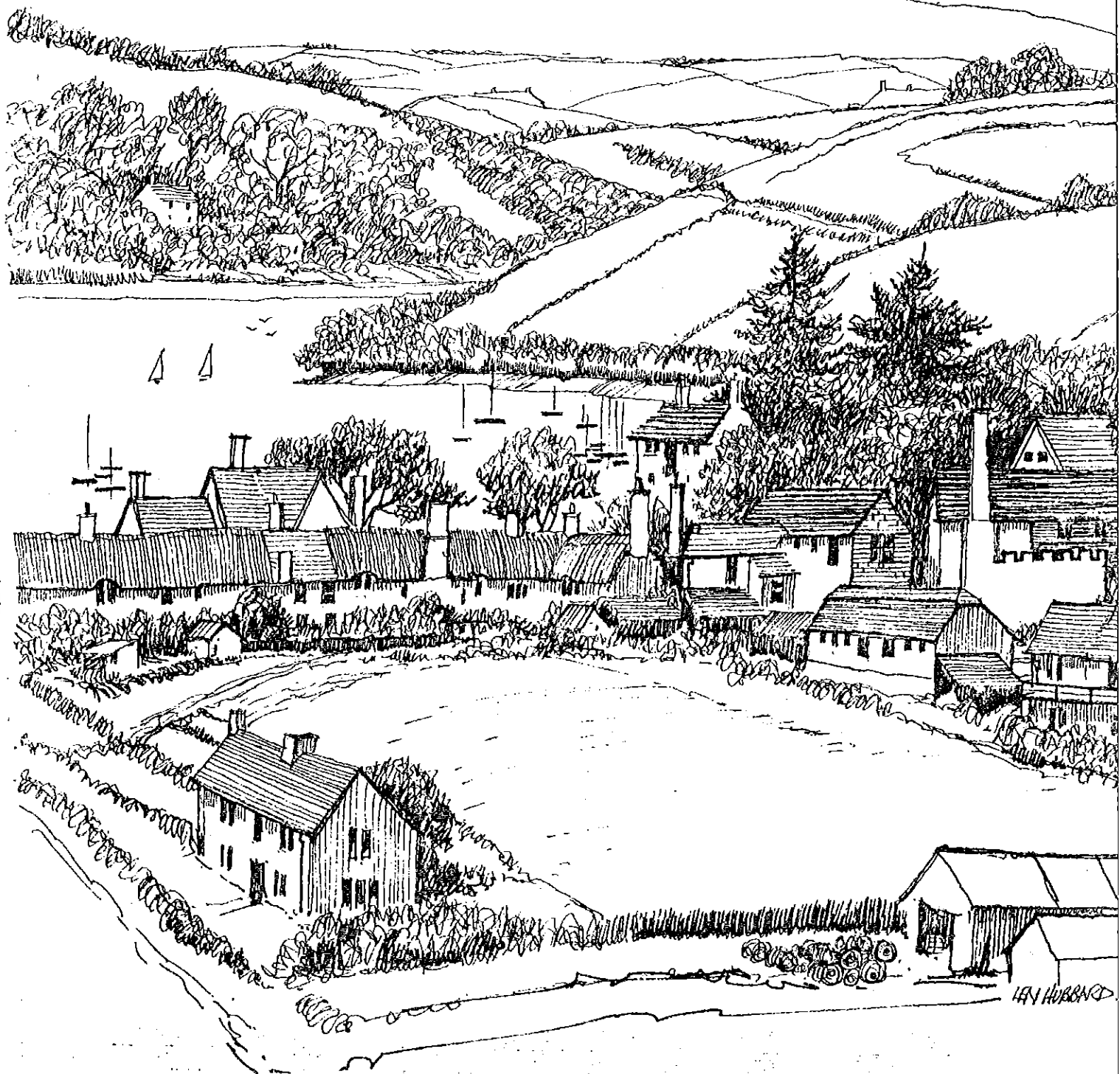


VILLAGE VOICE

SPONSORED BY THURLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL



Our cover picture, by noted Thurlestone artist Len Hubbard,
shows Bantham as seen from the golf course 12th tee.



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Cover Picture by LEN HUBBARD of Burwood Gallery Thurlestone

Number 34. Sixth year of publication. SEPT-OCTOBER, 1988.

THE FACT THAT the Armada 400 celebrations have benefited the Parish Hall to the tune of £500 is very good news indeed. The hall badly needs comfortable seats and we gather that the money is destined for that purpose. At least some of our posteriors will be comforted by this money - but only some. For we understand that the cost of a decent comfortable chair - even taking advantage of special amenity prices - is £10.

The simplest arithmetic shows that £500 will not cover the 120 chairs required. All must be the same. We can't have first-class and second-class sit-upons! That would be the bottom and our parish hall deserves the tops.

So what are we going to do about it? A villager recently came up with a splendid idea: Why not ask people to sponsor a chair? Sponsoring a chair wouldn't mean that it was yours to sit on at every event. Each chair would be anonymous, but a list of sponsors, well donors really, would be put up in the hall for all to see.

People we have talked to in the village about this idea have all told us that they would be willing to sponsor a chair. So let's do it! Let's be comfortable in our hall.

Tell you what - to start the ball rolling Village Voice will give five chairs!

Who's next for a super sit-in? Details in this issue.

FROM THE RECTOR:

ONE THING OF WHICH our Lord left us in no doubt is the duty of expressing gratitude...

"and when He had given thanks"

"were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?"

As one, therefore, not part of the Armada Committee nor associated directly with the Parish Council, it is perhaps appropriate for me as a leader in the community to express here on behalf of all the community our thanks to all those who had any part in the planning and execution of the Armada Celebrations. It was a splendid effort, and the most encouraging aspect was how well the community at large responded to the initiative.

If, as is arguable, it was all only an excuse for us to dress up and do things together perhaps we had better start scanning the horizon - not for another Armada, but for another excuse! So again very many thanks to all involved.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Stephens.

Rector.

Harry Huggins Column



Spotlights

Good pull-ups for
Birders!

WHERE TO WATCH.

A frequent plea is : "My aunt/grandson/whoever is coming to stay. They are interested in birds. Where can I take them?"

It depends a bit on how interested they are.

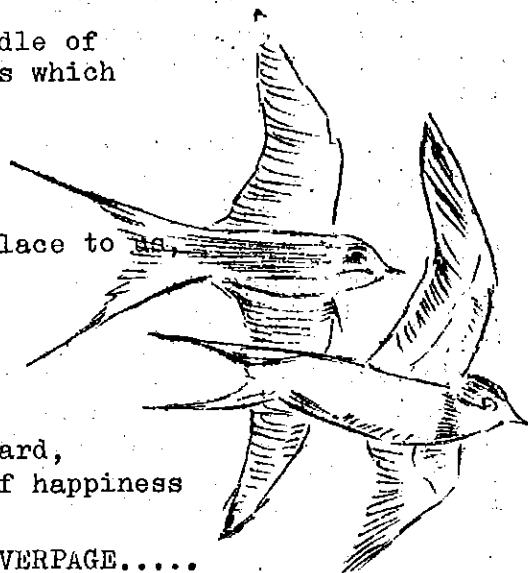
If there is a twitcher, he will know far more about the rare birds in this or any other area than you, or I; he need only be provided with food, and maybe a bed unless he is dashing off to the next tick.

I write "he" advisedly: there are very, very few female twitchers. There are plenty of ladies who consent to being dragged around with their husbands/boy friends because otherwise they would never see the brutes (like sailing!) but genuine female twitchers are as rare as penguins on Bantham Ham. I used to think this was because the competitiveness and discomfort were unfeminine. I realize now the ladies have more sense than to drive hundreds of miles to stand all day in the rain by some stinking estuary hoping to see a grotty little bird. And what does he do when he has seen it? HE ADDS IT TO HIS LIST!

But if fond relative is just an ordinary middle of the road birder, we have our own specialities which are sure to please.

When the whiskered Tern was here last year, I was quite astonished by the young man who said that what he really wanted to see was a Raven. They are, well, almost commonplace to us, but they are unknown if you live in the east of England.

Later, the warden of the RSPB reserve at Radipole, near Weymouth, visited us. He is one of the older and most experienced wardens, but he was enthralled to see a Buzzard, and when he saw a Sparrowhawk too his cup of happiness was full.



CONTINUED OVERPAGE.....

VILLAGE VOICE

GOOD PULL-UPS FOR BIRDERS continued....

Only a few weeks ago a friend from Lyme Regis was thrilled to find Goldfinches, which apparently they never see at home.

We used to be able to offer Cirl Buntings (Cirl as in Searle, not Kurl). They are very similar to Yellowhammers, in fact the female is almost indistinguishable; the male has a black chin and more black about the head than a male Yellowhammer. You usually find them by hearing his song, a dry unmusical rattle. They are rapidly dying out in the British Isles and are restricted now to a few pairs along the South Devon coast. There used to be a couple of pairs breeding somewhere between Thurlestone Mead and the golf club, but their favourite hedges have been demolished and they have gone, despite there being what seem to be equally attractive hedges left. However, you can usually find some in the vicinity of the Soar Mill Cove Hotel.

If you have any choice in the matter, tell your birding visitors to stop away in June, July and August - our quiet time - but if they must come then all is not always lost.

