

*“Working Together for a Better Community”*

# NEROCHE VILLAGES

## Newsletter

Issue No 17

Autumn 2015

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

### *Autumn, and it's Harvest Time in Neroche*



*“Our deep respect for the land and its harvest is the legacy of generations of farmers who put food on our tables, preserve our landscape, and inspire us with their powerful work ethic.”*

*(James H. Douglas Jnr, 1899-1988)*

*Autumn is also a time for reflection, to look back on the year's work so far. Therefore it was nice to receive this recent letter of praise for the newsletter.*

*“Dear Alan and Wally, I read the whole of the [June] newsletter in one go – it took me half an hour and I think it is a brilliant thing for our villages. Full of useful and interesting information, and all the news to keep us up-to-date with local happenings.*

*Congratulations to you both! Jane Hole”*



Welcome to the 17th 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)*



Readers may have noticed that this issue of their Newsletter has arrived a little later than usual, this is due to our printer taking a well-earned summer holiday. Your copy may not have arrived until early September, hence the title has been changed to the ‘Autumn’ issue, rather than ‘September’.



However, we hope you enjoy this, our latest offering, which covers a wide range of topics: from articles on Broadband to the Rural Beat Team; from Farming to a local Women’s Institute member (at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party - no less!); from Parish, District, and County Councillors to the local MP; from “Lost Houses” to “Wild Learners”; from local success in a national cooking competition to ‘A Little Bit of Smut’ (no, it’s not that!), and much more - it’s all here in the Newsletter’s 60 pages.

And, of course, we’re always delighted to advertise forthcoming village events. So take your pick; in this quarter we have such events as a Macmillan Coffee Morning; from Christmas Party Nights at Taunton Racecourse to the regular Thursday lunches in Neroche Hall; from Colin Croad’s Quiz to the Friday Film Nights and the History Group going to a WWII airfield, and much more! Hopefully something for everyone.

So if you want us to feature something that you feel deserves a wider audience, don’t hesitate, get in touch - our email addresses are on the back page. It can be an article, a report, an advert for a local event - anything will be considered.

As you can see from the above, we have lots to fill our 60 pages, however, we are always on the lookout for something new; the more ‘local’ the better. We have recruited a ‘Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent’ who has already produced some really interesting features. Ideally, we would wish to have a Bickenhall correspondent, and one also for Curland, and particularly one each for Thurlbear and Orchard Portman. It doesn’t have to be an onerous or demanding task, just one article per quarterly issue would be fine-for-starters; and on subjects and events of your choosing. Come on; why not give it a go (we are happy to help with pictures and illustrations; you are required only to scribble out a few words).

# News from Neroche Hall

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

This year's Annual General Meeting was held in May, and saw only one change to the committee, that being the co-option of Diana Davies as a representative of the Friday Women's Badminton Group. I am pleased to report that all existing trustees were re-elected or co-opted, thereby maintaining our strong and talented group of volunteers for yet another year. My full Chairman's Report is reproduced on the Neroche Hall website for any that may wish to read it, and reflects the hard work of all concerned, plus an outline of our achievements over the past year.



In the June edition of the Newsletter I mentioned our desire to carry out some remedial work to the internal paintwork in the hall. I can report that the contract has now been awarded and we currently await a date for the work to commence. There should be no noticeable disruption for hall users during this time. The general upkeep of a Grade 2 listed building is very important as it is a valuable legacy for the benefit of our entire community, but this often comes at a high price. The Trustees recently commissioned a survey of the building in order to establish the re-building costs for insurance purposes, and found that it was in fact not very short of one million pounds. Sadly this comes with a sting in the tale in the guise of a higher premium!



We have recently been visited by a pair of assessors from Hallmark, who look at community and village halls to examine their policies and procedures to ensure a high quality of management by Trustees. They examined 39 specific areas of our business, including Trust documents, maintenance of minutes, AGM, accounts, booking and hiring, Health & Safety, insurances etc. We have

applied for renewal of our 'Hallmark 1' rating, which, if achieved, will be valid for the next three years. Hallmark ratings are a recognised standard of quality which ensures high standards are being met and maintained by Trustees, thereby providing a tangible benchmark for anyone visiting, hiring or using the hall. I hope to be able to report a positive outcome in my next article.



Given the excellent work of the Newsletter distributors, there is every chance that you will receive this copy towards the end of August, which allows me to slip-in a mention for our August Bank Holiday event for this year. On Sunday 30th August we are hosting the 'Great Neroche Tea Party' with an opportunity to

come and enjoy tea and cakes from 3pm. There will also be a chance for the cooks amongst you to enter a 'Bake a Cake' competition, and I am told that this is open to everyone, be they young or old, male or female!

I would like to invite everyone to participate in a brief questionnaire being conducted to seek the views of our community in relation to the use of the hall now and in the future. Completed questionnaires are eligible to go into a prize draw. Please either visit the hall website for further details or pick up a form from the foyer.

Our ever popular Quiz Night returns on Friday 9th October, with our quizmaster Colin Croad, who, as always, will endeavour to test your knowledge. The Trustees are currently exploring the possibility of having a Fish and Chip Vendor on site to ensure all meals are delivered fresh and hot to your table.



We are also hoping to bring you news of an Autumn Fair, to include various craft stalls and refreshments (date to be confirmed; more details to be published soon). Similar events in the past have proved very popular locally, drawing in some quality 'arts and crafts', including several local suppliers and artisans.



A Take Art presentation on Friday 13th November brings the African singing group 'Namvula' to the hall for the first time, promising a programme of jazz, folk and African soul music.

The monthly Friday films continue with a variety of entertainment, beginning on **25th September** with '**Woman in Gold**' starring Dame Helen Mirren in the true story of a woman's quest to recover Art Works stolen from her family by the Nazis. On **30th October** we present '**Mr Holmes**' starring Sir Ian McKellan, which speaks for itself, and finally, on **27th November**, we end the year with '**45 Years**' starring Charlotte Rampling and Sir Tom Courtenay as a couple celebrating 45 years of marriage, when the discovery of a body in the Alps causes shockwaves. *(Please refer to the adverts on pages 23 and 40 for full details.)*

*As always, details of all our events can be found on our hall website [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk) and I encourage you to visit for further information on all our coming events.*



By kind arrangement with the **Greyhound Pub** you are cordially invited to attend a coffee morning in support of **Macmillan Cancer Support.**

**Saturday 26th September**

**10.00 am to 11.30 am**

**The Greyhound, Staple Fitzpaine**

*If you are able to make/ donate cakes (and preserves) please contact Pauline 01460 234455 or Nicky 01823 480675*

# *News from the Neroche Village Agent*

*By Wally Torrington*

As reported in the June Newsletter, Trudi Morgan is our new Village Agent, and we were hoping to start featuring a regular ***'News from the Village Agent'*** article in the Newsletter. Unfortunately, Trudi is currently recovering from a fall but she sent me the following message from her sick bed:



*“Thank you for your email and the opportunity to give a brief piece about my work. At present I am on bed rest because I have a fractured pelvis, so will probably miss this edition. However, I have contacted Route 60+ before I went off sick and they will be running a Road Show in Neroche after Christmas, I am still waiting for a date, and will book the hall when I get it. Also, I am in contact with British Red Cross and hoping, subject to funding, to organise ‘Everyday First Aid Courses’ again in Neroche Village Hall, as soon as the funding is granted; the courses are free to anyone over 18 years old, and I provide the tea/coffee and biscuits. So I have things in the pipeline, so to speak, but not firm dates. Once I am ‘up-and-running’, literally, I will send you draft for you to edit. I hope that you understand.”*

When I receive more news from Trudi, I will circulate it via the Email Alert. In the meantime, if you require help, assistance or advice, contact Trudi (see contact details below) and she will deal with your enquiries when she is ‘back-on-her-feet’:

*If you have any problems with which you feel Trudi can help, perhaps by directing you to the right people, services or agencies, or if you have any other queries, please contact her. All calls and advice given are treated in strict confidence. Please give her a call on 07908 160736, and see how she can help, or email her at [tmorganva@somersetcc.org.uk](mailto:tmorganva@somersetcc.org.uk) “*

# *The Farming Calendar*

*By Mark Pope*

*As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, Mark Pope of Staple Farm 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 in mid-July).*



To date, 2015 has been a kind year weather-wise. We are now approaching our busiest time with the harvest and planting.

This year we have harvested some of



*The John Deere 7080 Self Propelled Forage Harvester*

our wheat earlier, as what is known as ‘whole crop’. As the name suggests, we harvest the whole crop with a forage harvester instead of a combine. This crop is then taken to an anaerobic digester; many of you may have seen the plant as you drive along the A303 Ilminster bypass on your left. The crop will be used to make energy in the form of natural gas.

When ‘*the sun takes its hat off*’ and comes out to play again, we hope to start harvesting the winter barley, this will be stored and then sold for animal feed. The oilseed rape will be next, this being crushed for its oil, which you can see in the shops as cooking oil. Some of our oilseed rape is exported to Germany where it is turned into biodiesel.

The wheat will be harvested in mid-August. This is our largest crop, and most will be stored on the farm then sold in 2016. We grow mainly what is known as ‘feed wheat’, and this mainly goes to produce food for chickens.

We will finish harvest with field beans. These should be ready at the end of August. Harvesting beans can be a challenge, as the pods are very brittle and will shatter, leaving the beans on the floor, not in the combine, so we try to harvest them on dull days or at night. The beans will, if they make the grade, be exported to Egypt, where they are used as a snack food. If they do not make the grade we will sell them for animal feed.



As well as harvesting, we will be getting the ground ready for next year's crops; first spreading dung, then cultivating the ground ready for planting. The first crops to be planted will be oilseed rape. We have a target date of 15th August for this to be in the ground.



