

VILLAGE VOICE

1990

Oct — Nov



THE MARINES ARE COMING BACK

(SEE INSIDE)

Founded by Dudley
DRABBLE
1982.



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AS THE SUN SINKS SLOWLY IN THE WEST and the last, once welcome, guest, who has only overstayed that welcome by at least a year, revs away up the street, the village windows give a final rattle of protest, and sanity is here again.

Now is the winter of our content. Now the rush is over and there's time to think. To think, for example, about the benefits of tourism, which, to be frank, are hardly apparent to most who live round here. A time to wonder if the whole of the cultivation of West Country tourism is one giant confidence trick. For just as the poll tax levied on the holiday homes in our area goes not to the parish, but to the wasteful spenders higher up, so it seems does tourist money.

Look around you as you emerge from your home no longer penned in by other people's cars - where is the benefit? Where has all the money gone? Is it all already spent on yet more brochures dragging yet more hordes down the M5? Where is the benefit to the people who live here? Shouldn't we get our poll tax cut by a percentage of the number of tourists we endure?

None of this means that we are against tourism - not if it is really for the common good. We are told it brings in millions, provides jobs, keeps shops open. But are we really sure? Certainly we would like to be assured that there is a profit to our parish from our suffering. Or is it all going into that giant black hole they call the County Council?

ON THE GOLF COURSE YOU'RE UNDER PAR, METRO-GOLDWYN HAVE ASKED YOU TO STAR, STILL YOU'RE BROKEN-HEARTED 'COS YOU CAN'T GET STARTED...? THAT CAN ONLY BE BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T STUDIED THE SUPERGUIDE TO WHAT'S GOING ON...

VILLAGE VOICE'S DATES FOR 1990.

Tues 2nd October Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall 7.30 pm.
Sat 13th Oct. Coffee Morning. National Childrens Homes, Rectory Barn 10.30-12 noon.
Sat. 13th Oct. Dr. Neville Oswald slide-talk South Devon Cattle, Devonshire Assn, Parish Hall 2.45 pm
Tues 16th Oct. British Heart Coffee Morning, Clock Cottage, Bantam 10.30 am.
Thurs 25th Oct. Opening meeting of All Saints Fellowship, guest speaker, Rectory Barn 2.30 p.m.

Tues 6th November. Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall 7.30 pm.
Sat 10th Nov. Autumn Bazaar, Thurlestone School 2.00 p.m.
Sun. 11th Nov. Remembrance Day Service, All Saints 11.10 am.
Tues. 13th Nov. "Tupperware" Coffee Morning, Parish Hall 10.30 am.
Sat. 17th Nov. Wartime Memories, Parish Hall 7.30 pm.
Wed. 21st Nov. Thurlestone Ramblers Walk, East Allington.
Thurs. 22nd Nov. All Saints Fellowship. Guest speaker. Rectory Barn 2.30 pm
Sat 24th Nov. Christmas Bazaar NSPCC, Parish Hall 10.30-12.30 pm.

Sat 1st December. Thurlestone Conservatives Bazaar Parish Hall 10.30 am
Tues 11th Dec. Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall 7.30 pm.
Wed 12th Dec. Thurlestone Ramblers Christmas pub lunch walk, Normandy Arms, Blackawton.
Thurs 13th Dec. All Saints Fellowship. Guest speaker. Rectory Barn 2.30 pm.
Mon 17th Dec. "Rising Generation", Parish Hall.

1991. Shrove Tuesday. Possibility of village pancake race.

PLEASE HELP TO KEEP THIS LIST UP TO DATE. Only if all dates are listed, can clashes be avoided. Get your function off to a good start by giving your dates - and any others you know about - to Mrs. Joan Mackenzie, 7, Old Rectory Gardens, Thurlestone (in writing please) by November 1st for our next edition.



THE MARINES ARE COMING BACK!

VILLAGE TO HOST 50th ANNIVERSARY

REUNION IN 1991

Here Villager reveals some of the ideas circulating in Thurlestone about what should be done to mark the occasion when 'Johnny comes marching home again'....

THERE'S TALK IN THE VILLAGE of Church parades and band parades, of dinners and dances, of marquees and coach trips - all to mark the 50th anniversary of the Royal Marines taking over the Thurlestone Hotel in January 1941 as their Military School.

Highlight of the celebrations looks like being a grand reunion weekend in June next year to which all the survivors of the 6,000 cadets who passed through the school until it closed in 1946 will be invited. Central to the operation will of course be the Thurlestone Hotel and David Grose told Village Voice that though planning is in the very early stages they are in touch with the Royal Marines Association and hope to see many of the school's old boys back at the hotel for a special weekend.

Further on in this issue of your magazine you will find an article by Colonel F.C. Bye of the Royal Marines which will give you a good idea of what life was like for the cadets in wartime Thurlestone. When Colonel Bye spoke to the All Saints Fellowship early this year he was already making plans for a reunion at the Hotel for his own particular officer-training course. In his article you will see how much support the cadets felt they got from Thurlestone Church and so it is hardly surprising to know that the Rector has been involved in the anniversary planning from the very beginning and that a Church Parade figures largely in the reunion plans.

Though it's too early at this stage to say what the village plans to do to boost the celebrations, Derrick Yeoman, Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, is to head a committee. He already visualises the band of the Royal Marines parading down the village and points out that this would strike a chord with Marines who attend the reunion as the cadets who were passing out and getting their commissions would be paraded up at Kerse Cross and march down through the village past the Church and up to a field behind it for the actual passing-out parade. "It's where the 16th fairway is now," says Derrick, and adds that you can still see the stanchion where the flagpole and saluting party stood.

Such a parade down the village would certainly bring back memories to the older people in the village. Mrs. Gert Burns was telling me about the Marines in Thurlestone when I interviewed her for our "I Remember" column. "Course I remember the Marines here," she said, "you couldn't forget them..every so often they would have a pass-out..in the field behind the church. It was

VILLAGER CONTINUES:

beautiful...to see them all marching about with a band. We used to go up and watch.

"They were very good to the villagers. They got up concerts for the children. We used to go to the pictures there. And when my husband was home on leave we used to go up to the mess and have an evening with dancing. Mind you, you couldn't just go in. You had to stand under a light so they could see you and you had to have a pass. They had a guard in the little office and a sentry walking up and down all the time. They were very good and held lots of events in the dance hall which we always called the annexe. Every Sunday morning they had a parade and marched to Church."

Village Voice will bring you more details of the Marines celebrations in later issues. And now to other things...

ARCHERS NOT IN THURLESTONE - OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

DEVOTED READERS will recall my alarm when I heard that those dreadful Archers were launching a magazine called Village Voice!

Now I have had a letter from the co-editor of the Ambridge Village Voice, one Hedli Niklaus, enclosing a copy of her publication, which I am sad to tell you is "tabloid" size and only four pages. She writes: "The Ambridge Village Voice you will see not only differs in full title but also in format. So fears may be laid to rest and there will be no Archers infiltration in Thurlestone"

However, not without cheek is our Hedli not only does she add that "you will no doubt be horrified to hear that there is yet another Village Voice, this time related to Malvern" but has the nerve to suggest that I write a "pithy article" for their next edition pointing out that Thurlestone's Village Voice was first!

Pithy article indeed! Let me pithily point out another great difference in our two publications. Village Voice, the real one which you are holding now, costs you nothing whereas the Ambridge Village Voice of only four pages and which appears only quarterly has an annual subscription of £10!

POACHERS AND POLLUTERS BEWARE!

The National Rivers Authority is putting out this telephone number - 0800 378500 - and asking anyone who sees pollution or dead or distressed fish...or anyone illegally catching or selling fish...to let them know. It's a free call and a 24-hour number.

COLOUR-CONSCIOUS?

Has anyone else spotted the SHDC yellow van with the matching surfboard on its roof-rack?

LOCAL NEWS

SEX SHOCK HORROR.

NUDES SIGHTED AT LEAS FOOT BEACH.

The deputy chairman of South Hams District Council Jack Thomas shocked a Thurlestone parish council meeting at the end of August by declaring that he was investigating complaints made to him by a local woman, whom he did not name, regarding nude displays on Leas Foot Beach, Thurlestone.

The woman had reported men strolling around the beach with absolutely nothing on. Her complaints were backed by two visiting families, whom Councillor Thomas also did not identify. The woman had, however, told him that the nude men were not local.

Councillor Jack Thomas had investigated as best he could and had visited the beach in question but had seen nothing. The right channel for such complaints was the police.

Parish councillors professed amazement at his disclosures. Most admitted knowing of the "nudie nook" on Broad Sands, but this they were sure was the first time in living memory that such a thing had happened on Leas Foot.

After the meeting, one councillor who refused to give his name said: "I shall not go on that beach again. I thought it was bad enough with the sewage there. Are we now going to have to put up more notices to warn people of this new hazard?"

HOLIDAY HOMES.

PARISH APPEAL TO OWNERS.

Rubbish spilling from split black sacks - particularly in Island View during the holiday season - has resulted in an appeal from Thurlestone Parish Council to the owners of the 153 holiday homes in the parish.

Please, says the Parish Council, tell your tenants what happens if they put out their rubbish in plastic sacks when they leave on Friday or Saturday and the rubbish is not collected until the following Thursday. Tell them that dogs, foxes, badgers, seagulls and cats have a wonderful time, but residents are not amused.

So owners are asked to advise their tenants by means of the information book, which is in most holiday homes, to leave their rubbish in the dustbins. Owners are also asked to arrange with neighbour or cleaner for the bins to be put out on refuse days if the house or cottage is not occupied at the time.

NO HOME FOR BOTTLE BANK.

No place can be found for Thurlestone's bottle bank, the Thurlestone Parish Council were told at their August meeting.

