

30 Victoria Court
Chard



Dear Friends

Once more it is December and Advent and Christmas.

We all know that Christmas Day December 25th is an arbitrary date, chosen to replace the pagan midwinter festival of lights (which was a piece of ritual magic designed to remind the sun to do its stuff once again) by the birth of Him who is the light of the world. Originally the birth was celebrated at the Circumcision of Jesus early in January.

We also know that the historical records reveal that the Christian era was wrongly dated and should have been four years earlier in what we now call BC 4. For this was when the census took place in the Roman Empire. Too late to correct it now but this year should be 2007 AD. Ho Hum!!

But all of this obscures the reality of the historical fact of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth attested to by the official records of the Roman Empire in several places.

Nero knew what a danger this cult of Chrestus was, which was why he persecuted them, blaming the great fire he himself had started on the Christians. Marcus Aurelius also was persuaded of the reality of the resurrection presence of God who knew and observed his actions. This had the paradoxical effect of making this 2nd Century Emperor straighten up his religious life in the old ways of his empire and thus to persecute the Christians. However he left a marvellous devotional work in his "Meditations". In these he testifies to the effect the Christians preaching about the risen presence of Christ had had upon him.

In this and many other ways the phenomenal power of Jesus was demonstrated in the then known world.

The judgement passed many years ago still obtains "Aut Deus aut non bonus vir" "Either God or no good man".

But in today's cynical and perverse world no-one really knows or takes account of history or genuine evidence. We have been deracinated, removed from our roots and therefore are vulnerable to whatever our fancy or the deliberate misleadings of the atheistic majority choose for us to accept as true.

However I firmly believe in the necessity for a virgin conception if sinful mankind was to be purged of the disease which posses us. As a cancerous marrow can only be defeated by a transplant of fresh clean material, so if our fallen nature (all too evident to see in our world) is to be healed God has to enter as a human to put matters right. If we accept that we are God's creatures then all our powers derived from God – this includes the power to conceive children. So why strain at the gnat of divine saving intervention if we swallow the Camel of creation? What has been delegated can be resumed by the one who delegates.

I realise of course I will again be unpopular in saying all this BUT think and reflect on who, or what we are. Also what we need to become truly good people. Thank God that there are still his Saints and much evidence still of the effectiveness of Jesus power among us. Make Christmas this year a true Christ Mass not a secular excuse to over indulge ourselves.

Rejoice in the Lordship of God's Christ. Have a Merry Christmas.

David Savill



SERVICES AT ST STEPHEN'S & ST MARY'S ON 28TH DECEMBER

On the above date we will be joining with St Mary's, Chard for their **10am** service of Holy Communion.

There will be an 8am service of Holy Communion at St Mary's, Thorncombe on 28th December but no other services in Thorncombe or Winsham on that day.

Churchwardens



FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Wedding November 15th 2003 Paul Darby & Sarah Jane Vaux St Mary's Thorncombe



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH WINSHAM

Minister – Revd John McMinn – 01935 872105 **Hon Secretary** – Michael Hebditch – 01460 30201
Sunday services at 10.30am. 1st Sunday, tea and biscuits after the service. 3rd Sunday Holy Communion
3rd Thursday 12.15-1.30 monthly Soup & Cheese Lunch -Sports Club



THORNCOMBE CHAPEL

Normal Sunday Services: 11am and 6.30pm. Every 2nd Sunday at 11am is a Family Service. A welcome to everyone.

Ladies Bright Hour: Alternate Wednesdays – 2.30pm. A welcome is extended to all ladies to join in this special hour followed by tea and biscuits and a chat.

Saturday Club for Boys & Girls: 11am to 12.15pm every Saturday. This is an exciting club for boys and girls of 4 years and over. It has a mixed programme of bible stories, quizzes and many other activities.

Enquiries 01460 30267



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CHARD

Priest: Canon James O’Brien – 01460 62197

Services: Sunday Mass - 8am and 11am. Weekdays – 9.30am. Holy Days – 9.30am

Confessions – Saturdays 11am – 12 noon.



ST MARY’S – CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Decorating of St Mary’s for Christmas will take place on Monday, 22nd December. The church will be open from 8.30am and gifts of greenery or flowers would be much appreciated.

There is a new flower rota at the back of the church so please sign up for any dates on which you would like to arrange flowers, perhaps on a special anniversary or similar. For further information please have a word with me. Many thanks.
Margaret Chivers



THANKS - Alan Sidney Spurdle

Jean and family would like to thank everyone for the support and messages of sympathy received since Alan’s sudden death. It has been a great shock but knowing we have so many friends is a great comfort.

THANKS - Peter and Sheila Moreland wish to thank all the kind friends who have offered their sympathy following the family’s recent bereavement.



ST STEPHEN’S CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

CHANGE OF DATE –

Our original date in December has clashed with a trip going to Plymouth and also with the Magdalen Project Christmas Bazaar. We have brought it forward to

Saturday, 29th



November so please make a note of this in your diary. In fact it’s next weekend ! Come and have a cup of coffee and do some Christmas shopping at the same time.

We shall be pleased to receive items of bric-a-brac, Christmas decorations, cakes and prizes for the raffle (no jumble please.) The Air Ambulance will benefit from all profits raised. *JMS*



The Playgroup had its first OFSTED Inspection in June and received an excellent report on every aspect covered by the inspection ; the children are receiving the highest level of care and education. This is very much due to the hard work and dedication of our three excellent members of staff. A huge thank you to them !