A year or two back friends asked to bring their grandson to see some birds. It was a blazing hot day in August - it does happen. There was little at Bantham and Thurlestone, except people, so we picked Bolberry Down as being a nice place for a walk even if we found nothing. When we arrived, the world and his wife were there first - dogs, footballs, the lot. But hardly had we left the car to set off for Soar Mill Cove when we saw four Peregrines, parents and two youngsters, playing in the air and we watched them on and off for a good hour. Where they had come from I do not know, for they do not nest in the area., but it shows you can be lucky.

The Buzzards, Peregrines, Sparrowhawks and Ravens are some of our specialities; to see some more, it is worth, on a fine June day, to take the hour or so's drive to Yarner Wood National Nature Reserve (grid ref: SX786790) near Bovey Tracey. The warden has put up nesting boxes which are occupied by black and white Pied Flycatchers and by another scarce species, Redstart. This is not the Black Redstart, which we see on our roofs at migration time, but the so called common Redstart, now sadly far from plentiful. The male has black face and chin, chestnut breast, grey back and bright chestnut tail (hence the name). Singing in the treetops will be male Wood Warblers; he is a little fellow, very like a Chiffchaff, yellow on the breast but otherwise white below, if you are able to see him, that is - usually you just hear his song, beginning with sibilant whistles, which get quicker and quicker (his latin name is sibilatrix - and ending in a splutter.

But tell them to come in Spring, Autumn or Winter if they will, and for a start take them to Bantham Ham for ducks, waders and gulls. Maybe there will be other excitements. We went there with friends in the rain, last September. The flood tide was just beginning and the Salmon Pool was alive with fish, as long as your arm, leaping three and four at a time. The husband, who fishes, had to be restrained from going in after them. Dear fellow, he thought it was always like that.

In no way does this column wish to compete with the excellent Mr. Ronay, but a hungry birder is not a good birder, and if on the Ham we are always happy to retreat to the comforts of "The Sloop" !

For variety, without going very far, try the Aveton Gifford tidal road - but do be very aware that it is a tidal road and check on tide times. In the winter period it can be a good six feet deep at the 'stakes' - the posts indicating the depth. You do not have to get out of your car, in fact the birds will take far less notice of you if you do not (which makes it an ideal place to which to take a disabled guest). There should be Oystercatchers, Redshanks, Ringed Plovers, maybe a Kingfisher and up to a thousand gulls to pick over for rarities. Once we saw a Black Headed Gull go limp in a cloud of feathers and appear to fly off with its wings trailing behind it -

CONTINUED OVERPAGE...

Concluding - GOOD PULL-UPS FOR BIRDERS

a Peregrine had taken it and was making off with its victim.

A favourite expedition is to Lopwell Dam (SX475650). Here the freshwater part of the Tavy meets the estuary and SWWA have thoughtfully provided a little car park on the quay; there is a pleasant walk downstream to Maristow Quay with the woods on the opposite bank towering above. There are usually Common Sandpipers, flitting over the water on bowed downwings, sometimes a Green Sandpiper, white on the rump and dark under the wings, and often a Kingfisher. Here in October is the best chance anywhere around of seeing an Osprey; in most autumns one stops for a week or two to feed up on fish caught in the shallows, before running the gauntlet of the continental gunners on its way to Africa. If you want to feed up, the "Who'd Have Thought It" at Milton Coombe is not far away.

Probably the best place for birds in the whole area is Prawle Point, where there are several miniature valleys affording shelter and food for residents and migrants. Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society has a tiny reserve there, only 1½ acres, but they have recorded over the years nearly 300 species.

This is the place for Gird Buntings. Park in the NT car park at SX775355; there is no need to go rushing off to find them (the most successful birders are not necessarily those who tramp the farthest). You sit on the bonnet of your car and drink a cup of coffee, then you will find the buntings tripping about in the bushes and trees nearby. If it is autumn or winter you will probably see a Firecrest too, greener than a Goldcrest and very much rarer.

These are just a few of our favourite birding places. There are many more and if the Editor lets me I will return to them in a future column.

Meanwhile I commend a book by two very fine Devon birders - David Norman and Victor Tucker - titled "Where to Watch Birds in Devon and Cornwall." It covers all the places to go, tells how to get there, and gives helpful notes on identification as well. Bob and Kay Morley have a few copies at the Village Stores, price £8.95 - and well worth it.

===== HARRY HUGGINS =====

THURLESTONE PARISH HALL.

At a committee meeting held on July 11 a quotation for bringing the parquet flooring back to its original state was regretfully thrown out as the sum quoted of nearly £700 was well in excess of the sum originally anticipated.

Because of the potential danger of loose blocks it was decided that once the Armada Celebrations were over and the invasion of friends and relatives had passed that a small working party of volunteers would tackle the work, the estimated cost of hiring the equipment and buying materials is £200. Financial contributions will be gratefully accepted from those wishing to help, but who are unable to put in the necessary physical effort.

To bring our finances up to a more healthy state a fund-raising event is planned for September when it is hoped that all those clubs as well as others who make use of the Hall will do their best by running stalls, raffles etc, and so generally contribute to a very successful and enjoyable afternoon. You will find more details about this event elsewhere in this issue of Village Voice.

D.M.Yeoman (560300). Chairman Parish Hall Committee.

CREMATION.

The mourners shuffle to their pews,
Like some parliament of rooks,
All attired in sombre hues
And sickly sympathetic looks.

All except for one I saw
And that was Uncle Rex,
Who staggered from the pub next
door,
Gaily clad in violent checks.

The Vicar, clutching Common
Prayer,
(Grubby surplice, rather creased)
Enters with a flustered air -
He can't remember who's deceased.

Auntie's coffin on a trolley
(Chromium with rubber wheels)
Is pushed in by a melancholy
Understaker - down at heels.

While synthetic organs deafen,
Aunt discreetly disappears
Thro' the little doors to Heaven -
Hardly time to shed our tears.

At the door, the Vicar's trembling
Hand is shaking all of ours,
And the next lot is assembling
As we try to find our flowers.

God bless the crematoria
And forgive my little joke:
Sic transit Auntie Gloria
In a puff of holy smoke.

JOHN EVE.

JAMES DOES IT AGAIN!

A car rally at Yealmpton on
July 24, Wheels '88, organised
by the Plymouth Police in aid of
the Guide Dogs for the Blind
Association, was the occasion
for us to present our cheque,
amounting to £3,313.25.

We received in return a photo
of Guide Dog James, a yellow
labrador, also a large and
beautiful plaque of polished elm
with a carving in the centre of
James, coloured and copied most
expertly by Heather Trippas of
Woodturners, Modbury.

We would like to thank on behalf
of G.D.B.A. all who contributed
in any way to the success of our
tour. Shortly after our return
James passed her M.O.T. with
flying colours. JOAN AND MALCOLM
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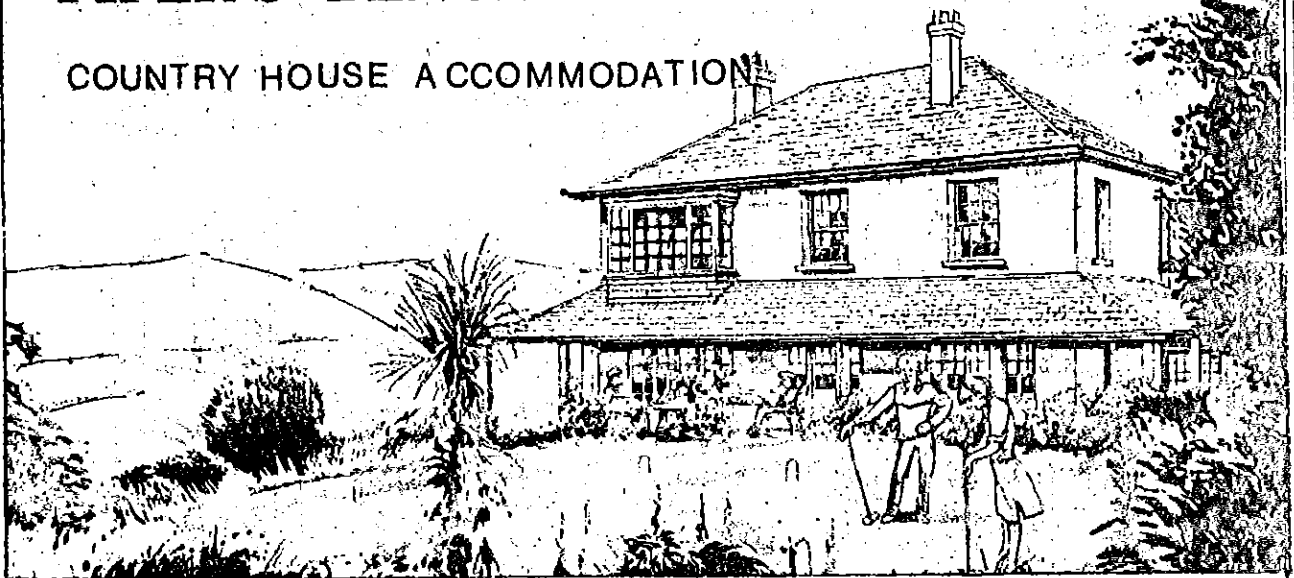
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SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

Under the reign of Elizabeth One,
When Britannia ruled the waves
And all our bearded sailors
Were sending Spaniards to their graves.