So things get a bit hectic at this time of year, as we can be harvesting wheat and planting oilseed rape all at the same time.

This autumn we will be planting more grass in our rotation; this will be a new crop for us. The grass will be cut to make silage for the anaerobic digester. We have also brought grass into the rotation to help to improve the soil structure. We aim to have all the crops planted again by the middle of October. This will also be the time when the maize crops will be harvested.

When all the crops are planted and sprayed we turn our attention to Christmas trees, and will be going through the trees for a final check.

***For information on the Christmas tree sale at Staple Farm, look out for information in the December edition of the Newsletter (distributed during the second half of November) and in future Email Alert Parish Notices.***



# News from Neroche Parish Council

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

**Parish Council.** Neroche Parish Council now has its full complement of members following the co-option of Sarah Salisbury onto the Council. Sarah has lived in the community for many years, running the family farming business with her husband Chris. Her local knowledge will be an asset to the Council and I hope that she will enjoy her time as a Parish Councillor.



**Parish Defibrillator.** Did you know that there is a defibrillator within the Parish? It is situated at the Greyhound Inn in Staple Fitzpaine and was provided several years ago by David Fothergill, County Councillor for Neroche at the time. The defibrillator has recently been added

to the records of South West Ambulance Trust, and callers using the 999 service will be advised of its existence, if appropriate. Understandably, 24 hour access is not possible but there is usually staff available during the day and evening that have been trained in the use of the equipment. The commitment by the owners of the Greyhound Inn to housing and maintaining this vital piece of apparatus is greatly appreciated by the Parish Council. The defibrillator has



to-date never been used, but it is reassuring to know that such an important medical asset is available in the community.

**Adopt a Path Scheme.** Do you enjoy using the footpaths in the Parish? Do you tend to use the same path regularly? If so, why don't you join the 'Adopt a Path' scheme? There are over 600km of public rights of way in Somerset, and understandably there are occasions when vegetation becomes overgrown and obscures footpath signs and markers, and impedes access to stiles and gates. Somerset County Council are looking for volunteers to 'adopt' a path that they walk regularly, and help with cutting-back vegetation from signs, gates and stiles, reporting any major obstruction to the County Council. In return, you can expect to receive the use of gloves and tools to carry out the clearance. We are extremely fortunate to live in such a lovely area where there is plenty of opportunity to use the footpaths and bridleways, and if anyone is interested in helping to maintain the Parish footpaths in this way, please contact me for further information on [neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk](mailto:neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk)



**Housing Needs Survey.** The termination of the tenancy agreements of so many Crown Estates tenants last year highlighted the apparent lack of affordable housing in the Parish. To fully assess the situation, and in response to requests from parishioners, the Parish Council is currently working with the Community Council for Somerset, with a view to carrying out an Affordable Housing Needs Survey. Although it is the Parish Council who would commission the survey, it is hoped that lottery funding would be available so that there would be little or no cost to the Parish. Furthermore, the survey would be conducted by the Community Council for Somerset, and responses would only be seen by staff members of that organisation. Should such a survey indicate a requirement for affordable housing in the area, then the Parish Council has the evidence to produce to local authorities and progress the matter further. Further details will be published in due course when we are a little further down the line.

**Parish Council Meetings.** Finally, parishioners are reminded that the Parish Council meetings take place on the second Thursday of January, March, May, July, September and November, and any members of the public are welcome to attend.

# Local Chef Kate 'Gives Peas a Chance!'

*From our Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent*

We have an emerging culinary star in our midst! This April, Kate Michaels of Staple Fitzpaine was a runner-up in a national cookery competition. Kate beat nearly 7,000 entrants to reach the final of the competition run by the well-known olive oil producer Filippo Berio.

Kate entered in association with Queens College, who provided her with 'chef's whites' for the occasion, which sported the school badge. Although she has lots of cooking experience, Kate needed some pointers on how to create high quality restaurant food, and to this end, she arranged to meet the head chef at Mount Somerset Hotel, Stephen Hawker, for advice. Stephen's guidance stood her in good stead in a demanding competition final.



  
**CAFÉ MICHAELS**  
*(Modern Staple Fitzpaine Cuisine)*

M E N U - April 2015

STARTER - PEA & MINT SOUP  
*(with a Cheese & Chive Soda Bread Roll)*

ENTRÉE - SALMON  
*(with Crushed Jersey Royals, Chargrilled Asparagus and Serrano Ham Shards)*

DESSERT - CHOCOLATE MOUSSE  
*(with Strawberries and Brandy Snap)*



The finalists had to prepare three courses in two hours, and (undaunted by the reputation sometimes accorded to peas), this was Kate's chosen menu (*left*):

Kate confirmed that the stress we armchair chefs witness in televised cookery competitions is very real, as she and her fellow competitors were filmed throughout. (It was stressful for parents too, who were watching via live link).

Kate had never used an industrial oven before, and at one point the central part of her dessert, a delicately made brandy snap, was overpowered by the draught from the powerful fan oven which lifted the unfortunate snap and splattered it

over the oven interior. Undaunted, she had a second snap prepared for just such an eventuality, and this saved the day (and the dessert).

Although it was a really enjoyable experience, Kate confirmed that it was one of most stressful things she's ever done. She came fourth in the competition; the photos show Kate receiving her award and displaying her completed meal.



Kate says she leans more toward Delia than Nigella, and feels there should be more high profile female chefs; it's time for someone to redress the balance!

She enjoys all aspects of cooking, including baking cakes for her family, and aims to pursue cookery as a career. Her ambition is to attend a cookery school such as Cordon Bleu once she has completed her A-levels.

Kate says she is sometimes a little critical when eating out, for example if more spices or herbs might have been added to a meal, although insists she is fairly easy to please. In fact her

favourite restaurant meal is traditional steak, chips and peas. Nonetheless, one might anticipate a scene in our local Greyhound Inn, in which the waiter hands an order in to the kitchen and casually adds, "*Oh by the way, this order is for Kate and her family...*", the kitchen falls quiet, looks are exchanged, a pan held between cooker and plate trembles.....

## Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir

In concert at St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine

**Saturday 24 October at 7.30**

Tickets £10 to include refreshments

Contact Mrs Mal Lee 01460 234282

Email: [les.curland@gmail.com](mailto:les.curland@gmail.com)



# Broadband Update - August 2015

By Tim French (Chairman of the Neroche Communication Action Group)

In the three months since the last newsletter there has been a mixture of progress and delay in the provision of superfast in our region.

First the bad news, as good news follows. The latest news from our Taunton Deane Borough councillor, John Williams, is that BT is still unprepared to burrow a fibre optic cable under the A358 to link the Hatch Beauchamp exchange to the 'green box' that sends the copper wire telephone lines to the 01823 numbers in the southern part of Neroche Parish. This is in spite of the best efforts of the TDBC and the opinion of the Somerset County Council Highways Office that this is the way forward. Clearly our local representatives are working hard to have this decision changed. However, until it is, the few premises in Bickenhall and Curland close enough to the green box to receive superfast broadband will be denied it. The remaining premises served by the green box will need some other technical solution to achieve this internet speed.



*A Superfast Broadband enabled Green Box.  
How long before the Parish gets one?*



Next, BT will not be the provider chosen by Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) to roll out the next phase superfast broadband once it has finished the current contract to deliver it to 90 percent of premise in the CDS area. The contract to do this for the next 5 percent of premises (and hopefully more, if funding permits) has gone to Airband. The company uses a wireless system which, according to its website, can deliver a very fast, secure and economical service.



The following was taken from the Airband website; [www.airband.co](http://www.airband.co)

*“Wireless broadband is a high speed internet connection that doesn’t need a phone line or cable. Instead a small device (smaller than a satellite dish) is attached to the outside of your house and a discrete cable is run into your house to provide you with high speed internet.*

*The Installation cost is £150 for all packages; the typical ‘Basic’ package (can vary with area) will provide a speed of “up to” 10 megabits per second, and cost £10 per month (minimum contract is 24 months).”*

However, it should be noted that , currently, Airband coverage does not extend to Neroche Parish.

The CDS website also has information on the development. Airband is now delivering superfast broadband to Exmoor; there is an informative article on the national park site (<http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2015/airband-to-deliver-superfast-broadband-across-exmoor>).

What this will mean for most of Neroche Parish is uncertain. There are parts of the parish that will not get superfast broadband when the green box near the A358 is finally connected to the Hatch Beauchamp exchange. These include 01823 numbers that are distant from the green box; 01460 numbers in Curland and Staple Fitzpaine which are miles away from the Buckland St Mary exchange; and other 01823 numbers distant from Taunton exchange, for example at Netherclay.



But if the type of wireless technology used by Airband, or another comparable system, becomes available, then all may finally be well. Two alternative systems were outlined in the May edition of the newsletter. It’s the most hopeful news we have had so far that a technical solution will allow Neroche Parish to get superfast broadband.

The other good news is that our representatives, at all levels of local and national government, are pressing the need for superfast broadband in rural areas.

# Neroche Hall Fun Quiz

*(NEW: Fish & Chips etc will be cooked  
on the premises by Layz Ricks)*



**Friday 9th October 2015**  
*(7.00pm for 7.30pm start)*

**Featuring Quizmaster: Colin Croad**

**Teams of up to six**  
**£2.00 per person (food extra)**  
**Bring your own drink**



*Full details are on the village hall website: [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk) or  
phone 01823 480286*



*The previous quiz, on 20th March 2015  
was won by a team captained by  
Curland's David Spears. Team members,  
from left to right: Ross Henley, David  
Spears, Mary Bambridge, Jill & Alan  
Perrior and Jane Dewick.*

## **THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL**

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

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

**3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> October\*, 5<sup>th</sup> November**

*(\* Special Harvest Festival lunch - see page 58)*

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

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

# *WI Centenary Royal Garden Party*

*Ninety one year old Molly Kelly, who lives at the Almshouses in Staple Fitzpaine, went to a garden party at Buckingham Palace on 2nd June, representing Bickenhall WI. Here's the story of her day, in her own words.*

I was informed in March that I'd been selected to attend the garden party. We purchased our outfits, received the official invitations and then looked forward to the big event.