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THURLESTONE AND SOUTH MILTON HORTICULTURAL SHOW

The results of this year's Show held at the Village Hall, South Milton on Saturday 4th August are as follows:

Section A - Vegetable and Fruit Cup (Amateur): D Coward (10 Firsts)
Section B - Vegetable and Fruit Cup (Open): M Orr (7 Firsts)
Section C - Cut Flowers & Pot Plants Cup: Mrs S Chapman (4 Firsts)
Section D - Children's Cup (5 - 8 years): Miss K Luscombe (2 Firsts)
Section D - Children's Cup (9 - 15 years): Miss J Anderton (3 Firsts)
Section E - Home Economics Cup: Mrs D Amess (3 Firsts)
Section F - Flower Arrangement Cup: Mrs A Foster (3 Firsts)
Section G - Handicraft Cup: Mrs D Amess (3 Firsts)
Cup for South Milton Exhibitor with highest number of points: Mrs
number of points: Mrs D Amess
Cup for Thurlestone Exhibitor with highest
number of points: D Coward
Marshall Cup for best Rose Bloom: Mrs M Pedley
Doris Jackson Cup for best sewn item: Mrs D Amess
Yeo Cup for best amateur vegetable: D Coward
Wray Cup for best open vegetable: M Orr
Derrick Yeoman Cup for best children's exhibit: Miss A Carpenter

Certificates of Merit:

Section A - Vegetable and Fruit (Amateur): D Coward
Section B - Vegetable and Fruit (Open): M Orr
Section C - Cut Flowers & Pot Plants: Miss E Snowden
Section D - Children: Miss A Carpenter
Section E - Home Economics: Mrs D Amess
Section F - Flower Arrangements: Mrs A Foster
Section G - Handicrafts: (J S R Reynolds
(Mrs D Amess

First Prizes:

Section A - L J Jeffery (3) K Luscombe (2) Mrs E Clack (1) Miss
A Jenkins (1) Mrs H McKillop (1)
Section B - R J Dayment (3) D Coward (3) B Horn (3) R Rogers (2)
Miss E Snowden (1) Mrs L A Grose (1)
Section C - M Orr (4) L A Jeffery (2) Mrs M Pedley (2) Mrs E White
(1) Miss E Snowden (1)
Section D - Children 5 - 8 years
Master R Luscombe (1) Miss A Carpenter (1) Master D
Pedley (1)
Children 9 - 15 years
Master S Pedley (2)
Section E - Mrs P Macdonald (2) Miss A Jenkins (1) Mrs L A Grose
(1) Mrs D Tyler (1) Mrs S Munday (1) Mrs J Yeoman (1)
Mrs J Mackenzie (1)
Section F - Mrs L A Grose (1) Mrs H McKillop (1)
Section G - Miss L Rogers (1) Mrs D Tyler (1) Mrs J Yeoman (1)
J S R Reynolds (1) Mrs P Ladd (1) Mrs J Richardson
(1) R A Reece

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all Prize Winners and to thank all exhibitors without whom the Show would not be able to take place.

Talking About

FIVE MONTHS AS THE LOWEST FORM OF
ANIMAL LIFE IN THURLESTONE...

THIS ARTICLE IS CLOSELY BASED ON A TALK GIVEN BY COLONEL F.C.BYE, ROYAL MARINES, RETIRED, TO THE ALL SAINTS FELLOWSHIP EARLY THIS YEAR IN THE RECTORY BARN.

The Royal Marines have two basic functions. Firstly sea service, during which if they are not ashore acting as soldiers, they man part of the ship's armament, usually "X" turret. Their second role is shore service. During the last war they provided four Commando brigades and took part in amphibious assault operations. In fact two-thirds of the landing craft in the Normandy assault were crewed by Marines.

In those days basic infantry training took place at various depots all over the country. Training for command - both non-commissioned and commissioned - was done at Thurlestone. So it could be said that all the Marines swanning around here during the war years were the cream of the Corps!

The Thurlestone Hotel was taken over as the Royal Marines Military School in early January, 1941. The advance party were greatly surprised to find some determined guests still in residence and the rest occupied by an evacuated girls' school. Agreement on a further evacuation was soon reached however and out went the guests and the girls and the Marines marched in.

The Marines Military School was here from 1941 to 1946. It consisted of an HQ and three wings. The Cadet Wing had about 300 cadets under training at any one time and if they passed the course which lasted three months they ended up as Second Lieutenants and were posted to land-based units, such as the landing craft squadrons.

The Officers' Wing had a different function. At that time the Royal Marines still took their officers direct from civilian life as well. Those who succeeded in this direct entry were schoolboys one day and second lieutenants the next. If they were in for the war only their course took two months. If they were regulars or career officers then they were in Thurlestone for five months. Unlike the other cadets these officers were posted to sea duties.

Thurlestone also had an N.C.O.'s Wing. The object of this was to take likely lads from the ranks and train them to be corporals. This wing did not stay at Thurlestone long and moved away in October, 1942.

Colonel Bye was a regular entry and here for five months. It was the policy of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines to give permanent commissions all the way through the war. This is Colonel Bye's story of his five months in Thurlestone:

I was trained at Portsmouth for nearly a year before I came to



Cottages
in
Thurleston.
22.5.44.

Toy Car

June 2. 44.

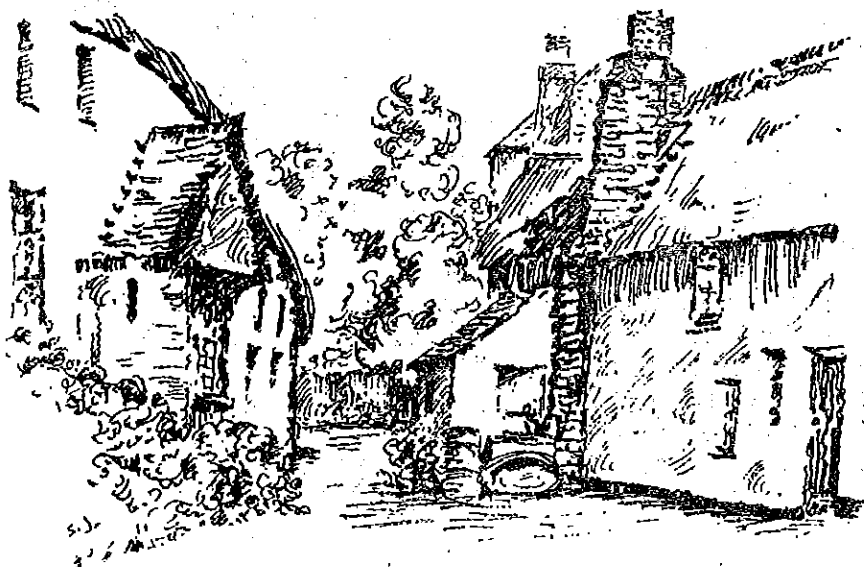
Thurleston

S.J.

Pen-and-ink drawings by
the late Mrs. Sybil Jerram,
wife of the C.O. of the
Officers' Wing of the Royal
Marines Military School
which was in the Thurleston
Hotel from 1941-46 (see
full story opposite).



Back of
the
Thurleston
15.6.44.



May Cottage
Buckland.
20.9.44.



"Just a Cottage"
Thurleston
June 2. 44.

CONTINUING COLONEL BYE'S STORY:

to Thurlestone. I was a probationary second lieutenant - the lowest form of animal life. My view of Thurlestone is therefore very much a worm's eye view. We arrived in January, 1942 - eleven of us - for that five month course. We got here by train from South Brent to Kingsbridge. And we left the same way. Those were the only times I travelled on that wonderful little railway, which they said was one of the prettiest in the country.

We found the hotel stripped of all the luxury and elegance it had obviously had before the war. It now had the real military environment - bare boards, deal tables, iron bedsteads, all the things you associate with service life.

The eleven of us lived in two large bedrooms on the second floor complete with those same bare boards, bare tables and a little cupboard for our uniforms. The parade ground was in the garage of today. The eleven of us used to fall in on the piece of the parade ground, which is where the little garage office used to be.

During our five months we were taught all the military skills from a theoretical and practical point of view, from map-reading to the correct way to assess a situation. Practically we did quite a lot of exercises around the area. We used to disappear in the dead of night in the back of trucks, were dumped off in twos and threes with a map and compass and told to find our way back. We had to learn to ride a horse too. This was supposedly so that if you ended up in some overseas land, you could grab a horse and ride off to do some reconnaissance - time spent in reconnaissance, we were taught, was seldom wasted.

The hotel golf course was in those days an explosion-torn wasteland because it was a grenade range. The fields around the hotel were used for drill manoeuvres and sport. I can't honestly say I ever went into one of the village shops because in the hotel we had a NAAFI shop. But I know that the staff of the school lived in the village and they went shopping there.

The golf course - what do I remember about the golf course? - what I can't remember is seeing anyone playing there..it would have been quite difficult because the cadets used to do a set piece attack across it which started at Bantam and ended up at a water tower, which was where the 13th green is today..It would have been quite disconcerting to have been playing golf with all that happening!

Another interesting thing was the uniform tailors. Cadets had to pass out in large numbers and they had to get their second-lieutenants' uniforms so, of course, they were good trade for the military tailors. All the London tailors homed down here like bees round a honeypot. They all worked from garages which they hired here in Thurlestone. Gieves was, for example, in the garage of Mount Stone near the Stores in the main street. Hawkes, Flights and Hohn Jones were all here in Thurlestone.

There was a remarkable intelligence network between the tailors' representatives and the NCO Instructors at the school. They all met in the Village Inn and discuss personalities. At the end of the evening the tailors would know who were the likely lads almost certain to pass the course and get their commissions. So you knew how you were doing because the ones who were likely to pass were bombarded by requests from all the tailors to be allowed to make their uniforms!

One of the major aspects of life in the Thurlestone Hotel was that we had a Wren detachment! The Wrens numbered about 50. And

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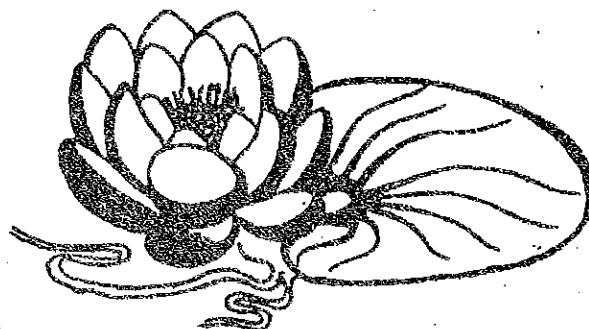
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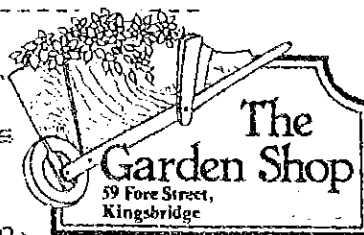
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THE COLONEL'S STORY CONTINUED:

they had a marvellous time! They also contributed, of course, in giving a marvellous time to a few - there were over 350 men in the hotel at any one time!

There were three Wren officers. My batch of second-lieutenants soon got into hot water by drinking too much beer one evening and then all eleven standing in a semi-circle serenading the Wren officers in their quarters. The next morning we were up before the Commandant, told this was conduct unbecoming an officer and given a very severe warning. However, it was largely because of this incident that a remarkable notice appeared on the main board in the hotel, which said that Wrens were expected to assume their normal civilian status out of working hours. Which of course meant that there was no problem anymore about officers going out with Wren ratings, or cadets going out with Wren officers. The arrangement worked extremely well. But there were still only 50 lucky men out of 350!

Our entertainment was limited because we had to walk everywhere. And we couldn't go into the Village Inn - that was out of bounds to all except military school staff. That was probably why the NCO's met the tailors there. But the Links and the Downs Hotels were functioning and we used to go to splendid Saturday evening hops which cost the princely sum of half-a-crown. That included dancing all night, a bun and a pint of beer. Some of the smaller hotels were still operating and you could get a five-bob utility meal.