The King of Spain would not be beaten
And so an Armada sent
To launch an attack on our fair isle
Across the Channel went.

T'was one fine day when all was quiet
And nobody thought of foe.
There was a sea Captain playing bowls
On a green at Plymouth Hoe.

All of a sudden all hell broke loose,
As the Spanish Armada was spied,
People were running all here and there,
"But lets finish our game," Drake cried.

We do not know who won that game,
But of one thing we are sure,
Sir Francis Drake finished his game,
And went and won that war.

JULIE MINGO (Age 13)

PAT MACHIN - VILLAGE VOICES

RESIDENT PUZZLEMASTER presents

CLUELESS X-WORD!

NO CLUES - but each number represents a letter. Discover each letter and enter in grid. Each letter of the alphabet has been used at least once. Three number/letters have been given to help. As each letter is found, write it in the reference grid:

1	6	19	16	3				23	7	3	22	3
15		24		1	23	12	3	17		8		1
7	24	13	3	9	4		4	11	8	19	3	23
11		7		26	1	19	24	4		7		3
5	10	4	26		14		1		1	20	3	21
	3		11			1	A		7		18	
	1		4	16	7	2	G	2	3	16		
	16		3			3	E		3		9	
1	24	7	25		9		23		21	11	4	3
23		21		20	1	4	9	26		25		1
4	26	3	23	7	23		1	7	25	7	24	2
7		1		4	26	7	24	23		22		3
16	3	25	1	10				23	4	3	3	16

REFERENCE GRID

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	G	E										
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

SOLUTION ON ANOTHER PAGE

Do please tell us if you have enjoyed solving this Clueless Crossword - tell us if you have found it too difficult !
Go on - do tell us if it takes some hours to scribe this onto a wax stencil - but the pleasure is ours if you like it

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SOME MONEY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO GET NEW ONES, NOTABLY £500 FROM THE ARMADA CELEBRATIONS. BUT GOOD CHAIRS COST ABOUT £10 EACH AND WE NEED 120. ONE WAY OF GETTING THEM IS TO ASK PEOPLE TO SPONSOR A CHAIR.

SO WILL YOU SPONSOR A CHAIR FOR £10? IT WON'T HAVE YOUR NAME ON IT, BUT YOU WILL BE ON THE LIST OF DONORS DISPLAYED IN THE HALL AND AT LEAST YOU'LL BE SITTING COMFORTABLY!

Please send your chair donation to D.M.Yeoman, Hilltop, Thurlestone. Cheques should be made payable to "Thurlestone Parish Hall". Any questions to 560300 please.

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Tramp, Tramp, Tramp!

By J.S.B.Reynolds of the Ramblers Association.

As a result of earlier articles in Village Voice a small group of local walkers (about 20 so far) has evolved. We did four walks together (on the third Wednesday of each month) starting in January, which by all accounts were enjoyed by all.

When we "broke up" for the summer, a general wish to continue was expressed. We shall therefore continue with these monthly walks as long as they continue to give enjoyment. We shall use footpaths all over the South Hams. We have called our group TRAMP, for Thurlestone Rambling Party and here is an outline of our programme for the next six months. Anyone can join us. Walks start from the rendezvous (RV) at 10.30 a.m. and a picnic will be needed.

1. 21/9/88. RV: West Alvington Car Park, Lower Street. Leader: Stuart Reynolds. Length: 15kms (9.3 miles). Not strenuous. A figure of eight taking in Collapits, Easton and S.Milton.
2. 19/10/88. RV: Thurlestone Church. Leader: Chalky White. 10kms (6.5 miles). Not strenuous. To Bantham, Avon Valley, Stadbury Manor.
3. 16/11/88. RV at Loddiswell Car Park. Leader Stuart Reynolds. 8kms (5 miles) Not strenuous. Coombe Farm, Aveton Gifford, Avon Valley.
4. 14/12/88. RV: Folly Farm, Mount Folly, 1km NE of Bigbury-on-Sea. Leader: Chalky White. 13kms (8.12 miles). A little more strenuous. Avon valley, Bigbury, Ringmore.
5. 18/1/89. RV Ringmore Car Park. Leader: Stuart Reynolds. 11kms (6.9 miles) Rather strenuous on coastal path. 3 climbs from sea level to 300ft. Coastal path to Wonwell Beach, Kingston and Ringmore.
6. 15/2/89. RV South Milton (by garage). Leader: Chalky White. 11kms (7 miles) Not strenuous. Triangular - South Milton, Hope, Malborough, South Milton.

I'm not Deaf.

I just can't understand some words.

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Kate's Kitchen

JUDGING by the abundance of flowers on the blackberry bushes, there should be a good crop of fruit this autumn.

If you like the flavour, but not the seeds, then try this recipe:

BLACKBERRY MOUSSE

1 lb Blackberries, 4 tablesp. Water, 4 ozs Sugar, 6 oz can of Evaporated Milk (chilled), juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz Gelatine.

Simmer fruit with 2 tablesp. of the water and the sugar till tender. Puree fruit through a sieve. Dissolve gelatine in the remaining water in a bowl over a pan of hot water. Put evap. milk in bowl with lemon juice and whisk until thick. Stir dissolved gelatine into puree, allow to become cold and thick. Fold blackberry puree into whisked milk and chill.

NOTE: You can use a $\frac{1}{2}$ pint Double Cream omitting the lemon juice, instead of evaporated milk, for a richer texture and taste.

LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NE

Glow-worms have been sighted all over Thurlestone. Quite a number of sightings were on the path from the Mead to the Village Inn. Is there a connection?

Ted and Jean Sadler have moved again. Their new address is: AYIOU KENDEOU ST, L4, FLAT 10, LARNACA, CYPRUS. Tel: (041) 22002,

WHO IS THE PHANTOM sign cleaner of Thurlestone? Someone keeps the village name sign at the top of the hill clean and tidy, but the Parish Council don't know who our benefactor is. Any ideas?

Did you know..that some people take bowls and spoons and cream and sugar with them when they go to pick-it-yourself farms? Well they do and after they have stuffed down as many bowls of strawberries-and-cream as they can manage they turn up at the exit and show just one tiny punnet - and that's all they pay for. One group who made a local strawberry farmer really mad, asked him for a spare carrier bag and then used it to wipe their bowls in front of him!

Some people get very het-up because the village only gets skips on a few days in the year. Don't they know that there are two skips open weekdays, except Saturdays, during normal working hours at Manor House depot, Kingsbridge. You can put any rubbish you can get in your car boot in there.

Why does everyone you drive out to visit live in the crease of the road map!- Bob Monkhouse on a tv show.

THE HORTICULTURAL SHOW.

Chairman Ben Horn was generous in his thanks to the show committee, to all who had helped in any way, to all the sporting exhibitors, and to all the people who came just to enjoy the colourful spectacle of the 10th annual Thurlestone and South Milton Horticultural Show.

A glowing display decorated South Milton village hall to greet the eyes of over 150 visitors to the event, and they were not disappointed by the usual high standard of the exhibits. And Mrs Pat Ladd drew an appreciative and attentive audience as she demonstrated the art of spinning. Dick White, the show's President, presented cups and awards as follows:

CUPS:

Amateur Fruit and Vegetables...C.Johns.
 Open Fruit and Vegetable.....M.Orr
 Cut Flowers and Pot Plants.....M.Orr.
 Junior Children.....Charlotte Brice.
 Senior Children.....David Coward and S.Wood.
 Home Economics.....P. Macdonald.
 Flower Arrangements.....A.Jenkins
 Handicrafts.....K.Turner
 Thurlestone Residents.....M.Orr
 South Milton Residents.....C.Johns
 Yeo Cup for best amateur vegetable exhibit...C.Johns.
 Wray Cup for the best open.....M.Orr.
 Marshall Cup for one rose bloom...M.Orr.
 Derrick Yeoman cup for best child's exhibit...E.Pedley and S.Pedley
 Doris Jackson trophy for best sown exhibit..D.Amess and E.Applega

DIPLOMAS FOR BEST SINGLE ENTRIES:

Amateur Fruit and Vegetable...C.Johns.
 Open Fruit and Vegetable.....M.Orr.
 Cut Flowers and Pot Plants....M.Orr.
 Junior Children.....Charlotte Brice.
 Senior Children.....E.Pedley and S.Pedley.
 Home Economics.....D.Tyler.
 Flower Arrangements.....E.Jenkins
 Handicrafts.....J.Richardson and K.Turner.

It was good to see the healthy signs of new names coming into the prizewinners' list, but the number of entries was down a little on previous years due, it is thought, to the Show's being at the end of such superb Armada celebrations. Perhaps a lot of folk were a bit 'punch drunk' from all the hard work which went into that event

Please let the show organisers know if there is an exhibit class you would like to see included in future schedules - or if there is any way in which you think the show could be improved. Our AGM is at Thurlestone on Monday October 24 at 7.30 p.m., so why not come along to that and air your views and also offer to serve on our very happy show committee?

On Saturday September 24, the show committee members resident in Thurlestone will be running a produce stall at Thurlestone Parish Hall to help raise funds for the renovation of the hall floor, so please, exhibitors, if you have any produce you can donate to our stall, let Pat Macdonald know (560436).

