a perspiring Robert Newton in *Treasure Island*. Newton, who was by then an alcoholic, stole the production with an over the top performance. Ask any native English speaker 65 years on, ‘*How do pirates speak?*’ and they are likely to provide a rendition of his Long John Silver. Newton arguably carved one of the most enduring definitions of a West Country accent, and he did it drunk, standing on one leg.



I remember it as if it were yesterday.

*Robert Newton as Long John Silver*

# Taunton Racecourse

By Wally Torrington



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

*If you have ever considered joining the racecourse as a member, to enjoy all the wonderful facilities of the newly extended and refurbished members stand, but, for whatever reason, hesitated; well here is a fantastic offer to 'give it a try' at half price (£85) for the remainder of 2016. This membership offer also includes free entry to meetings at Bath, Exeter, Chepstow, Cheltenham and many others.*

Members and their guests, together with owners and trainers, have exclusive use of the Paddock Stand, Members Restaurants and the Members Car Park. Wearing their badges, members enjoy free entry to Taunton Racecourse and to numerous reciprocal racecourses shown on the opposite page.



Half Year Membership, for the remainder of 2016, is available now for just **£85**. Full membership facilities and privileges apply.

## Reciprocal Racecourse Meeting and Dates (Free Entry when wearing Taunton Membership Badge)

**SEPTEMBER** - Sedgefield Thursday 1st, Newcastle Friday 2nd, **Bath** Saturday 10th, Great Yarmouth Tuesday 13th, Newmarket Saturday 17th, Plumpton Sunday 18th, Hexham Friday 30th

**OCTOBER** – Ludlow Wednesday 5th, **Exeter** Thursday 6th, Kempton Wednesday 19th

**NOVEMBER** - Musselburgh Thursday 3rd, Sandown Sunday 6th, Lingfield Tuesday 8th, **Cheltenham** Sunday 13th, Fakenham Tuesday 15th

**DECEMBER** - Leicester Thursday 1st, **Chepstow** Saturday 3rd, Fontwell Tuesday 6th

Also, KELSO, AYR and PERTH (any one, non-festival, meeting during the year on the day of your choosing, and tickets must be requested in advance through Taunton Racecourse.)

## Taunton Race Meeting Dates for Remainder of 2016

10th and 24th November - 8th, 20th and 30th December

Apply for half-year membership at the Racecourse Office: 01823 337172 or [info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk) . The membership application form can be found at [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

## Taunton Racecourse Business Club

Offering businesses around the region a range of racecourse benefits alongside social and networking events





## **The Racecourse is celebrating Christmas 2016 with a Victorian Theme**

A Great Venue for the Office Christmas Party  
For just £33.95 you can enjoy their fantastic 4 course Christmas menu, a bottle of wine for every 5 guests, a disco and a chance to win a table for 2 at a race-meeting of your choice. The organiser of your group will also receive 2 open race-day tickets to any race-meeting of their choice.

Book now by emailing [troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk) or calling 01823 337172 option 2 or go to [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk) and download the booking form

## **Car Boot Sales**

The Taunton Racecourse Afternoon Car Boot Sale hosted by Paul's Promotions, Every Sunday & Bank Holiday Mondays (weather permitting)

Buyers from 1.30pm to 4.00pm, Sellers arrive at 1.00pm.

For more Information please call Paul or Chris on 07900 621199 or 07766 740046

[www.facebook.com/pages/Pauls-Promotions/133765106744975?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pauls-Promotions/133765106744975?fref=ts)

## Conferences & Seminars

*Taunton Racecourse is beautifully situated in Neroche Parish, at the heart of the South Somerset countryside. The unique atmosphere and panoramic views across the racecourse to the Blackdown Hills make the racecourse the perfect location for successful business events.*



The racecourse is only two miles from the M5 (junction 25) and a five minute drive from the centre of Taunton. Taunton Racecourse is well sign-posted from both the M5 and Taunton town centre.

Their two fully self-sufficient 'Orchard' and 'Paddock' Stands have a range of rooms available with business facilities, and can accommodate from 12 to 350 delegates in different layouts; they are the ideal setting for conferences and seminars. Most rooms have blackout facilities to allow use of the video or other visual presentations.

They have an excellent, highly professional catering service, which can provide three course lunches/dinners or buffet meals, as required. They also have fully licensed bars. There is free car parking for delegates (500 spaces available on the Racecourse and a further 1000 free spaces in adjacent car parks)

Their delegate rate is very competitively priced, and includes coffee on arrival, mid-morning coffee and biscuits, lunch (2-course seated lunch, cold platter or finger buffet ), afternoon tea and biscuits, room hire (including syndicate break-out rooms) and a selection of AV equipment.

If you would like a quote or arrange a viewing of the facilities, please telephone 01823 325035 or e-mail [troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk)



# *News from Bickenhall & District WI*

*By Tricia Dryden*

In May we held our Annual Meeting; members voted to retain our excellent secretary, Frances Alford, and Treasurer, Elizabeth Westlake for another year. The President (yours truly) and Vice President (Pauline Phelps) were also re-elected.



Resolutions for the upcoming Federation Annual Meeting were also discussed at length, with thanks to Jacqueline Kolkowski for an in-depth and interesting discussion on those Resolutions.

Our June Meeting was 'toe-curlingly good'. Hilary Norman, a member of our WI, gave a fascinating talk about foot health and the do's and don'ts of taking care of your feet. We all learnt something new about foot health and how to take care of our 'tootsies' for the future.