On the 21st June, our day started early when the alarm went off at 5.30am, I got myself up and ready, then my son-in-law Dave took my daughter Maureen and I to Wilton Lodge to catch the coach to London, which left at 07.45am (Maureen was travelling with me as my official carer). Carol Smith, our Coach Marshall, had very

kindly reserved us the

front seat. We had two stops on the way and people were amazed to see all these smartly dressed ladies queuing for the toilets, and some asked where we were going.

Margaret Big, the County Chairperson, was on our coach. We were being dropped-off at Grosvenor Place and she wanted all the Somerset ladies to meet in front of the Palace to have a group photo taken.



*Molly with daughter Maureen, outside Buckingham Palace*



*Princess Alexandra*





*Countess of Wessex*

grateful. Then, to our amazement, he pushed me straight across the main Palace forecourt, right past the sentry boxes and round the corner to the right of the Palace, chatting to us all the way. We then entered through the arch and a young man was waiting to push the wheelchair to the lawns. As we proceeded forward the young man pointed out the royal corgis being exercised on the grass. He advised us to go for our tea as soon as the main tea tent opened. He left us at the edge of the lawn and Maureen pushed me across to the tent. We found a table and sat down to listen to the bands playing. We were told later that the way we came in was past the Queens private apartments.

Tea was served at 2.30pm; Maureen went to get our tea while I sat at the table. She came back with two rectangular white plates with a selection of sandwiches and cakes and a cup of tea for each of us. We sat and chatted and watched all the ladies milling around us in their beautiful outfits.

At 3.00pm we saw the Royal Party come out of the Palace and stand at the top of the steps before entering the lawn where



*Duchess of Gloucester*

the Yeomen of the Guard had made a walkway through the crowds of ladies who had queued five deep and more to see them. Representing the Queen were The Duchess of Cornwall, The Countess of Wessex, The Duchess of Gloucester, and Princess Alexandra; about 8,000 members of the WI attended. We saw them from a distance, because, with the wheelchair, it was impossible for us to get near, so we just stood up by our table and hoped for a glimpse as they passed by.



*Duchess of Cornwall meets the Calendar Girls*

We then went for a walk round the gardens and stopped near the band and listened to them playing. The Royal Party were in the tea tent meeting people after their walk down the lawn. At 4.30pm they walked back through the crowds and returned to the Palace.

At 4.45pm we made our departure slowly, leaving via a winding path, past the lake and through some lovely gardens, and out via the Grosvenor Place Gate where we met-up with our bus party. As we walked along, members of the public were stopping to take our photographs; we felt like celebrities.

Our coach picked us up at 5.30pm. We had a good journey home, arriving back late evening. We went to bed exhausted. It was a wonderful experience and an amazing day. It is an experience that I will always remember. I would never have dreamed that at 91 years of age I would go to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Many thanks to the Bickenhall WI for selecting me to represent them.

# The Women's Institute

By Doreen Marsh



This year, 2015, is the centenary of the first Women's Institute (WI) in Britain, although it was founded in 1897 in Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada as a branch of the Farmer's Institute. During the past 100 years, it has been notable for its campaigns to do with women.

It was an active supporter of the right of women to vote in the 1920s. It promoted the

cause of more meaningful education for girls. It has urged the Government to do all it can to make life safer for bees (the response from Parliament has been to ban the use of certain noxious weed-killers, but thus far only on a temporary basis; after all, if we lose our bees how will our crops be pollinated and produce our food?). Concern about health issues has prompted our members to urge that those with mental health difficulties should be cared for and not put in custody. More recently, it has championed the training of more midwives,



*Adelaide Hoodless - Founder*

During WW2 it played its part in helping with the evacuation of children from towns and cities to safer rural locations, and then helped with entertainment to keep them interested. Perhaps, as far as the war is concerned, the members were most remembered for their stalwart work in preserving fruit and vegetables locally grown, to save merchant shipping space.



*Members of the first WI at Stoney Creek*

Locally, Bickenhall WI was formed in 1926, and although never large in number, it has been very active in our villages since that date. If there is a local event the WI supplies refreshments.



*The Queen attending the Centenary Celebrations at the Albert Hall*

At our monthly meetings we have a speaker, and these can be light-hearted or come with a serious message. This past winter we heard about the Help For Heroes organisation, which cares for those who are injured after fighting in military operation, including Iraq and Afghanistan. This we followed-up with a coffee morning to raise funds to the tune of £480.

Our most recent meeting in early July could only be described as a ‘fun evening’ when, with the help and encouragement from two demonstrators, we attempted

several crafts, with varying results. There was a lot of good humoured chat, and many visits to the kitchen to get rid of all the glue we had on our hands. Perhaps the less said about the comments made by husbands when they saw the end results, the better.



*Ladies of the local WI providing tea at a garden open day*

In August we shall be going on a visit together, somewhere in Somerset.

What do I get out of the WI? Interest, fun and friendship; it is well worth being a member! If you are interested in joining the local WI then contact either Frances Alford (Secretary) on 01460 234245 or Tricia Dryden (President) on 01823 481037; all ladies in Neroche Parish are welcome.

# *Hatch Beauchamp and Neroche Garden Club*

*By Wendy Morris*

On July 19th members of the Garden Club spent an idyllic afternoon exploring the beautiful 13 acre gardens at Burrow Farm in East Devon.

John and Mary Benger began by creating a woodland garden in 1963, and have since gone on to create five more distinct garden areas.



*Angela Clarke, Liz Davies, Joy Larkman and Joanne Richards*

The original woodland

garden now abounds with wild flowers and mature rhododendrons, The Terrace garden, which was the next to be developed, has a more formal layout and is

filled with 'cottage garden' style planting; here roses and herbaceous plants provide a riot of colours and scents.



A millennium garden was developed in 2000 with formal colour

themed planting and a rill leading down to a pond. This garden has a traditional stone gazebo with wonderful views over the surrounding countryside.

In 2010 an anniversary garden was created to celebrate John and Mary Benger's 50 years at Burrow Farm. Also in 2010, an Azalea walk was added.

A very enjoyable afternoon of exploring these diverse areas was concluded with tea and cakes in the secluded tea room, and a visit to the nursery to stock up on some of the plants we had seen.



*Wendy Morris (and gunnera)*



The next meeting will be a Summer Garden Party for members in August, followed by a September visit to Farrs Garden in Beaminster.

*Patricia Dunworth, Liz Davies, Wendy Morris, Joy Larkman and Angela Clarke enjoying a well-earned rest in the sun!*



*Scheduled visit to Farrs Garden on 13th September.*

*Farrs Garden is an inspirational, contemporary grass garden which first opened to the public in the summer of 2010.*

*The garden is the first venture into garden design by internationally acclaimed furniture designer, John Makepeace .*



Tickets: £6.00

Contact: Nicky Baxter (01823 480675)

Bar & Snacks available

**Friday 25th September 2015 @ 7.30pm**

## **Woman in Gold (12a)**

*Based on a remarkable true story. Sixty years after fleeing Vienna, Maria Altmann (the wonderful Helen Mirren), an elderly Jewish woman, attempts to reclaim family possessions that were seized by the Nazis. Among them is a famous portrait of Maria's beloved Aunt Adele. With the help of young lawyer Randy Schoenberg (Ryan Reynolds), Maria embarks upon a lengthy legal battle to recover this painting and several others, but it will not be easy, for Austria considers them national treasures.*



**Friday 30th October 2015**

**@ 7.30pm**

## **Mr Holmes (PG)**

*A crime drama mystery film.*

*A retired and aged Sherlock Holmes struggles to resolve the case that led to his retirement.*

*Starring Sir Ian McKellen as the 93 year old Mr Holmes.*

*"An elegant and absorbing British film".*

# A Message from the Rural Beat team

By Eamonn Leniston - PCSO

Dear reader,

This is a request from your local beat team.

There exists a current vacancy for a volunteer Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator in your area. The role acts as a two way conduit between Lindsey Stone, who is the Avon and Somerset police NHW administrator based in Bridgwater,



and the local community. The NHW coordinator is also a contact point for the local beat team when information needs to be passed to and from the local community.



This allows the local community to express any concerns regarding suspicious vehicles or persons in the area through the NHW coordinator, who in turn passes the information on to the beat team. Plus, the beat team will advise the coordinator of incidents in the local area which can then be disseminated to the community.

It is a system that achieves results in making life difficult for those who want to make life difficult for you and your community. It can prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and helps ensure that unwanted visitors are aware that they are being observed.

We also offer advice to members, via the NHW coordinator, on issues, such as crime prevention and protection of your property. As well as the obvious benefits of this advice, **it can also reduce house insurance for members of the scheme.**

If you would like more information on Neighbourhood Watch, please contact Lindsey at [lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:lindsey.stone@avonandsomerset.police.uk) or call 101.

***Important:*** *Where a serious crime is in progress, do not attempt to confront the suspect by yourself. Call 999 immediately and wait for the police to attend.*



Regards

Eamonn



# *Neroche Local History Group*

*By Dianne Hood - Treasurer, Local History Group*

## **NEROCHE WWII WAR MEMORIAL APPEAL**

The history group have been researching the war period in our local villages (Bickenhall, Curland and Staple Fitzpaine) and it appears that a commemorative plaque to remember those who died in service during WWII was never made. We in the History Group are taking action to remedy this.