On a sadder note, it is with much regret that Lindsay, our playgroup leader, has decided to leave. She has however, kindly agreed to stay on until a suitable replacement can be found. So, if anyone with the relevant qualifications would like to join our enthusiastic village playgroup, please do contact Rosemary Walley on 30189.

The playgroup has an action packed few weeks until Christmas, with a sponsored leaf pick at Forde Abbey on 20th November, followed by our annual fundraising coffee morning of Friday 5th December at Jubilee House, (by the bus shelter) from 10.30 a.m.

until 12 noon. Finally we believe Father Christmas may be visiting the village towards Christmas!!



LEUKAEMIA RESEARCH FUND

Angela and Richard Delderfield would like to thank everyone who helped at, and those that supported, our recent coffee morning and sale.

We have been able to donate £400 to the Leukaemia Research Fund.

We still have a few of the new 'Calendar Girls' calendar for 2004 (being published and distributed by Penguin Books) which includes the stars of the recently launched film and some of the previous W.I girls.

They cost £9.99 of which over £5 goes to Leukaemia Research and they make a great Christmas present! If you would like one, please call us on 01460 30916 and we'll deliver.

Whilst writing, Angela would like to thank everyone who has contributed to her 'Smarties Tube' fundraiser. She is pleased to be sending £224.90 to the St Mary's Talents Appeal.

RD



WINSHAM VILLAGE SHOP



The Annual General meeting of Winsham Shop Ltd was held on 11 November 2003 in the Jubilee Hall attended by 40 shareholders. A verbal report on the shop activity over the

past year was given, reminding members of the flood of November 2002 and of the two successful evening events held during the year. Attention was drawn to the policy of attempting to provide for two differing markets, firstly to provide a range of basic household and domestic products at prices as competitive as possible, and secondly to support local producers by providing a range of goods of perhaps better quality, albeit at slightly higher prices.

The results of the recent customer survey on bread were given. 37 responses were received of which 29 (78%) expressed a wish for traditionally baked crusty loaves, even though the price will have to rise slightly. 26 responders (70%) said they would be happy with a smaller range of high quality bread rather than a wide range of steam baked bread. In order to reflect our customers' clear preference the Board have been exploring the possibilities for buying our bread from a new supplier. At the time of writing it looks as though this will be Village Bakers, a long established firm from Evershot. They already have retail outlets in Chard and Beaminster and will be able to deliver high quality bread to us. Inevitably

there will be some increase in price. Because they have their own retail shops, Village Bakers will not allow us to undercut their prices (reasonable enough), and we therefore have little price flexibility. One not fully resolved difficulty is how to continue the provision of wrapped sliced bread of which we currently sell about 30 loaves a week. Village Bakers do not supply this and we have to look elsewhere to continue this service.

During discussion, mention was made of the necessity of continuing to maintain our customer base, and to remind villagers of the services that we provide. One slight disappointment is that the suggestions folder in the shop has not been used much lately. We remain very keen to continue to be flexible in meeting our customers' requirements and therefore need to hear from you about what you want and expect from us. The board recognises that we are a bit deficient on the publicity side. This is not from lack of enthusiasm but simply lack of time. If any reader feels that he or she could help in this regard, by liaising with the shop management team to produce timely promotional material, would they please let me know?

The Company accounts were available at the meeting and were explained by our accountant. These showed that the paper profit for the year was £9,656. However, this was distorted by the Countryside Agency grant of £25,000 and the necessity to spend money on the building, which will not be needed in future years. The true profit was therefore less than half that figure. Turnover (i.e. sale of goods) was £168,649. To obtain this turnover we spent £141,455 on buying stock, giving a gross margin of £27,183 (16%). We were advised that we should aim for a gross margin of 18-20%. 16% gives us no slack to allow for unexpected contingencies. It may need to be adjusted. The overheads last year were £34,572 although again distorted by first year costs. The recurrent overheads are in the region of £24,000 per annum. We are however keen to keep prices as low as possible, and the best way of doing this is to increase turnover. The advice we received at the outset was that a village the size of Winsham should be able to sustain a turnover of £200,000 per year, so we have some way to go. If any shareholder who was unable to attend the meeting wishes to receive a copy of the accounts, please ask in the shop and one will be supplied.

Finally, I was re-elected as Chairman for a further year.

Robert Shearer



Always be a little kinder than necessary.

J M Barrie

THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST



We are sorry that it was necessary to cancel, at short notice, the November talk on the Archaeology of the Axe Valley. We hope that the talk about R.N.L.I. proved to be a most

interesting alternative.

CONSERVATION GRANTS:

In keeping with the aims and objectives of the Trust we are pleased to enclose the under-mentioned information from **WDDC**.

“Grants to carry out conservation work and help protect the countryside are still available from West Dorset District Council. Locals have until 9th February 2004 to apply for grants of up to £1,000 from the Council’s Countryside and Conservation Grant Scheme.”

Anyone can apply, but applications are being particularly encouraged from farmers and landowners wishing to lay hedges, restore dry-stone walls or plant copses.

Projects that use traditional local trade or craft skills and those that aim to make improvements to places that have been designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest will also be given priority.

Grants are awarded on a first come first served basis so anyone wishing to apply is encouraged to contact the District Council as soon as possible. The maximum grant available is £1,000 per application. To find out more about the scheme or to apply for a grant, contact Landscape Architect Tony Harris on 01305 252235”

Our next meeting is on Thursday 8th January when Dr. Nigel Merrett, Marine Biologist and an ex-committee member of TVT, will give us an oceanographer’s tale of “Ships and Sealing Wax”

We hope for a great turn out of members and non-members alike for what sounds to be a most interesting tale. *RD*

Did you see.....?