*Our President and Vice President serving refreshments at a charity fundraising event*

Our July Thursday meeting was well attended, and we welcomed Audrey Cooksley, from Horton WI, to demonstrate some Simple Puddings. It was stated that none of the puds had any calorific content??? However, it was suggested that we had a small and light supper before attending the meeting. The puds were delicious, full of fruit, cream and cream cheese. We were handed a recipe leaflet with Mango Cheesecake, Passion Fruit and Banana Whip (my personal favourite), Cherry Mousse and Black Velvet (not a drop of Guinness was spilt!!!).

*Audrey demonstrated all of these and they were tested by the ladies at the meeting - delicious!!*

In August we will be holding a Cream Tea, in the home of Jim and Wynn Balance, to raise funds for our Residential College, 'Denman'.

In September there will be a talk and demonstration, held in Neroche Hall, on Crystals for Health and Happiness. On the 24th September we will be holding a MacMillan Coffee Morning at the Greyhound Inn (with many thanks to Marina and David for their support). We look forward to seeing as many of the local community as possible from 10.00am to 11.30am.

October is a very special month for the Bickenhall WI, as it is our 90th Birthday, and we are planning a 'bit of a do' to celebrate this historic milestone.

We would be delighted to welcome new members to our meetings (second Wednesday in the month) if you can spare a couple of hours then come and join us; we are a small but very happy band and love to welcome new faces to our group. For more information contact [tricia@witchlodge.co.uk](mailto:tricia@witchlodge.co.uk)



*Denman College is the WI's own Residential and Day Adult Education College. Most of the funds needed to buy, develop and maintain the College has been raised by the members.*

## Neroche Hall Quiz



**FUN QUIZ** (with fish'n'chips)

**Buy beer / wine on night or BYO**

**Max 6 in team**

**£2.50 per person (food extra)**

**Friday 7th October 2016 at 7.00pm**

[www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk)

# *Forestry Commission / AONB*

*By Jon Burgess*

At the Forestry Commission the summer can be a quiet time as most of our work takes place in the winter, when the trees are dormant, however, we don't get time to rest on our laurels – in fact removing laurel is one of the summer jobs that we do have to get on with! Laurel and rhododendron are both non-native invasive plants that spread and shade out native woodland ground flora. So at Castle Neroche Wood and Otterford we have been cutting, spraying and mulching to try and eradicate it from the woods. Such is the toughness of these plants that it can take years to gain back control.

We have also been working over the summer to deliver the management plan for the Scheduled monument at the Castle Neroche ramparts which were becoming overrun with bramble, bracken and tree regeneration. The plan will see a more open environment on the top of the hill, with better



views out, and a clearer view of the historical earthworks, hopefully making it easier to understand how the site was used. We have started the works this year, and will complete them next year, when we hope to run the timber harvesting contract in the main block, and can remove the young plantation trees from the north end of the monument. There will be a period of time whilst we try to establish ground-cover when the site will look quite disturbed but things like this are always a longer term project.

Timber harvesting will also return to Staple Park Woods, usually a quieter site for the public but one that I recommend visiting; as it has a wonderful mixture of landscapes, ancient trees and interesting wildlife, spread over the mix of habitats. We will be thinning-out the plantation oak stands, and to gain access we have opened up many of the old rides; these will allow those in search of a nice walk an easier way to explore the site further than simply passing through on the Herepath.

# News from Neroche Parish Council

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



There are currently several projects that the Parish Council is involved with but are not yet complete, so for this edition of the newsletter, I will report on the progress to-date of these initiatives.

## Housing Needs Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed and returned the Housing Needs Survey. The response rate was approximately 20%, which is considered good. The results are currently being collated and analysed by the Community Council of Somerset, and once the information is available to the Parish Council, it will consider what further action is necessary.

Connecting Devon  
and Somerset



## Broadband Voucher Scheme

Following a presentation to the Parish Council by a representative of the Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) team on the Broadband Voucher Scheme, the Parish Council is currently exploring ways in which the vouchers can be 'pooled' so that a faster broadband service can be delivered to eligible properties prior to phase 2 of the superfast broadband roll-out. If your broadband speeds are, on average, less than 2mps, then you should be eligible for the scheme. *(See broadband article on page 18.)*

Councillor Lynne Spoor has been leading on this initiative, and is in discussions with possible providers. If you are interested in participating in the scheme, and haven't already contacted Lynne, please do so as soon as possible. Her email address is [lynne.spoors@btinternet.com](mailto:lynne.spoors@btinternet.com). A minimum of 60 properties is required to make the scheme cost effective for the providers, although it may be possible to link up with adjacent parishes to achieve this.

## Changes to the Parish Council

Mark Palmer has been co-opted onto the Council to replace Sarah Salisbury, who has now left the Parish.

In May, the Council received, with regret, the resignation of Ian Parker. Ian, who represented Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, was the longest serving member of the Council and his knowledge and experience will be greatly missed.

## SCC Listening, Learning, Changing

For the past four years, Somerset County Council has been running an engagement initiative called ‘Listening, Learning, Changing’ (LLC), seeking the public’s views about the Council’s priorities, challenges and opportunities, and other key issues.

Roadshows will be present at eleven towns across the county this summer, and although it is not possible to visit every community, people can give their views online by completing a survey that mirrors the one available at the events [www.somerset.gov.uk/listening](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/listening). Responses should be submitted by 30th September.