In 1989 there will be no excuses for not entering the show..we will be pursuing more entries and trying to persuade the many

Horticultural show continued:

'shrinking violets in the two villages to be sporting enough to enter the 11th annual show. We'll be back to our normal date of the first Saturday in August, so start planning now what you are going to enter. Don't say you haven't been warned! See you in 1989!

P.M.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

May I, through your columns, say a very big thank you to everyone who helped organise the Armada celebrations. The Elizabethan concert was superb and was such a very happy evening; the bonfire evening likewise was a great success and it was such a pity that rain stopped play for the other events.

The flower festival showed up a wealth of talent and was beautiful.

Many thanks to everyone.

PAT TOWNSEND, 4, Parkfield, Thurlestone.

A SMILE

A smile costs nothing but gives much.
It enriches those who receive it without making poorer those who give it.
It takes but a moment, but the memory of it lasts forever.
None is so rich and mighty that he can get along without it; and none so poor that he cannot be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business and is the countersign of friendship.
It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and is nature's best antidote for trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile; give them one of yours as none needs a smile as much as he who has none to give.

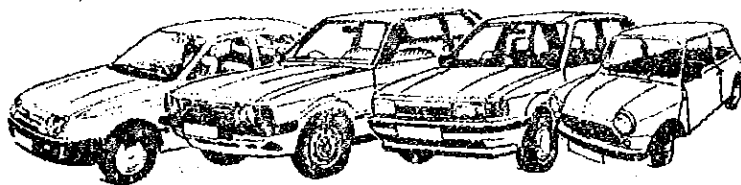
P.E.

We overheard it and we liked it...

"Mummy, why is that man wearing a safari suit?"

"Sssh, darling...he has to with a garden like his!"

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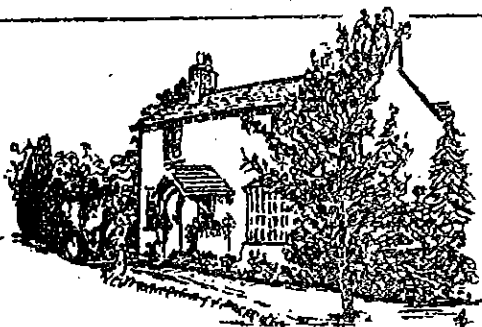
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World War II Comes to the South Hams

by NEVILLE C. OSWALD., T.D., M.D., F.R.C.P.

PART V. + THE ARMED FORCES

British troops were rarely conspicuous in the South Hams during World War II; with no organised depot or camp in the district, most of the units that came and went over the years could be accommodated in requisitioned hotels. Amongst the early arrivals and perhaps best remembered were the Buffs who remained until 1942 and erected coastal defences, including mines and barbed wire on the beaches. In 1940, a mounted unit of the Indian Army arrived unexpectedly and moved into Wood Barton, a former French monastery to the north of Woodleigh. During a 6 months' stay, their wagons drawn by mules with turbaned outriders regularly clattered along the Devon lanes down to Loddiswell station to collect their rations; the villagers, who recognised horseflesh of quality when they saw it, were enchanted by the officers' mounts. Also in 1940, some of the exhausted troops who had been rescued from Dunkirk were welcomed into the homes of local people, who were thereby confronted by the realities of war for the first time; others included 200 to 300 Pakistani troops, part of a mule company, who were quartered in the old barracks at Modbury.

Defence of the long coastline with limited troops and equipment was always a problem. When the Buffs first inspected the five miles of Slapton Sands between Torcross and Strete, they found one field gun from the 1914-18 war and several lengths of old telegraph poles mounted on axles taken from scrapped vehicles, which were intended to resemble guns in any photographs the enemy might take. The Commanding Officer had 13 rounds of ammunition for the gun at his disposal and gave permission for one round to be fired harmlessly out to sea, only to be severely rebuked by his General for wasting ammunition. In time, barbed wire and mines were laid on most of the beaches, anti-aircraft and other guns were strategically sited, ten foot poles were planted in areas where enemy aircraft might land and a balloon barrage was erected in Kingsbridge estuary. These defences were manned by successive units of infantry, the Royal Artillery and the Home Guard. Later, in 1944, the Home Guard were praised for the way it guarded nightly

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Thurlestone Parish VILLAGE VOICE

the perimeter of the American Training Area at Slapton.

The Royal Air Force established an airfield at Bolt Head. Beginning as a stretch of level grassland in 1941, it was developed with Nissen huts, hangers and living quarters, using the Cottage Hotel at Hope Cove as an officers' mess, and by 1942 was able to support its own fighter squadron. One of the airstrips extended to within yards of the clifftop at the Warren. Functioning as a satellite air station at first, it housed a squadron of Spitfires Mark XII in 1944 to protect the vast concentration of troops and equipment in the neighbourhood before 'D' Day. Extracts from the flying log of Tom Slack, one of the pilots, displayed on the wall at the 'Port Light' on Bolberry Down, mention "Sweep after sweep over France in the support of the troops after 'D' Day..... shooting up trains, convoys and German staff cars." The airfield closed in 1947; a radio station with antennae now rises up from the junction of the former airstrips.

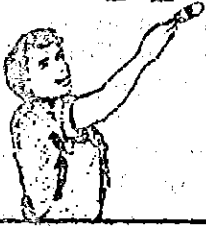
From 1941 to 1945 the Thurlestone Hotel and empty houses nearby became a Royal Marine Officers Training Unit of distinction. With classes of 200 cadets, battle training was undertaken on the formidable slopes of Soar Mill Cove, where in May 1945, the Colonel Commandant was accidentally shot dead when he stood up in his Bren Carrier during an exercise. In the evenings at Thurlestone, children and teenagers stood at a respectful distance to watch cadets on guard duty march as only Marines can, momentarily hesitating on occasion as they passed the Village Inn to snatch a mouthful of ale. At Passing Out Parades, country folk from miles around flocked to see the Royal Marines Band marching up and down the little village street. A local farmer supplied the establishment with milk; he was variously described as a character and an astute business man who made a point of looking into his milk churns when they were returned to see whether they contained any articles in short supply; certainly each of his farm workers had a marine greatcoat that had been acquired by way of a churn !

The cadets had access to the adjacent golf course, which had more than 500 sheep grazing on it and orders from the War Agricultural Committee that the mowing of grass was to be limited to the greens. The difficulties of finding golf balls, which were in extremely short supply even when they were struck onto the middle of the fairways, limited their play. They were welcome to the bar of the Clubhouse where, it was said, the annual allocation of 300 bottles of gin was never enough; the quota was raised in 1943 when the WVS took over the catering !

Preparations for the invasion of Europe included the selection of several training areas, one of which extended over 30,000 acres from East Allington to Blackawton down to the coast between Torcross and Strete, as it closely resembled the terrain of projected landings in Normandy. It included Blackawton, Chillington, East Allington, Sherford, Slapton, Strete, Stokenham and Torcross where a total of some 3,000 people lived, mainly families whose forebears had tilled and nurtured the same fertile fields for generations.

In November 1943, the inhabitants were summoned to meetings in their village halls and were given six weeks to leave, together with their valuable possessions, livestock and crops for, probably, about six months. Most of the farmers were able to make temporary arrangements with farmers they already knew nearby outside the perimeter, being satisfied with perhaps a shed and a couple of fields. Others, such as shopkeepers and publicans, finding that the district was already crammed with evacuees, usually had to go further afield. Some difficulties arose over finding accommodation for the elderly and chronic sick, but the evacuation was completed in the allotted time, these simple countryfolk bearing no resentment against the Americans and indeed feeling that they were contributing to the war effort..

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Thurlestone Parish VILLAGE VOICE

Continuing 'WORLD WAR II COMES TO THE SOUTH HAMPS'.....

United States forces started to arrive in the last days of December 1943 and by the beginning of February 1944 there were 15,000 troops in the area. They rapidly instituted a programme of increasingly alarming exercises with live ammunition which soon caused casualties and culminated in April in disaster when some manned and loaded landing craft taking part in a full scale rehearsal were attacked by German 'E' boats; in a brief encounter, 749 Americansoldiers and sailors were killed or drowned. By the end of May the troops had left to take up their positions for 'D' Day and the invasion of France in early June.

When the last American truck had departed, the Area was handed over to the War Agricultural Executive Committee. First, a bomb disposal unit went in to clear the site of unexploded ammunition. Then 200 men started work, which was to take five months, repairing 800 buildings, filling in shell craters and restoring lanes whose hedges had been flattened or, more often, that had been filled with earth to allow the passage of enormous American vehicles. Damage to drains, water supply, electricity and telephones was made good. A plague of rats, and to a less extent of rabbits, was reduced to tolerable numbers. Some farmers were able to return to their homes at the end of July, but the last of them had to wait until the end of the year when the whole Area was declared open.

Regrettably, as soon as it was safe to enter the Area, almost unbelievable thieving and pointless destruction took place; at a time of great shortages, anything with a second-hand value such as lamps and pots and pans was stolen. Blackawton church was ransacked. These shameful actions, sometimes carried out with the excuse that "the Government will compensate" will never be forgotten by the residents who returned home to start their lives anew.

PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION OF FRANCE...

