

Ashlands Meadow
Crewkerne



Dear Friends

Well what a hot time we all are having. As I write, the hottest day ever at Heathrow. Hot times too in church politics.

Just as the Reading affair began to peter out we get the U.S.of A. asserting its independence once again. What, you may well ask, is going on?

When I was teaching, we had a deputy head mistress who loved to read a passage at 6th form assembly, "A letter to my godson" which included this. "I hope he will grow up good and gay." This had the 6th form rolling in the aisles and she was too innocent ever to give up her favourite passage. Well over 50 years I have had some dealings with the issue of personal identity. I have counselled a priest who could not help falling for his churchwarden. I saw a man through a sex change because he/she wanted to live a moral life and realised she was in the wrong kit for this to be possible. I also came across deliberate perverts who chose and delighted in their practises. I know some are complete in themselves and need no partner. Some have a genetic make up, which means they cannot relate outside their own gender. Others have been traumatised so badly that normal/conventional lifestyle is impossible for them to contemplate.

Having said all this, I quite fail to see why Gays, to use their borrowed terminology of a beautiful word, cannot live as others - who are so called straight - do as celibates, who sublimate their sexual desires into other forms of creativity. I know also that many gay people over the course of history have enriched their societies by their creative and compassionate gifts, without self-indulgence. We also know that being queer has been harshly and unsympathetically treated by cruel laws in our society. It is quite right that these have been repealed. I also believe that a minority should not claim to be a majority, and while they should be recognised and welcomed into our midst they too have some recognising to do about what is driving their life style.

Were the church to have a special ministry to them, as we do for the blind and the dumb for example, then it would be appropriate and welcome for there to be a priesthood and episcopate able to fully comprehend and minister to their needs. We do need to accept them, such as they are, as full members of our communities. But their state is not as nature and our Creator originally designed for most of us to be. The church is being rushed and pushed before all circumstances have been examined and debated and a modern understanding has been formed. The ministry of women for instance took many careful years before a decision was finally achieved. Patience, love and deep understanding are required of us all right now.

I hope you have enjoyed the summer and have had a chance for rest and a holiday before the demands of autumn and winter close in on us.

David Savill



THANK YOU



Ernie and I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone in Thorncombe, Winsham, Chard and the surrounding areas for the many cards, letters and messages we received following Ernie's recent illness, also for the arrangement made to get me to and from the hospitals at Dorchester and Bournemouth, which I did appreciate so very much.

Your love, prayers and support are helping us through this difficult time, so may I say once again, sincerely, thank you and God bless you all.

Margaret Chivers



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.



THANK YOU

Keith and myself would like to thank everyone for their wonderful support over the last month since Keith has been diagnosed with lung cancer. We are confident that with the treatment Keith is receiving and the continued support from family, friends and everyone who knows us that we will continue to have a happy life for many years to come.

We would also like to thank you all for the cards and good wishes to ourselves and our daughter and her husband (Michelle and Steve Smith) after the birth of our first granddaughter, Molly Annabelle Felicity.

Thank you all. *Keith and Maureen Marsh*



LIFEBOAT DOOR-TO-DOOR COLLECTION

A great big thank you to everyone in Ammerham, Bridge, Cricket, Leigh, Whatley and Winsham for making the lifeboat collection a generous £289.57.

SW



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

Due to very un-seasonal weather – it poured with rain! - we regrettably had to cancel the butterfly survey scheduled for Saturday 26th July. Thank you to all who had offered help in any way. The cream tea provisions

were sold to make a £20 donation towards the Village Hall car park project.



Our next meeting is on Thursday 11th September at 7.30pm when Brian Edwards will give a talk on “Dorset Insects”. Brian is a representative of Dorset Wild Life Trust and Senior Conservation Officer Dorset County Council.

In support of local producers, we are to offer a selection of pure apple juices and local biscuits as an alternative to teas and coffees for refreshments at our meetings. Your comments would be much appreciated!

Unfortunately due to new work commitments, Trevor Burnham, our tree officer has stood down from our committee. We are very keen to hear from anyone with an interest in trees and a little time to devote to supervising the maintenance of the Trust’s trees around the village.

For further information contact the secretary 01460 30213. *RD*

Did you see.....?