## Blackdown Hills Parish Network

Neroche Parish Council has decided to join the Blackdown Hills Parish Network (BHPN) for an initial 12 month period. This network was formed in 2009 in order to develop a cohesive voice for the rural parishes of the Blackdown Hills; approximately 50% of the Neroche Parish falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB.

The Parish Council considers that there are several benefits to belonging to the network, not least the ‘wider voice’ that can be achieved by joining together with other similar parishes. For example, members of the network have the opportunity to meet regularly with the 3 MPs that cover the Blackdown Hills, and raise issues that are particularly relevant to the area.

Recently, the BHPN, with the support of East Devon District Council, submitted an outline application to the



European Regional Development Fund for £4.6m to improve Broadband provision in-and-around the Blackdowns Hills, and if successful, Neroche may well benefit from the outcome.

# The Bickenhall Owl Box

By Wally Torrington



*Owlets starting to venture out of the Bickenhall box*

of the project's positive affect upon the Barn Owl population in UK, it was reported in the 2015 Barn Owl census 'State Of The UK Barn Owl Population 2015' that the only areas where mean brood size was above normal were West Cornwall and Somerset!

We are delighted to report that this spring/summer the Bickenhall box, for the second time in the four years during which it has been in place, attracted a pair of Barn Owls who, this time, produced two owlets (or to be more precise, two that have survived).

In April 2012, 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 were delighted to report in the November 2012 issue of this Newsletter that Neroche had immediately '*stepped up to the plate*', and that all four parishes were having a box installed (Staple Fitzpaine, Curland, Bickenhall and Orchard Portman with Thurlbear). Following a Herculean effort by the two trusts, the 335 target was achieved. As a measure



*The Bickenhall box, taken after dark with the infra-red camera*



At the time of writing this article (19th July) the owlets look rather large, come out each evening around 8.30pm for a look-around, and appear very much like they are ready to fledge.

If you wish to find out more about the project, become involved, report a sighting, buy or even learn how to make your own box, then please go to [www.somersetwildlife.org/barnowl](http://www.somersetwildlife.org/barnowl) or, for more general information on hawks and owls, go to [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

*Left: An owl starting to 'flex its wings'*

## Rare Sighting of a Bittern in Curland

By Wally Torrington



*Bitterns are a classification of wading bird in the heron family 'Ardeidae'. Bitterns tend to be the shorter-necked, often more secretive members of this family*

At 9pm on 3rd July, Rob Larkman, an avid birdwatcher, or more affectionately termed 'twitcher', spotted a Bittern flying over his neighbours house in Curland, a relatively rare sighting! Rob said "*Why this bittern was here in relative open country I do not know. According to the book it should not have been here but birds have wings so they can please themselves*". That having been said, the once beleaguered Bittern is making a recovery, with conservationists hailing the success of a project aimed at bringing the shy member of the heron family back from the brink.

Scientists tracking the bird's foghorn-like booming song have recorded more than 150 different males across England and Wales, up from just 11 in 1997. Its recovery is attributed to the restoration and management of the sizeable tracts of wet reed-bed required for its successful breeding.

According to the latest figures, Somerset is the top UK county for Bitterns, despite the species only becoming re-established in the region seven years

ago. More than 40 ‘booming’ males have been recorded here, following the restoration and creation of large wetlands in the Avalon Marshes, in particular the RSPB’s Ham Wall reserve, Shapwick Heath (run by Natural England) and Westhay Moor, run by Somerset Wildlife Trust.

Declared extinct in the UK at the turn of the 20th century, the Bittern was absent as a breeding bird between the 1870s and 1911. Following concern over a possible second UK extinction in the 1990s, a concerted conservation programme was set up. 2015 was an exceptional year, with numbers not thought to have been seen since early in the 19th century.

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## *Greg Wilgar, Graduates with a BSc in ‘Zoology with Herpetology’*

*By Wally Torrington*



Regular readers of the newsletter will recall that, in the February 2014 issue, we reported on the remarkable achievement of Curland resident Greg Wilgar, picking-up two prestigious national awards i.e. the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, and Queen’s Scout. Two-and-a-half years further on, and proving the old adage ‘*success breeds success*’, in July he graduated from Bangor University with a BSc in ‘Zoology with Herpetology’ (that’s snakes and reptiles to us mere mortals). Greg has already travelled extensively in search of reptiles, to Arizona, Corfu, Guatemala, and has recently returned from Slovenia and Croatia. His mother, Mary Bambridge, told me “*Greg had a fantastic three*

*years, very much encouraged by our neighbour David Spears, who had taught at Bangor, worked on several BBC natural history programmes there, and, as a result, suggested that Greg applied to study at that University. Also, through David, Greg worked during his summer holidays for Dr David Shaw, of the Savari Trust, a programme researching blight resistant potatoes (the Sarpo variety) resistant to the Phytophthora fungus that was responsible for the Irish potato famine disaster, and still causes huge economic loss. During those*



*summer placements, Greg was also introduced to advanced plant genetics”.*

Greg was extremely fortunate to find himself living close to David Spears, especially from a professional perspective. David has had a fascinating career; he is a graduate Zoologist who did brain research before starting to work as a cameraman, specializing in medical, scientific and natural history subjects for broadcasters like BBC, ITV, and C4. He then ran his own company with his wife Madeleine, producing award winning educational programmes. He still has an interest in education, running exhibitions and hands-on experiences for children.