In September 1943, a US Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) moved into Salcombe; more American sailors followed and soon there were 137 officers and 1,793 men in the town. They requisitioned about 60 properties including the Salcombe Hotel; which became the headquarters of the United States Navy Advanced Amphibious Base, along with the Marine Hotel and Cliff House. Their purpose was to supply, maintain and repair landing craft and any other US vessels that might come into the harbour. They built concrete hards on the waterfront and over at Mill Bay, across the harbour in Portle-mouth, they assembled a large slipway with lifting and haulage equipment, the remains of which may still be seen.

During the first half of 1944, the countryside gradually became choked with heavy US military vehicles, ammunition, petrol, guns, crates and stores. They were stacked here and there in fields or beside the roads, often with tents for personnel alongside. Some of the transport was drawn up in lines along country lanes awaiting their turn to embark. At Salcombe, there were eventually 66 ships of the US Navy and many auxiliary vessels ready to take troops and equipment in relays to France.

The sheer mass of men and materials during these months stifled the countryside. Americans seemed to be everywhere. Some were practising respirator (gas mask) drill - the only way, it was said, to keep them quiet; others were wondering what was in store for them on the beaches of France. Off duty, they visited the inns in Kingsbridge and elsewhere on organised dances, especially at Salcombe, collecting girls from the nearby parishes in trucks. Their military police were called upon to exercise both discretion and authority in circumstances beyond the control of the civilian wartime constabulary. There were also occasions for them to mix with the villagers at happy social gatherings when, whether as guests or hosts, their natural generosity took the form of 'hospitality rations', which might be pork chops, nylon stockings, cigarettes or even Spam.

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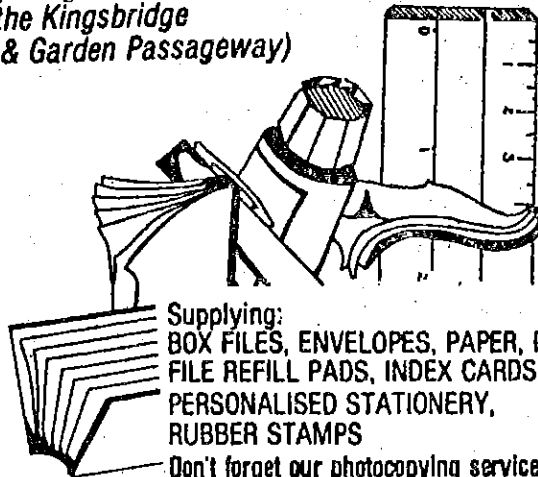
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CONCLUDING:

WORLD WAR II COMES TO SOUTH HAMS

US troops off duty were fair game for children who pestered them until, perhaps, a packet of chewing gum came out of one pocket and then, amid shrieks of delight, a bar of chocolate came out of another.

As 'D' Day approached, barrage balloons appeared over Mill Bay, parts of the Mulberry harbour arrived, destined for the beaches of Normandy, and ships were moored perforce two or three abreast. By June 1st, all craft were fully loaded with men and equipment and, after a delay caused by the weather, sailed on June 4th and the following days. A small cadre remained in Salcombe to service and repair landing craft until the end of the war in Europe.

Little now remains to commemorate the American presence in 1944. A US Memorial stands by the beach at Slapton, Salcombe has its Normandy Way with a plaque and over at Blackawton the Normandy Arms has a few relics of those days - and that is about all. Indeed, aside from the Memorials and lists of the names of the fallen usually in or near churches and some repaired buildings, few vestiges are to be seen anywhere in the South Hams to remind a casual visitor of those stirring times.

NEVILLE C. OSWALD

AN OLD REMEDY

It has been said that to prevent chilblains just crush an aspirin tablet as fine as possible, and then sprinkle it into the feet of socks or stockings

WELL CARED FOR PUSSY CATS

When one of the Editor's went away recently their dear old pussy cat was in need of a temporary 'holiday home'. Janet Lemmy at her Country Hill Cat Kennels proved to have an excellent set up and can be recommended to all pussy cat lovers. D.D.

LifeTime's Reward

Let amateurs be thankful they are such and enjoy their privilege of making mistakes and acknowledging the same; only let them be more in earnest and get all the wondrous good a garden can do them. Let them feel, as I do myself, provoked (to use a mild word) when told 'the garden must be a great amusement to me'. Those who till a garden merely for amusement or money only know nothing of its truest value, of the power this pursuit and study has to elevate and humble, to calm and strengthen, to cheer and soothe, and which enables a garden to fit all states and moods of Body and Mind.

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F.J.HOPE. Motes & Thoughts
on Garden and Woodlands
(1881)

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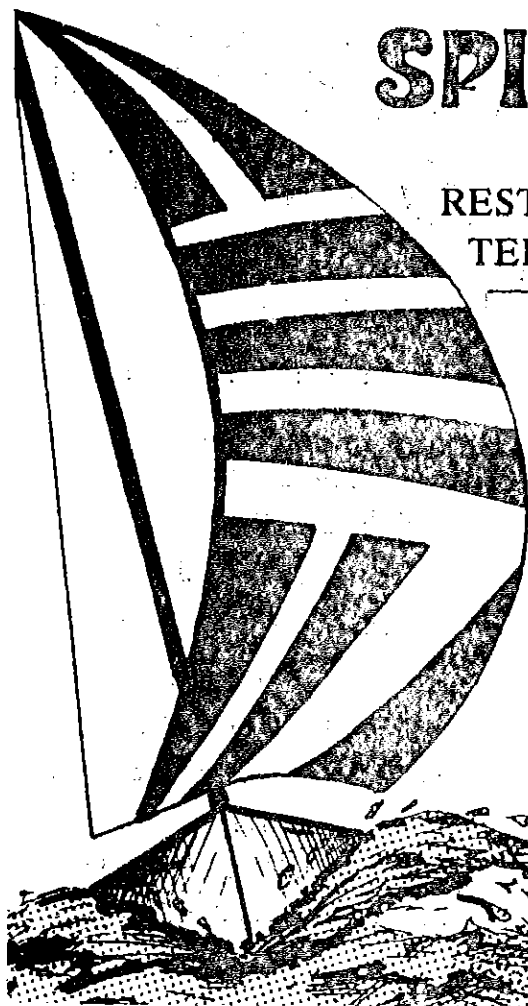
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MEDDLING MONKS are considered to be responsible for the old legend that if it rains on July 15th - St. Swithin's Day - it will rain for the next 40 days. Swithin was Bishop of Winchester who died in AD862 and had asked to be buried "in a vile and unworthy place, under the drip of eaves, where the sweet rain of heaven may fall upon my grave." When he was canonised in 971, the monks of Winchester decided to move his body to a more fitting place in the cathedral choir. They moved the body on July 15th, and it rained for the next 40 days, the saint's protest, so legend has it, against the move.

- - - - -

"RED SKY AT NIGHT - SHEPHERD'S DELIGHT" - red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning." When the sun is low in the sky, morning or evening, it tends to glow red anyway - whatever the weather conditions, but what you see depends on whether there are clouds in the sky in the way, so if the redness is visible in the evening, in a relatively cloud-free sky, it means that the air to the west, the direction from which most of our winds come in this latitude, is fairly cloudless and dry. So, it follows, that the next day should be clear and fine. If on the other hand, the redness is visible in the morning, it means that clear weather is to the east, and less favourable weather is on the way. St. Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 16, verses 2 and 3) tells you: "When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering."

RESEARCH: Walter Dee



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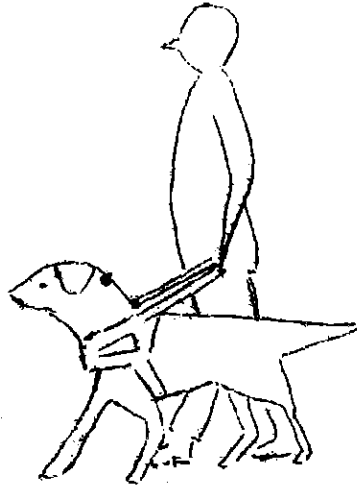
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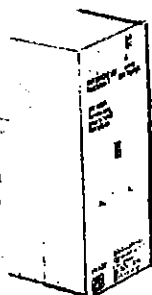
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WHOOOMPFF!

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.

MONDAY, JULY 18, 1988.

That was the week that was! Thurlestone, Buckland and Bantham Armada week got off to a flying start with a splendid Elizabethan Evening in the Parish Hall. Titled as "an extravaganza presented to the populace to mark Our Most Glorious Victory over the Armada of Spain", the show certainly lived up to this billing.

Extravagant in the use of talent it was indeed and the "populace" of the parish rolled up (car park full) to enjoy it to the full. In fact many of the audience competed with the players in the extravagance of their dress and we are sure we spotted a fully arrayed Court Jester in the 14th row!

For the record, 120 tickets were given away at local stores and Village Voice is able to deny categorically the rumour that fights broke out when it was discovered that the last of the tickets had gone very soon after the shops opened! It is some measure of the village spirit that only three seats were vacant when the curtain went up, or rather slid aside, and there was no standing room left at the back, due no doubt to some excellent forgeries!