A superb late summer and autumn of sunshine and drought have ended with a show of seasonal colouring among deciduous trees and shrubs that can rarely have been equalled. Those who can remember the area in 1976 may recall that, when the drought was ended by heavy rain in September, there followed an extraordinary glut of edible mushrooms. Every field and roadside bank had its quota. The long

dormant spores must have been activated by an ideal combination of warmth and moisture. The conditions have so far not been repeated and it is well that we should continue to enjoy this year’s wonderful autumn tints while they last.

In the meantime, the B.B.C. swans are not alone in seeking winter keep in the British Isles. Already the winter thrushes are about and enjoying the berries and windfall apples; snipe, now much less numerous than formerly, have also been seen in the parish. *PM*



November has been a relatively busy month within the estate of Cricket St Thomas. Torrential rain, after months of blissful sunshine, resulted in a dramatic mud river,

engulfing one of the roads of Cricket and slithering its way insidiously down the road. Luckily, a knight on shining JCB came roaring to the rescue and a few hilarious hours, both late at night and early the next day, were spent digging the putrid mess out.

The next gathering of the clans is for Christmas Carols on Sunday 21st December at 6pm. Warner Hotel, in keeping with a long-standing tradition, have kindly invited all who attend the carol service back to Cricket House for mulled wine and mince pies.

The charity lunch, in aid of Cancer Research UK, was a great success. Head chef of the Ritz in London, Philippe Vande Walle, concocted a delicious feast before our eyes within the kitchen of Hamilton’s Restaurant, after which we all sat down in the sumptuous surroundings of Cricket House to enjoy an amazing lunch. Many thanks to all who helped make the day possible. We managed to raise over £1000.00 for this very worthwhile charity.

Tickets for the premier charity showing of the Lord of the Rings, Return of the Kings, to be shown at Taunton on December 18th can be obtained by contacting me on 01460 30775. The ticket will cost £1 over the face value, with all proceeds going to Cancer Research UK.

Finally, congratulations to Matt and Jo Board on the birth of their son William Thomas. *Susie Versluys*



THORNCOMBE FIRST RESPONDERS

October was another fairly quiet month I’m pleased to report, with one Care Line call and two 999 ambulance calls.

Recently there have been two



occasions where young children have been the ones to dial 999 in an emergency. We would like to congratulate them heartily for their initiative and hope that all families out there are similarly prepared.

Of course we mustn't forget that it's Christmas soon, so this month's tip is to douse all fires on the evening of the 24th, as we don't want to get a call-out to Santa.

Don't forget that, if you need to call 999, say you live in Dorset. If we have not arrived after about 5 minutes, phone us direct, using the number in the back of this magazine.

Have a wonderful Christmas!

MP-B



WINSHAM ON THE WEB



In the Church, November is the month in which, traditionally, we especially remember our loved ones who have passed on. It is further reinforced by Remembrance Sunday, when the nation as a whole, and thousands of small communities throughout the United Kingdom, remember the fallen in the two World Wars that contaminated the first fifty years of the last century, and the reverberations of which can still be felt to-day.

It is therefore entirely appropriate that the Winsham Web Museum should use this month of remembrance to launch its new gallery on Winsham at War, which is the result of a great deal of work by Peter Duffell, with the cooperation of many of the older Winsham residents.

The Rolls of Honour are greatly enlarged, giving as much detail as could be found of those that died, including some pictures. There is also a fascinating account, told by Fred Newton, of his time as a Prisoner of War in the hands of the Japanese in Burma and Japan. Fred actually witnessed the dropping of the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki and he talks about this in his account.

A small section is also devoted to Private R. Warren, whose memorial plaque is to found in the Church, and who died in the South African war at the start of the last century.

All this and an interesting account of how Winsham organised its own War Memorial back in the 1920s make an invaluable contribution to the content of the Winsham Web Museum. Go and see for yourself on www.winshamwebmuseum.co.uk

I owe the readers of last month's article an apology. The guest book has ceased to function. The service was provided free, and then suddenly a charge was

being made, which we were unable to meet. Without further notice the guest book was axed. We are now casting around for another free service, which is all we can afford on account of our having no income! Still, I greatly regret its passing, as I am sure many others do.

JSS



ST MARY'S SCHOOL, THORNCOMBE

At the end of last term, Mrs Owen organised a sponsored mini marathon and the children at the school raised £550. This money was donated to worthy causes, the Devon and Dorset Air Ambulance service and the Nepalese school, with which we are twinned. Mrs Rutter and Canon Rutter came into school to show the children slides of the school and to accept the cheque on behalf of the village. The money will be used to pay for wood for desks and benches. Mr David Elkington accepted the cheque on behalf of the air ambulance service.

We are very proud of the children's efforts and grateful to all those who supported the children with sponsorship.



WINSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Clerk writes:

The parish council received a letter last week advising them that South Somerset District Council is considering phasing out 'Recreational Maintenance Grants' (RMG). You may ask what are RMG and how might this effect you as a resident of Winsham.

The cost of maintaining the lower recreation ground, grass cutting, equipment repair and insurance is funded through the parish precept, directly by you as a resident. In the past the District Council has offered grants of 50% towards the cost of this maintenance. Winsham has always applied for and received this grant. It is now suggested that this grant be phased out over the next 2 or possibly 3 years. The parish council will now have to adjust the precept to allow for the loss of the grant by either increasing the precept or adjusting expenditure in other areas.