However, Back to Greg; he is returning to Bangor this September to take up a ‘Masters by Research’ place, joining a project headed-up by Dr Simon Creer, senior lecturer in molecular ecology, looking at using eDNA (environmental DNA) as a way of recording the habitats of protected and endangered species.



*The graduation ceremony*

*Well done Greg, and good luck with the Masters course*

## ***TAOS Cabaret Group Presents Broadway Heroes & Villains***

***23rd September at Neroche Hall***

***Tickets:  
£10***

***Featuring villainous and heroic songs from shows such as  
The Lion King, Chicago, Oliver, Wicked and CATS, along with  
a couple of other courageous and rascalion surprises!***

*For tickets and further information,  
contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441,  
Email: [alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk)*

# News from Somerset County Council

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

One of the things I really like about the Neroche Parishes is that, although they are very rural, residents never let that get in the way of working together as a real community. One of the community events I really enjoy is the Neroche Villages' Lunch. I attended the lunch recently and had a great time, sitting with both old friends and new. The food is always good as is the company.



*Lunching with old friend Magnus Stewart*



I visited 'Paddocks' in Bickenhall, which is run by Kate Baker and where many Blackdown Hills Riding Club events are held, to touch base with another local business. It was very interesting to look at the organisation and discuss local issues with them.

I managed to attend the last race meeting of the year at Taunton Racecourse, which of course is in Neroche Parish. It was an Arabian race meeting. It was free to get in as well, and held on a Sunday afternoon, and the weather was kind too. It's a great facility in our area and I'm always pleased to tell Councillors I meet around the country that I have Taunton Racecourse in my Division.



I was very sad to see we have lost our Artisan Bakery (*Editor: see article on page 6*). It's another example of an important local facility and local business moving out of a Crown Estates farm. The bakery will be greatly missed.

One issue that does concern me is the proposed merger of Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. I cannot see what Taunton Deane residents will get out of a merger with a cash-strapped council in West Somerset, which has long standing financial difficulties. I fear it will be much harder for the voices of the Neroche Villages' residents to be heard in a much larger District Council, which will stretch all-the-way to Minehead.



We are still waiting on news from Taunton Deane on when the public consultation will take place on the proposed new business park at Henlade. Although out of our area, the extra traffic this will cause will have a major effect on traffic on the A358, which everyone uses locally. I do have ongoing concerns about this issue. Will the proposed improvements to junction 25 and a Henlade bypass be implemented before the business park is built, let alone the duelling



of the A358 and the huge impact that will have on this community.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contacted me over the recent passing of my mum to cancer. It's been a great support to

know that people have been thinking of me and my family. The next Macmillan coffee morning I attend in the Neroche area will be of great poignancy for me because of this.

# *Gardening in Curland*

*By Doreen Marsh*

*Contained within this delightful article are some wonderful musings, proffered by a long-term Curland resident, reflecting on the great enjoyment and satisfaction derived over the years from time spent in their garden. Maybe other readers have similar stories to tell?*

Alan and I have been gardening in this village since early 1978, when we took on a house and garden that had been lived-in and enjoyed by a family with teenage children and their visiting friends. So the grass was short, not because it had been carefully mown, but because of the activities that went on around; bicycling, football, in fact all the games that youngsters like to play. There was also a conspicuous clothes line and evidence of numerous dens made in an amateur fashion but nevertheless enjoyed.



There were damson bushes, which had possibly been planted in the early 1960s, and had seen better days; also, beds of roses which were not to our taste but they were healthy enough. In the back garden there was a decrepit shed and the beginnings of a vegetable garden. The parents had been busy people and wanted to make sure their children had fun in the garden, so it was not cultivated for beauty alone!

Our first task was to replace the shed with something stronger and more visually attractive. Then we took advantage of our predecessor's vegetable garden and divided it into a fruit growing area with a cage and a place for rows of vegetables. The cage to protect soft fruit was very necessary because we soon discovered that Curland blackbirds really enjoyed soft fruit, and were persistent in their attacks. Now the fruit cage protects black and red currants, gooseberries, blackberries and raspberries.

Over the years we have grown many types of vegetables, some on a regular basis and others as a trial to see whether we enjoyed them sufficiently to undertake

the work. Peas, both ordinary and sugar-snap (where the pods are eaten as well) always have a place. French, runner and broad beans are regularly sown and enjoyed. From time-to-time we grow an early variety of potatoes. Carrots we fail with because we have a heavy clay soil. We are also unsuccessful with parsnips, owing to attacks by slugs; the chewed tops are revolting to look at, and the cook in the family (me!) has to remove so much. Beetroot are attacked in a similar way. Our slugs have much to answer for.

We like growing broccoli, and eating it is good too, but we have not been successful with cauliflower. Courgettes we do enjoy but they have to be watched because they love to become outsize marrows, which are too large for a two person family. Squashes we have tried but they tend to roam all over other plants.



We have a small greenhouse in which we grow tomatoes, cucumbers and sweet peppers (but not the fiery ones!). The greenhouse is also used to care for seedlings when they are too big to be looked after in the kitchen. Cuttings taken in the summer from ornamental plants are also looked after in the greenhouse. In-one-way-or-another our fairly elderly greenhouse is in use throughout the year. In cold winter months some protection has to be given; we have a paraffin heater which we bring into use if the weather is very cold. However, if we assume from studying the forecast that it is going to be a short cold spell, we simply cover the plants with fleece; in these milder winters this is usually sufficient to prevent too much damage being done.