There are two plaques with the names of those who died in WWI, we wish to purchase a new plaque and have the names of the six servicemen who died in WWII engraved in similar design. The cost will be about £650. The plaque will be Dedicated at the Remembrance Day Service at St. Peters Church in Staple Fitzpaine in November, on

the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII. The names of those who died during 1939-1945 are:

**A S Dicks**  
**R R Dicks**  
**M Hargreaves**  
**E B Portman**  
**D F Ricketts**  
**D Sydenham**

We are hoping to finance this locally, so we are relying on you for help.

Contributions can be made in 3 ways:

- By cheque payable to the Neroche Local History Group sent to Goddards Orchard, Staple Fitzpaine;
- Cash in the collection box on the counter at the Greyhound Inn at Staple Fitzpaine;
- Cash in the collection box at the church, in an envelope marked WW2.

Anything you can give would be gratefully received, in order to complete this precious project. Every penny given will go towards the memorial.

# Taunton Racecourse

By Wally Torrington



## Half Year Membership Offer

*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 2015. This membership offer also includes entry to meetings at 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 the Taunton racecourse and to numerous reciprocal racecourses shown on the opposite page. Half Year Membership, for the remainder of 2015, is available now for just **£85**. Full membership facilities and privileges apply.

Badges are available now from the racecourse Office: 01823 337172 or [info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk) . The membership form can be found at [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk/2-uncategorised/103-half-year-membership](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk/2-uncategorised/103-half-year-membership)

| <b>Taunton Race Meeting Dates</b> |               |                   |                  |                   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Day</b>                        | <b>Date</b>   | <b>First Race</b> | <b>Last Race</b> | <b>Details</b>    |
| Thursday                          | 12th November | 1.10pm            | 4.10pm           | Opening Fixture   |
| Thursday                          | 26th November | 12.35pm           | 4.10pm           | Autumn Meeting    |
| Thursday                          | 10th December | 12.40pm           | 3.40pm           | Festive Meeting   |
| Thursday                          | 30th December | 1.10pm            | 4.00pm           | Christmas Meeting |

### **Reciprocal Racecourse Meeting and Dates (Entry Free)**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| BATH              | Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September     |
| SEDFIELD          | Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September      |
| NEWCASTLE         | Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> September        |
| YARMOUTH          | Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September      |
| NEWMARKET         | Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> September     |
| PLUMPTON          | Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> September       |
| HEXHAM            | Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October          |
| <b>EXETER</b>     | <b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October</b>  |
| KEMPTON           | Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> October         |
| LUDLOW            | Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October       |
| MUSSELBURGH       | Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> November       |
| SANDOWN           | Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> November         |
| LINGFIELD         | Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> November       |
| <b>CHELTENHAM</b> | <b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November</b>  |
| FAKENHAM          | Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> November       |
| LEICESTER         | Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December       |
| <b>CHEPSTOW</b>   | <b>Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December</b> |
| FONTWELL          | Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> December        |



## *Christmas at Taunton Racecourse*

Christmas in 2015 - this year we are celebrating Christmas at the Movies. For just £33.95 you can enjoy our 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 Christmas party will also receive two open race day tickets to any race meeting. There will also be a pick & mix table and, of course, what movie night would be complete without popcorn!!

*The dates on which you can enjoy this wonderful Christmas experience are: 11th, 12th, 18th and 19th December*

Some dates are very busy, so to avoid disappointment 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) to use the online booking form.

# 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*

**Housing Needs Survey.** At the recent Neroche Parish Council meeting, I was very pleased to see your Parish Council receive an interesting presentation from the Community Council for Somerset about conducting a 'Housing Needs Survey'. This is an essential pre-requisite to determining if there is an identifiable need for affordable housing in the parish for, say, children growing up who wish to stay, parishioners downsizing or those with connections to the area that wish to return but just cannot afford it. Identifying this need and then working with the Planning Department, Housing Associations and landowners to find a suitable site and carry it forward to completion, will take commitment and determination. Conducting the survey is the essential first step, and well done Neroche Parish Council for considering this.



As a first class example of what can be achieved is St Peters Close, Staple Fitzpaine. How well this fits into the countryside and what lovely homes it provides for those who otherwise would not have found an affordable rural home. This was driven by the far sightedness and determination of the Parish Council at the time, and I was fully supportive. I will be

equally supportive of any future efforts to provide more affordable homes in the Parish to help retain our long term residents and young in the area, where otherwise they may not be able to afford to stay. We can all remember the misery and anguish caused by the Crown Estate suddenly evicting a lot of their tenants, we need to mitigate against this in the future. That does not mean we can build homes and keep them empty 'just in case', but the more stock available the more chance of homes being there if the need arises.

**Some Borough and Neroche Ward Statistics.** As a Council, we have been preparing Information Packs for each Ward in the Borough, and I thought it may be of interest to share with you some of these statistics, based on the 2011 census returns, as follows:

*Taunton Deane is the smallest in area, at 42,236 hectares, of the five Somerset District Councils but 3rd in ranking for total resident population of 112,116.*

*In terms of area, Neroche is the 2nd largest Ward of the Borough at 4,912 hectares and a population of 2,164 [Neroche Ward encompasses the parish of Neroche, together with the parishes of Stoke St Mary, Hatch Beauchamp, West Hatch and Corfe]. As a comparison, the largest is Wiveliscombe and West Deane at 6,869 hectares and population of 3,900. The smallest is Taunton Eastgate at 79 hectares and population of 4,734.*

*The most densely populated ward of Taunton Deane is Taunton Eastgate with 60.30 persons per hectare, and the least densely populated ward is Neroche with 0.4 persons per hectare (we are certainly blessed to be living in such an unspoilt beautiful area).*

*In terms of Borough population, there is roughly a 47% to 53% split between rural and urban population.*

*In respect of Neroche Ward gender and age profile, the total is split 51.8% female and 48.2% male, with an age profile of 18% aged 0 to 17, 57% aged 18 to 64 and those aged over 65 years 25%. The aging demographics of the Ward will continue, and by 2033 be near 50% or above, which I believe reinforces why we need to make every effort to increase the affordable housing stock to help younger age groups stay in the villages.*

There is an interesting table on migration to Taunton Deane, I stress the figures are for the Borough not just Neroche Ward:

*During 2012, there was a net loss of population from births and deaths of -66. Net internal migration (from within the Country) was 684. Net international migration was 112, and 'Other' totalling 16. A net population change resulting in a net Borough population of 112,116 in 2013.*

**Broadband Progress.** Before I get shouted down “what progress” I do accept that residents in Bickenhall, Curland and Staple Fitzpaine are being badly served, but I can reassure you, it is not for lack of trying on my part! It is all to do with installing a cable under the A358 to ‘enable’ Cabinet Number 1 off the Hatch Beauchamp exchange that serves the above villages. BT are adamant they must excavate through the road surface but cannot do so before April 2016 because a Highways order prohibiting excavation of the road surface until that time is in place. They have refused to contemplate the alternative method of installing a duct and cable by thrust boring, which is non-destructive of the road surface and has the blessing of County Highways. I have not given up hope, and be assured I will keep trying on your behalf.



In terms of progress, Hatch Beauchamp village is now enabled, as is Lower West Hatch, and Stoke St Mary is anticipated to be on-line by latest October; so the benefits are beginning to be felt!

As regards the ‘Super Extension Programme’, which is the extension of Superfast Broadband from the present 90% coverage of properties to 95%, it has already been announced that BT have not secured the contract as their tender was not considered ‘value for money’ by Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS). A further tendering process is now being entered into, which, I am told, is generating considerable interest. The fact that BT was unsuccessful could be a

case of ‘every cloud has a silver lining’ because, with alternative providers, we may get innovative systems that can go further and be quicker to install. I will also be pressing for much more openness and transparency, about when and where we can expect progress so we can keep you, the community, fully informed. I find it intolerable with the present BT contract that no meaningful advance information is made available, and what little information is provided to us as your elected representative, is immediately subjected to a confidentiality agreement. Wholly unacceptable and I am assured that under any new Contract such conditions will not be allowed [see also Tim French’s article on page 13].

**A358 Upgrade and Junction 25 Enlargement.** I did cover this in my last report but by way of update I comment on what I consider to be an enormously positive step forward. I believe we have all had that nagging doubt that, although announced in the Autumn statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (£275 million for the A358 and £13 million for J25) would it really be made available? After all we have been there before!



However, I am delighted to congratulate our MP, Rebecca Pow, for a recent question to the Chancellor seeking reassurance that the two schemes were fully funded within the Transport allocation. The response was an unequivocal “yes” which is duly recorded in Hansard! Well done to Rebecca as this gives a major boost to confidence that this is now going to happen, and much needed improvements to the most heavily trafficked trunk road in Somerset will happen [see also, Rebecca’s article on page 36].

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



**FRIDAY 13TH NOVEMBER  
NEROCHE HALL - TAKE ART PRESENTS**

**DOORS OPEN 7.30 FOR 8.00PM START**

Earlybird Ticket £8 before Nov 1st or £10 afterwards

Tel: 01460234377 or 07775 912928 or email [anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:anne@poolesfarm.eclipse.co.uk)

For info and directions go to [www.nerochehall.org.uk](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk)

bar,nibbles,raffle etc

**NAMVULA** Fusing the folk and urban traditions of her Zambian homeland with London's eclectic music scene, Namvula blends African sounds and rhythms with Latin, jazz and folk into uplifting and emotive songs. Crossing boundaries with a refreshing honesty and evocative lyricism, Namvula's music transports listeners into different worlds, whilst staying firmly rooted in African soil.