Winsham Recreation Ground Management Committee, who has also claimed the RMG from the District Council, has maintained the Upper Recreation Ground, football and cricket pitches, for many years. Under present internal arrangements they will be unable to maintain the cricket and football pitches successfully without the help of the RMG and will probably have to seek funding from the parish council, directly from your precept contribution.

SSDC's reasons for withdrawing the RMG are stated in their letter. They have a budget deficit and believe that this sort of expenditure is better managed directly by parish councils to give greater clarity and accountability for their own services.

The parish council strongly disagrees with this view and it has written to SSDC, through Councillor Mrs Stella Abbey, expressing their concerns in two areas. Winsham has an ageing population, which probably does not represent the demographic spread of South Somerset as a whole. Younger people have to leave the village because of the lack of affordable housing. Therefore the older members of the community are supporting recreational facilities in Winsham, used predominantly by younger people, in a disproportionate way. The facilities in other adjoining towns and parishes, particularly for football, are in short supply. It could be said that young people join our local teams because there is a lack of facilities elsewhere. Winsham is therefore providing facilities for people from outside the village. The parish council might want to encourage everyone to enjoy our recreation facilities, but feels that the costs should be more widely spread.

The precept for 2004-2005 will be set at the December meeting. If you have a point of view on the above, then please attend this meeting.

We are experiencing some vandalism on the lower recreation ground. Remember you pay for the maintenance and you will probably be paying more in the future. So look after your assets.

We are at last having some success with the County Council Highways Department. After asking for the past 14 months most of the white lines have been repainted. This is thanks to Councillor Keith Marsh and his persistence in making phone calls, writing emails and generally being a pain in their neck. Keith is still pushing for progress on flood prevention and many other outstanding items too long to list here.

The next meeting of the parish council will be held on Wednesday 3rd December at 8 p.m. in the Jubilee Hall. If you can, please come along. Items for the agenda should be with the Clerk at least 8 days before the meeting. *FV*



THORNCOMBE SWIMMING POOL



The pool is now closed for winter.

This year we sold a record number of keys but unfortunately the sale of keys has not covered our costs for the season.

Due to new health and safety rules we have had to purchase two sets of stainless steel steps. We were

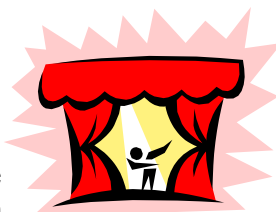
able to purchase these as we had money, which was raised from the cream teas held during the summer. We had one incident of something unpleasant being left in the pool. If this occurs again, please pop a note through the caretaker's door IMMEDIATELY so that it can be taken care of straight away. There was deliberate damage to the cover, which was ripped beyond repair. Because of these incidents the committee will be forced to raise the cost of keys for next season.

We look forward to your continuing support next year and the swimming pool committee wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. *WH*



WINSHAM PANTOMIME

Huge apologies! I have had to change the date of the first meeting from Tuesday, 9th to **Thursday, 5th December** at 7.30 in the Jubilee Hall. Please make a



big effort to get to the preliminary meeting; much needs to be discussed. Young children need not attend as long as an adult can come to note times they will be needed and to give me names etc. Anyone not yet in touch with me about joining please give me a ring. We'd love to have you with us.

Penny Pargiter – 30260



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Car Park. The resurfacing has been completed at last and what a tremendous difference it has made! The financing of this has only been possible with a top up from the hall's emergency fund. This is now so dangerously depleted that fund raising needs to continue to bring it back to a more reasonable level.

Thorncombe W.I. Dinner. Many thanks to the W.I. for putting on a very successful dinner, which is expected to realise about £800 towards the fund. Paul Atterbury was the guest speaker. He gave a fascinating insight into the staging and production of the BBC's "Antiques Road Show".

The Thorncombe Railway Activities Club, who staged their model exhibition on the 8th November, very kindly donated £200 from the proceeds to the car park fund.

The Thorncombe Food Festival on the 23rd November will have taken place before this is published.

A Village Variety Show will follow on 24th January with lots of local talent, something not to be missed.

A Pudding Evening planned for next March will hopefully bring the fund raising to a close.

Thorncombe Gardening Club. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11th December when Mrs. Lyn Spencer-Mills will talk on "A Garden for Retirement". The programme for the next year will then be available. Members' annual subscription £5, visitors £2.

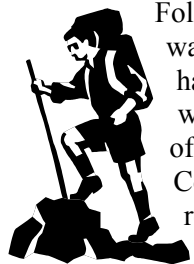
Thorncombe Cinema Club. The next presentation at 7.30pm on 4th December will be "Evelyn" with Pierce Brosnan. This is a tale of a father's struggle to retrieve his children from the authorities in Ireland after the death of his wife. Non-members £4.50.

The Art of Craft. This touring visual arts exhibition put on by Artsreach will be on shown in the hall on 27th and 28th March between 10.30 and 4.30pm.

Vivienne Dalziel



WINSHAM WALKERS



Following a period of heavy rain the walk on 6th November was made on hard surfaces to avoid any mud. Ten walkers accompanied by four dogs set off from The Bell and walked via Colham Lane to Hollowells. The route followed the bridleway to Chalkway and then left up the lane before turning right onto the footpath that passes through Lue and Midnell Farms in succession to join the lane from the A30. We returned by way of the Crewkerne Hill to Fore Street and into the village.