The routine of watering the greenhouse on a regular daily basis is rather satisfying, and watching the gradual ripening of tomatoes and sweet peppers, and reminding oneself of good recipes is pleasing. I prefer to cook vegetables when they are in their true season, rather than buying from a supermarket out of season. I am old enough to remember when fruit and vegetables were always purchased IN season; how we looked forward to them then!

Our ornamental garden is in the front of the cottage, in which there is a gravelled area surrounded by tall grasses. These we leave to grow through the winter

months when they become straw-coloured and catch the sun in the early morning. The birds appreciate flitting in and out of these grasses, especially in the winter time, and they give plenty of cover for their safety.

We do not grow spectacular, brightly coloured flowers, preferring to allow our plants to merge-in with background hedges and wild flowers. Also, as we get older, we are content to allow some wild flowers, which some gardeners might regard as weeds, to carry on flowering in our beds; after all, a weed is a wild flower, and many are beautiful.



We have planted many shrubs over the years; for example, winter honeysuckle and golden philadelphus to complement the common green one that was in the garden when we arrived. Some shrubs remind us of gardens we have visited in different parts



of our country; also, we have shrubs which remind us of members of our family; for example, one daughter was very good at selecting clematis and we have different types of that climber in the ornamental garden. Near the shed is a very large earthenware pot with a spring flowering prunus; it was given to us by our eldest daughter Kate, alas no longer with us, so that is a very

special plant indeed. As the season progresses, the leaves colour-up and there is a lot of attractive lichen on the rather rough branches.

In our early days here, when young grandchildren visited on a regular basis, we put up a rather curious volley-ball pitch; this was well used and much enjoyed. A then very young grandson used our garden as a base for exploration, up the stream into Neroche Forest. It stood him in good stead because, as an adult, he has explored Nepal.

So our garden is not only full of plants, it is also full of happy memories. We greatly enjoy it!

# *Neroche Local History Group visit to Chard Museum - 27th July*

*By Dianne Hood*

“**CHARD – the birthplace of powered flight**” it states on the entrance to Chard town. So it was one beautiful summer evening when members arrived for a special evening tour of the Museum. We were welcomed by Roger Carter, the Curator, and Vince and John who are Trustees and volunteers with wide-ranging knowledge of the history of Chard. We were taken round the labyrinth of rooms and sheds and into the barn where maps had been laid out, some of Buckland St Mary and the Forest of Ashill, on which Roger is working.

We covered the history of Chard, through the Charter, Monmouth Rebellion and onto the Lace Riots. We looked at collections from the 1st and 2nd World Wars and the ship that was paid for by donations from the people of Chard.

In the 19th century local industry included a lace factory and companies making farm equipment, some of which had been conserved at the museum. Dening was a huge manufacturer of agricultural equipment and their goods were sold all over the world, departing from one of the three railway stations. An upstairs wall was adorned with old photographs of the High Street shops, together with the Regalia of past Mayors, most of whom were the factory owners.



The complete contents of an old wheelwright and blacksmith workshop in Tintinhull was recorded in detail and then moved to what used to be an old skittle alley at the rear of the Museum building. The bricks from the forge we dismantled and rebuilt on site and even the soot was brought in, the tools were laid out as though it was still being used. The workshop used

to belong to John, one of the Guides, he inherited it from his father who was the blacksmith and his grandfather, the wheelwright and joiner. John was so pleased that everything had been taken on by the Museum, kept together and reconstructed on site, preserved for all to see.

More rooms displayed how people used to live, a kitchen with the old utensils and versions of washing machines. Amazing to think what we use today with

our automatic versions that do everything for us. Labour was highly intensive in all aspects of work, albeit for men or women.

In the barn was a huge assortment of agricultural implements, different types of wagons and other forms of transportation. There was so much to see we had to take a 10 minute break from the tour to look at the items on our own. We were treated to a lovely cup of tea and cake which was a very pleasant surprise. Roger explained how the big lace machine worked, it was not the type of lace that was made in Honiton, this was netting for the British Empire – mosquito



netting that was sent to all the countries in our Dominions to keep the British soldiers and civilians safe from insects. A fascinating design of how the bobbin worked, specially designed by Stringfellow, who invented many things, as well as the first powered flight.



We saw the artificial limbs invented by James Gillingham in the mid 1800's, together with

more recent prosthetics right up to the present day.

We were told about their archives and the stores that were held at the Museum. Volunteers are currently going through the boxes and re-recording them digitally using 'key words' so that the search for items is easier. The old paper system still exists but it is proving to be not entirely accurate. The Museum is looking for more volunteers to help with the cleaning and recording of so many more items that are stored in boxes and cupboards, so if you think you may be interested in helping, do get in touch. If you cannot actually help, then become a 'Friend'. For just £10 per year you will be helping to keep this museum going for future generations, and have access to any information in the archives.

There was so much to see and not enough time to see it all – we felt we just have to come back again to see more. A very interesting evening and I would encourage anyone who has not been to make a visit.



## *Neroche Local History Group - September*

*The second weekend in September is part of 'Heritage Week' when some privately owned old buildings will be open to the public.*

*On the following Wednesday we have arranged a private guided tour of GRAY'S ALMSHOUSE in Taunton for our members and friends. We will be met by one of the Trustees and told the history of the building, and shown into some of the rooms, where possible, including the chapel.*

If you would like to join us please arrive at:

***Gray's Almshouse (at the middle door)  
at 10.30am on Wednesday, 14th September 2016***

Gray's Almshouse is the large old brick building by East Gate, nearly opposite Argos. Parking is available in the Sainsbury's car park for up to 2 hours, or the bus through Staple Fitzpaine to Taunton stops nearby. The tour will finish by 12 noon.