But as far as entertainment was concerned the golf club was our saving grace. We were all temporary members, which meant we could go in there and drink. We were looked after by a marvellous lady whom we called "Sunshine", whom I subsequently discovered was Betty Ord. She not only kept the golf club going almost singlehanded, but she looked after us like a mother. She really was magnificent - she would pour pints of beer with one hand and find cigarettes or sandwiches with the other and all the while she had both ears open listening to all our cares and woes.

In the military school itself we had ENSA shows, concerts and dances, because being Marines we had access to the Royal Marine bands. And the Plymouth band was conducted by Major F.J. Ricketts, who under his pen name of Kenneth Alford wrote "Colonel Bogey" and lots of other marches. He used to send dance bands over to Thurlestone.

This all sounds very carefree, but we were at war. Sometimes we had an air-raid when German planes returning from trying to bomb Plymouth dumped their bomb-loads on the way back to France. The beaches were mined and wired at that time and sadly, during the time I was in Thurlestone one Wren was killed by stepping on a mine on the beach.

That was not the military school's only casualty. In Thurlestone Churchyard on the South-West side there is a gravestone to 51-year-old Major-General A.C. St. Clair-Morford, C.B.E MC. He was the commandant of the school and he was killed accidentally in a live-ammunition exercise on May 4, 1945. He had retired as a major-general and was recalled to the service. He was involved in the Normandy landings in the Eastern Taskforce when he was the senior marine planner on the staff of the Naval Commander. And then he came to Thurlestone as a colonel.

What happened when we had to hand the Thurlestone Hotel back?

CONCLUDING THE COLONEL'S STORY:

This was in the Spring of 1946. Being Marines we had inherited the Naval tradition that you scrub out every morning come hell or high water and so over the years the poor old floorboards of the Thurlestone Hotel had been scrubbed out vigorously every day. And they had shrunk. And according to the Grose Family there wasn't a floorboard in the place which didn't squeak!

There was an enormous amount of damage done too by hobnail boots and rifles banging against walls and chipping plaster and all that sort of thing - the sort of thing which happens when you have hundreds of soldiers there year after year. But the family set about the huge task of putting it all back into a lovely hotel. They had their problems. There was a certain amount of difficulty about Government compensation. Before a tough bargain was struck there were even threats of permanent requisition of the building!

The Church in Thurlestone always gave us the very necessary spiritual support. And the Corps has recognised this with the plaque in the Church and the silver candlesticks, which were presented after the war.

My batch left in May, 1942. When we had got our kit together, the commandant of the Officers' Wing - Major (later Colonel) Fred Jerran, a retired Marine officer, who had been recalled at the start of the war, asked us to call in at his home for a cup of coffee on our way. The Major was a very distinguished soldier from World War One. He had been at Gallipoli and was a man of great intellect and charm.

He then lived in Home Cottage, which was then divided into two and we stopped our three-tonner outside and went in to claim our coffee. When we were all in, a door opened and in came all our No.1 Wren friends! We had a lovely coffee morning and I can still remember waving goodbye to those girls out of the back of the lorry. I don't think any of us - maybe one did - saw those girls again, but they live on in our memories.

We all went to sea and amazingly we all survived the war. Now we are ten. We have our 50th anniversary next year - we shall be having dinner (with our wives to keep us sober) at the Thurlestone Hotel where else! We are today one Major-General, two Colonels, one Lieutenant-Colonel, two Majors, a stockbroker, a thatcher, a chief executive and a Government official...

THOUGHTS ON A BUSY DAY!

I wish I were a little rock
Asitting on a hill,
A doing nothing all day long
But just asitting still.

I wouldn't eat,
I wouldn't drink,
I wouldn't even wash!
I'd sit and sit a thousand years
And rest myself by gosh!

P.E.

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Various Sandwiches
Pasties
Scampi
Chicken
Ploughman's
Lasagne Verde
Cod
Steakwiches

EVENINGS

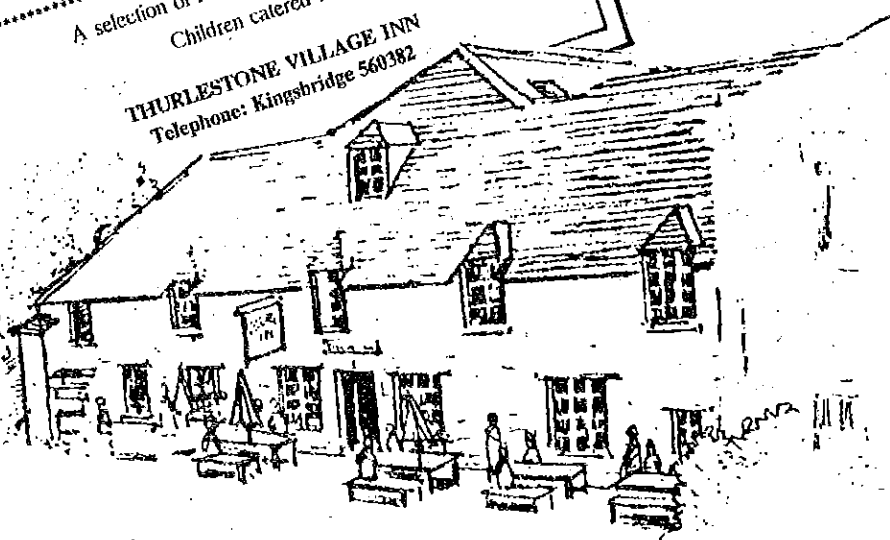
Prawn Cocktail
Home-made Soup
Smoked Salmon Pate
Smoked Mackerel
Avocado Crab Cocktail
Fillet Steak
Sirloin Steak
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Chicken Kiev
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Kate's Kitchen



SAYS KATE: The increase in the frozen fish trade may mean that the days of scrubbed marble slabs covered with fresh fish amid blocks of ice will soon be just a memory...

WITH AROUND 50 SPECIES OF FISH SWIMMING around our shores, it is sad we don't see more variety in the shops. Fish is full of goodness and taste and most fish dishes are quick and easy to prepare. I have chosen plaice, because it is easy to get, for this recipe.

PLAICE ROLLS

4 large plaice fillets
Salt and pepper.
Grated rind and juice of 1 Lemon
1 teasp. chopped Parsley
4 rashers streaky Bacon
1 oz Butter and 1 tablesp. Milk
1 small Onion
Small tin Tomatoes
Dash Worcester sauce
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teasp Basil or other herb you prefer.

Skin the fillets. Season well with salt and pepper. Lay each fillet skinned side up. Sprinkle with lemon juice and parsley and lemon rind. Roll up head to tail. Remove the bacon rinds and wrap a rasher around each fillet. Dot each with butter using no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ oz altogether, place on a plate and add milk. Steam over a pan of simmering water for 20 minutes.

Melt remaining butter in a small pan. Peel and grate onion, add to butter and fry until transparent. Add tomatoes, Worcester sauce and $\frac{1}{2}$ teasp basil or herb you prefer. Cook rapidly for approx. 5 minutes. Carefully remove fish rolls, turn on to side and put under a hot grill for 2-3 minutes to brown and crisp the bacon. Pour the tomato mixture into a shallow dish and put fish rolls in centre. Decorate with a few sprigs of Dill or chopped Parsley.

This dish serves 4.

POSTBAG EXTRA

DEAR EDITORS,

"What a really super exhibition of crafts of all kinds was recently put on in the Parish Hall and very many thanks should be extended to Mrs. Mackenzie and her very hard-working team. It was a joy to see such beautiful work especially so artistically arranged. One can only hope it got the support it so richly deserved. Many thanks. Pat Townsend, 4. Parkfield. Thurlestone.

PAT MACHIN'S PUZZLE CORNER

You liked them! So here are some more

WORD PAIRS

From the list of words take out two which go with each clue. This will remove 32 words, leaving just one. What is it?

CLUES:

- a) Top of the World
- b) Two with Charles
- c) An adventure book
- d) A Cornish town
- e) Two linked with "bar"
- f) A hobby
- g) Two animals
- h) Two make understanding
- i) Two connected with "tea"
- j) A summer game
- k) A temporary mental upset
- l) Two going with "fair"
- m) A newspaper
- n) A tall garden plant
- o) Two anagrams
- p) Two joined to "cup"

WORDS:

- 1. Egg
- 2. Red
- 3. Way
- 4. Gain
- 5. Hook
- 6. Isle
- 7. Know
- 8. Lawn
- 9. Ruth
- 10. Board
- 11. Brain
- 12. Daily
- 13. Emits
- 14. Holly
- 15. Ledge
- 16. Mount
- 17. Party.
- 18. Stamp
- 19. Storm
- 20. Times
- 21. Bridge
- 22. Island
- 23. Prince
- 24. Possum
- 25. Tender
- 26. Tennis
- 27. Dickens
- 28. Everest
- 29. Express
- 30. Treasure
- 31. Afternoon
- 32. Springbok
- 33. Collecting

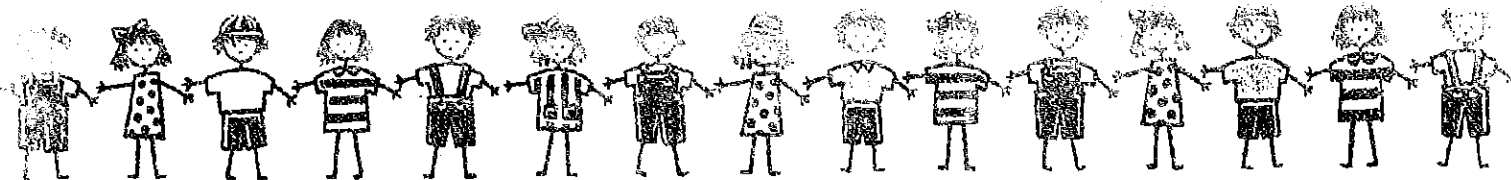
THE ANSWERS ARE ON ANOTHER PAGE IN THIS ISSUE.

LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL

NOT TRUE GRIT...

So many of our visitors are dumping their rubbish in the grit bins, particularly the one at the top of Clannacombe hill, that the Parish Council are asking for it to be removed.

The gritting mixture is delivered in special sacks these days. Of course visitors who can't tell grit bins from rubbish bins may well take these sacks to be the rubbish from someone who got there before them...



FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN

CENTENARY YEAR

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

AT THURLESTONE PARISH HALL

SATURDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

10.30 --- 12.30

STALLS INCLUDE: Cakes, Plants and Groceries, Children's clothes,
toys, Christmas gifts, crackers and cards,
Bric-a-brac, 'Nearly new' clothes, books, raffle.