One of the few Zambian artists performing in Europe, Namvula has collaborated and shared the stage with artists including legendary South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela, multi-award winning Zambian singer Maureen Lilanda, and sitarist Anoushka Shankar.

***"Contender for debut album of the year" (Sunday Times)***



**NEROCHE LITTER ACTION GROUP**

**The next community litter pick-up  
day is planned for Saturday 5th Sept 2015**

**Meet at the Greyhound pub car park at 10.00am**

*(If you have a high viz jacket, suitable gloves, pickup sticks please bring these along; alternatively these will be provided.)*

Resulting from the parish plan, a Litter Action Group has been formed to keep our parish grass verges clean and tidy; we have had excellent responses on previous community collections and hope this day will be equally successful.

We are looking for volunteers (min age 16 years) to:

**Join in community pick up days to deal with the parish 'black spots'.  
Adopt a stretch of road and be responsible for keeping it free of litter.**

***If you are able to offer a couple of hours on the day please  
join us as above or contact for more information:***

***Anthony Brown: 01823 480441 or Jayne Hunt: 01823 480113***

# *A Little Bit of Smut*

*By Madeleine Spears*

The fields and hedgerows have been ablaze with summer colour. The variety of plants pleases the eye, and their scents liven the summer air. In this patch of Somerset, flowers are found in profusion.



Among these are the pretty red campions flowering from the time the bluebells come out in April until the grasses take over early in July. Red campion is mainly found on basic and chalky ground around the woodlands of the upper areas of the Neroche woodlands. They liven up the hedgerows with their delicate flowers, but lurking among these pretty flowers a dark secret hides.

Red campion and its relatives the white and pink campions have separate male and female flowers. A close examination of mature male flower shows the characteristic petals and a central white collar. Four yellow stamens with slim filaments supporting the pollen producing anthers are hidden down in the centre of the flower.

Look deeply into the centre of the mature male flower and you will see the anthers producing showers of pale yellow pollen waiting to be dispersed to the female plant. Dispersal happens when insects pick up pollen when searching for nectar or pollen - as they move from flower to flower. Magnify the centre of the flower about ten times and you can see the pollen and the tips of the pollen producing anthers.



When passing along the hedgerows occasionally you can see flowers with black centres. The dark purple or dark brown colour comes from the anthers and the small specks produced by them. To all intents and purposes they appear as a variation on the usual flower only with black rather than yellow

pollen. It is not until we magnify the anthers to about a hundred times, this time with an electron microscope,



that we begin to see that the anther looks different from a normal one.

Even closer examination, this time up to 50 thousand times under the electron microscope, shows that the so called black pollen is not pollen at all, the spores are a fungus known as the red campion smut. Scientists specialising in the study of fungi have named it *Microbotryum lychnidis-dioicae*, *Microbotryum silenes-dioicae*, or *Microbotryum violaceum*. There is the usual academic debate on the naming of these fungi and a certain amount of further debate about whether there is just one species or whether there are several – we will leave all that to the scientists and just call it red campion smut.



It is important to note that these fungi are related to the rusts that infect commercial crops. At present they appear to be very specific in just using the campions as host plants that provide protection, food and a means of dispersal essential to complete their life cycle. The scientists are interested in looking at their life cycles as it helps their understanding of the commercially important rusts. An odd quirk of red campion smut is that if it reaches and infects a female plant it can over-ride the genes that produce female parts in the flower and produce stamens – the male part of the plant. The male stamens grow larger and last longer than the uninfected ones. This probably increases the chances of the spores being distributed.



The spores, on reaching a new plant via insects, spend the winter in the new host as a small organism which migrates down the internal structures of the campion to the rosette. Here it remains until the spring when it acts on the floral parts to produce the stamens which, in turn, produce a new generation of fungal spores. All this is very chancy and so the infected anthers produce vast quantities of spores for the same reason that plants produce large amounts of pollen.

The complexity of such a life cycle is impressive and for most of us easy to overlook. As it is a member of the rust family, scientists have studied the detail of its life cycle to help them understand its relatives in more detail.

***So next summer, when walking along hedgerows decorated by red, white or pink campions, look for the telltale black centres of their flowers.***

# *News from our (newly elected) MP*

*Even though she is now extremely busy with her duties in Westminster, our newly elected MP, Rebecca Pow, has not forgotten us, and has agreed to continue producing a regular article for our Newsletter. It will take the form of a bulletin on her activities in Parliament, and the work she is doing for us here in Taunton Deane; plus a few gardening hints.*



I can hardly believe that it is only a couple of months since the May election. So much has happened, and there has been so much to take on board, that it seems like much more than 8 weeks!

I was parachuted into Westminster just days after the all-night count, to immediately begin the serious task of being your MP. Apart from getting-to-grips with the actual enormity of the role, and the responsibility that comes with it, there was much else to address imminently, for example: setting up two offices, one in the constituency and one in London; equipping and staffing both; handling the essential budgets; security and transparency; and not to mention finding somewhere to stay!

For several weeks I was ‘of no fixed abode’, home or office-wise, and it was pretty disconcerting. I was literally carrying my office and my life around in a range of bags; hot desking like mad. Progress was, and still is, regularly hampered by constantly taking a wrong turn in the maze of staircases, tunnels, corridors and courtyards that comprise the Hogwarts-like House of Commons ‘estate’. My biggest faux pas so far was turning up on the wrong side during Prime Ministers Question Time! With no signs on the doors (a big L for Labour might have saved me) it is surprisingly easy to make a mistake like this. It had to be the day I was wearing my bright, electric blue jacket too, so there was no avoiding having been spotted. It was all taken in good heart I am pleased to say, even by the Hon Members of the Opposition, who joked that they thought I had come to join them. Normally there is always a smartly bedecked, endlessly polite member of the estate staff to come to the rescue.

The Chamber itself is much smaller than it appears on television, and infinitely more comfy than it looks, which is fortunate, as I've spent much time there already. I am still deciding which is my preferred spot, so watch out on the Parliament Channel (mustn't tread on the toes of stalwarts like Ken Clark or Peter Bone, who virtually have their names engraved on their chosen seats, and even the more recent the 2010 addition, Jacob Rees Mogg has 'bagged' his special position).

How much or little one takes part in the day to day proceedings in the Chamber is optional, but I have been fairly active from the start: doing my Maiden Speech on day 3 of the Queens Speech; intervening often (including on the PM and Chancellor, regarding key issues relating to Taunton Deane); and asking questions when the opportunity arises. Even asking a relevant question of a specific Minister is not as straight forward as it might appear. Each Secretary of State has a set date for updating the House and answering questions, and MPs can 'table' a question to them. However, you only actually



get to ask the question if your name gets drawn out. If it doesn't, you can try and get a 'free hit' question by bobbing up and down like a penguin, hoping you catch the Speakers eye. Even this is not straight forward, because the questions alternate across the floor between the parties. And then there are 'topical' questions, 'urgent' questions, 'points of order', 'adjournment debates', 'ten minute rule bills' and more. It is like learning a new language (with no lessons.), not to mention the turn of phrase one has to use. You have to get it right: My Hon Friend; the Hon Member; or Rt Hon of either. Everything goes through the speaker, you can't say "you" and really shouldn't point (although the 'Beast of Bolsover' always seems to get away with it), and women are supposed to wear a jacket and not have bare arms. And if you want to speak in a debate, you have to be there at the start (but there are no guarantees you will get in, even if you sit there for 4 hours, as I found to my despair in the Climate Change debate) and if you do get called, you must turn up for the summing-up at the end.

Despite the minefield-of-process, this system has worked well for centuries, and continues to do so. I have made a number of speeches, including: during

the Finance Bill; following the Summer Budget; in the Equality and Gender Pay-Gap debate; and in a Westminster Hall debate on Coastal Flooding. In virtually everything I do, I of course fly the flag for, and raise issues relating to, Taunton Deane. Indeed, I have mentioned the A358 so many times that even Boris Johnson says he's now mentioning it because it is etched on his mind!

Most days I do pinch myself, as the sense of history in the House of Commons is overwhelming, and I feel truly honoured to be there representing my home area. This is a truly fascinating time to be entering Parliament, with the changes in political parties and the rise of the SNP, who are challenging protocols and 'pushing the boundaries' (they've already been politely reminded by Mr Speaker not to clap in The Chamber).



Aside from the Chamber, there is a world of activity to attend to: going to briefings; voting; holding surgeries in the constituency; attending events; and meeting with constituents raising particular issues in London. In addition, there are the vast range of constituents' queries, and calls for help or guidance to respond to. I am always pleased to hear from people, but please bear with me; I reply as soon as I can, but it can take time to elicit information from the relevant department or provide useful contacts, and so on. It has also taken some time to get my staff and offices fully up-and-running, largely owing to parliamentary procedures. I hope that, by the time this is published, my new Taunton office will be open, and I am very much looking forward to welcoming constituents to it.

A subject with which I've been much involved locally, has been in progressing funding for the long awaited and much talked about upgrade of the A358, the Henlade bypass and the upgrade of Junction 25 of the M5. I have held many meetings about this with Ministers in The



Treasury and The Department for Transport, sent in written submissions and liaised with many local parties, including the Council and people in parishes that this development may impact upon. So, just recently, I was delighted to receive an overwhelmingly positive assurance from the Chancellor, George Osborne himself, that the Government will definitely provide funding for this scheme. It is one of the key priorities in the £7.2billion commitment to transport infrastructure in the wider South West.