And talking of spirit, Village Voice is also able to deny another rumour - that the large audience was entirely due to the free drinks served at the interval. But there is no denying that there was little demand for the non-alcoholic punch, while the other variety went with such gusto that the serving wenches were soon, literally, scraping the bottom of the barrel. But enough of the background, what of the entertainment?

The Dodbrooke Consort singers set the tone with delightful renderings of old songs. So good were they that they deserve mention name by name - Pam Brewster, Elsie Brewster, Hilary Edwards, Niler Reid, Bob Reid, Jacky Pearce, Barbara Jones, Arnold Jarrett, Brian Nice, and Roy Owen.

Then we had fun from "1066 and All That" and solos from Dianna Brown (Camelot), Paul Allen (Greensleaves with Michael Stone on the piano), Robert Gloyn (Drake Goes West), Barry Brooks (Yeoman of the Guard) and Diane Tobin (Oh, Peaceful England). And one member of the audience voiced everyone's thoughts when he said they were all "superb". Dianna Brown was the main pianist for the evening.

In the second half came the play "Bird in a Hand", written by the show's producer Val Brown. It was sad and it was funny and it was local and it was the tale of what happened in Hope Cove one night in 1588, which led to a ghost which is still seen today! The applause for the play rolled on and on and so it should have done for the play showed clearly what a gift for dialogue has Val Brown, the authoress. Bringing her words to life were the members

Armada Report continued:

of Kingsbridge Dramatic Society and they did a proper job too. We are grateful that they could give their time to present such skilful show to us. So that you can put the names to the faces that you often see in their real life roles in Kingsbridge and round about - and thank them again - here they are: Dawn Spence, Ann Low, Nicola Fox, Philippa Salton, Elizabeth East, Sophie East, Dyane Newcombe, Lorraine Holmes, Maureen Wild, Barbara Perkins, Dorothy Lyons, Audrey Woodroof, Mark Robinson, Paul Holmes, and Leighton Elliott.

The evening was a huge success and congratulations were in order for everyone concerned.

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 1988.

That was the night that was!

Down the hill they came, led by the village schoolmaster and a boy with a drum. Lords and ladies, wenches and workers, that court jester still in his motley, a mad monk, our own Francis Drake lookalike complete with specially grown beard, Lady Drake, better known perhaps in modern times as the post mistress, and children everywhere, all in splendid Elizabethan costumes, behind which it was easy to guess were many a pricked finger and countless instructions to "stand still".

But now there was no need for them to stand still any more and they pranced down the hill behind Trevor Battell, a tall Pied Piper, who said afterwards that turning round at Thatchways to look back he could see, to his amazement, that the tail of the procession which had set off from the School, was still only just about level with Home Cottage. The whole village was out and parading down their street.

Pausing only briefly at the Rectory to collect a suitably attired Rector, the procession swept on down to the Village Green and the maypole set up near the War Memorial. Here the Plymouth Wind Concert Band had been hard at blow for over half-an-hour - and by golly they were good! So good in fact that some even begrudged them their well-earned break while the children from the School demonstrated that Maypole dancing is an art and plaited a neat pattern round the pole. Most of the players in the band, we were told, were from the Plymouth Polytechnic.

Organisers of events needing a band in future should note that that the Plymouth band are good and willing and able to attend events in this area. Organisers should also note that bands should not be seated under trees. No it's not the rooks; it's the fact that the underside of trees always creates a breeze which plays havoc with sheet music. The things you learn from the Armada!

Anyway, with a floodlit church in the background and much merriement on the green before it - including a rapid sale of Armada souvenirs, not to mention a steady stream of helium balloons being sent up, up and away in the hopes of winning the star prize of a weekend at the Thurstlestone Hotel, donated by David Grose - with all that and the approach of dusk, the whole affair took on an unreal quality. Here was material for a thousand gossips...did you see....did you?...but the overwhelming feeling was that everyone was having fun - and wasn't that what it was all about!

At 9.40 precisely and despite a last-minute panic when the bell ringers couldn't get into the Church because the Rector had gone to minister to those other poor souls at South Milton and taken the key with him, the bells began to ring. This was the signal to up, up, and away again, this time to the bonfire. Of the over 700 people ringing the green, at least 650 of them set off for and reached

Armada week report continued:

the fireside. We know that there were at least 650 because 200 sausages and 400 burgers were eaten from the barbecue, staunchly manned by members of the Thurlestone and South Milton Football Club. During the height of the rush for the eats, one genius among those sturdy footballers could see that no way were they going to feed the multitude with the meats that they had. His solution was to cut the burgers in half! But even that was not enough...where did all those people come from?

We had been told to light our fire, our beacon, at precisely 10.16 together with the rest of Devon. So up spake our former High Sheriff of Devon, Jim Woodrow, in mighty strong voice and solemnly gave the word for the conflagration. This was the moment of truth for "Master Peter Hurrell", who had not only designed, but built the fire too. Would it light? To say that Master Hurrell was worried would be the understatement of the night! But hidden in the depths of that mighty pile was his secret recipe. Right valiantly he plunged home his igniter and his prayer was answered as with a wonderful "whoompf" up went the best bonfire in Devon. It was so good that a devout pyromaniac of our acquaintance almost wept with joy - but then he had been in the beer tent for some little time!

Walking away from the fire into the outer dark of the golf course, and up to the highest point you could spot nine beacons burning around us. To the West a faint red "eye" in the dark was Rame Head, and as you came closer the red blobs of fire were bright on every point. Inland was Loddiswell burning bright. And Eastward look - Hope burneth well!

Back at the best beacon, a strange thing had happened. Told that the food was free, thanks to the generosity of David Grose again, the multitude, unused to such charity, or perhaps impregnated with the goodwill they found all around them, insisted on making donations. And at the end of it, there was another goodly sum to add to the Armada fund for strictly local worthy causes (for details of that distribution, read on.).

At midnight a gentle rain began to fall, and even the die-hards fell back to the village down the path of now guttering flares, which had been thoughtfully provided to guide their faltering steps homeward. And that was the end of bonfire night that was!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1988.

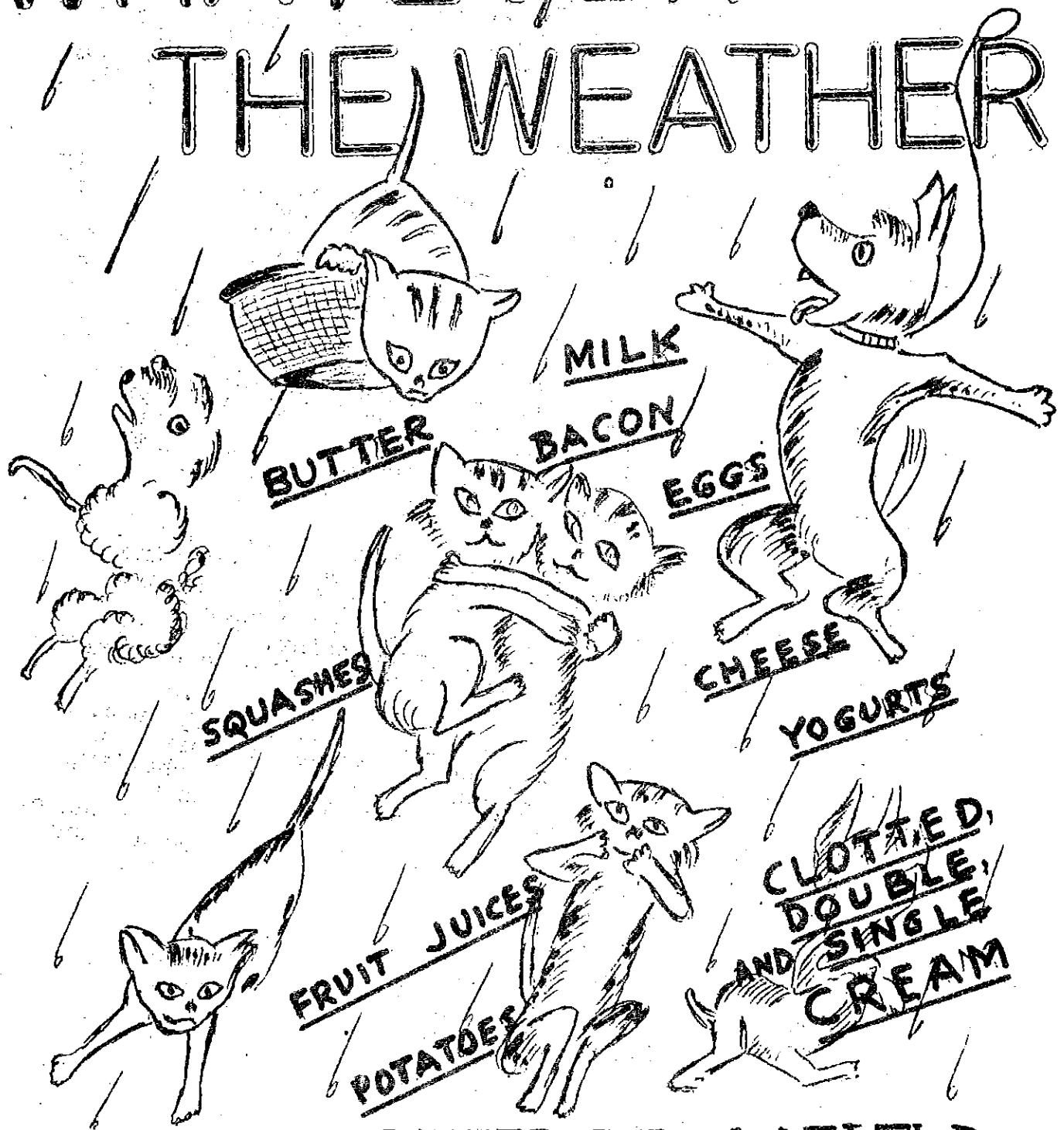
Despite a sky full of clouds, the rain held off in the evening, and with our own special constable controlling the traffic past the beflagged Village Inn, dancing was the order of the night.