As this note is written, the countryside is basking in days of warm sunshine unrivalled for many years. Butterflies, despite a succession of bad seasons, have appeared in extraordinary numbers and, although some have come from the continent, many are homebred and are showing, yet again, their remarkable powers of

recovery. The offspring of the hardier kinds (tortoiseshells) will in due course hibernate to reappear next spring. Our selection, mainly of peacocks, red admirals, tortoiseshells, painted ladies and commas, has been joined by the occasional fritillary and brimstone. Other insects also are benefiting from the good conditions, including moths and dragonflies.

Among the migrant birds, the swifts have already disappeared; not so their cousins the house martins who will produce at least a further brood, which with luck, will have gained sufficient strength by October for their long journey to Africa. *RM*



GARDEN PARTY FOR THE HOSPICE



Thank you to everyone who came to Hazelwood Farm and supported the garden party. Our shady trees and begged/borrowed sun umbrellas came into their own and a good time was had by all. The result was £650 towards the new unit in Yeovil which, we are told, takes in its first patients at the end of September. A wonderful achievement for the people of Somerset.

Roy and Janet Smart



I thought I would miss the deadline for the magazine as my computer didn't like the very hot weather and decided that, if it couldn't have cold drink, or whatever computers cool down with, it would just stop working. Switching off was the only option, and then when I switched on again it told me off for not exiting properly, and would I make sure I did it correctly in future! Having done this twice I rang up the expert and left a message to say my computer was -----, but when I tried again in the cool of the evening he or she decided it was cool enough to work.

My last article for the parish magazine was in June and I wrote about the European Agricultural Mid-Term Revue, with the possible effect on British agriculture and the countryside. We have now got to the stage where we will be attending meetings to hear the latest facts and figures and suggestions as to the best way forward for different farming systems. With the grain harvest well under way and the perfect weather for it,

it's rather sad that we are talking glibly about reducing home food production and buying it from abroad. Politics, not common sense, the order of the day.

I know I mustn't get involved with the GM debate in the parish magazine, but the technology can assist food production in countries that have extremes of climate and always have a problem feeding their own people.

Our old, but excellent, grain moisture meter went wrong, when we were half way through the barley harvest. Coming home, after dropping it off at the repair depot, I saw a gang hauling sheaves of wheat for thatching. A couple were loading the trailers, and one man unloading on to the rick, with two more making it. One of the disadvantages of modern farming is the lack of companionship when working, as we are mostly on our own with the radio for company.

Looking at this scene brought the fact home. I am lucky enough to have been part of that scenario, starting off by driving the horses and loads back to the farm from the field, as quite a small boy. To be truthful the horses took the load and me for, when I got into the rick-yard, there was someone to take over the reins. We stopped to eat our tea and the large tea urn brought out from the farmhouse held enough tea for everyone. Very often we had a trace horse to help pull the wagons in the field, as the wheels easily sank when heavily laden and then just one horse to take the load home.

One other thing happened when I was combining, which brought back memories of harvests past. The field nearly finished, a narrow strip left and then there was a rustling in the standing corn, keeping a few yards in front of the combine. I knew what it was, and thought back to a different scene. The binder had nearly finished cutting the field, workers and youngsters were watching and trying to catch the rabbits as they ran out. When we all saw the standing corn moving, keeping in front of the machine, then the anticipation heightened. I knew one or more would have to run out this week; we all knew one or more would have to run out years ago. How sad that now I was the only one to see.



MSH



THORNCOMBE NEPAL LINK

On Tuesday, 23rd September at 7.30pm we invite anyone from Thorncombe, who would like to come to Home Farm, Chilson to discuss the link with Ghalegaon and a possible visit to Nepal in Autumn

2004. We will show you a few recent slides of the village and also answer your questions.

Please let us know if you are coming or any ideas you may have to enrich and further this friendship link.

Claude & Elizabeth Rutter



GOD SPEAKING TO US, TODAY

I was looking through the July parish magazine before throwing it away, and took note of the clergyman's letter at the front and of the various religious 'quotes' inserted into spare corners (for which, many thanks Ed.) They all seemed to speak to me directly, and I expect many people will have had this kind of experience over the years.