The next step will be a visit from the Roads Minister. The right road system to reduce congestion on this, the busiest road section in Somerset, is crucial. With this upgrade the prospect of a strategic employment site adjacent to the motorway junction can become a reality. With my keen interest in the environment, I am pressing all parties involved to ensure that any development is environmentally sustainable and green, something I know local people are much in favour of. We need progress but we must always care for our environment, which of course includes all our ‘birds and bees’! And on that note, I am delighted to have gained a place on the Department of Environment, Food and Farming Select Committee in Parliament, so hope to play my part in these areas, not just locally but nationally also.

This brings me neatly back home to my beloved garden, which I still work in whenever I can. I crave my home grown vegetables when I am in London, and like nothing better than a salad comprising of my precious mixed salad leaves when I get back. I’ve been harvesting since April (continue picking around the outside of the plant and they will keep producing). As well as the leaves, some new black radishes have been a great success this season.

In the borders, the Kniphofias (red hot pokers) have been spectacular this year, loving the dry, sunny weather. They are adored by bees, and the garden has been abuzz with them. The more we can help our bees the better. As I mentioned in my Maiden Speech, bring on the government’s Bee Pollinator Strategy!



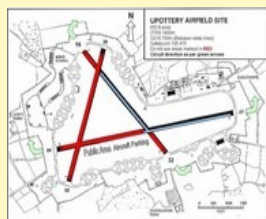


Tickets: £6.00  
Contact: Nicky Baxter (01823 480675)  
Bar & Snacks available

**Friday 27th November 2015 @ 7.30pm**  
**45 Years (12a)**

***A thriller/drama***

*A winner of several awards this film stars Tom Courtney and Charlotte Rampling who together perfectly play a couple whose 45 wedding anniversary is ruined by the discovery of a body in a glacier.*



## *Neroche History Group*

Our evening meeting on 23rd  
September is a visit to

### **Upottery Airfield Heritage Centre and Archive at Smeatharpe**

The centre is run by volunteers and has an original photographic archive documenting the major role this historic airfield played during the D-Day operation in 1944. All housed within part of the original 439th Troop Carrier Group HQ Officers' Mess Complex.

Upottery was also the departure field for the legendary men of 'Easy Company', 2nd battalion the 506th PIR, who were famously featured in Stephen Spielberg's TV series the 'Band of Brothers'

For more information contact: [jane.hole@outlook.com](mailto:jane.hole@outlook.com) 01460 234410  
and / or Dianne Hood [stapleservices@btinternet.com](mailto:stapleservices@btinternet.com)



# *Neroche History Group Meeting*

## *The Lost Houses of Bickenhall, Staple Fitzpaine and Curland*

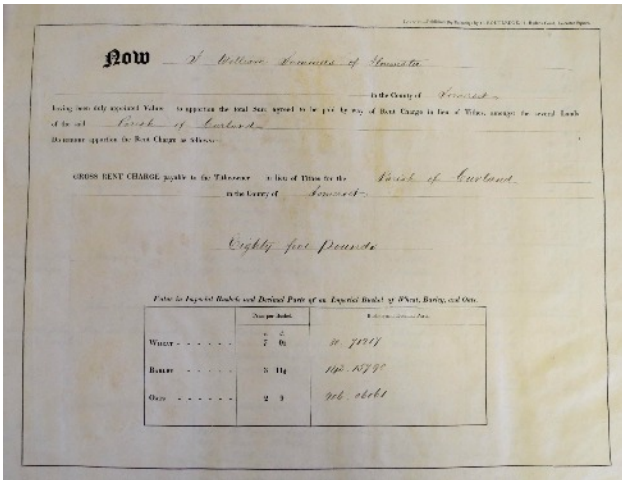
*By Jane Hole*

A good sized local audience came to hear the latest research by members of Neroche History Group about the lost houses of our three villages.



Research from the 1840 tithe records at Somerset Heritage Centre was conducted by Chris Cottey on Bickenhall, Sarah Covey on Staple Fitzpaine and Jane Hole on Curland. We were all grateful for previous research conducted by Mary Bell.

Tithes as a form of tax had been around from at least 787AD, the time of King Offa. Based on one tenth part of the annual produce of land or labour, they raised funds for the clergy and church.



**Curland Tithe of 1840, showing a Gross Rent Charge of £85 (left).** In 1836

the Tithe Commutation Act converted tithes to become a rent charge. Commissioners were appointed to establish land values. These were laid out in two ways, as a map of each parish showing all the tithe fields with numbers, and a ledger known as the Tithe Apportionment which showed the landowner, the

occupier, the field number, if there was a house or cottage on the plot, then a description of the land use and its value.

Thus the bureaucracy established to collect the annual tithe in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century bequeathed us 21<sup>st</sup> century amateur historians a very useful amount of information about our villages.

### A page from the Curland Tithe.

At least 80 houses that are identified on the tithe maps and apportionments of the three villages have been lost. Some would just have become dilapidated and fallen down, others would have been demolished by Lord Portman as he improved the land and accommodation for farmers and agricultural workers on his estate, others were pulled down and newer houses built in their place. Some such as the large old house at Bickenhall Mill were demolished at late as the 1960s. Many cottages were knocked down in order the stones and materials could be used in another buildings.

| LANDOWNERS                  |                 | COTTAGES |      | APPORTIONMENT | RENT VALUE   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------|------|---------------|--------------|
|                             |                 |          |      | TO THE TITHE  | OF THE HOUSE |
| Rowden Robert junior        | Robert Duke     | 5        | 5 18 | 2             | 1 0          |
| Rowden Robert               | Rowden          | 5        | 1 31 | 1             | 1 0          |
| Rowden James                | Robert Rowden   | 5        | 1 17 | 1             | 1 10         |
| Rowden James                | Rowden Westlake | 1        | 2 37 |               | 3 0          |
| Rowden the Rev. John Bayden | Mary Gove       | 13       | 3 16 |               | 18 0         |
| Mary Gove his wife          | John Gove       | 1        | 2 2  |               | 3 0          |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | Robert Burrough | 1        | 2 20 |               | 2 0          |
| Robert Burrough his wife    | John Bayden     |          | 1 33 |               | 2 0          |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | Robert Duke     | 15       | 1 25 | 1             | 2 0          |
| John Bayden his wife        | Robert Gove     | 2        | 3 15 |               | 2 15         |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | Rowden          |          |      |               |              |
| Robert Gove his wife        | Rowden          | 2        | 2 3  | 1             | 2 0          |
| Rowden                      | George Gove     | 2        | 0 11 |               | 2 0          |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | John Bayden     | 1        | 0 25 |               | 2 10         |
| John Bayden his wife        | Robert Rowden   | 1        | 1 21 |               | 2 6          |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | James Flood     | 1        | 3 50 |               | 6 3          |
| Thomas Rowden his wife      | John Knight     | 19       | 1 24 | 2             | 16 7         |
| Rowden Reverend John Bayden | Thomas Ridge    | 3        | 3 9  |               | 4 9          |
| John Bayden his wife        |                 |          |      |               |              |



The house (left), (demolished in the 1960's) in the bottom of one of the fields opposite Neroche Hall, was at one time lived in by the late Miss Dorothy Sydenham.

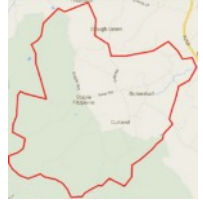
Our Lost Houses research is still very much a "work in progress". If you have any information about the Lost Houses or indeed about the house you live in

please get in touch with Jane Hole at [jane.hole@outlook.com](mailto:jane.hole@outlook.com)

# Closure of Herepath at Bickenhall

By Ann Finn

On Tuesday 28th July 2015 an “onsite” meeting was held on the closed section of the Herepath in Bickenhall; the meeting was attended by Ann Finn and Barbara Hemmings of Taunton Deane Bridleways Association, Margaret Robinson and Jill Perrior of Blackdown Hills Riding Club and Rebecca Pow (MP).



The meeting was set-up to inspect and discuss the section of the Herepath where strands of heavy duty wire (used to bind together bales of old tyres in the foundations) had snapped and were now protruding out of the ground. Subsequently, this section is too dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and riders; thus rendering a 1.5 mile stretch of the Herepath unusable.



*Rebecca POW (MP) and Ann Finn (TDBA)*

The Neroche Project was started in the early 2000s with a £3,000,000 grant (much of which came from the Lottery Fund) to develop tourism and light industry etc in Neroche Forest. A project committee was formed, under the management of Gavin Saunders, in

partnership with the Forestry Commission, Neroche AONB and Crown Estates, with additional input from SCC Rights of Way.

The Herepath is a 13.5 mile circular off-road bridleway, designed to encourage safe riding as a tourist attraction and for the benefit of local walkers, cyclists and riders. Much of the land is owned by the Crown Estates and the Forestry Commission, although some sections are ‘permissive rights of way’ across land owned by local farmers. With the closure of this section of the Herepath, users now have to use a network of busy, narrow lanes which are often used as ‘rat runs’ between the A358 and A303.

The Herepath was opened in 2008 and was based on definitive bridleways and some newly created ‘permissive’ sections, such as the ‘Bickenhall Farm’ section – a 500 yard stretch either side of Bickenhall Lane. The foundations of this section were constructed from old tyres baled in wire cages.

After a couple of years, wire began to spring up through the surface, and Taunton Deane Bridleways Association reported the damage to the landowner and the Neroche Project team. By 2013, as more wire continued to appear through the surface, the project manager organised a working party of volunteers to cut and remove the projecting wire. However SCC and the Forestry Commission deemed the section to be unsafe and closed it on 20th December 2013.



