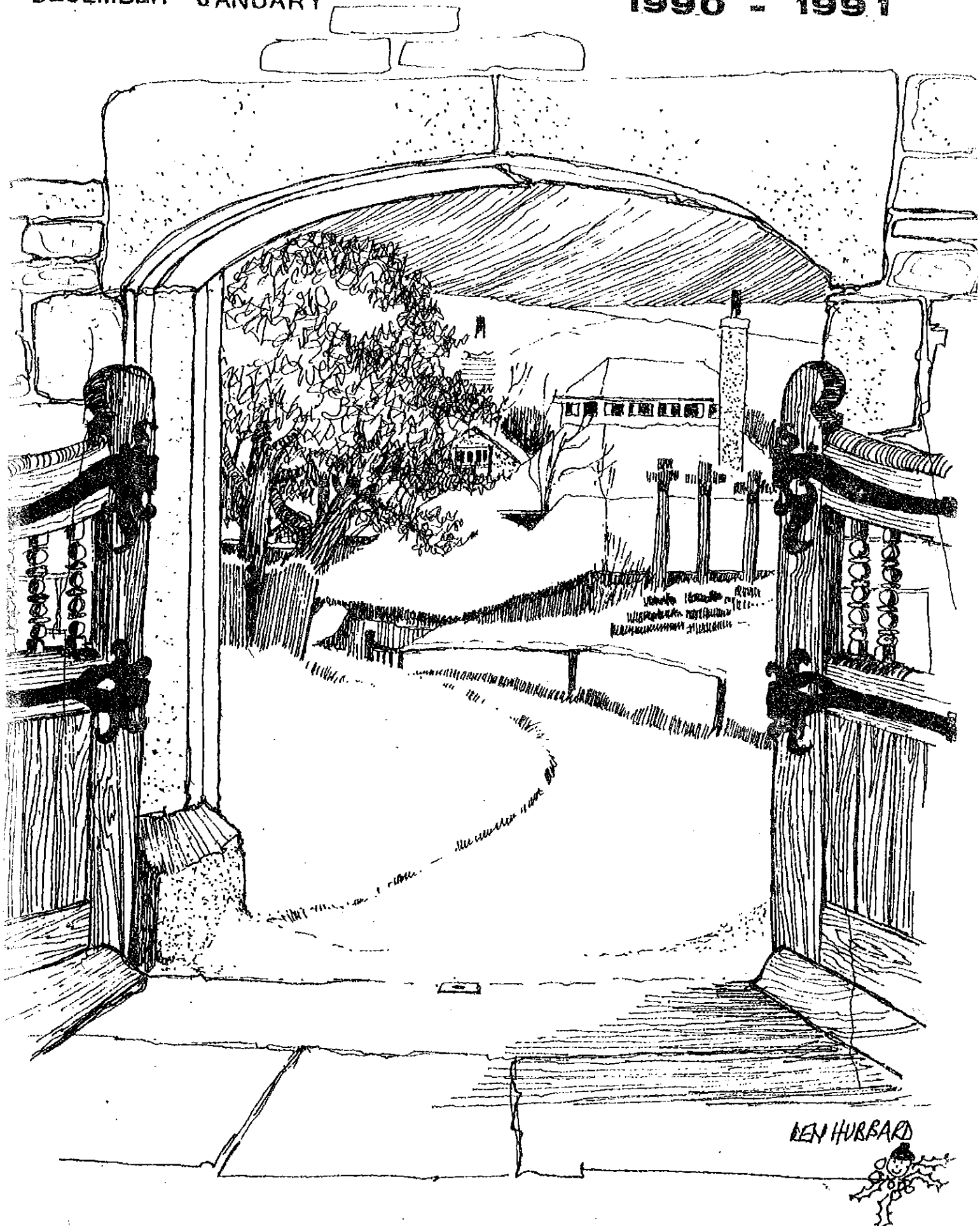
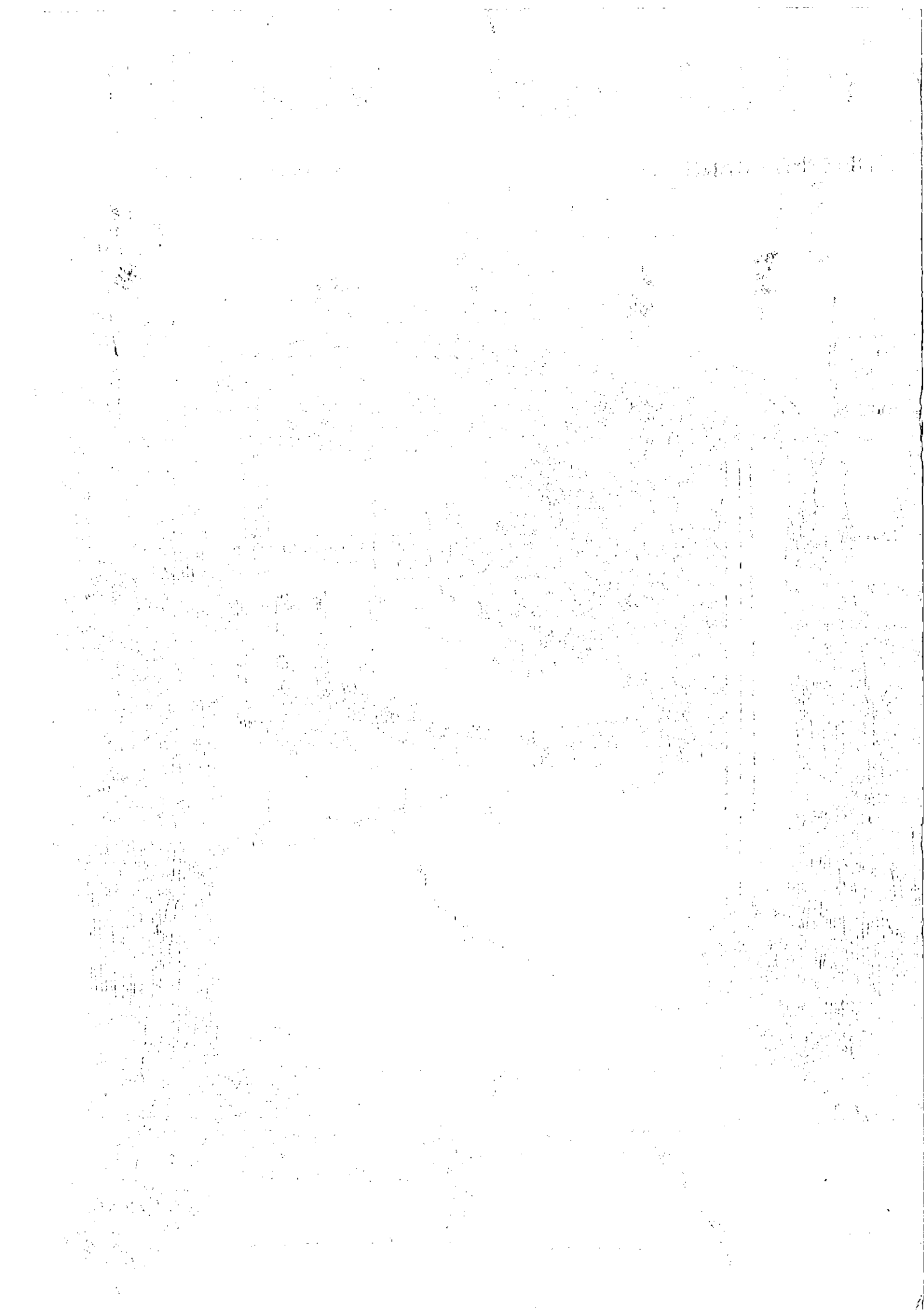