Please note that there will not be a walk during December. It is hoped that the next walk will be on Saturday, 3rd January 2004. Watch out for the posters.

For further details contact Peter Pye, 01460 30751.



SHOEBOX APPEAL

I was able to hand over 53 Shoeboxes from Thorncombe, Holditch and Winsham to the driver collecting them. This was a fantastic result so can I say a very big and sincere thank you to everyone for taking part.

I have already been given a supply of shoeboxes for next year so, if you would like one early, please give me a ring!

Again, on behalf of the little ones, thank you and God bless you all.

Margaret Chivers



COMPOST CORNER

Well, last one for 2003. December's a month in which, if you totally neglect your garden, it won't make a scrap of difference. Nothing is going to grow and there shouldn't be much more to fall from the sparse looking branches only drips. It's at last started to rain so will continue, I'm sure, for the best part of winter.

December is the time to order from the catalogues, as late ordering will often prove disappointing. Why not spend some time during December looking through the falsely coloured presentations of products that are grown in conditions far



removed from your back garden, and portrayed using all the technology and trickery available? Or you could always go out and do the Christmas shopping. No?

The plant for the month is going to be the holly tree. I toyed with nuts, the good old Christmas tree, poinsettia, and mistletoe. At least I have a list for the next 4 December issues. I'm already looking forward to boring you all about the mistletoe, a parasitic plant that is rather particular about its host. Still more on that in future editions. The holly, oh, and "the Ivy," there's number 5. How easily I wander off track!

Ilex aquifolium is the botanical name for a genus of over 300 species. The only thing they all have in common is that they produce small five petaled flowers in either white or pale green. Its is best to have both male and female hollies close to each other for successful pollination and a good crop of berries. You need to be alert when choosing sexes because "Golden King" is a female plant and "Golden Queen" male, perhaps the gardeners of yester year were more liberated, open minded folk than we were led to believe! Within the holly genus there is every possible plant form, tender or hardy, a huge variance in height from 4ft to 30 ft and spreads of equal differences. Leaves range from smooth to very prickly/spiney and plain deep green to yellow or white edged. Berries also differ from black to deep red to light yellow. Species such as J C van Tol and *Pyramidalis* will produce berries without a male tree being in the neighbourhood. So, if you only have room for one tree and your neighbour doesn't have a holly, then one of these might be for you.

This time of year is great for moving and planting trees and bushes, though better established hollies don't re-establish themselves well. That's what the book says. I've found that, if I can physically get it out of the ground, then it will take hold again.

Pruning can also be done. If you have variegated shrubs/trees in the garden and notice the odd sprig of plain colour then remove it as close to the main stem as possible and destroy it. If you don't, it may well revert the whole plant back to a single colour leaf.

If you have a cut tree for Christmas this year, it is best to remove an inch or two of trunk just up from the initial amputation prior to dragging through the back door. Place it in a bucket or suitable stand, suitable being one that will allow you to keep the base in water. The tree might last the whole of the festive period without dropping its needles. Tree needles in your socks are such a nuisance.

I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas. Just remember when someone's holding mistletoe over your head I will be writing about it no doubt next year. You now have more than one reason to smile or shriek.

Stephen Rowsell



THORNCOMBE RAIL ACTIVITIES CLUB

The speaker at the last meeting of the Thorncombe Rail Activities Club was to have been David Barrie to talk about the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway but unfortunately he was unable to come at the last minute.

Instead one of our members came to the rescue with some films about the Rack Railways of Switzerland. Members were treated to some very scenic views of various mountain railways in the Swiss Alps as well as a description of how the rack railways work.

Members were reminded that the next meeting would be on Wednesday December the 10th when there will be a showing of Heritage Railway Films. The meeting begins as usual at 7.30pm in Thorncombe Village Hall.

Any inquiries please telephone Michael Sheasby on 01460 30474.

Model Railway Report

On Saturday November the 8th Thorncombe Rail Activities Club held its first Model Railway Exhibition in aid of the Thorncombe Village Hall Car Park Fund.

The Club played host to eleven model railway layouts which, as well as those from Thorncombe, came from Bridport, Weymouth, Axminster and Shepton Mallet.

Mr Michael Pritchard, Managing Director of Peco's of Beer opened the exhibition.

All the layouts on display were a high standard with lots of individual detail, but the prize for the best layout in show, voted for by the paying members of

the public, was won by Phil Dawling's "Dawlington".

Trade stands were present to enable modellers to purchase both new and second-hand equipment for their models.

We are very grateful to Buffers Model Shop from Axminster for their generous sponsorship of the event, which enabled the club to donate £200 to the village hall fund.



ST HELENA APPEAL

On October 14th we delivered to Portland docks 36 boxes of donated goods. Who could have foreseen, a week later, I would be waiting on Crewkerne station to welcome Bobby Robertson! He wasn't sure until the last moment whether time would allow him to travel down to see us. He had attended a conference on "Self-determination" in Bangladesh; this involved a very convoluted journey and a three-month absence from St Helena and his wife Dulcie.



He wanted to come to the village and meet as many people from the area as possible. His determination paid off! In the 48 hour duration of his visit we endeavoured to make this possible and a hastily arranged 'meet and greet' drinks party on the first evening and a convivial lunch the following day were enjoyed by all who were able to attend. My grateful thanks go to everyone, family, friends and neighbours who were galvanised into midweek socialising with hardly any notice.