Contributions to any of the above will be very gratefully received
and may be brought to the Hall on the morning of the bazaar, or
preferably delivered beforehand to any of the following or will be
collected on request:

Mrs. J. Barton,
9, Meadcombe Road,
Thurlestone
(560864)

Mrs. M. Oswald,
The Old Rectory,
Thurlestone
(560555)

Mrs. J. Auster,
4, Stoke Damerel
Warren Road,
Thurlestone
(560578)

Mrs. J. Wilson, Skerries, South Milton (560302)

NSPCC

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

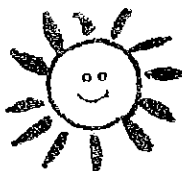
THE ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING
in aid of
NATIONAL CHILDRENS HOMES

will be held in
THE RECTORY BARN on
SATURDAY 13th OCTOBER
from 10.30 to 12.00

Please come and enjoy a happy morning helping to raise funds for this worthwhile cause.

There'll be bring-and-buy, cakes and produce, odds 'n ends, a raffle and the best of everything. If there is anything special you'd like made, please let me know -

PAT TOWNSEND 560430



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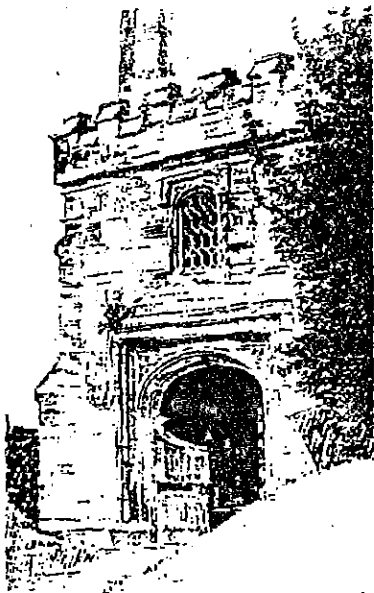
And Many More Too Numerous
To Mention!

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The Rector Writes

THOSE OF US INVOLVED IN EDUCATION over the years cannot but help notice the various FADS which occur - how the system so often overwhelmingly embraces the fad and seeks to make all those who don't readily appreciate its advantages, or, even more daringly, questions the supposed advantages, feel a total outsider.

But one example will serve to illustrate the point. Some 20 odd years ago I was being pressed to lend my support to I.T.A., the Initial Teaching Alphabet, which, by dint of teaching children a different Alphabet and different ways therefore of spelling, was supposed to help them to read and write much more quickly.

Since I always try to be supportive, I indicated that I would not withhold my consent (as Chairman of Governors), although I had the greatest reservations, not with the claim of faster reading, but with the ability of children satisfactorily to transfer to the normal Alphabet and conventional spelling subsequently. In the event my caution was justified and I don't know of a single school where I.T.A. is now used. Undoubtedly, I.T.A. did enable some children to read more quickly. Undoubtedly it is responsible for some children's inability to spell, quite simple words, still.

One appreciates that there is a tremendous amount of extra knowledge that children of today have to learn - to watch the Infants operating their Computer scares me! But why methods of the past should be scrapped, methods of proven worth, merely to accommodate the fads of the present has always been to me a mystery. All the more so when, in general - there are exceptions, but in general, there is less ability to read and write and a lower standard of discipline. These things seem to me to be a pretty basic part of education.

I was amused the other day to read the re-action of groups of educationalists to the claim that the number of children who could not spell had increased. They re-acted by saying it was due to lack of resources! My own reaction was "What resources do you need other than classes of pupils who can't spell and teachers who can! Plus, perhaps, a dictionary."

It is, of course, such considerations which have led us to the much discussed "National Curriculum" and specific "attainment targets", and I read that some teachers are now claiming that fun will disappear from the classrooms and there will only be time to pursue those things which are of academic value.

All this coupled with another fad I occasionally encounter with

CONCLUDING "THE RECTOR WRITES".

parents not allowing children to be childlike - banning "Pussy-cat" in favour of CAT, and of course "Baa-lamb" is out and only LAMB permitted - caused me to wonder whether all our Nursery Rhymes shouldn't be rewritten..so I've made a start, perhaps some of you out there would like to have a go at some others!

"Maria possessed a diminutive sheep,
With wool resembling a frozen heap.
No matter the venue for her wandering feet,
There would be found this walk-about meat.
To the place of learning it pursued Marie
Ignoring legislation to the contrary.
Manifestations of infant delinquency
Marked this visit to the local Academy."

OR perhaps you would prefer "Mary had a little lamb"?!

Now to other things. All Saints Fellowship re-commences on October 25th at 2.30 p.m. in the Rectory Barn. We hope to have an interesting series of speakers and events and hope many of you will join us. Further details will appear in October's Church magazine "Parish News". The following meetings will be on November 22nd and December 13th.

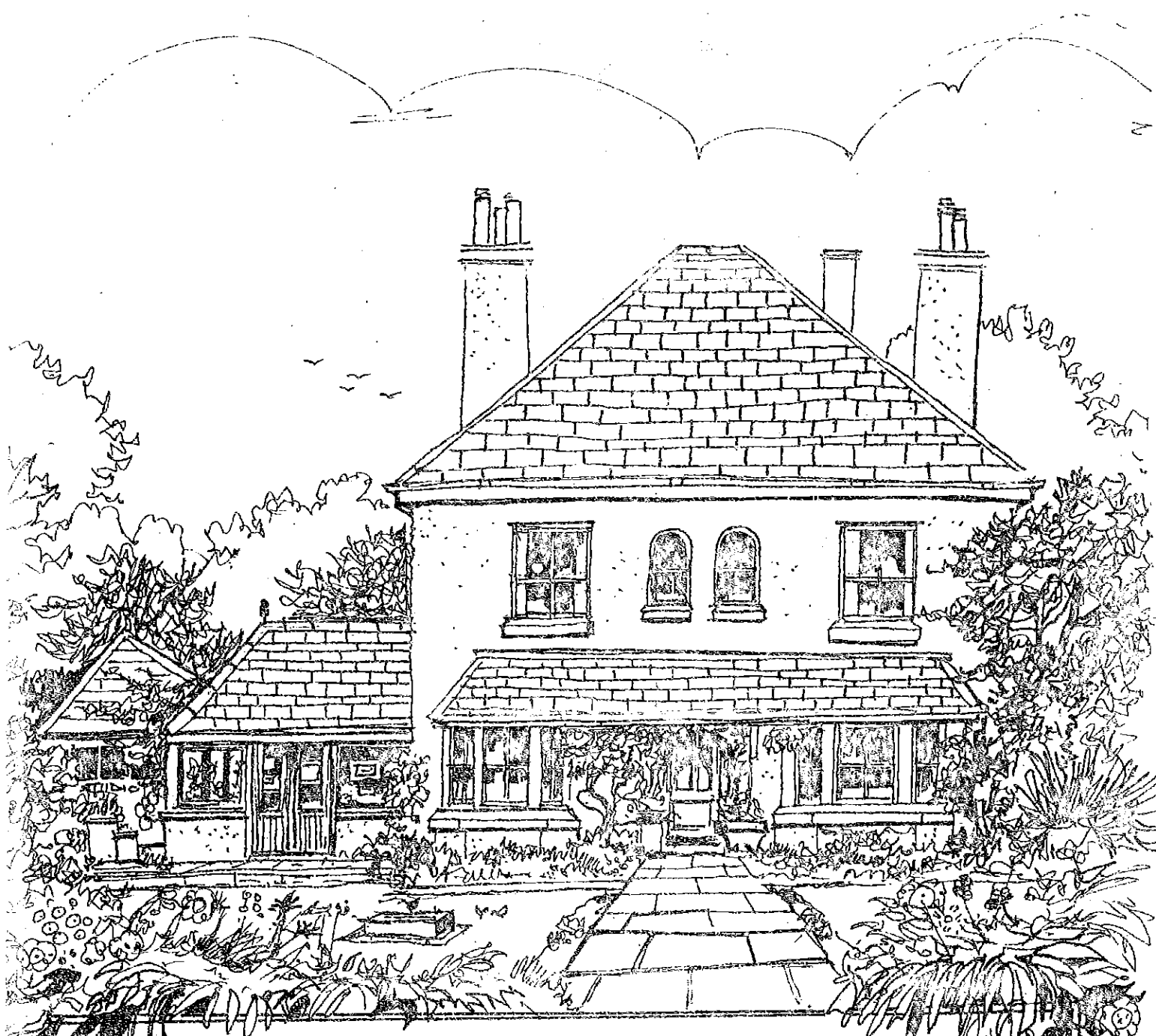
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

YOU READ HARRY HUGGINS IN VILLAGE VOICE..HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO FIND OUT ABOUT BIRDS FROM THE MAN IN PERSON.

For on Thursday November 22nd Harry and June Huggins of the Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society are leading a "Wildfowl in Winter" Walk for the South Hams Environment Service. Meet them outside the Ashburton Arms, West Charleton at 9.45 a.m. and be shown the wonderful wildlife of the Kingsbridge Estuary. Bring fieldglasses and expect to be back by about 1.00 p.m.

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO PAT MACHIN'S PUZZLE CORNER:

- a) 16, 28. b) 23, 27. c) 30, 22. d) 2, 9. e) 4, 25.
f) 18, 33. g) 24, 32. h) 7, 15. i) 17, 31. j) 8, 26.
k) 11, 19. l) 3, 6. m) 12, 29. n) 14, 5. o) 13, 20.
p) 1, 10. Leaving just one word - "Bridge".



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Village Voice can only be distributed FREE to RESIDENTS of the villages of the Parish.

The magazine is entirely self-supporting and is not a charge on the Parish Rate, but it was founded on behalf of the Parish Council and is delighted to remain under the Council's sponsorship.

Extra copies may be bought from the local newsagents, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Morley, at the Village Stores. There is also a subscription service, which already sends copies to readers all over the country at an annual cost of £4.50, which includes postage.

Your copy is delivered to you by our volunteer distributors. In Thurlestone, this is dairyman Peter Bromfield, and in Bantham and West Buckland Mrs. Jean Hurrell.



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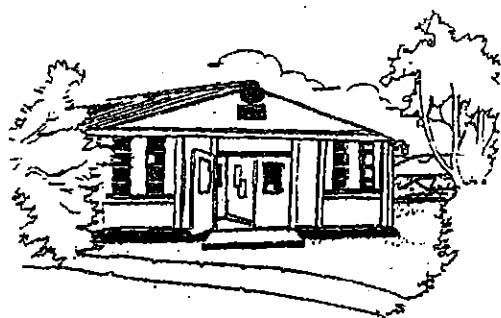
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THURLESTONE PARISH HALL

THE HOBBIES AND CRAFT EXHIBITION produced a variety and high quality of exhibits which surpassed our expectations, and also gave much pleasure to those who visited it.