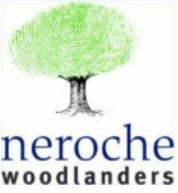
The Neroche Project was closed in 2013. This was a planned closure, not associated with the problems detailed above. However, on this closure, responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the Herepath was not determined, and none of the ‘partners’ have taken it on. Additionally, the original contract for the construction of the Bickenhall section has disappeared into the Forestry Commission’s archives in Exeter. To date, the contract hasn’t been found.

Other issues, which have yet to be resolved, are the cost of re-opening and the requirement for a bridge to be constructed where the flood alleviation works at Bickenhall have cut a deep channel through the path.

*It is hoped that we will be able to report some progress in the next issue of the newsletter. (See also articles by Ross Henley on page 47 and FC on page 55)*

# One hundred Wild Learners in the Woods

By Gavin Saunders



Neroche Woodlanders has just completed the third year of its Wild Learning project, with funding from the People's Health Lottery, Somerset Skills & Learning and Taunton Association for the Homeless. Over the past year Wild Learning worked with 40 adults and 60 children, providing a welcome change of scene for families from the Halcon and Priorswood areas in Taunton, who face a range of challenges including homelessness, long-term unemployment, learning difficulties and family pressures.

Twenty sessions were held in the woods specifically for adults, who learned about woodland wildlife, practical traditional skills like green woodworking, and helped to conserve the forest environment. Participants carved bowls and spoons, cooked together on the campfire, and went searching for signs of nature through the seasons.

Twelve family days were run on Saturdays throughout the year. Families worked and played together, building shelters, using tools, creating fairy dens, cooking together on the fire and exploring nature. The project ended with an overnight camp, with families who had never camped before experiencing this for the first time in a wild setting. The camp enabled many to experience real darkness for the first time. One participant said *"I loved seeing how bright the stars are"*, and one young person said *"I liked the night walk even though I was scared!"*.



As well as bringing people to the woods we also ran an after-school club at Halcon Primary School in the town, bringing parents into the school grounds to enjoy time with their children, whittling wands, and cooking popcorn over a camp fire.

Jenny Archard, who led the project, said: *"We know that the woods provide a powerful setting for people to find out more about themselves, build family relationships, pick up new skills and interests, and also feel they are*

*contributing something back to nature. The peaceful, natural surroundings of a wild woodland strips away a lot of the stresses of everyday life, and helps people to heal and recharge themselves."*

Feedback showed that participants gained confidence, felt less isolated, discovered new practical skills, and benefitted from positive interactions with others. *"We provide a non-judgmental atmosphere, in a very natural setting."* said Jenny. *"We allow learners to explore new interests, and gain a sense of achievement. There is always a campfire at the centre of things, with the kettle on, and cooking food collectively is also an important part of the experience."*

At the end of the project, the adults taking part talked of having grown in confidence as a result of the time spent at Young Wood, and having learned to take a lead in their own lives. The children wrote comments on blackboards, including, *"I feel happy since I came here"*, and *"I can speak out loud to other people"*. One mum said, *"My son is calmer when he is here"*.

As a result of the project, some families have begun to look after their gardens more at home, with one mum saying, *"We now have fruit trees, and are planning to grow vegetables"*. Another mother said she had made her sons room *"into a forest,"* as that made him feel calm.

Neroche Woodlanders used the John Muir Award as a basis for the project. The Award, named after the famous Scottish-American wilderness explorer and campaigner, allows participants to earn a certificate for completing a simple portfolio of learning. For those without many existing formal qualifications, this provided an important sense of achievement.



Gavin Saunders, who worked alongside Jenny running the project said: *"Taunton has its problems and its areas of deprivation, but it is fortunate to have some amazing wild woodlands right on its doorstep. Through this project we can help people who seldom get the chance to do so, to benefit from those woodlands."*

# News from Somerset County Council

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

**The Herepath.** I continue to chase-up the issue of the Herepath closure. I have had several meetings at County Hall, and following the publication of the Forestry Commission report, I am calling for a meeting between all interested parties, which will include local landowners and farmers. I recently had a really interesting meeting with Chris Salisbury at Bickenhall Farm, who I contacted after producing my article for the June publication of your Newsletter. We discussed the Herepath, and I assured him that the County Council needs to consult with him and others, every step of the way, and listen to local business people and residents also. It is important to mention at this point, that the section of Herepath that runs through Bickenhall Farm is not a public right of way but a ‘permissive path’, so users are there by invitation only. It goes without saying, therefore, that if the route and the land through which it passes, is not respected, then the permission could easily be withdrawn.



I was also given a guided tour of the farm, and saw the cattle side of the business, and also the horse livery operation. A really fascinating insight; thanks to Chris and his wife Sarah for letting me come to visit them. Afternote: I’ve just been informed that Sarah has been accepted onto the Parish Council; a great choice. I look forward, therefore, to seeing her and all her fellow Councillors at their bi-monthly meetings, which I attend regularly.

**Superfast Broadband.** The lack of superfast broadband is a total fiasco. At a public meeting, Devon and Somerset County Councils and BT were told, in no uncertain terms by a packed hall of local residents, that BT’s proposed

method of connecting the rural parts of the Blackdown Hills and the Neroche Villages was not going to work, and that local people had no confidence whatsoever in the project. It's sad that six months later this came to pass, and attempts by BT and the two County Councils to sign an agreement to provide superfast broadband to large parts of our villages had collapsed without any agreement.



## Connecting Devon and Somerset

This leaves us without a workable solution for our rural areas, and no firm connection date. I have been attending various meetings at Somerset County Council, making the point that so much time has been wasted and that the people in charge of this project have had ‘their heads buried in the sand’, displayed a great deal of incompetence and should resign.



I have lost count of how many rural business people I have spoken to in our area who are greatly disadvantaged by slow broadband speeds, compared to the service enjoyed by their urban competitors. It's a real drawback and a major concern for local farmers in particular.

**Crown Estates.** I've recently had the chance to meet some of the people who were affected by the Crown Estates decision last year to start selling-off their rental housing stock. I spoke to a few residents who had to leave their properties but luckily found new homes locally, and also to some who sadly had to move away. Some were caused untold stress, especially those who already had underlying health issues. I also spoke to a journalist from a national newspaper who recently wrote an article highlighting the issue. However, ‘every cloud has a silver lining’, and I am aware that many of the new owners of the old Crown properties are already well settled into our community, and are keen to take part in local activities; I look forward, therefore, to meeting them at some of the many excellent events that take place in the parish, and to welcome them personally.



**Speeding Traffic.** I am trying to get the County Council to look at the speed of traffic that passes Thurlbear School; the current speed limit is 60mph. I'm preparing a bid under the Small Highway Improvement Scheme for a review of speed again at this site.

**Finally.** I called-in at the Greyhound Inn the other week, after work. What a pleasant way to spend an hour after a long day, sitting in the sunshine, having a pint with friends and catching-up on their news. We really do live in a beautiful part of the world.



## *Email Alert Parish Notices*

*If you wish to be kept informed of all that is happening in the community (including: crime alerts; road closures; community activities; local events; important meetings etc etc) then why not add your email address to the 310 plus individuals that have already signed-up to the service.*

*Your details will be kept secure, as all Email Alerts use the BCC address system so that nobody sees the full list.*

*If you are not on the list, then you are missing-out on 'up-to-the-minute' information on all that is important and happening in the immediate area in which you live.*

*To join, send an email to: [wallytorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:wallytorrington@hotmail.com) with the message "please add me to the list".*

*We look forward to you becoming a fully-informed Neroche resident.*

# *Scarecrow Festival 2015*

*(Scarecrows from left-to-right, top-to-bottom)*

*Little Miss Mermaid  
Harvey  
Freddie  
The Gardener*

*Witchcraft  
The Invisible Man  
Nun Better  
The Chimney Sweep*

*Before the Great Fall  
Charlie Chaplin  
Britannia  
Fosbury Flock Shot*

*Crow's Foot UFC  
Man on the Job  
Hedge Laying  
Old George and the Dragon*

*To find out who won -  
turn to page 52!*

*Visit Neroche Villages' website to view the original  
Scarecrow photographs - and much more!  
[www.nerochevillages.org.uk/picture-gallery.html](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk/picture-gallery.html)*







The St Peter's Parish Scarecrow designers have done it again – what a wonderful display we have had this year with sixteen creative and some very humorous entries. Thanks go to all the design teams for making the 2015 Scarecrow Festival a lot of fun.

Without sponsorship we would not be able to provide the prizes, so thanks go to AES Building Services, The Greyhound Inn, Hannah May Hair Studio and Louise's Health and Beauty for their generous support.

This year there were 68 completed voting forms but many many more people had lots of fun viewing in groups and scoring the scarecrows. For example, West Buckland WI came en masse to the Greyhound for lunch and then did the scarecrow safari – the recycling operatives really enjoyed looking at the scarecrows and said it made their morning go much more quickly and enjoyably.



*BBQ Chefs - Tami and Peter Ellis*

The teas in the church and at Woodcott were a great success and the Festival was rounded-off with a BBQ at Batten's Farm to announce the winner. Special thanks go to Nicky and Chris Baxter, Alison and Anthony Brown, Tami and Peter Ellis and John Lee for all their help and support in preparation, printing, cooking serving etc the list is a very long one!



*Some of the contestants; left-to-right: Holly-Jane Harris, Kathy Harris, Hannah Perry and Jessica Perry*

..and finally

3rd place was a tie between *Hedge Laying* and *Fosbury Flock Shot*

2nd place *Old George and the Dragon*

1st place *Man on the Job*  
*(Congratulations to the winner Hannah Perry)*



# *News from Bickenhall & District WI*

*By Nicky Baxter*

As usual we have been busy at your local Women's Institute. Our big news



was the Annual Conference attended by over 5000 members, including our own President, Trisha Dryden. This year's event was particularly notable due to it being the 100 year anniversary of the WI. Even more noteworthy was the attendance by three very special WI members; Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Princess Royal and The Countess of Wessex. All three royal guests looked absolutely stunning.