Bobby answered all the questions fired at him and won over many by his wit and charm. His soft Scottish accent, which he hasn't lost over years in St Helena, wasn't ideal for the hard of hearing! His wife Dulcie is coming to England next year to visit their family, so maybe we will be able to meet her too. It was a pleasure to meet Bobby and to hear first hand that all your donations, which are shipped to St Helena, are used and greatly appreciated by the islanders.

After Christmas we will be collecting with renewed zeal for a March shipping date.

Thank you all for your support this year.

A happy Christmas season to you all. *George & Jilly*

STOP PRESS – We have today (Monday 17th) received a letter from Bobby thanking everyone for their kindness during his stay. He said he felt a special love and friendship emanating from everyone he met from the villages. *JH*



ST MARY'S THORNCOMBE – 'The Talents' Fundraising

Congratulations to everyone who initiated their own 'Talents' and to everyone who supported them in their individual efforts. Thank you all very much!

Having preached on the parable of 'The Talents' earlier in the year, our Team Rector, the Rev. Stephen Kivett will announce the total raised, at the 10.30am. Service on Sunday 7th December, when he will preach his final sermon at Thorncombe, prior to moving to Taunton in the New Year.

At the time of writing there are still a few returns to be made. Richard Delderfield, the P.C.C. Treasurer, will be very pleased to hear from you no later than the 5th December. (01460 30916.) *RD*



HOLDITCH HALL

At our recent whist drive and auction in aid of the Axminster and Chard hospitals a total of £650.50 was raised. This amount will be divided between the two hospitals.

Many thanks to our long-standing auctioneer Bert. To all the people who gave so generously and those who came to purchase, thank you all.

Holditch Hall Cttee.



CRICKET ST THOMAS PARISH MEETING

The annual parish meeting took place on 17th October, 2003 at Cricket House by kind permission of Warner Hotels.

Some 30 residents attended and the guests were Stella Abbey and David Gordon.

John Taylor was elected chairman and Roger Tadema vice chairman and clerk.

Bob Cook raised the matter of white lines being painted on the road at Westport and the dairy entrance to alert drivers as to the road priorities. Stephen Taylor reported on the on-going application for three wind turbines, which is still under discussion by the Ministry of Defence. It was agreed to lock the London Lodge back drive at night for added security.

There will be two parish meetings a year unless any requests are made for special meetings to be called;

these would be announced in the joint parish magazine. Warner's kindly agreed to make the old pay box on the car park available as the parish notice board and in future all parish information will be left in it for residents to see. A full list of all parish residents and all estate residents is being prepared and will be circulated to all parties.

Notice - Cricket St Thomas Parish and the Parochial Church Council invite all residents to the village Christmas Carol Service at 6pm on Sunday, 21st December, 2003. After the service Warner's Hotels have kindly invited everyone to drinks and mince pies at Cricket House.



USED STAMPS

In reply to a request for an outlet for used stamps in last month's magazine, I have been given 3 outlets. They are Guide Dogs for the Blind – box in St Mary's Church. Joseph Weld Hospice, Dorchester – Erica Dunsmore 01297 678496 and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, PO Box 1, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 2YJ.



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – BIRDSMOORGATE BRANCH

The annual remembrance service was held at St Mary's and as ever was a moving tribute to those who gave their lives and their youth in war. The standard was paraded and laid on the altar as the service commenced. While solemn music played members of the congregation moved forward removing their poppies from lapels to place in the circular wreath, which at the end of the church service was laid on the village memorial.

A contingent of the branch, along with the standard bearer, then proceeded to Marshwood War Memorial where prayers of exhortation and two minute's silence were observed and the laying of a wreath took place.

Blackdown Church have requested that, next year, we attend a special service of remembrance to re-install a plaque to replace the original which was consumed in a fire in the church some years ago. Our local historian Ron Farley and others have researched and found the names of several men who lost their lives in World War 1 and World War 11. If anyone has names or information on this subject, the Blackdown Churchwardens or Mr Farley would be most grateful to hear from you.

Ron Chiverton

The total amount collected for this year's poppy appeal was £1,454.18. We would like to thank the collectors and those who donated so generously.

Rosemary Chiverton



DORSET COUNTRY CARS

Can you spare some time to drive people on necessary trips to the doctor, dentist, optician or chiropodist etc.? Dorset Country Cars are looking for some more drivers to ease the load. We don't get a lot of call for our services but at the moment our six drivers come from four households. So if one couple is away or, as has lately happened, two couples are on holiday at the same time, we can be a little pushed to help everyone out. If you would like to help, please contact Meg Terrett for more details-01460 30464.



EDIE JONES

Unbelievably it will be a year on December 17th since we, as a community, lost 'our Edie.'

Edie Jones touched so many of our lives. We miss her and feel her loss deeply. Those who knew her always will, not least because those of us left behind have to work twice as hard! She was involved in so many areas of village life. Her enthusiasm and zest for living were infectious. She and Geoff enjoyed eight years of shared love and fun before his untimely death.

Edie's last kindness to me was last December on our shopping outing to Plymouth. While waiting for the coach to come home Edie treated me to a cup of tea. I said I'd buy her one when we next went somewhere. I was never to get the chance to repay that small gesture, but I'll never stop wishing I could.

Jilly



THORNCOMBE CHOIR

Once again the plea goes out. Can you sing? Can you read music? Have you ever sat in church and thought, "I like singing hymns"? Why not join our choir? I know that children are a bit daunted by unfamiliar hymns, schools have a different repertoire these days but, if you could see the enthusiasm of our three new choristers as they learn new things, you would be inspired to join them.