We thank the residents who generously loaned samples of their work. I am most grateful to the friends of the hall who gave up their time to set up the excellent staging, the stewards and those manning the raffle and refreshments. Also to those who came back again to dismantle the exhibition.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY.

There will be a "Tupperware" Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall on TUESDAY 13th NOVEMBER at 10.30 a.m. A demonstration of these products will be given by Mrs. Angela Brooks. There will be no obligation to purchase any of the items. But it will be just the right time to buy Christmas presents.

HELP, HELP, HELP!

IS THERE ANYONE who could volunteer some help occasionally to do a small amount of skilled typing for the hall?

JOAN MACKENZIE. CHAIRMAN.

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Mr. John Dayment - - - - 560295

Mr. Geoffery Stidston - - 560695

Mr. David Grose - - - - 560375

Mr. G.S. Wilkinson - - - - 560512

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Dist. COUNCILLOR Mr. J. Thomas 560269

Cty. Councillor Mr. Simon Day
Plymouth 691212

SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL:

All Depts: Totnes (97) 864499

KINGSBRIDGE POLICE STATION 85 2326

KINGSBRIDGE HEALTH CENTRE: 85 3551

SALCOMBE HEALTH CENTRE: (84) 2284

LOCAL EMERGENCY OFFICER: 560607

VILLAGE VOICE MAGAZINE: 560239

VILLAGE VOICE CRIMEWATCH

Do Neighbourhood Watches work? They certainly do. To prove it here is a letter sent to the heads of all such watches in our parish recently by Devon Police's Chief Inspector C.E. Morbey:

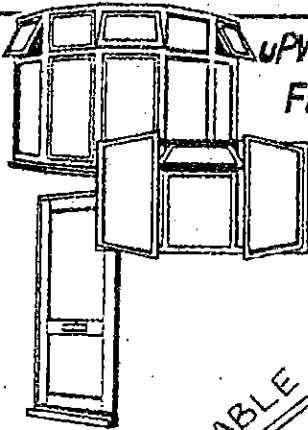
"On 7 August 1990 it was reported to the Police that a suspicious youth, travelling in a Ford Fiesta motor car had been seen in the village of West Alvington.

"As a result of Officers checking the details of the vehicle in question, it was found that the car had been stolen from Oxfordshire.

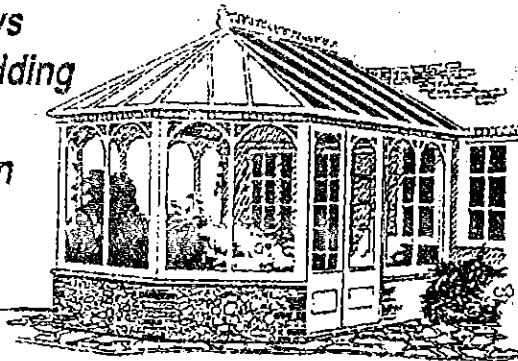
"The area was searched, but Officers failed to locate the car and its driver, and the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators were alerted. As a result of vigilant observations, the vehicle was spotted in the Churchstow area. Police Officers attended and the driver was arrested.

"I would like to thank all those who were involved for their co-operation, and it certainly proves the worth of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme."

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FROM A LEAFLET ON PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE & LUNG CANCER. PRE-RETIREMENT
DEATHS - SMOKERS 40% - NON SMOKERS 15% !!



Cigarettes give off two types of smoke - "mainstream smoke" is filtered by the cigarette and inhaled by the smoker. The other type is sidestream smoke which goes directly from the end of the cigarette into the air. As it is not filtered it contains higher concentrations of harmful substances than the mainstream smoke. It is therefore potentially dangerous to non-smokers, especially when they are exposed to it for long periods of time.

Children exposed to a large amount of sidestream smoke are more prone than other children to serious chest illnesses such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

DRABBLE MANIA

A MISCELLANY OF THIS AND THAT

Do you ever feel giddy - and wonder why ?? Perhaps you don't always remember that the Earth is spinning on its own axis at about 1000 miles an hour and at the same time travelling through space on an annual journey round the sun at something like 67,000 miles an hour. And we think breaking the speed of sound quite wonderful !

Of the estimated 4,500 million years or so since the Earth's crust was formed, man-like creatures have been present for a mere 14 million years or so, and our own species, Homo Sapiens, emerged a mere 35,000 years ago. Fossil remains of Ramapithecus (which lived 14 to 6 million years ago (and apparently stood upright) have been found in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and many scholars are said to regard this ape like creature as man's oldest direct ancestor.

+ + + + +

In practice few organisms (except bacteria) live longer than man. The longest recorded lifespans (in years) for a variety of animals may be of interest:

Marion's Tortoise 152. Deep-sea Clam, 100. Killer, Blue and fin Whale. 90. Freshwater oyster 80. Cockatoo 70. Condor and Indian Elephant around 70. Ostrich and Horse have managed 62. Chimp 50. Lobster 50. Cow 40. Domestic Pigeon 35. Cat 34. Labrador Dog 29. Budgie 28. Sheep 20. Goat 18. Rabbit 18. Golden Hamster 10. House Mouse 6. Housefly - just 2 months, thank goodness.

+ + + + +

When so many are lonely as seem to be lonely, would it not be inexcuseably selfish to be lonely alone ?

+ + + + +

NORE OVERPAGE:-

WANTED SOON - PARISH CARETAKER !

And what, you may ask, is a Parish Caretaker ?

One could say - District Councillor, for on one Thursday in May 1991 there will be a District Council Election, and if there is more than one nomination for the Thurlestone, South Milton and West Alvington area there will be an election here - and if there isn't it must show a total lack of interest in the well being of the parish.

For instance I understand there is to be an up-date, revision or even a basicly new Plan for the future of the South Hams even now in course

of preparation ! At the present time you are faced with a District Council group of officials who seem to be interested in any scheme to enhance the population of the South Hams because this is a certain road to bigger salaries for all top officials. As one of many who are called upon to pay almost one hundred percent more in Community Charge than under the old rating system, it is also increasingly important to know how our money is being used by our public servants !

+ + + + +

WATER - I would like to acknowledge the 'Choice - Magazine for the Over Fifties' for this extract from a health article: Water has an important contribution to make to the proper functioning of our bodies. It is essential to maintain metabolism (the chemical processes of the body's cells) and normal bowel function. When are good times to drink water to maximise its beneficial effects?

Drinking a glass of water on getting out of bed in the morning, when we haven't eaten for several hours, is one of the best ways to prevent constipation. It is also a good idea to have some water before going to bed as the body perspires during the night.

Water drunk before or after a meal is better than drinking it with food. This is because our digestive juices become diluted, and so work less efficiently, when liquid is consumed together with food.

And I'm not even a shareholder !

+ + + + +

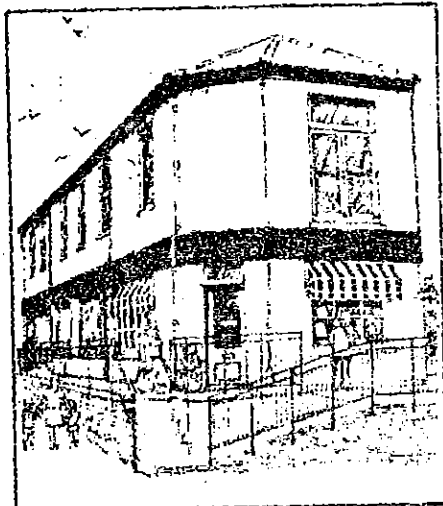
DID YOU KNOW that it was development of the electric starter that finally made petrol the fuel choice for the motor car. A British Arnold car had the first fitted electric starter in 1896. By 1912 the American Company Cadillac had introduced a system into production models. Until then, 40% of cars were steam powered, 38% used electric batteries, and only 22% used petrol. The electric starter meant that petrol driven cars would start up at once - unlike steam, which had to be built up, and petrol driven cars could be refuelled more quickly than electric cars.

+ + + + +

HOLY SMOKE Every year Chinese families burn one of their gods. This fiery ritual takes place before the Chinese New Year as part of the Festival of the Kitchen God, Taso Chun. Wishing to court Taso Chun's favour, so that he will speak well of them to the other gods, families offer cakes and sweets to his picture, smear his mouth with syrup and dip him into wine to make him tipsy and amiable. Afterwards they burn his picture in the belief that the god will ascend to heaven in the smoke. He is believed to return to the household on New Year's Day when a new picture is hung on the wall.

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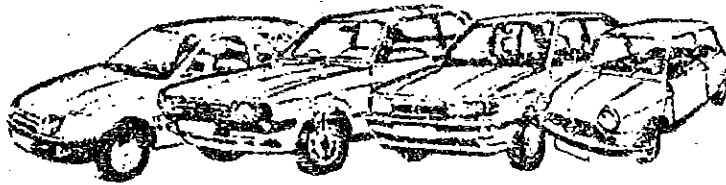
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and just before Totnes Cross Filling Station
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Farms only'. Turn in this lane through the
Ritzon farmyard and begin looking for my
Warren Farm signboard at a little lane on
your right. Sounds more complicated than it is!

TELEPHONE: BLACKAWTON 582 (code 938 21)

The views and opinions expressed in the pages of Village Voice
should not be taken to be the views or opinions of any member
of Thurlestone Parish Council and should be ascribed only to
the authors concerned.

D R A B B L E M A N I A P a r t I I I

MARCH 1980 - JUST A DECADE AGO an elected committee of 8 villagers worked like beavers to produce a 26 page booklet of comments, recommendations and statistics following their work with a parish wide questionnaire. The first Village Appraisal to be held in the County, sponsored by your Parish Council with a fair measure of help from Nicholas Hooper, then the Rural Officer of the Community Council of Devon.

Mr M S Carpenter, Chief Planning Officer for South Hams District Council wrote: "From my Council's point of view appraisals are most valuable in two ways:- (a) as a source of local information for this Council's planning processes, particularly at that detailed level where it is so difficult to obtain information. (b) the information gained by appraisals will allow local councils to contribute more fully to the production of policies and plans by this council. Views from the parish level are a matter of considerable importance in preparing these plans."

The Water Authority of that period said: "The Thurlestone sewer outfall has adequate design capacity at all stages of tides, to discharge the required volume of out sewage for all recent development before overflow into the stream takes place."

Within a year or so they were piping that overflow to the stream running over the beach, at an estimated cost of £10,000 ! At least it made the stench a little less in front of the golf clubhouse, and the Chief Planning Officer had advised the County Council: "...there is unlikely to be any substantial future housing development in Thurlestone village, except for the completion of the Thurlestone Mead Estate."

Four blocks of flats creating 50 or so 'dwellings' not substantial ?

Do you feel this 1979/80 Village Appraisal has served a useful purpose and proved of benefit to the community ? Do please write the Editor.