David Savill's letter spoke of dark and painful days and of patient endurance when nothing seems to be happening. (I've had chronic M.E. related illness for 20 years, profoundly affecting my life.) I'm currently facing up to moving house, and am concerned about the future, and hoping it will all turn out to be for the best – and behold, there was a Patience Strong poem: "I'm looking in a new direction...I'm walking out into the sunshine..." Not knowing how I shall manage to find a suitable property, and how I shall cope with my first house removal, I read in another quote: "I am God...Today I will be handling all your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If you happen to have been delivered a situation which you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it." Very comforting! I just need to keep talking to God, with confidence. However, I am under pressure to put the house on the market, now, and it's a bit stressful! But in a little corner of the magazine was a quote from Matthew 11.28: "Let Jesus in – when Jesus comes into your life he brings the calmness of Heaven."

It is amazingly supportive to have this kind of input on a daily basis, and it's available with a few paragraphs written for every day. It covers all manner of things. For example: August 2nd: "If you want to change your life, you have to change your thinking. Let God transform you. Change always starts in your mind. The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act."

July 6th: "50 tips for marriage. (1) Start each day with a kiss. (14) Send a card for no reason. (27) Show respect. (34) Set up a romantic getaway. (50) Pray for each other daily."

June 24th: "Learn to recognize your dominant gift and build your life around it. Uncommon people are simply common people who recognize their dominant gift and put it to work."

This publication has been around only a few years, but apparently is now reaching one in every 60 people in this country, which says a lot for it.

If you would like to experience one of these booklets, each covering 3 months, please pick one up from the supply in St Stephen's church, Winsham or phone 0845 6040401 for a free copy. *AM*



VILLAGE FETE IN AID OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

St Mary's Fundraising Committee would like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to every one who so generously supported the Village Fete – over 40 helpers came forward on the day to run stalls, make teas, sell raffle tickets, organise races and the huge number of other jobs to make the day such a success. Well over 300 villagers and visitors attended the afternoon of fun and entertainment – an extra thank you to Long Odds & Short Straws and Bryony Growdon for the music and singing.



We were particularly appreciative of the many donated raffle prizes – as there were so many, a few have been held back for future church fundraising events.

A great day of community fun and fund raising donated the wonderful sum of £1243.34 to St Mary's Church Funds. Well done to you all! *RD*



ST. STEPHEN'S GIFT DAY

It is three years since St. Stephen's held a Gift Day and once again your Parochial Church Council is appealing to all Winsham residents to help meet our financial commitments.

For the majority, church finance is hardly an interesting subject I know, and there is a deal of misunderstanding and indeed ignorance as to exactly what happens to money donated. Church members are the mainstay of our income, giving generously throughout the year in a planned manner via weekly envelopes or by standing order, but the number of donors is slowly decreasing and each year sees some old friends departing this life or moving from the village.

Our main commitment is to pay our Parish Share (the Common Fund) out of which will be paid clergy stipends or salaries, pension contributions and clergy housing. Clergy pensions, just as in the world of commerce, are proving an ever increasing burden on

church finances and are due to increase dramatically over the next two or three years. We are also warned that our insurance premium is due for a hefty rise, partly due to the increased cost of the Employer's liability element of our policy.

This all sounds very doom and gloomy, but by prudent management of our parish finances, we will be able to meet the parish share commitment. But-and it's a big but - it does not leave much for all the other expenses that arise. Expenses, just like your own household budget, include heating and lighting, repairs and renewals, supplies, stationery etc. The list sometimes seems endless and all of it has to be found from our own resources. We do not receive any income from a central source.

So, why a Gift Day?

Church members are in the minority, not just in Winsham, and it is a large burden for a small number of regular supporters to bear.



This is your opportunity to show that you care about the oldest building in the village and what it represents and offers.

We will be door dropping further details nearer the day itself, including how you can increase the value of your donation by 28% at no cost to yourself by using our Gift Aid envelope.

GIFT DAY 2003 IS ON SATURDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER.

RCB – PCC

Treasurer



Cricket St Thomas, along with the rest of England, has sizzled and simmered under searing record high temperatures. The maize fields are already tall and ripe to bursting point, the smell of sweet hay fills the blistering air, and with tropical misty mornings and steamy, balmy nights, echoing to the sound of screeching monkeys and howling leopards, it felt more like Africa than England.