Entertaining the crowd were the Dartington Morris Dancers and the Green Willow Clog Dancers. And what a show they put on! Today's disco dancers would never stand that pace! Most enduring memory of that night must be the sight of Frankie Drake, alias Derrick Yeoman, and his henchman, Phil Deare, being whirled away into the dance by some very handsome wenches.

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1988.

The rains came. And in the end the Armada Committee had to

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Armada week report continued:

admit defeat and call the costumed bowls match at Kearney Point postponed, Thurlestone and Bantham's challenge to Hope still stands however and will be played at a later date.

Rain may have stopped the bowls, but the Armada Flower Festival was unstoppable - and people came from far and wide to see the wonderful set pieces in the Thurlestone Church. The arrangements were superb, the colours incredible, and the work that had gone into them was clear for all to see. We were told that the last flower festival was some eight years ago. With work like this and the talent to do it available, we demand another one very soon!

The rain poured down that night, but it takes more than that to stop Sir Francis Drake. And as Kingsbridge carried on with their heat of the Sir Francis Drake Lookalike Contest, our man was there. And what is more he won! So Derrick Yeoman goes into the National Final.

FRIDAY, JULY 22, 1988.

Rain stopped all play, which was sad because the Bantham Surf Lifesaving Club had arranged a Children's Armada Games for the Ham and a pig roast to follow. What happened to the Armada Committee's pig? Just read on..

SATURDAY, JULY 23, 1988.

Rain came and went, but Derrick Yeoman, Chairman of the Armada Committee, was determined to show them in Kingsbridge what Thurlestone could do. So he entered an official Thurlestone Armada 400 Committee float in the Fair. The sides of the float were decorated with the Armada panels from the front of the school painted by the children with a little help from Len Hubbard, the Thurlestone artist. Len, of course, does the front covers of Village Voice and produced all those Armada pennants with which we decorated the village street, as well as arranging the decoration of the school.

And the float rolled through Kingsbridge and past the judges and...Sensation! They won not only the King's Arms Cup for the most original entry, but also first prize in the Armada Class. And back they came in triumph with a darned great silver cup. Well done, Thurlestone! For the names of those aboard that wet but winning float, read on..

SUNDAY, JULY 24, 1988.

It was billed as the Armada Deliverance Thanksgiving Service and at least one member of the Thurlestone Armada 400 Committee thought the service was specially to give thanks that the village celebrations were safely over! Certainly the sun shone and the swallows swooped in and out of the church porch, and many villagers turned up in their costumes. It all added to the colour in the beautifully flower-decorated church. The National Anthem was sung, all three verses, and the Rector had unearthed some prayers of Francis Drake and the Queen's Household and used at the time of the Armada. So it was a splendid service and history came alive.

The Rector himself made history too and said so when he produced his camera at the beginning of his powerful sermon and took a flash photograph of his colourful congregation - a pulpit's eye-view - for the record books. What a pity they didn't have cameras at the time of the real Armada!

Incidentally, though the Rector undoubtedly did make

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Armada report concluded:

Thurlestone history by taking the first flash photograph from the church pulpit during a service, this was not the first time that such a modern contrivance as a camera has been used during a sermon. On Sunday, September 3, many Thurlestone villagers heard the declaration of war on a radio set perched on the edge of that same pulpit - fifty years ago next year!

After the service, it was time for the raffle draw, which was held at Len Hubbard's Burwood Gallery - after all it was his picture which was being raffled! Winner was Mrs Barbara Gay of Kingsbridge - - the first thing she had ever won in her life! The raffle raised £435.71.

MONDAY, JULY 25, 1988.

The Armada 400 Committee held their last meeting. They thanked everyone who had helped, all who made donations, and all who took part. And they divided up the proceeds, as promised, on a strictly local parish basis:

£500 to the Parish Hall.

£100 to the Friends of Thurlestone School.

£100 for improvements to the Rectory Barn.

£50 to the Thurlestone Football Club, plus the barbecue monies.

And One whole pig to the Bantham Surf Lifesaving Club for use at their fete.

For the record the members of the Thurlestone Armada 400 Committee were: Derrick Yeoman (Chairman), Phil Deare (Treasurer), Penny McDonald (Secretary) and the members: Molly Oswald, Monica Dickins, Val Brown, David Grose, Trevor Battell, Len Hubbard, Kendall McDonald. And the crew of that winning float were: Derrick and Jean Yeoman, Phil and Doreen Deare, Jean Adams, Yvonne Jeffery, Nita Trim, Tracy Penwell and Val Brown.

And for the record too: That committee would like to put an album of photographs in the parish records, so would anyone who has pictures of Armada events please lend them for copying. Please contact Len Hubbard or Kate Hubbard at the Burwood Gallery.

THURLESTONE PROBUS CLUB.

The speaker at our July meeting was Len Hubbard, our local water colourist. He outlined his working life to date culminating in what led him into making a career as an artist. His tips and anecdotes made the talk both interesting and humorous, and was obviously much enjoyed by the 32 members present.

Our next meeting will be on September 9 when Mr. G. Calvert will be talking about the Falklands, an area of the world in which he has a very close and personal interest.

The annual golf meeting will replace our normal meeting on October 14. Any member wishing to play or just to attend the lunch and has not yet given Geoff Wilkinson his name on 560512 must do so no later than the September meeting, but preferably before.

In November we are hoping that the Director of Finance for the South Hams District Council will be talking to us about the Poll Tax.

D.M.YEOMAN. Hon.Secretary (560300).

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY.

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Evening Show - 7.30 p.m.

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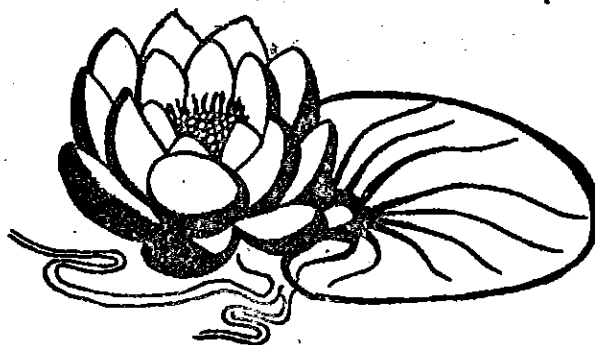
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A R E T I R E M E N T H A V E N A N D A L I V I N G C O M M U N I T Y

asks WALTER DEE

Over the past six years this publication, in support of the Parish Council, has maintained constant publicity regarding the Thurlestone village sewerage problem, now hopefully on the way to being resolved following the EEC Directive demanding the Authorities clean up the beaches in their area - which proved how right the Parish Council had always been in rating Leas Foot beach as the most sewage polluted in the South Hams. Now there is the little matter of the awful housing imbalance which needs to be resolved....

Some few years ago the County Council closed the Primary school at South Milton and transferred the children to an enlarged school at Thurlestone - now called All Saints Primary School. I have recently been creditably informed that there are some 70 youngsters in South Milton under the age of 18 years. How many are there in Thurlestone Parish ?

I think it not out of place to relate the theme of a speech given by John Gummer, Minister of State at the Ministry of Agriculture at the Annual Conference of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers, in Hereford a few weeks ago:

"Frightened by the dangers of overdevelopment, the Mrs Snells (local busybody in 'The Archers') of this world want to turn the countryside into a Museum. They belong to the taxidermy school of planning. Using the language of conservation, they condemn up to preservation. They squeeze the life out of our Villages and keep only the skin. Workaday places retain their facades as they become retirement havens."

"But where are the jobs and opportunities for working people? What future is there for the countrymen and women who fashion those villages and whose farming forebears created the countryside around? Jobs in agriculture will decline as we pull back on surplus production. Our planning policies must give elbow room for rural enterprises to take their place. Villages and Market towns must always be working communities. Most of the young stayed to work. Now there are ever fewer in farming we have to put some of those jobs back on the farm - through farm shops, tourism, crafts and recreational facilities - farmers can help to replace the lost employment. But they'll have to counter the rural extremists and uphold the living countryside. If we don't want that countryside filled with old schoolhouses, old rectories and old forges and denuded of village schools, village parsons and village enterprises, then we've got to get on with it. If we don't want our countryside to die, we have to get this right. We DON'T have to choose between being clobbered by development or chloroformed by preservationists. There is a middle way - rural jobs for rural people, keeping life in the countryside through farm based enterprise.