+ + + + +

ABOUT THE SO CALLED SALCOMBE 'YUPPIE-YOBS !

During the present holiday period there has been a very considerable amount of attention in the 'Gazette' regarding certain uncouth types in Salcombe. Well, times have't changed all that much for it is recorded that in the year 1607 the County Justices complained to the Government that 'Salcombe harbour was infested with pirates, who often landed armed parties to the great danger of the inhabitants. The following extracts taken from Hamilton's 'Quarter Sessions under James 1st. show the very unpleasant state of things which existed at Salcombe at that period.

"Piracy was practiced at this time by Englishmen as well as by Turks. A letter was sent to the Council representing that the inhabitants of the haven town of Salcombe, in the County of Devon, were sorely oppressed and endangered through the insolence of sundry dissolute seafaring men who often come into the town in great numbers, and threaten, when they are denied such things as they would have, that they will burn the town. It was represented also that they often foraged and stripped the country adjoining of sheep and other commodities, and took from poor fishermen their boats and barks. The authorities of the County felt quite unable to suppress them, as they could always take refuge in their ships lying off the harbour. The Justices, therefore, called upon the Council to send down his Majesty's forces to subdue them. It may be supposed that their advice was taken, for we afterwards find a charge of 26 for conducting 'pyraths' to goal from Salcombe. The pirates showed fight, for there was a payment made to the surgeon for curing them. But the fair harbour of Salcombe still continued to be a favourite haunt of such characters."

I remember...

DERRICK YEOMAN recalls the early days of Bantham lifesaving.

ALL MY LIFE I have heard tales of bathers getting into difficulties at Bantham. One of the worst accidents occurred in the early 1930s when a Scoutmaster and five Scouts were drowned. Mr. Henry Sherriff who worked in the fields behind the beach saved many people from drowning in those days; even now, at least one person is drowned there in most years.

A long time ago, when we lived in Buckland, I used to talk to Maitland Tribe, Rosemary Stocken's uncle, who lived in a caravan on the Ham where he cared for his market garden. He was on the spot for any emergency and was often involved in rescue work. He told me about the tides and the danger spots and the way currents swept people off their feet. Someone drowning at low tide was likely to be dragged along to the rocks at the east end of the beach and then disappear out to sea in the direction of Hope Cove before being washed up somewhere along the shore. In another tide a body might go straight out to sea and then curve back to be carried up the Avon; on one occasion, a body was found at Looe in Cornwall a fortnight later.

Maitland was anxious that proper rescue services should be provided at Bantham and he obtained the formal approval of the Kingsbridge Rural District Council to organise them. A meeting was called and the Bantham Surf and Lifesaving Club was founded in 1960 with him as the very active secretary and Mrs. Alma Hardwick as treasurer. I was elected chairman and, with the committee, set about raising finance for this wholly voluntary service.

In due course we acquired a hut and lifesaving equipment with grants from the District Council and arranged for teams of members to man the beach on Saturdays and Sundays in the summer season. From the early 70s, paid lifeguards patrolled the area during the week.

In the first eight years of the club, from 1960 to 1968, 50 people were rescued from drowning, mainly holidaymakers who drifted out to sea on air mattresses or some form of rubber support; six children were saved in one afternoon in July 1963. Since then rescues have tended to increase as many more bathers rush to the sands on hot summer days, but the numbers vary from year to year, depending of course mainly on the weather.

The original committee provided the nucleus of volunteers and was soon joined by others, some from as far away as Plymouth and Newton Abbot, so that there might be a trained team of four at weekends, dividing the day into two shifts.

The club has had its ups and downs in attracting new members, but latterly has thrived with many young people being given instruction, undergoing tests of proficiency and competing against similar clubs.

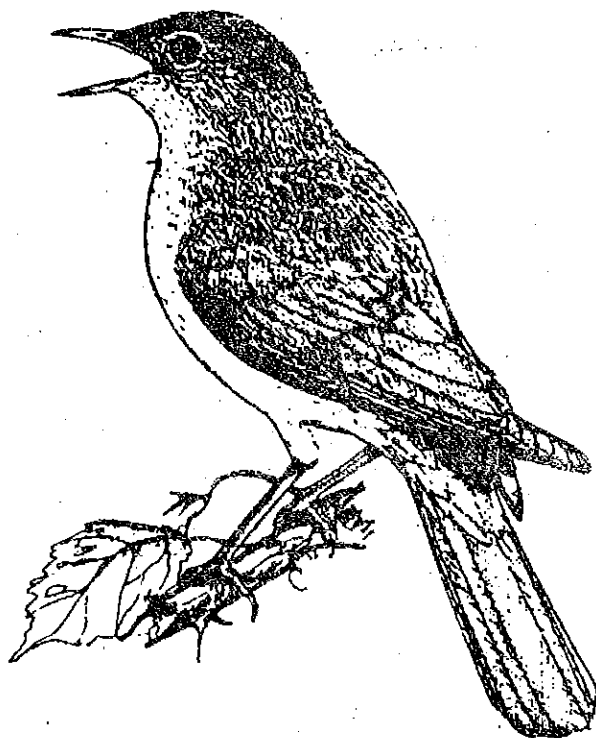
Long may it continue to be supported and prosper.

NCO.

HARRY HUGGINS

SAYS FORGET SWAN LAKE, HERE'S

THE BIRD FOR THE BALLET!



I READ SOMEWHERE that when recently the Kirov Ballet wanted to do Swan Lake, out of over 200 dancers they had difficulty in mustering 38 swans. No doubt some were never swan timber in the first place. It was inferred that the rest had got too old and fat.

Knowing the birds, you wonder why a little stiffness and obesity should be a bar to the ladies. Of course one problem for an ornithologist thinking about Swan Lake is that its title is so imprecise. Is it Mute Swan Lake, or Whooper Swan Lake, or Bewick's Swan Lake? We are not told. We ought to be. These things matter to birders.

I think I am right in saying they were wild swans, so we can rule out Black Swans, from Australia, and likewise the American ones, Trumpeter and Whistling. They might have had them in Russia in Tchaikovsky's day, but only in captivity. Mute, Whooper and Bewick's are all found wild in some part of that country at some time of the year: Whooper, which breeds over much of northern Russia and winters in the south, as well as in western Europe, seems the most likely candidate.

However, none of these three species is elegant enough to put you in mind of a ballerina. They are quite graceful on water - the Mute cob can be downright impressive when he arches his folded wings over his back and sails down the pond like the chairman's lady entering the room for the company annual dinner. In flight their size gives them a certain grandeur, but they are all a bit laboured and fall miserably short of the elegance of a pelican: a bird designed by a committee if ever there was one, it floats like gossamer once airborne. The Mute Swan's walk is an ungainly waddle; the others are a little more agile but you feel that surely the fat and not so young Russian ladies could fill the bill admirably as far as any of them is concerned.

But one day last July we saw the bird which ought to have a ballet written about it.

I should explain that once a month, throughout the year we go to the Erme estuary to count the wildfowl and waders (the latter being what the Yanks call "shorebirds"). It is all part of a grand design planned by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (the later Sir Peter Scott's lot) and the British Trust for Ornithology. People do it all over the British Isles and most of Europe. The results are filed and

then if someone proposes to build a nuclear power station at say Wonwell Beach the conservationists can support their predictable howl by producing immediately figures to prove that the river is an internationally important wintering station for a hundred Wigeons, eighty-three Mallards, fifty Curlews and three Greenshanks, on which ground any development must be blocked.

In fact, doing our river count we never get as far as Wonwell Beach. We took the boat over from a lady who lived at Flete House and who for reasons of ill-health conducted her researches in a motorised bath chair. She started counting at Holbeton and if she went as far as Mothecombe, across the river from Wonwell Beach, she did not have enough electricity left to get back to Flete.

So she did only about a mile of the top part of the estuary, and we have continued with that bit. We know we are contributing little to the body of knowledge, but it is a beautiful piece of river, private, you cannot go there without permission, and sheltered by trees in winter and summer. The count organisers would like us to do something more worthwhile, like miles of the banks of the Tamar or a big lake (Beesands ley needs a counter just now). We have said it is the Erne or nothing.

On this day last July there was a Little Egret on the river. It should have been somewhere in a marsh in southern France, or bordering on the Mediterranean. Instead it was here among the gulls - a heron about the size of a Herring Gull with pure white plumage, long thin neck, long black legs and bright yellow feet - dancing in the shallow water as it scampered about after shrimps and little fish.

We thought, as we watched it do its pas de seul, that this bird is what they should compose a ballet for. I suppose the title could hardly be as evocative as "Swan Lake" - "Little Egret Swamp" sounds a trifle sordid but I believe Benjamin Britten (not my favourite composer) did a thing called "Curlew River" and surely if the music were compelling enough the name would be acceptable. After all, "Yellow Submarine" never sounded much as a title but....!

Little Egret is not as rare a bird in Britain as some, but it is nevertheless one you report and we raced home to send off a rarities form to the Devon county bird recorder. If you want British Birds magazine to credit you with notifying something unusual, you have to get in first! A week later there were six of them on the Kingsbridge estuary and to our surprise our bird on the Erne was joined by another. They stayed all winter.

Next spring we watched them do their courtship display and they took a great interest in a suitable nesting site. We go very excited - there is no record of their ever having bred in the British Isles, although maybe they did when the Somerset levels were all lakes and the good people of Glastonbury lived in huts on stilts. But when breeding time came, they went - probably they were too young.