July commenced in a truly spectacular and indeed regal way. HRH the Prince of Wales officially opened the new creamery at Lubborn Cheese. Over 160 guests attended the opening, including buyers, local farmers and suppliers. The Prince of Wales flew into Cricket St Thomas by helicopter and said, "Cricket St Thomas, what a wonderful name. It's made it worth coming just to say that I've been here." I think all who live here would agree!

During one magical evening, Heartbreak Productions enthralled a local audience with an amazing production of A Midsummer's Night Dream. The dynamic cast managed to bewitch us all against the breathtaking backdrop of the lake and wood behind Cricket house. The evening was in aid of Marie Curie and was a great success.

The wildlife park has also had a busy summer, with huge numbers of visitors enjoying the cool sanctuary of Lemur Wood, admiring the rapidly growing leopard cubs, and watching the new baby camel learn to walk on very shaky legs. Stars from the Moscow circus have been busy every Wednesday throughout the holidays, entertaining visitors with clowns, jugglers and a fire eater (imagine how hot he must get!)



Finally, for those of you with gastronomic inclinations, there will be a lunch in aid of Cancer Research in November of this year. The lunch will be held in the dining room of Cricket House; the head chef from the Ritz will give a cookery demonstration and prepare a delectable feast. Tickets, with all money going to cancer research, will be £45 per head. For more information please contact me on 01460 30775. *SV*



NSPCC – LOCAL GROUP

We are looking for new members to join our friendly group. We meet regularly to have coffee and a chat, whilst organising activities to raise money to make a real difference to the people our charity helps.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's aim is to end cruelty to children. Thanks to continued support from you, the NSPCC is able to provide a range of services and education programmes.

If you would like to join us or find out more, please contact Eleanor Pack, Local NSPCC Co-ordinator on 01823 346346 or e-mail: epack@nspcc.org.uk



WINSHAM VILLAGE SHOP



By the time you read this, we will be approaching our first anniversary of trading. It has been a hectic, but successful year, and with your support we will be able to build on that success for a confident future. Many thanks once again to all who support us, not only by shopping with us but also by the purchase of shares or bonds, and of

course to our faithful band of volunteers. We are still able to sell shares/bonds. If anyone would like to do this, or if you know of anyone who would, just leave a name and address in the shop and I will follow the matter up.

A wandering comma (punctuation not a butterfly) rather altered the sense of what I wrote last month. What I said was that turnover had increased by £1000 a week since we started. The errant comma made it seem that turnover was only £1000. In fact it is over £3000 a week.

We hope to have resolved the bakery problem. From September our suppliers will be County Bakery who were originally based in Sherborne but have recently expanded and moved. They carry a wide range of bakery, including sponge cakes and quiches, and we hope to manage the transition without too much hassle. One bread they do not seem to supply is oat bread, which has proved very popular since we introduced it last year. Perhaps we will be able to persuade them to take it on. It also seems that Heritage, our previous bakers, was the last outpost of the custard tart, but here again we may be able to persuade County to supply these. The principal down side is that County's prices are higher. We hope to keep the impact of this to a minimum in the charges to you, but inevitably there will be some rises.

Bob Elkin in the Post office is now able to top up mobile phone charge cards. *Robert Shearer*



ST MARY'S FUNDRAISING APPEAL

The Village Fete, 'packed away' for another year, was a wonderful demonstration of the community spirit for which Thorncombe can be justifiably proud.

Our next fund-raiser, again with fun in mind, is to be an **AUCTION OF PROMISES**. This will be held on the evening of **Friday 24th October 2003** and will be part of a 'Cheese and Wine' social evening in the Village Hall.

This is an event for all, but we need your support now so that we can prepare and publish the auction lots by the end of September.

We ask you to make **anonymous promises** that we can auction, with the proceeds going to St. Mary's Church.

What sort of promises? – Anything! It could be: four hours of gardening, five hours of car washing, bake a cake a week for a month, two hours spring cleaning, wash your car for you/once/twice etc., give you ten hours computer training, four hours of babysitting,

paint you a picture, cut your hair, give you a beauty makeover, cook dinner for four and so on!

The list is endless! – All we need now is the detail of your promise that you wish to have auctioned. The buyer will not know who has made the promise until the lot is purchased.