The Government through its diversification policies and enterprise grants is committed. The industry must now respond." (End of quote)

Ewen Cameron, Chairman of the Avon & Somerset branch of the Country Landowner's Association is giving a block of land to the Housing Association Sutton Eastoe, who are helping to build starter homes on it. Safeguards are built into the scheme to ensure that homes can only be owned or rented by village people. Mr Cameron said: "As landowners we believe the future viability of our rural communities depends on the provision of low-cost housing for young people. We are not against executive housing or village retirement homes, but every community needs a balance and currently young people simply cannot afford to buy country homes in this area.....we hope it is a scheme which is going to take off nationally, because it could help to solve one crisis in the countryside."

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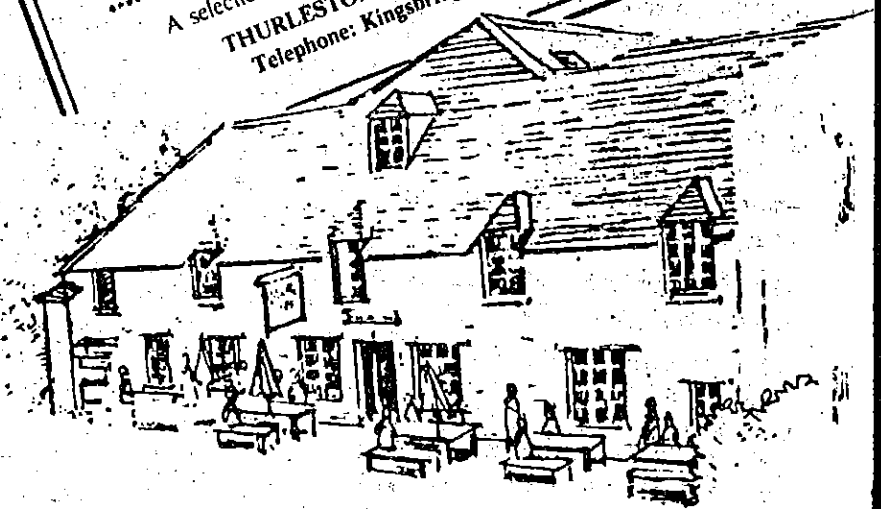
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Drabblemania!

The two sides of a person's face are never alike. The eyes are out of line in two cases out of five, and one eye is also, as a rule, stronger than the other in seven persons out of ten. The right ear is also often higher than the left.

Only one person in fifteen has perfect eyes, the largest percentage of defects prevailing among fair haired people. Short sight is more common in town than in country folk.

The smallest interval of sound can be better distinguished with one ear than with both. The nails of two fingers never grow with the same rapidity, that of the middle finger growing the fastest, while that of the thumb grows slowest.

In fifty or so cases out of 100 the left leg is shorter than the right. The bones of the average human male skeleton weigh just about 20lbs; those of a woman are 6lbs lighter.

That unruly member, the tongue of a woman, is also smaller than that of a man, given a man and a woman of equal size and weight. It may be appalling to reflect, but it is nevertheless true, that the muscles of the human jaw can exert a force of over 500lbs. !

Now the only part of this you can't prove is the weight of your bones !!

+ + + + +

What a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back with a hinge in it.

+ + + + +

Have you ever watched that ITV series 'The Bill' ? If it truly represents how our wonderful police perform then one can only predict - no, I won't say it.

+ + + + +

Did you feel any sense of surprise that a Primary School event had to resort for support to a licenced bar ?

+ + + + +

When in 1984 direction indicators were made compulsory for farm tractors, - yes, really! - one was left wondering how this applied to farm tractor trailers, because as we all know trailers mask their towing vehicles' rear lights. Surely even the dimmest of us thought that trailer indicators would also be mandatory - but it has taken just four years for the 'oversight' to be remedied. I am left wondering how many farm tractor trailers we shall now see with lovely flashing amber lights.

+ + + + +

If your cat or dog suffers from fleas, I am told you should mix some dried fennel leaves with their bedding material. It will keep the fleas at bay.

+ + + + +

Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley says that Housing Associations are to be encouraged to move into rural areas and provide low cost homes for rental which are in such demand.

. Opportunity knocking ?

+ + + + +

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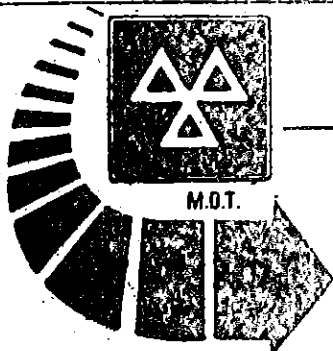
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DRABBLEMANIA PART TWO

Perhaps not widely known is that in December last the High Court ruled in favour of a member of the Ramblers' Association, upholding the Association's interpretation of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and overthrew the Act's main principle covering public rights of way. The judgement effectively means that farmers cannot now bring evidence to show that foot-paths and bridleways were incorrectly marked or drawn in error. The outcome vindicates the working of section 56, which states that: 'Definitive maps are conclusive evidence that footpaths, bridleways and other categories of highway existed from the date they were drawn.'

+ + + + +

It is said that more than half of Britain's mothers still believe an apple a day keeps the doctor away and put one in their children's lunchboxes. Do make sure any wax said to be used on apples has been washed off first.

+ + + + +

"There, but for the grace of God, go I...." is a phrase which has been used so many times and applied to a wide variety of circumstances, but the man who supposedly first said it is today largely forgotten. The words have been attributed to a number of saintly men (its always 'men' you notice, ladies) - though the story is rightly told of John Bradford, a well-known Protestant. Once, on seeing some criminals being taken to execution, he exclaimed, 'There, but for the Grace of God, goes John Bradford.' His words proved prophetic, for he himself became a martyr. He was reportedly burnt at the stake in Smithfield, London in 1555.

+ + + + +

Benedictus benedicat -
With full heart I say my grace,
For my kitchen garden grows
All I need in little space;
Onions, carrots for a stew,
Comely kale that holds the dew,
Fruit the blackbirds share by stealth;
And my orchard keeps me fed
Through the Winter by its wealth
Of fine apples gold and red.

W.M.Letts

+ + + + +

G.K.Chesterton (1874-1936) speaking of money: "There are two ways to get enough. One is to continue to accumulate more and more. The other is to desire less and less."

+ + + + +

Coal Board Chairman Sir Robert Haslem says that since the long strike coal production has risen by 60 percent - and some miners earn as much as £500 a week.

+ + + + +

I am told that when the Secretary of a nearby village Conservative Association retired at the age of seventy 'to make way for a younger man, his successor was 77 !

+ + + + +

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Shall we see another 1963? asks Villager

Here we are - September October time, and without wishing to depress you in any way, I don't think we should go on too long without a thought as to what kind of winter weather we might expect for 1988-89. No doubt many will recall: 1963 - just some 25 years ago which was 'acclaimed' "As one of the worst winters for the past 200 years." Make that 225 years now, of course. I can remember it only too well for my water main was frozen solid for over six weeks.

Mind you, I could refer to John Cossins and his "Remembrances of Exeter in 1877." "The young reader must understand in those days," he began, "the winters were much more severe than now; skating was almost a certainty, and snow falling at various times for two or three days, and remaining on the ground for several weeks. I have seen birds dead on the ground for want of food. My father informed me that the snow had been so high in Haldon that men were sent from Exeter to cut a passage through it, to allow the mails to pass."

Naturally I was not then alive, but the greatest snows I have witnessed in this country occurred in Derbyshire in 1947, when I had my car locked in a snowdrift on the A6 for 17 days before they could break through with rather more modern machinery than in 1877 I'm sure.

However, the winter of 1881 is recorded, "As fierce as anything to be remembered," and the great snows of 1891 (and who hasn't seen photographs of that) were followed by the intense cold of 1895, but just how close a scrutiny such recollections could withstand I don't know. The Meteorological Office announced that January 1963 was the coldest in London since 1838 - but in the South West it was said to have been the coldest since 1814, although records were only kept continuously from January 1817 by the Devon and Exeter Institution, so there has to be an element of subjective recollection prior to that date - and that is not always reliable. Let us stick to Records - which reveal that the temperature at Exeter for January 1963 averaged just 28.9 degrees F - more than 3 degrees F colder than the average recorded in January 1838 - and whatever I think of the 1947 winter the 1963 winter in January was 2.4 degrees F colder! In fact, the lowest recorded temperature for January 1963 was 12 degrees F - 20 degrees of frost!

Local newspapers stated that the snowfall of early January 1963 was greater than anything in living memory, that all travel ceased and most shops remained shut and the streets empty with snow 3 to 4 feet of snow. Certainly I recall there were no Plymouth-Kingsbridge-Dartmouth buses running for fully three weeks - but as soon as the main carriageway was at least cleared to the width of one vehicle I got through to my office in Kingsbridge every day. Mind you that old time courtesy was abroad again, and what few drivers were on the road were people like myself - reared in the north where a foot of snow for many weeks of winter were commonplace - and you either learnt to drive in such conditions or didn't drive at all - and there was little in the line of four wheel drive cars in 1963. Incidentally, much of the River Avon was partially frozen over and the bird life would have thrilled every 'birder' there was - if he could have got through to look. The mortality amongst so many birds was dreadful.

So, I just wonder, as I said at the beginning - what sort of a winter are we due to have. 25 years since the last truly hard winter is a long time - so timewise a little preparation for the worst will cost little now and probably a great deal should it come to the worst.

After all, I was a boy scout - once!

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