Not only did Trisha attend the meeting, but many of us also watched by live satellite, via the internet, and we were able to spot Trisha on a number of occasions in the crowd. It was a lovely day and two highlights for me were the royal visitors and the speaker Lucy Worsley, curator of Royal Palaces, who entertained and informed us about the Women's Institute. Lucy also narrated a recent television programme about the WI entitled 'Cake Bakers and Trouble Makers', which was delightfully very interesting.

Our other exciting event was the attendance at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party by our own Molly Kelly (you may read about this on page 16). We all say "good on you Molly" and thank you for representing us.



*Lucy Worsley's Radio Times advert for the WI programme*

Our more local news is a report on the County Quiz, which partly took place at our own Greyhound Inn. A number of teams participated and also enjoyed a delicious supper provided by the pub. The

winning quiz was a group of ladies from West Monkton WI, so well done to them.

At our own Annual Meeting, Trisha was again elected as our most capable President; we are all very grateful to her for taking on this role and leading so ably 'from the front'.

### Forthcoming Events

*A summer trip is being planned for August but at the time of writing no firm decision had been made of where to go.*

*Hopefully, we will enter The County Knock-Out Skittles Tournament led by our Skittle Captain, Win Ballance. Maybe we'll get beyond the first round this time!*

*We are well underway with our contribution to the Somerset centenary celebrations, with our own sketch based on characters from Absolutely Fabulous.*

*We have three very interesting speakers booked in the next few months: on September 9th we have local lady Rebecca George OBE, who is a partner in Deloitte's, and will be speaking about Women at Work; another local lady, Karen Morgan, will speak about the work of Macmillan Cancer Care on October 14th; and On November 11th we have Jean Tomlinson talking about sugar craft, when I believe members may be able to 'have a go'.*



*Rebecca George OBE*

*We hope to run another Family Fun Bingo Evening closer to Christmas.*

*Our members will also support the Macmillan coffee morning to be held at the Greyhound Inn, Staple Fitzpaine on Saturday 26th September (please see the separate advert on page 5).*

*We are always trying to encourage new members, and visitors are welcome to try before they join, or if they just want to see what goes on. Any further information can be obtained from Secretary Frances Alford on 01460 234245 or Tricia on 01823 481037.*

# *Forestry Commission - Wych Lodge*

*By Neroche & East Devon Beat Team (Andy Harris & Jon Burgess)*



*Aerial view of Neroche Forest*

As you will have read in a previous issue, the Forestry Commission team is now established in its new offices at Wych Lodge, and as a result has been busy around the hills. The most noticeable works, relating to access, so far has been the resurfacing of a length of the Herepath at Staple Hill that was getting washed out and making

access difficult. We also resurfaced at Staple Hill car park to remove the potholes.

Nearby, some significant tree felling has taken place in Staple Park – in an area that was identified as a crucial link for the Wood White butterfly (one of the rarer ones in the area). This species thrives in low shrubby woodland, so we hope that the summer will see numbers rapidly increase as a result.

We regularly inspect our trails throughout the year, to ensure we keep our maintenance up to date. As a result, we are beginning to undertake improvements at Staple Hill, making access to the loop trail easier for all, plus creating more open space and retaining key views from the ridge. Some trails will naturally come to the point when it's too much to continue maintaining them to the standard we set ourselves. This is the situation with the red trail at Castle Neroche, and earlier this spring we removed the waymarkers from the circular trail. This does not affect anyone's access to the site, and we're sure most visitors will continue to wander and explore this interesting woodland. We shall continue to maintain and manage the site for visitors.

Another important trail, already mentioned, is the Herepath. The Bickenhall section remains closed, and whilst it may appear that there is little action on the ground, the original partners involved in the Neroche Project (landowner Crown Estates, SCC, FC and AONB Service) have been investigating the construction method and establishing the best way to repair and maintain it.

Other tree felling works will soon be underway across the Forestry Commission estate. Recently, we cleared-up the windblown stands in Middleroom Wood, these trees were blown over in the Valentine's storms last year but, even though uprooted, many of the trees remain alive with some green foliage. This means that they retain their timber value as the wood has not dried out and is still able to defend itself against attack by fungi and insect.

The harvesting of these trees was undertaken with large machinery, in addition to chainsaw, although the wood itself was closed to the public to ensure safety. The Herepath which runs alongside the wood remained open at all times.

With the harvesting operation over, we will be replanting with a mix of deciduous broadleaf trees. This will help progress the restoration of this site which is recorded as being Ancient Woodland – a term used to describe areas that have had tree cover for a long period of time and as a result have a fully 'woodland' ecology. The restoration was meant to be a gradual process over many years, always retaining a woodland canopy but slowly manipulating the species mix – nature, however, had other ideas, and blew down all our trees!

A lot of the work that we do for nature has led to a rich and diverse landscape, however, even we were surprised to find one new addition to the Hills, when we discovered a swarm of Tree Bumble Bees *Bombus hypnorum* had taken up home in a newly built nest - inside our tractor...

**Middleroom timber harvesting.** Now that the Forestry Commission local



office is back up-and-running after an absence of many years, we are now in a position to offer local people a brushwood collection permit. The basic idea is that for an annual fee of £36.75 (incl.VAT), permit holders would be able to collect 1 cubic metre of firewood from the forest, over a 12 month period, for their domestic use. Following the recent timber harvesting at Middleroom, there is a lot of suitable branch wood and other offcuts that are perfect – all

you would need to do is to carry it out. Anyone interested should contact Sam by email on [sam.negus@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sam.negus@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)



# *Curland Equestrian Centre*



*Always wanted to try Side Saddle? Then here's your chance.*

## **SIDE SADDLE CLINIC**

**30th October 2015**

Curland Equestrian Centre are delighted to announce that the talented and well-respected **Lucinda Sims** will be holding an **'Introduction to Riding Side Saddle'** clinic at Curland Equestrian Centre, on **Friday 30th October 2015**.

*All ages are welcome - and men are also very welcome to have a go!*

The day will begin with a talk about riding side saddle, a little of its history, along with detailed explanations on dress, etiquette and the different specialised saddlery and tack involved. This will be followed by demonstrations of Lucinda's horses being tacked up and ridden side saddle.

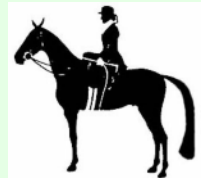
After a break for a buffet lunch, a few people will have the chance to ride side saddle on one of Lucinda's schoolmasters. This "taster" session will only be available to those riders weighing less than 11 stone, owing to the greater weight of side saddles compared to astride saddles.

The clinic will continue with a teaching session, incorporating saddle fitting, for people to try riding their own horses or ponies side saddle. Most horses and ponies take very well to side saddle, but please note, for health and safety reasons, horses and ponies attending this event must be at least 4 years old and have clearly defined withers. Riders will be able to warm up their horse astride before embarking on a lesson.

The clinic will end with a chance to review riders' achievements and celebrate with cake.

***If you've never ridden side saddle, it's not too late to learn!***

***For further information, contact Catherine Gray  
on 01460 234983 or 07808 962560***



**St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine**  
**HARVEST FESTIVAL**

*A Special Lunch at Neroche Hall - Thursday 1st Oct. 12.30 for 1.00pm*



**Tickets Adults £10**  
**Children £6**  
**Includes a glass of**  
**cider or soft drink**

For more information  
contact Alison Brown-  
01823 480441

**Proceeds to St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine**

*Harvest Service at St Peter's Church - Sunday 4th Oct. 10.00am*

*(Donations of goods for OPEN DOOR can be made at both functions)*

## 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.



**Autumn Half-term**  
**Saturday 24th Oct.2015 to Sunday 1st Nov.2015**



**Household Recycling & Refuse Collections**  
**for September 2015 to November 2015**



**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep.2015 changed to Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep.2015**

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

## September

- 2 Greyhound Quiz night
- 3 Thursday Lunch Club *(page 15)*
- 5 Litter Pick-up *(page 33)*
- 5 Walking Group
- 9 WI meeting, speaker - Rebecca George (OBE) *(page 53)*
- 10 Parish Council Meeting
- 13 Neroche & HB Garden Club visit to Farr's Garden *(page 22)*
- 23 History Group visit to Upottery Airfield Heritage Centre *(page 40)*
- 25 Friday Film Night - Woman In Gold *(page 23)*
- 26 Macmillan Coffee Morning at The Greyhound *(page 5)*

## October

- 1 'Special Harvest Festival' Thursday Lunch Club *(pages 15 & 58)*
- 3 Walking Group
- 4 Harvest Festival at St Peter's Church *(page 58)*
- 7 Greyhound Quiz night
- 9 Neroche Hall Fish'n'Chips Quiz *(page 15)*
- 14 WI meeting, speaker - Karen Morgan *(page 53)*
- 24 Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir at St Peter's Church *(page 12)*
- 30 Friday Film Night - Mr Holmes *(page 23)*

## November

- 4 Greyhound Quiz night
- 5 Thursday Lunch Club *(page 15)*
- 7 Walking Group
- 11 WI meeting, speaker - Jean Tomlinson *(page 53)*
- 12 Taunton Racecourse Meeting *(page 26)*
- 12 Parish Council Meeting
- 13 Take Art presents Namvula at Neroche Hall *(page 33)*
- 26 Taunton Racecourse Meeting *(page 26)*
- 27 Friday Film Night - 45 Years *(page 40)*

*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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