Please tell your friends about this and all join in. They may not read the parish magazine.

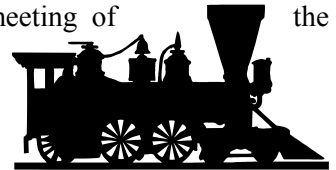
Please contact us as soon as possible (21st September latest), as we need time to prepare and publish a catalogue that will be for sale early in October.

Richard Delderfield 22 Tansee Hill. Tel.30916.
Bunny Snellock 30 Tansee Hill. Tel. 30135



THORNCOMBE RAIL ACTIVITIES CLUB

The speaker at the last meeting of the Club was Martin Dean who gave an interesting talk entitled "Oh Mr. Porter, the Basingstoke and Alton Light Railway, the line that would not die."



Martin's illustrated talk covered the comparatively short life of the line, but in that time a lot happened. It was built with the idea that it would become a through route to Portsmouth but the traffic envisaged never materialized and it remained all its life a quiet rural branch line. During its life it had the unusual event that, during the First World War, the government requisitioned track from the railway companies for use in France. It was decided to close this line and lift the track for most of the branch's length, relaying it again, due to local pressure, in the early 1920's on the understanding that, if it was not commercially successful within ten years, it would be closed again.

Members were reminded that the next meeting would be on Wednesday September 17th when one of our members, Jim Thomas will be giving an illustrated talk about "A Personal Nostalgic Journey". The meeting begins as usual at 7.30pm in Thorncombe Village Hall.

Any inquiries please telephone Richard Holt on 01460 30428.



ST HELENA APPEAL



Off to Portland docks again on 29th July with 35 boxes and one knitting machine. Your gifts this time also included a video player, music centre, typewriter, cassette player, many cassettes to listen to and videos to watch. Lots of lovely

clothes, shoes, books, kitchen equipment and cutlery, bedding, curtains and toys. Well done everyone.

I have spoken to Dulcie Robertson (Bobbie's wife) on the phone and have again been assured that absolutely everything we send is made good use of. The people we help are all extremely grateful.

Inside each box we put the date it is packed and the phrase 'packed with love from Winsham.' I think this is especially true when you donate things in memory of loved ones.

Thank you so much everybody for remembering our "neighbours" on this unbelievably remote island in the South Atlantic.

The last shipment this year is in October, the last chance to send gifts of toys or presents for Christmas. Only about one third of children get a 'bought' present. Can you help?

Jilly & George Hobbs - 30621



THORNCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

The Council is enjoying a month free of meetings during August; however, there are a few areas to bring to your attention.

These items were mentioned last month. There is going to be a review of the Mobile Library Service. This is a major review and the council wants to hear your views; they will be very important to the future of this service. If you have not made any comments or suggestions yet, then please pass them onto Cllr. Mary Marsh (01460 30139) who will be co-ordinating this project. Cllr. Brierley reported at the last meeting that he is currently working with the highways department to set up a repairs programme for potholes etc within your area. He is meeting with local representatives within his ward to get details of the repairs needed. Cllr. Mangles will be showing Cllr. Brierley the problems in Thorncombe. If you know of a problem area, then please report to Cllr. Mangles, (01460 220235) who can then pass this information on.

As you may know, Thorncombe has been experiencing problems with responses to 999 calls. Most of you will be aware that, although you live in Dorset, you have a postcode TA20 ---(Somerset) except in a few cases where it is EX13 ---(Devon.) It is very important therefore that, when asked for your postcode by the operator, you should add '**Thorncombe, Dorset**'. This should ensure that your call is not re routed to Somerset or Devon. It is also better to use a landline where possible as mobile calls go via the nearest mast, which can sometimes delay matters.

If anyone wishes to have an item placed on the agenda, then please contact the Clerk, Lesley Barnes or the Chairman, Cllr. Rob Mangles at least seven days before the date of the next meeting. Date of next meeting: 2 September 2003 in Thorncombe Village Hall at 7.30pm.



HOLDITCH HALL

Holditch Hall Committee would like to thank everyone, the exhibitors, helpers and those who visited and supported the Flower Show on 9th August on such a hot day. Thank you.