Our next exciting thing was young also. A friend returned from searching the cliffs at Warren Point for a lost golf ball, whether his own or someone else's he did not explain, and told us he had found a large black bird, dead. I assumed Cormorant, and hurried off to photograph it - detailed close-ups of head and feet are always useful. At risk of limb, if not of life, I climbed up from Yarnier Beach - what some folks will do for a golf ball! Lisa

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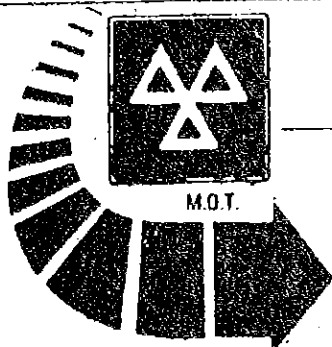
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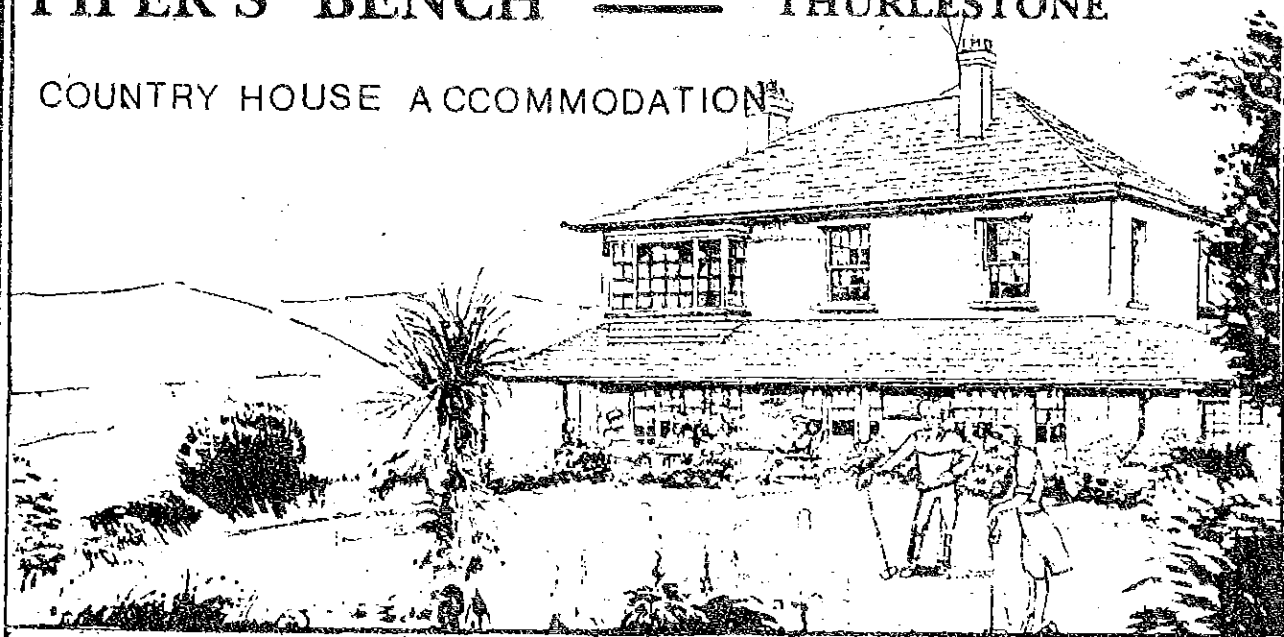
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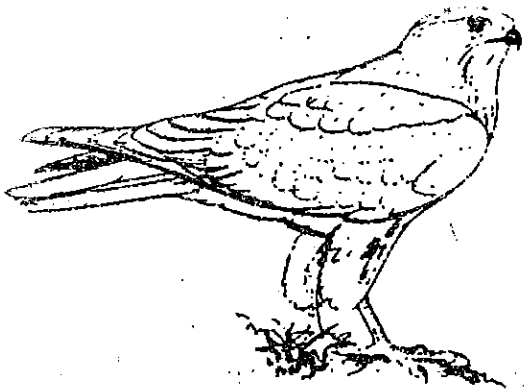
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managed much better, four feet are always superior to two for this climbing (surely dogs would be better on Everest than Sherpas). To my surprise this was no Cormorant, but a young Gannet, hatched that spring and well able to fly - it must have travelled a good many miles to get to Thurstone - but still in its black juvenile plumage. Over a span of four or five years they get whiter in successive moults until they achieve their final gleaming white with black wing tips. When one is in between, with white head and dark wings, we sometimes kid ourselves we

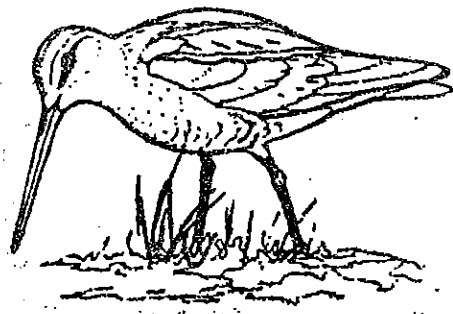
we have seen an Albatross!

This was at the end of October: a couple of days before there had been a Force Ten from the south west. Our bird was blown ashore (it seemed quite uninjured) and unable to take off again had sat there until it died of starvation and exposure. Had it been found in time the man at Plymouth who cleans the oiled auks could have saved it. Will my golf ball seeking friends please go out in future while it is still blowing.

Our final rarity for 1989 was a storm victim likewise, on Christmas Eve. Lying in the golf club car park was a scrap of black and white feathers. I thought Turnstone. But no, it was a Leach's Storm Petrel - I had never seen one before. If you have one of the older books it calls this bird Leach's Fork-tailed Petrel, because of the small notch in the end of its tail. It was a little thing, with starling sized body, but long wings, over 18 inches from tip to tip, and a long tail. Its plumage was brownish-black, with a lighter crescent across the upper wings, and its rump was white with a grey streak up the middle. This is one of the tube-noses which include petrels, shearwaters and albatrosses - its nostrils are fused into a tube on top of its bill; the people who should know tell us this is to shed salt from the seawater the birds drink. They do not tell us why the phalaropes, little wading birds which spend most of their lives far out at sea, as does the petrel, do not need such nostrils and have similar ones to any other wader!

But there seems to be something in what students of natural history say when they talk of convergent evolution, meaning that totally different species have developed similar shapes and life styles because they occupy the same environmental niche - a dolphin, a warm-blooded mammal which lives in the sea is the same shape as a fish (but why is its tail fin horizontal and not vertical like a fish's?) and a Humming Bird Hawk mother, a summer migrant from Southern Europe has developed the same shape and flies and feeds in the same way as a humming bird.

So Leach's Storm Petrel has similar wing and tail formation to a Kestrel. The latter uses its long narrow wings and tail to ride the air currents over land - you can hardly walk the cliffs by Yarmouth Beach and Breadsands without seeing one. The petrel rides the updraughts blowing up the faces of waves. The people who write the books say it seldom alights on water (please do not ask me how they know); on land it cannot walk



HARRY HUGGINS CONCLUDES

its legs are too small to support it, and it can do no more than shuffle along on its breast: all of its life except when it is ashore to breed, is spent flying over the sea.

Whether any more had been blown in I do not know. Occasionally these Leach's Petrels are driven ashore in thousands by a bad storm: in 1952 over 2,000 were picked up in Bridgwater Bay alone. The European population is quite small, probably no more than 10,000 pairs, breeding around northern Scotland, but it is estimated that those breeding in Newfoundland are to be numbered in millions, and it is thought the wrecked birds were from this source.

As we had never seen one before, this bird would have been a life tick for us. But we cannot count it, because it was dead. One of the prime rules of twitching is that you cannot claim a tick for anything dead: for if you could where would it all stop - being freshly dead is only a step from being a dried up remnant like the Puffin which was on Leasfoot Beach last winter (we have never seen a live Puffin around here). And the dried up remnant is only one step from stuffed birds in museums!

But if a bird has a gasp of life you can count it. For which reason it is said that twitchers can be found giving the kiss of life to sad little corpses, in the hope that they will revive, if only for a moment. Not as foolish as it sounds. A rare vagrant bird is stressed and exhausted and often has little grip on life.

Cuckoos in particular seem to die soon after arrival: the Yellow-billed ones from America always do, and the Great Spotted Cuckoo from the Mediterranean, which arrived at Dowlish Warren earlier this year, lasted only a few days before being found lifeless - a frosty night and a couple of crows soon did for it. If you are a twitcher, who has travelled the length of England to see a rarity and are show a body, with the explanation that it died a little while before, you are going to do your best, are you not?

We felt no desire to give the kiss of life to this petrel. All petrels and shearwaters have a musty smell. This one, if it did not stink to high Heaven, was none the less pretty powerful. When I took it home to photograph it, Lisa walked around the room wriggling her nose, and June complained bitterly, despite being so ill with flu that she had passed the stage of fearing she was going to die and was now fearing she was not. So Leach's Storm Petrel was consigned to the compost heap and we are hoping for a real live one some day.

THE RISING GENERATION.

We are a group of young people ranging from six to 16. We meet at the Thurlestone Parish Hall each Monday evening during term time for alternate drama and art club evenings.

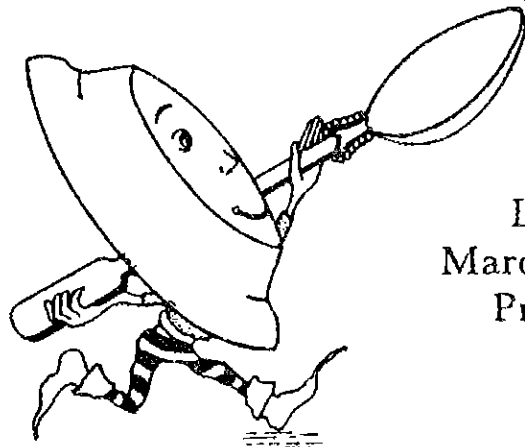
The 'mural' which you can see at the Thurlestone Hotel is the latest product of Len Hubbard's art club. We have spent many weeks on this collage, the younger ones have been cutting and sticking and the older ones designing and sketching.

The 'mural' is our view and impression of Thurlestone, Bantham and the surrounding area. The Rock is the centrepiece. We tried to highlight prominent features, the pubs, the Village Inn and the Sloop at Bantham, and landmarks such as Burgh Island, the Church, Jenkins Quay and Thurlestone Hotel, as a welcome to visitors.

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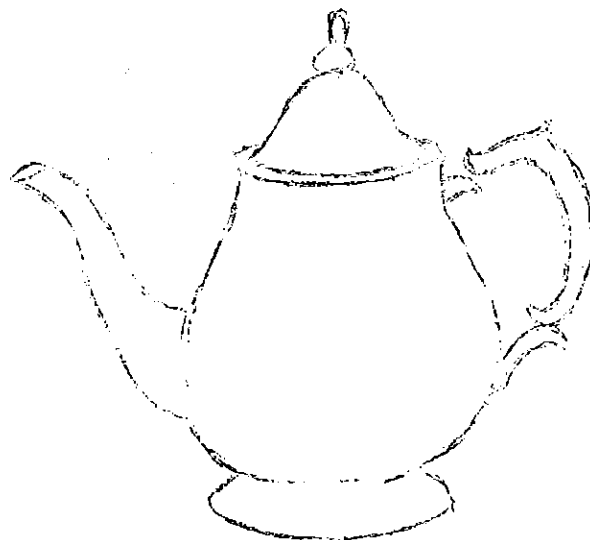
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Neville OSWALD reports



FOR ONE WHO HAD GIVEN NO PREVIOUS THOUGHT to local history, it was a privilege, when I retired from medical practice in 1975 and returned to the county of my upbringing, to seek at least an acquaintance with the subject.

Yet my ignorance of the available facilities was then complete. The libraries in Exeter and Plymouth held no surprises, but the county record offices posed problems because I knew nothing of the nature of their possessions and the sort of services they provided. I learnt to visit them with specific requests and, when the staff came to know me, was delighted with the profusion of relevant material they managed to unearth.