## *Litter Action Group*

*There is an excellent opportunity for an enthusiastic local person who would be keen to take on and maintain the current Neroche Litter Action Group.*

*I have been organising the litter collections, which normally takes place twice a year around March/April and September since 2011. There is an existing team of committed volunteers, and on each occasion we have new members, who support the event.*

*Anthony and Alison Brown who co-organise and who kindly offer their vehicle as part of the roadside collections, continue to offer this facility and support.*

*I have some travel commitments over the next few years and keen that this Action group continues the excellent work. Of course, when I am around, I will be there as a volunteer to support.*

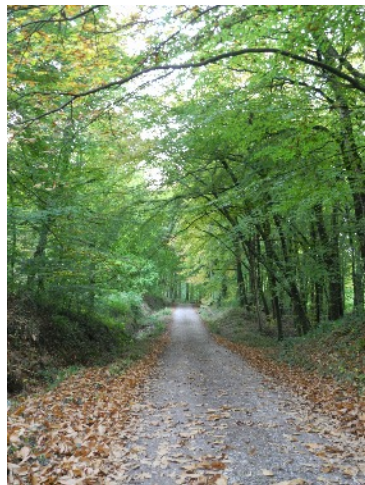
*If you are interested please email me on [jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jayne.haynes@hotmail.co.uk)  
or telephone me on: 07854 414 704.*

# *Neroche Walking Group*

*By Sheila Green*

The Neroche Walking Group was established five years ago in response to the Parish Plan, and was initially well supported, although numbers have dropped off recently. The walks take place on the 1st Saturday of the month, and each last about 2 hours. We aim to explore all parts of the Parish and sometimes further afield. We would love more people to come along and perhaps lead a walk in their area of the Parish. You can choose the route and to help you plan, we have large scale maps of the footpaths for you to borrow.

The walks are led at a moderate pace so there is no need to be super-fit, although you may become so! Most people know their local 'patch' but may not be so familiar with other places, and this is an opportunity to explore with someone who knows the territory.



We are a friendly, social group and once a year, usually in January, we have lunch at the local pub. We are planning to do an audit of the local footpaths over the next months, and report any problems such as broken stiles or missing finger posts; you could help us in this essential part of caring for the countryside.



Upcoming walks are on 3rd September and 1st October, 5th November and 3rd December. Why not give it a try? Dogs are welcome, although sometimes they will have to be on a lead for part of the walk. We look

forward to welcoming you and showing you some of the lovely countryside we are so lucky to have on our doorstep.

# Roopstock

## From Garden Party to Charity Gig

By Rupert Ryall

Roopstock started over 20 years ago.... a small party in the garden of Sawyers Cottage in Curland in 1993. It soon included live music, catering with camping and parking in an adjoining field, by kind permission of Ben Male and Forest Farm.

For many years the preparation and clearance after the event was greatly assisted by Rupert's brother's firm, Robin Ryall Farm and Garden Services, to whom the event owes a great debt of thanks. Sadly, Robin passed away as a result of sudden heart failure at the age of 39 in 2004.

Since then the event has continued with the proceeds donated to British Heart Foundation in Robin's memory, to date donations have exceeded £20,000.



After several years the party outgrew its idyllic location at Curland, despite the loan of land for parking, and was relocated initially to a farm near Fivehead, and subsequently, after two years, to its present location at Rydiness Farm on Hare Lane, near Broadway.

The event is still held in marquees, with professional sound and lighting and bands performing on a temporary stage. There is a licensed bar and catering. Without the generosity and help from a great number of people the event would not continue as it does.



Each year the party has a different logo which is produced by Tony Girardot, an artist and guitarist, who many will have seen performing at Roopstock.

The logo appears on the souvenir glasses and the T shirts, with any profit going to BHF. The event has also adopted the RR logo, formerly attached to Robin Ryall Farm and Garden Services, and which now also appears on the glasses.

This year's Roopstock will be held on Sunday 28th August (as always on the Bank Holiday weekend) with music by : Ferris and Sylvester, Group Therapy

and Farfisa, the headline act will be Man from Funkle.



*Man From Funkle*

Although we had a year off last year, Roopstock seems to be coming around again very quickly. I am most grateful to all who have

given and continue to give, their time and help so generously, making the event the success it has been; and all those who have come along to create the great atmosphere in a truly beautiful corner of Somerset. ***The Beat Goes On !!***

## *Neroche Parish Council Meetings*

7.30pm at Neroche Hall

**Thursday 8th September**

**Thursday 10th November**

*All members of the community are welcome to attend*

## *The Greyhound Pub Quiz*

***1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm***

***Quizmaster: Paul Hart***

**Teams of 6 - £1 per person**

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

# The Royal (Almost) Garden Party

By Marianne Bray



The party, held in Neroche Hall on 11th June, to celebrate the Queen's Official Birthday, was enjoyed by about 50 parishioners and raised over £150 for hall funds.

Katherine Bray judged the cake competition;

Nicky Baxter won the 'Birthday Cake' section; and yours truly won the 'Royal Birthday Cake' prize.