RUSSICUM – ST MARY'S THORNCOMBE

Don't forget our much-loved singers are returning to St Mary's on Monday, 8th September at 8.30pm. A free performance but there will be a retiring collection in aid of the singers.



Refreshments will be on sale during the interval in aid of St Mary's Church. *MRM*



FAREWELL TO

Joe and Christine Russell, Orchard Lane, Thorncombe.

Jeff and Di Huntley, Holly and Charlie, 1, Knapp Cottage, High Street, Thorncombe, who have gone to live in France.

Welcome to Richard and Ann Hood, Orchard Lane, Thorncombe.



NEWS FROM THE WEBS

A host of new material has been added, as long promised, to the Winsham Web Museum www.winshamwebmuseum.co.uk

This includes a section on the Norman and Medieval periods of our history and how they might have impacted on the little settlement of Winsham. Stella Abbey contributed these, as she did the section on pre-Norman times. They are well worth a visit.

The architectural history of Charlton Cottage is also to be found in the Parish of Winsham Gallery. Written by a previous owner back in the 1980's it was passed

to the Web Museum by Jacqui and Steve Weller and is a fascinating account, with pictures, of how a house adapts over the centuries to meet changing circumstances. Bearing in mind when the history was written, it pre-dates the idea of 'The House Detectives' on TV by some ten to fifteen years.

The Book of the Axe also features with the section on Winsham featured in full, complete with footnotes and some lovely illustrations. It is a fascinating read and it is reproduced simply because copies of the book are now difficult to find, and when one does appear, very expensive, and out of the financial reach of many. It is an important record of Winsham in the mid-nineteenth century, and contains much information about earlier times in the parish.

All the above can be easily located by going to the 'What's New' section, where you will find links.

Much nearer to us in terms of the time line are the reminiscences that we have been receiving, and the entries in the guest book. Go and look at them now. Some may be from people you know. If you want to contact them, let me know. It may be possible.

At long last my attempts to get to grips with the problems that the worldwide web present to a novice are beginning to pay off. Not quite so many things seem to be going wrong. However, I have enrolled at Yeovil College for a 16-week course on web site management and design. Bob Osborne, who runs the course, and who set up the museum web site originally, assures me that, once I have completed it, all the problems I have experienced on the museum site will be a thing of the past. Well, if you believe that, you will believe anything!

Still, things should get better, which, in turn, should result in some improvement in the appearance of the Parish Web Site. I am very conscious that it has a distinctly 'homespun' appearance in parts. Even so it contains a lot of important information about what is going on in the parish, so please visit it frequently, otherwise you might miss something! Remember – www.winsham.org.uk JSS



THORNCOMBE GARDEN SOCIETY

Come to a meeting in the Village Hall on September 25th at 7.30pm if you are interested in gardens, garden visits and talks. If enough people are interested we can form a group, meeting perhaps bi-monthly in the winter for talks, and in the summer for visits to gardens, swapping plants etc. Come and tell us what you would like to do.

Contact – Vivienne on 30250 or Pauline on 30428 or turn up on Sept 25th. PH

THORNCOMBE W.I.



We met in July to hear Keith Morton talk about his "40 years in the Media." Starting off in Yorkshire on the weekly papers he progressed to the Yorkshire Post and thence to the Nationals and BBC radio and television. He travelled widely covering the news and told many anecdotes both amusing and horrific, of people and places he had come across. He now lives a quiet life restoring vintage cars as a hobby.

The September meeting is a special invitation meeting. Commander Richard Seymour will talk about "Yeovilton: Past, Present and Future." He would like to see as many gentlemen as possible in his audience, so if you have an interest in naval aeronautics, please come along on Tuesday September 9th at 7.30pm. The competition is for a Tie Pin.

We hope to hold a fund raising dinner in the autumn in support of the village hall car park refurbishment. Our guest speaker will be Paul Atterbury of Antiques Roadshow fame. Watch this space for further details.

The winner of the July competition was Gwen Warren; Lily Banks won flower of the month. MT



SPONSORED BIKE RIDE AND WALK

This will take place on Saturday, 13th September. Raise money for your own church or chapel and for the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels.

Proceeds are divided equally between your church or chapel and the 'Friends'. Cycle or walk, choose your own route, to as many churches and chapels as you wish. In Somerset the Bike Ride has raised £146,000 since it was started in 1996.