Walking through the Cathedral Close one day I saw, by chance, the brassplate of the Devonshire Association. Having previously heard of the Association and thinking it to be similar to London clubs with elderly gentlemen sitting in leather chairs, I entered and found an impressive house containing an historical library and the headquarters of several learned societies. Many other would-be historians must have had similar experiences.

Already determined, before my retirement, to write an account of epidemics in Devon over the centuries, I made little progress until I was advised to go to the West Country Studies Library in Exeter. There I was immediately taken in hand by Mr. Paley, the librarian, and was shown books and journals relating to the county and the valuable collection of copies of parish registers belonging to the Devon and Cornwall Record Society. I resolved to write a medical article on epidemics with a local setting for submission to the Devonshire Association and thereby joined that band of amateurs which over the years has sought to illuminate the story of Devon's past.

What qualities are needed for making sensible observations on local history? Rouse's description of W.G. Hoskins' books on Devon as being "learned, graphic and humane" can hardly be improved upon. Learning can only come from years of study of national, and to some extent international, literature and constant association with one's colleagues at work; it may be acquired through diligence.

The ability to be graphic is more difficult, whether in lecturing or writing, and needs hardly less study. Without it, historians are not alone in finding they lecture to meagre audiences and have few readers for their publications. Historians, as opposed to antiquarians whose function is primarily descriptive, must be humane in that their principal purpose is to place events of the past in an humane context.

There is no reason why would-be historians cannot aspire to these

qualities, but they do not come easily. With the necessary diligence, they can undertake the laborious task of assembling facts and then, aided by the literature, try to interpret them and finally acquire that combination of gravity and the common touch which can make even a dull subject exciting.

My main task, in writing of epidemics in Devon, was to record the total deaths month by month of over three million people which had been recorded in parochial registers during the years 1538 to 1837. At busy times such as the Napoleonic wars, burials in the Plymouth parishes of St. Andrew's, Charles and Stoke Damerel averaged about 1,500 a year between them. I was unable to cover more than about 40 years for one of them at a visit and that involved a journey of 25 miles each way. To transcribe the registers in Exeter, 45 miles distant, I stayed overnight in an hotel on several occasions. The task involved a degree of stoicism which I had acquired from previous experiences. For literature, Hoskins' Devon and several medical books sufficed.

Searching the literature poses several problems for an amateur who has not done it before. Even a visit to a library may be a daunting experience, principally because he does not know where to start and a blank expression is not likely to stimulate the staff. In time, he discovers the contents of libraries, record offices and other collections and the means of finding his requirements. Even then primary sources, which are often so important, may be difficult to trace or be lodged as far away as London. He decides to compromise, especially if he lives in one of the remoter parts of the country, by limiting himself to sources that are easily accessible. Hence, articles by amateurs are almost by definition incomplete.

Acquaintance with local history may be gained in easy stages, through one of the many societies that have been founded in recent decades. These admirable institutions hold meeting throughout the winter months which attract enthusiastic audiences of local people many of whom have lived in the vicinity for most of their lives. They especially welcome speakers whose subjects can be related to their members' experiences; for this reason question times are often lively and informative. From time to time somebody amongst them, after months of preparation, summons courage to address an audience for the first time after which, amidst general acclaim, he (or she) sits down spent, but secretly exultant. The first hurdle has been surmounted and the new speaker is able to contemplate his future ambitions.

Having sampled the delights and frustrations of his first communication, he may have difficulty in selecting another theme, unless he has a special experience or qualification he is able to exploit. He faces an infinity of alternatives. He may feel, as many have done before him, that an historical subject is not quite "respectable" unless it refers to something at least 200 years ago. He may soon find himself delving into an age quite unknown to him whose literature, if it is before 1650 is hard to read. Should he settle, for example, for an item in his local church, he needs to review relevant literature and then decide whether he has anything useful to add and, if so, whether he is capable of sharing it with an audience or of committing it to print in an interesting way. Should he have nobody at hand to encourage and advise him, he may wilt or at least defer judgement. Alternatively, he may select a subject from recent history. If he cannot manage that, he may well give up. After all, most amateur historians seek no more than a pleasant diversion of a quasi-intellectual nature. They know they are free to pull out at any time, but those who do may live to regret it. (TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE).

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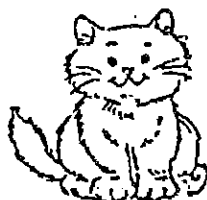
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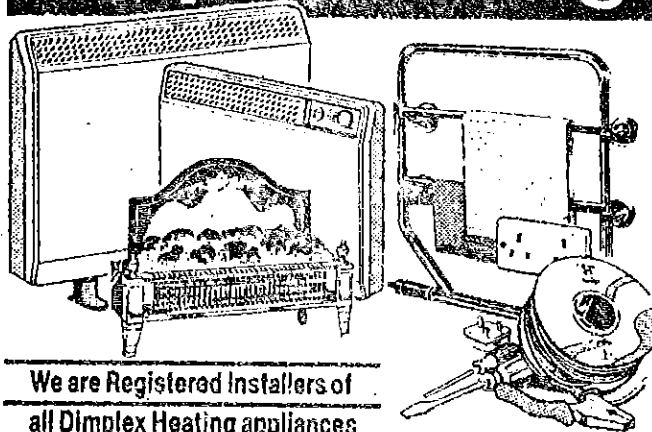
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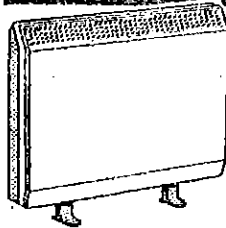
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POSTBAG

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Did you realise that over sixty residents of Thurlestone, Bantham and West Buckland exhibited more than one hundred and twenty items at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition held in the Parish Hall on Sunday 12th August? No, neither did I.

Or that two thousand three hundred and fifty Raffle Tickets (£235) were sold and over £70 worth of coffee/teas/cakes/biscuits consumed resulting in a net profit of over £280? This means that the much talked about tables have now all been paid for.

Thank you Len Hubbard and The Rising Generation. Thank you Parish Hall Committee members who either organised exhibits, donated generous Raffle Prizes or both. Thank you Joan Mackenzie and your band of helpers. It was your powers of persuasion, perseverance and above all your organisation that produced such a successful event.

Over three hundred people came, saw and admired. Everybody had one comment: it is quite remarkable the amount of talent in our small community.

CONGRATULATIONS!

A Parishioner

PS Not surprisingly at least one sale has subsequently been negotiated.

Dear Sir

Elsewhere in this edition are published the results of the Thurlestone and South Milton Horticultural Show held in South Milton's Village Hall on 4th August.

The Committee welcome ideas for possible new or alternative Classes on all Sections and hope that residents will make suggestions to the Thurlestone members whose names appear below. The Schedule will be revised early in the New Year. It is imperative that our Show remains interesting and appealing so that parishioners WANT to visit it as opposed to feeling they ought to go out of a sense of duty or in reluctant support.

In 1991 it is Thurlestone's turn to host the event: in the Parish Hall on Saturday 3rd August. It is never too early to start preparing, especially in the Handicraft and Preserves Sections and we look forward to receiving a bumper crop of exhibits next year. After all we now have proof of the quite remarkable talents in the Parish!

Dick White Pat Macdonald Chalky & Veronica White (The Mead)
Doris Tyler (Glebefield) Derrick Yeoman (Parkfield)
Tony Church (Bantham) David Coward (West Buckland)

POSTBAG EXTRA..MORE LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

DEAR EDITORS,

"Villager" maligns scientists in your August/September issue by saying that behind every one of the recent more dire predictions (greenhouse effect, destruction of the ozone layer, dangerous food scares etc.) there is a "loopy scientist".

Surely a very large part of any blame lies with the press, radio and television, when sometimes fairly modest statements of scientific fact are seized upon by them and quoted out of context in an exaggerated manner.

Instead of blaming "loopy scientists" how about examining the part "the media" has to play in the distortion of some of the evidence?

Yours faithfully,

PATRICIA MACDONALD,

Mead Lane, Thurlestone.

DEAR EDITORS,

As I write this I am sitting on a terrace in France, sipping one of my husband's "specials" - guaranteed to make me 'Oh, la, la' - and gazing for the umpteenth time across the woods, across the Lake Lemane (Lake Geneva you ignoramusses) to the dramatic panorama of Europe's highest mountain, Mont Blanc.

What has stirred me out of my glorious lethargy? The fact that I have just read, or tried to read via the dictionary, the local Village Voice. So I thought I'd tell you that you, too, could have been here. A notice in Broads, curling at the edges and getting brown with age, was read by my slow-moving husband. I'm always in too much of a hurry.

It was from a French family, Dutch by birth, French speaking, working at the International Labour Office in Geneva and more fluent in English than many of us. They asked if anyone wanted to exchange their house here for any one in Thurlestone. A telephone call to France and we were the only ones to reply! So here we are.

How much pleasure we have had, what a marvellous area to explore and to have a month so that we old pensioners can take it leisurely. There was quite a scrubbing up of the old homestead to leave it sparkling and then off to Plymouth for the 8 a.m. ferry. Sorry, wrong day! Creep home and hibernate until the next day at the same ungodly hour. We have seen so many things of interest - one in particular seems to cry out for the same thing to be done in Thurlestone. It's a "ralentir"...a slab of raised tarmac, not a sleeping policeman, but rather a police cadet, just sufficient to slow the passing traffic.

This letter shows we thought of you.

Au revoir,

de vous-savez-qui.

(Name and address not supplied).

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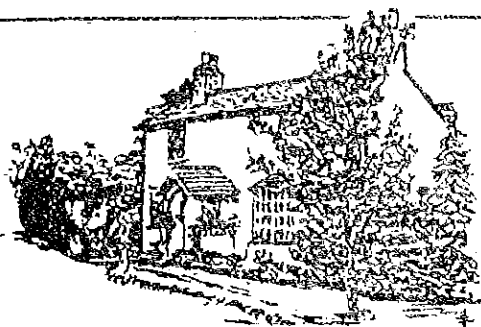
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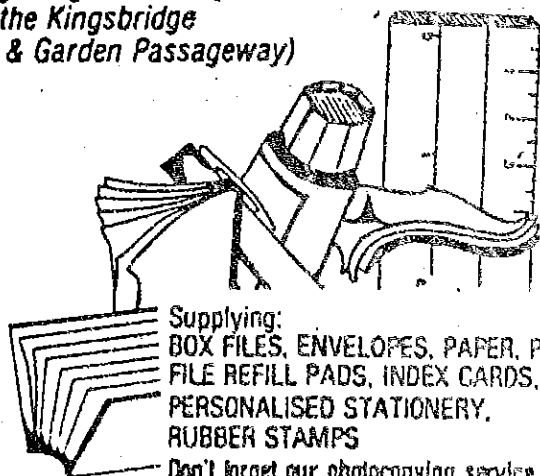
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