The Limerick competition was judged by Magnus Stewart, Katherine and Deborah Bray; the rules stated that all entries had to start with the line "*There was a fine lady*



*named Lizzy*". Sheila Green's effort (see below) won the competition, second prize went to Diana Davies and Christobel Ager came third.

***There was a fine lady named Lizzie***

***Who at 90 was still rather whizzy***

***She said I'm bionic***

***It must be the tonic***

***In the Gin, which is making me dizzy.***



Alan Marsh won the 'Best Dressed Hat' competition, judged by Richard Davies; with Judith Wakley and Nicky Baxter taking second and third places.

At the end of the party, Richard Davies unveiled a plaque to commemorate the events held for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and 90th birthday celebrations.



# The Farming Calendar

By Daniel Macey

*As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, local farmer Daniel Macey has kindly penned a few words to give us an idea as to what he is up to at this time of the year (written late July).*



Onwards and upwards and on to the next season; after a very wet winter the spring showed a glimmer of a hope of it drying out. The spring started for us in mid-April, with dung spreading and spring cultivations. Spring is quite an important time for us, as this is when we secure our winter forage for the dairy cows, with the hope of successful maize planting and a good quality cut of grass silage. Time is of the essence during this period, which means that, on occasions, we work long hours, and I apologise for any late night noise.



This year we made 180 acres of grass silage and 30 acres of bale silage, we wrapped some of these bales in pink plastic wrap to support breast cancer, with the additional cost of £1 per bale going to the charity. So, if you see any pink bales in the fields on your travels, you will know the farmer is

raising money for a good cause. After my father sadly passed away last autumn from prostate cancer, at the age of 63, I decided it would be good to raise awareness and help cancer charities.

We have been experimenting this year on some of the Maize acreage with a piece of machinery called a direct drill. This drill negates the need to cultivate the land before seeding, the aim being to have less soil disturbance, resulting

in reduced soil erosion in the winter months. Also, by not cultivating, we will not be encouraging the weed seed already in the ground to grow, the hope being we will need fewer chemicals to control the weeds, which environmentally and economically must be a good thing. We



*Direct Drilling*

We will not know how successful this has been until the crop is harvested in the autumn.

Weather-wise, in June we had a lack of sun units, which has not favoured the



cereal crops of wheat's and barley's, where photosynthesis is an important part of the later stages of ripening. We will, therefore, have lower than expected yields this year. In July we have had the opposite, with glorious long hot days and little rainfall, which has helped

the maize grow from one foot tall at the beginning of July to over 6 feet by the end of the month. However, this has not helped the grass regrowth after the second cut for silage (we usually aim to cut the grass 4 times in a year, starting in mid-May, then every 5 weeks thereafter).

Mid July saw our calving season start, which is now well-under-way, and by the beginning of August we hope to start our wheat harvest with neighbours and colleagues already harvesting their barley and oil seed rape.

By the time this goes to print, harvest should be finished and autumn cultivations should be well under way.

# Scarecrow Festival - 2016



Turn to  
page 58  
for the  
results!





# Scarecrow Festival

By Mal Lee



*John Lees and Henry sharing a joke at the bar*

organising this treat for young children and families. On Wednesday and Thursday, traditional English teas were served at ‘Woodcott’; the weather was kind and lots of local people, both young and more-senior, enjoyed a warm welcome.

Many local residents and visitors enjoyed looking at all the scarecrows: there were people going round on horses, in cars (one couple from New Zealand took lots of photos and are hoping to start a scarecrow festival over there); we had others running, dog walking, and cycling the route; we even had a minibus from a care home going round with some residents who were clearly enjoying every minute (even getting lost they thought was fun). Over fifty voting forms were submitted but this probably represents about 150 people who came to see the scarecrows. This little bit of English countryside frivolity gives many individuals a great deal of pleasure.

This year we had 14 entries and 2 random scarecrows, which appeared after the entries had closed. The imagination and expertise of the scarecrow designers never fails to amaze and delight. Some were fun scarecrows – maybe to appeal to the younger visitors; some had a serious message and gave food for thought; and some were shabby chic – which is very much in vogue at the moment.

The Festival opened on Saturday 23 July with Teddy Bears Tea in St Peter’s Church. Many thanks to Julie Pope, Lisa Knight and team for



*‘Spiderman’*

The Festival finished with a BBQ hosted by Alison and Anthony Brown with a team of chefs, barman and helpers. It was a very pleasant evening and at last the results were announced.

### Results

**First: Spider Man**  
*(John Cooney)*

**Second: Lady and the Lamp**  
*(Alison and Anthony Brown)*

**Third: Behind Bars - Let Me Out**  
*(Gaynor Carter)*



*Jon Bell, Parish Council  
Chairman, cooking the B-B-Q*

## *Help Required*

The team that produces this Newsletter is looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of the operation eg:

Have you basic skills in 'desk top publishing' or similar; would you be willing to write articles or take photos of events you attend; could you write features on local topics; does the thought of selling advertising 'ring your bells'; if needed, would you be happy to be called upon to help with delivering the Newsletter.

If you can help with any of the forgoing, or assist in any other way, then please contact Wally on [wallytorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:wallytorrington@hotmail.com) or Alan on [nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nerochenewsletter@yahoo.co.uk)

As well as being aimed at established members of the parish, this could also be the ideal opportunity for new arrivals to become involved with the local community.