How does it work? Cyclists, walkers and church monitors find sponsors who will either pay an agreed sum per church visited or a lump sum for participation. Church monitors (those who do duty in churches and chapels) should use the sponsorship form, appropriately amended.

Sponsorship forms will be available in the churches or from Mary Rose Mangles 01460 220235.



TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME – God gives us just enough light to see the next step, and that's all we need. Psalm 27:1

ST STEPHEN'S CHARITY PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH

At our recent ploughman's lunch we raised £182 for the Chard Club for the Blind. We would like to thank everyone who supported us, especially on such a very hot day. Thank you. *JMS*



THORNCOMBE FIRST RESPONDERS

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the unveiling of our new vehicle, when it was announced that we had been awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award. Many, many thanks must go to Ernie Smith for all the hard work and effort that he put in to sponsor this award. As we write this, we have just received the certificate and trophy from the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset at his home in Cerne Abbas and wonder if anyone has any bright ideas about how these can be displayed for the village.

We have received 4 emergency calls this month (July); sometimes a 999 call gets through to West Country instead of Dorset Ambulance, in which case we are not contacted. If you have made a 999 call and we have not arrived after about 5 minutes, please call us direct (our mobile number is given in the back of the magazine).



THORNCOMBE SWIMMING POOL



It was a beautiful afternoon for our cream teas and also very successful as we raised £481.26.

May we say a very big thank you to Brian and June Ball, Colin and Margaret Baylis and Betty Quick for allowing us to use their lovely front gardens and for all the help they gave us. Also thank you to our extra helpers, Jayne Martin, Mary Hawker, Mrs Banks and Betty Cox. For those who gave donations of money and goods to sell and to all those who came to support us, thank you.

Due to this wonderful hot weather we have, for the first time ever, sold out of swimming pool keys.

WH



NEWSLETTER FROM DR LOUISE CROSSLEY

Many of the older residents of Winsham will know Barbara Shrubshall who lived for many years in Back Street. Now in her nineties she lives in a residential home in Chard. Her daughter, Louise, who lived in

Winsham as a child, is now an Australian citizen, and is station head of the Australian Antarctic Research Station on Macquarie Island. She is an internationally respected ecologist and expert on the Antarctic.

The newsletter gives a fascinating and lively account of life in Antarctica, where a ship arrives about twice a year, if it is not delayed by pack ice, and where twice a day, when the satellite goes over, you can 'phone your mother on your mobile, or she can 'phone you!

If you would like to know more about the research project after reading her newsletter try the web site – www.aad.gov.au

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We've been here over two months already! We had a bit of weather last weekend. In fact, it was probably a 100 year storm, with NW winds of 60-70 knots for about 8 hours gusting over 90 knots, and 8-10 metre swells. The station is on an isthmus running N-S, in two sections: the main living area to the north, separated from the science, engineering, communications and met offices and workshops to the south, by a narrow, lower, area carrying no structures except the helipads. Early on Sunday morning, we think, coinciding with a king tide, the seas broke continuously across the helipad area, and also slammed into a stores building on the western side of the main station. So when we awoke on Sunday morning, though it was hard to sleep from the howling of the wind, which drowned out any other sounds, we found a scene of devastation

The stores building was a complete wreck and one door had been blown into the centre of the main compound, thank God no one was around, instant decapitation. Other buildings had shifted bodily on their foundations; all the boatshed's sliding doors had blown away, the waste containers had been knocked open or over, so the place was strewn with garbage, as well as tonnes of rocks and sand from the beach. The main store was 30 cm deep in water; there was a huge erosion gully east of the helipads with broken water lines, electrical cables etc washing around in it. The fences and gates that are used to protect the helipads from seals, 18 large double farm gates on heavy steel posts, completely disappeared! We discovered later, a heavy steel boiler and digester, dating from the sealing era nearly a century ago, had been washed off its platform high above the beach.



My boss, at the Antarctic Division put out a press release describing the damage as 'superficial' but it

sure didn't look like it to us! However, a week's hard work by all 14 of us, with the help of some machinery and a lot of DI's (shovels) has cleared and repaired most of it, and last night we celebrated with a Storm Survival dinner.