We meet on Thursday evenings at 6.30pm in the church and our services are at 10.30 on Sunday morning.

I hope to take the choir carol singing around the village on MONDAY, 22ND DECEMBER AT 6.30PM. We would be glad of anybody who would like to join us. We all know the old familiar carols so there is nothing to learn. See you then! *Meg*



de BOINOD'S AU REVOIR

Just a brief note to wish parishioners and readers a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

We left Laymore thinking we were moving beyond Yeovil, only to end up camping out at some dear friends' abode. We hope to be renting for six months near to Chardstock, hence 'au revoir' and not 'adieu.'

I'd like also to wish Jill all the best as she retires as editor. I thoroughly enjoyed working with her on the magazine. *VdeB*

Thank you Virginia. What shall I do with my time?

Jill



A big thank you to all our customers for their generosity again this past year. We have raised over £500 for various village causes plus over £700 for the Air Ambulance, which included the 5p bottle.

There was £121 in the bottle and £60 was given as a prize for guessing correctly how much was actually in it. The second bottle has been started and is filling up nicely!

Our Italian night on 24th October was a great success. 35 diners enjoyed spaghetti bolognese followed by various desserts and coffee. Our next evening for traditional Christmas dinner on 5th December, is fully booked but, because of the high interest, we are repeating the same on Friday, 12th December. Bookings only!

On Christmas Day we will be open from 12noon to 2pm. All opening hours over the Christmas and New Year period will be displayed.

New Year's Eve will be ticket only again, £5 per person for buffet and entertainment. A limited number of tickets will be available, so don't leave it too long and be disappointed. Tickets will be on sale at the beginning of December at the pub.

Wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year from all at The Bell.



NEW YEAR'S EVE CEILIDH- THORNCOMBE



Everyone is invited to a Ceilidh on New Year's Eve, where we will be having a taste of Dorset and Scotland in the music, dances and food at the village hall.

Sheila, June and Gwen, who provided such a lovely meal for the summer barn dance, are providing supper, but please bring your own favourite drink, if you wish. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available.

The Long Odds and Short Straws band will be playing with Olive calling. Do come and enjoy the music and supper and a chance to meet friends and neighbours even if you don't intend dancing.

We start at 8pm through to Auld Lang Syne at midnight, with a break for supper in the middle. Tickets are available in advance from Sheila, June, Gwen or Olive, from Rosemary and Brian at Middle Cottage, Chard Street, or phone 01460 30539. Adults £5, child £2 or family £12 (2 adults and children.) There will also be a raffle.

All profits will be shared between St Mary's Church and Thorncombe First Responders.

Please come and join us, kilts or smocks optional! Ticket numbers are limited so please book early.

OM



DOG FOULING ALERT

Sadly there has been an increase of dog fouling in Winsham, including the play areas of the upper and lower recreation grounds. Geoff Hollis, Area West Dog Warden, asks for this to be made public.

Please remember that irresponsible dog owners, if caught, can be fined up to £1,000. It is very difficult to report on your neighbours, but this is an important matter of public health. Most of us know that one young man in Winsham lost the sight of an eye a few years ago contracting toxocarosis.



by

You can report dog fouling incidents by telephoning 01460 260343. All calls are treated confidentially.

We have two dog bins in the village and it's not much trouble to take a plastic bag with you when you walk your dog. Most dog owners are responsible: this is a reminder. So, PLEASE CLEAR IT UP!

Stella Abbey on behalf of Geoff Hollis



THORNCOMBE W.I.



President, Mrs Julia Snellock opened the October meeting by leading members in a moment's silence in memory of Elsie Vickery and Lily Banks, two long serving members who had recently died.

The meeting welcomed Bob Hall who reminisced about his years as a meter reader for S.W.E.B. This aspect of his life, which had occupied some twenty years of his working life, found him caught up in many strange, difficult and embarrassing situations. However, his great sense of the ridiculous and his capacity for getting on with people had made sure that he always saw the funny side of life, and his experiences were very entertaining.

Margaret Retter won flower of the month and the competition for a paper knife was won by Rosemary MacCrimmon.

On Friday 31st October the W.I. hosted a dinner for over eighty people at the Village Hall to help raise funds for the re-surfacing of the car park. After an excellent four-course meal the speaker, Paul Atterbury, entertained guests with his experiences as an expert on the Antiques Roadshow.

The December meeting will be a Christmas dinner for members at the Golden Fleece and in January we will meet at the Sport's Club for our annual skittles get-together with our husbands and friends. MT



WINSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

This year Winsham School is taking part in a Healthy School initiative. Our aim is to make the school and its immediate environment a healthier, more pleasant place for everybody, pupils and staff alike. To this end we are working on several projects.



The health of the children will be targeted in our weekly early morning run, followed by breakfast at school. Although only in its early days, the signs are good for this becoming a popular mid-week event. We are continuing to receive a weekly donation of fruit from Stokes the greengrocers in Chard and will be promoting fruit and vegetable consumption at break and lunchtimes.

On the environmental side we have already adopted one of the flowerbeds in the churchyard and will be hoping to keep it looking good for years to come. Thanks to a grant from Somerset County Council we will soon be planting three fruit trees in a corner of

the school field, and look forward to harvesting our crop in a few year's time.

Staff will be updating policies and schemes of work for "Personal Health, Social and Citizenship Education." We are planning sessions for parents and staff to inform them about drugs and their misuse.

Staff will not be neglected as they can choose their special "treat." Suggestions so far have ranged from hammocks in the staff room to an ironing service or reflexology!