# Charity Match at the Taunton Vale Polo Ground in Orchard Portman

By Wally Torrington

ABF

THE SOLDIERS'

CHARITY

On 22 June 2016, Taunton Vale Polo Club held a mini polo tournament in our very own parish at their Orchard Portman ground, to help raise funds for the Army Benevolent Fund

The Soldiers' Charity. It was organised by members of the charity's Somerset Committee, supported by Pardoes solicitors. As the Taunton Vale Polo Club was founded in 1911 by officers of the Regimental Depot of the Somerset Light Infantry, it was a particularly appropriate location for the fund raising event.

Around 80 spectators enjoyed a curry lunch served by the Ceylon Curry House, and an afternoon tea during the half-time interval.

It was just as well the traditional 'treading in' of the divots between chukkas encouraged some exercise during the afternoon!



*The referee prepares to take charge*



*'Treading-in' the divots*

Spectators, organisers and participants all agreed that it was a splendid afternoon, and over £1,000 was raised for the charity. It is hoped that a similar event will be organised next summer.

ABF The Soldiers' Charity is the Army's National Charity, giving a lifetime of support to soldiers and former soldiers from the British Army, and their immediate families, when they are in need. Many of their beneficiaries live in Somerset. More information is available from ABF The Soldiers' Charity South West office on 01392 496412 or at [southwest@soldierscharity.org](mailto:southwest@soldierscharity.org)

# *A Special Chelsea Pensioner*

*By Wally Torrington*



*Chelsea Pensioners, at The Royal Hospital Chelsea, on parade for Founders Day*

A wee bit of self-indulgence, if I may. Over the years we have included a number of superb articles provided by parents, extolling great pride for their offspring's achievements; this is a short piece by a son proud of his mum.

In January of this year, my 92 year old mother, Mary, was accepted as a Chelsea Pensioner, and now resides permanently at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. She qualified to join because of her war service with the ATS (for which she proudly wears her two medals). When completing her application form, she was asked about family links to the military; we established that, between my mother, father (a Dunkirk veteran), my brother and I, we had a total of 92 years' service.

My mother is having a wonderful time representing the hospital at numerous events throughout London and the South East, and appeared on television for the Queen's birthday celebrations this summer.



*My brother Paul and I with mum on Founders Day*



*Mum marching down the Mall from Buckingham Palace, on the occasion of the Patrons Lunch/Street-Party, one of the events held in London to celebrate the Queens 90th Birthday.*

[www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://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](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk)

# Great Community Spirit

By Wally Torrington

In July, an enormous bough of an oak tree crashed on to the Staple Fitzpaine



Road in Bickenhall, between the A358 and the entrance to Forest Drove North. Local resident, Mike Hayman, immediately set-to-work clearing up the mess. He was helped by a passing tractor driver who gently lifted the fallen timber off the nearby telephone lines. Very quickly, Mike cleared the way and traffic was able to resume using the road in safety. Well done Mike; brilliant effort!

*Photo by our Bickenhall roving reporter, Alison Brown*

## School Holidays

It is always useful to know the school holidays dates. The dates below include, where appropriate, the weekends either side, as these are equally affected by school breaks, especially regarding family holidays and road traffic.



**Half Term Holiday**  
**22nd October to 30th October 2016**



**Household Recycling & Refuse Collections**  
**for September 2016 to November 2016**



**31st August collection moved to 1st September**

To view the actual dates, go to

[www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tbcsites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf](http://www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tbcsites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf)

# Events For Your Calendar

## August

- 28 Boules Competition (see page 26)
- 28 Roopstock (see page 52)

## September

- 1 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 9)
- 3 Neroche Walking Group (see page 50)
- 4 Inter-Village Cricket Match, Stoke St Mary (see page 2)
- 7 Greyhound Quiz (see page 52)
- 8 Neroche Parish Council Meeting (see page 52)
- 14 History Group - Guided tour of Gray's Almshouse (see page 49)
- 14 WI Meeting - Crystals for Health and Happiness (see page 34)
- 16 Friday Film Night - Golden Years (see page 17)
- 17 - 2 October Art Week, Open Studio (Mal's Studio) (see page 25)
- 23 TAOS concert - Heroes and Villains (see page 41)
- 24 WI MacMillan Coffee Morning (see page 34)

## October

- 1 Neroche Walking Group (see page 50)
- 2 Harvest Festival Service, St Peter's Church at 10:00am
- 5 Greyhound Quiz (see page 52)
- 6 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 9)
- 7 Neroche Hall Fish'n'Chip Fun Quiz (see page 34)
- 12 HB&N Garden Club - From Plant to Plate (see page 21)
- 21 Take Art - Cuban Rhythms (see page 16)
- 28 Friday Film Night - Love and Friendship (see page 17)

## November

- 2 Greyhound Quiz (see page 52)
- 3 Neroche Thursday Lunch Club (see page 9)
- 5 Neroche Walking Group (see page 50)
- 10 Racing - Taunton Racecourse (see page 30)
- 10 Neroche Parish Council Meeting (see page 52)
- 13 Remembrance Service, St Peter's Church at 10:55am
- 24 Racing - Taunton Racecourse (see page 30)
- 25 Friday Film Night - Money Monsters (see page 26)

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



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

### ***Websites:***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Neroche Communication Action Group runs an Email Alert System for sending information to those wishing to receive it. It forwards information of a general nature about local events and issues - please contact Wally Torrington at [wallytorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:wallytorrington@hotmail.com) if you would like your name added.

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

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

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

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

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