Although we are a comparatively small group, there are many talented members, led by Clinton our chef. He produces consistently excellent meals, and every Saturday excels himself with imaginative and exquisitely prepared and presented menus worthy of a 5 star restaurant. He also initiates a theme night every month that always turns into a hilarious extravaganza. In fact, we were probably less aware of the storm last Saturday night because we were all immersed in celebrating the Grand Prix, with converted garbage bins as race cars in the mess, and our two quads (Honda 4 wheel motor bikes) as dragsters in the store. We have done Elvis - complete with hair made out of shredded paper spray-painted black, and Thunderbirds, featuring Brains, Virgil, and Lady Penelope. At Easter, we blew and decorated eggs, and then painted huge posters with primary colours from the guts of highlighter pens, a delightful regression to kindergarten finger painting! Clinton made us each a chocolate egg, which our ranger then hid around the station, giving us GPS references and obscure clues to help find them. Our doctor's grid reference was one digit and 15,000 km out, but even he eventually found his quarry! So with these spectacular productions already, who knows what midwinter, the highlight of the social calendar, will produce.

On a more prosaic note, we do actually do some work here, as well as party. Most of April was in fact spent in sorting out all the supplies that came in with us by ship and helicopter, both on station and in the field huts, of which we have five scattered around the island. It appears that last year's mob didn't do a stocktake before they reordered, one hut received over 2000 muesli bars, another none! Fieldwork is one of the joys of 'Mecca' despite the normally appalling weather, wind, rain, fog, snow, hail, almost no sunshine. For those of you unfamiliar with the island, it is about 35 km long, and 8 km wide at its widest, and rises almost straight up from narrow beaches to 300-400 metres - geologically speaking it's a unique chunk of the ocean floor uplifted above sea level. Outside the station/isthmus area the only way to get about is on foot, and colloquially, wherever you go, it's always up hill and up wind! But the coast is spectacular, and the plateau has a stark, brooding beauty that is transformed by rare shafts of sunlight into a soft and verdant landscape. From most points on the plateau you can see the sea to both east and west, and I am constantly enthralled by the very existence of this pinprick of land in the vastness of the southern ocean.

The huts are very comfortable and well supplied, gas for cooking and heating, good water, lots of food, comfy bunks and sleeping bags, and very efficient RAPS (Remote Area Power Supply) including wind, solar and petrol generators for lighting and radios. So although the external environment can be challenging, with the average temperature about 5c, but much lower due to wind chill and rain, so that hypothermia is a definite hazard, the internal environment is very cosy.

On station, my main responsibility is 'maintaining a productive and harmonious community,' which with this bunch is not particularly onerous. They all work hard at their appointed jobs, station maintenance, communications, weather observations, wildlife monitoring. There are no scientists here this winter, so a lot of my time is spent deputising on various science programs. I am in charge of a mysterious magnetometer experiment, for which my predecessor left cryptic instructions. I think I am doing right! I spend a lot of time, in goggles to protect my glasses from spray and drizzle, waterproof notebook in hand, bent double against the wind, floundering through wallows ~ get the picture! - recording the brands and flipper tags of elephant seals on the beaches of the isthmus. This is all in aid of a long term study of survivability of these seals, which were almost extinguished on the island in C19, seemed to recover in the early C20, and then declined until 2000 when the numbers started to rise again. So it is interesting and worthwhile, if very uncomfortable at times.

Of course there is a lot of other wildlife around. Although the royal and rockhopper penguins have departed for the winter, we still have gentoos and kings in abundance, as well as gulls, cormorants (which took the worst beating in the storm, their usual roosting rocks were mostly submerged) and giant and other petrels as well as a few albatross chicks. Wherever you look on the beaches, the ele seals are disporting themselves in the surf-wonderful!



In my spare time I am trying to learn Russian (slowly), the banjo (even slower) and working on my research project on the environmental history of the island, which is totally absorbing, and going well. It is fascinating to piece together all the impacts of human exploitation on the wildlife, and the various recovery programs, such as the elimination of feral cats which was achieved when I was last here in 2000, and has resulted in a vast increase in the breeding and survival of the burrow nesting petrels.

That's about it for now. But I hope you'll raise a glass for us at midwinter/summer!