It should be an interesting year,



CHURCH & BRASS CLEANING – ST MARY'S

We have a wonderful team of ladies who undertake this work, a month's duty through the year. I am hoping for new names to put on the list in order that those who do two months in the year may be relieved of one month. (Males may apply!)

We receive much appreciation from both congregation and visitors – the work is noticed. Please volunteer.

I am also looking for new names to add to the reader's list. Please help. *June Ede – 01460 30239*



As we approach Christmas the pre-school is doing better than we expected with five full time children.

Julie Rowsell has left as our supervisor and we wish her well in the future. Sharon Cox has taken on the position and at the time of writing we are having our Ofsted inspection.

Our annual Christmas bingo will take place on Saturday December 6th in the Jubilee Hall. Doors open at 7pm and eyes down at 7.30pm.

The pre-school will open for three days from January 2004, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Toddlers are very welcome on each day.

Thank you all for your continued support. *NS*



WINSHAM WOMEN'S ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Our October meeting was well attended and plans were discussed for the Remembrance Service. The legion conference will be held at Weston-super-Mare in November when some of our members will attend.

Jilly Hobbs will carry the standard. The branch, which has been existence for 40 years, will receive a certificate at the conference for this achievement.

Our speaker, Miss Mosscrop, gave a very interesting talk together with slides, of her trek over the Atlas Mountains.



At our A.G.M. on 10th November the Exultation was said and, during the silence, members were asked to remember Alan Spurdle who died recently. Alan did so much for the branch. Our prayers were asked for Jean our secretary at this sad time.

Mrs Rose, our Area Poppy Organiser, presented awards to some long serving poppy collectors: Mrs Jean Spurdle - 30 years, Mrs A Rose and Mrs Jill Stone - 25 years, Mrs Margaret Long - 15 years and The Bell Inn - 10 years.

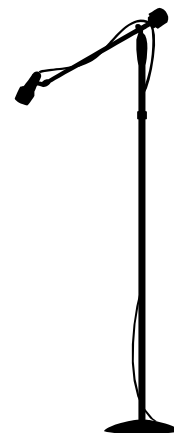
Mrs Spurdle gave her report on the year's activities. Mrs Tierney reported a healthy bank balance having received £70 from The Bell Inn from their lottery. Donations had been made to several Legion homes. Thanks were extended to Mrs Long and Mrs Hobbs for clearing around the war memorial before the remembrance service, to Mr G Crowden and to Mrs Margaret Tett for playing the 'Last Post' at the memorial. *MF*



OH TO HEAR!

All people that do Church attend
To hear God's word – to sins amend.
Oh just to hear His word would be
So very satisfactory.

All people with a hearing aid,
Turn up the sound – don't be afraid
To bless those folk with voices clear
Who make it possible to hear.



Hint for Readers - SPEAK TWICE AS LOUD AND HALF THE SPEED. *June*



MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription of the magazine is to remain at the same price for next year – 35p per copy.

Please have your subscription ready for collection at the end of December. £4.20 for 2004. Many thanks.



You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE LATE ELSIE MAY VICKERY
(continuing her memories)

I have always been interested in village activities. Pubs, I was told by my father, was no fit place for a young lady. But after I was married Bert, friends and myself used to decorate our tractor and trailer, put our old settle and piano on board and go carol singing all around the district we visited may public houses on the way collecting for the Children's Society.

I have always enjoyed the cold weather and have been a great fresh air fan. I remember having a cup of water frozen solid beside my bedside, the drought of 1976, the gales in 1987. In 1964 we had the terrible freeze with snow to the tops of the hedges, this lasted for 13 weeks. Telephone wires were encased with ice and you could hear the branches of the trees crashing down with the weight of the ice and snow.

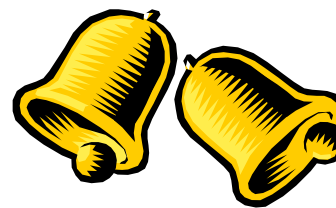
Without doubt the biggest change I have seen in my lifetime is from horsepower to mechanical power. This has made such a difference to farming and made farmers more isolated. Haymaking used to be a social occasion, with the children and families taking part. Today because of the machinery used no children are allowed in the fields.

Gypsies used to camp on Beaminster Down, which adjoined our farm. They used to cut hazel sticks from our hedges to make clothes pegs, and helped themselves to milk from our cows. If they were approached about it their answer was, 'Oh no sir, it was the hedgehogs, we saw um'. The odd swede or turnip went missing to.

About six weeks before Christmas we would all sit around a big table and prepare the fruits, etc., for the puddings. Big juicy raisins, peel to chop and big hunks of suet to shred or chop (no packet shredded suet then!) This was all mixed together with the eggs and flour and then we all had a stir. About 12 puddings were made. One big one for Christmas Day and one pudding for each of the family's birthday.

I have been involved in most of our village organisation. Mother's Union, W.I., Young Farmers, Young Wives and Holditch Village Hall committee where I have held the post of secretary of 37 years. I have had to give up many of these as I do not drive and have to rely on other people to give me lifts.

I think we were more disciplined in my younger days. I remember when we were courting I was expected to be indoors by 10 o'clock unless I had asked permission to go to a dance. One night when I was going to a dance I put on some lipstick and powder. When I came down I was told I couldn't go out until I had washed 'that muck' off my face. We really did respect our parents. Yes meant YES and no meant NO. But at least we knew where we stood.



May we wish all our
readers

A

Very Happy Christmas

And

A

Peaceful

New Year