VILLAGE VOICE

DECEMBER - JANUARY

1990 - 1991





Founded by Dudley
DRABBLE
1982.



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THURLESTONE ON A THURSDAY WILL NEVER LOOK the same again. That is a safe prediction after the black plastic bag controversy surfaced at the November Parish Council meeting in the parish hall. Ways of preventing rubbish spills and animal attacks on these bags took up most of the discussion in the "open forum" session at the meeting.

First into the fray was Mr.A.Caunce, who despite the Parish Chairman's assurance that there was nothing personal in the Council's report of black plastic bags spilling rubbish in Island View, said that he took great exception to Island View being singled out for mention. There were seven holiday homes in Island View of which he owned two and he was most careful to see that his tenants' rubbish was kept secure in a proper bin until collected. He was always present on collection days and though he would not deny that there was ever a spill in Island View, Island View was not the chief culprit.

Another holiday home owner in Island View, Mr.R.Young of Birmingham was also present and he really put the cat among the plastic by saying that he understood that the refuse collection was a doorstep collection and not a pavement collection and so the dustmen should collect the rubbish not have it put out for them. What had the Parish Council got to say about that? The Parish Council promptly said that refuse was a matter for the District Council. This brought Mr.Jack Thomas, Vice-Chairman of the District Council into the spotlight. He quickly counter-attacked by saying: "Our service is a back-door collection service".

Furthermore, he said firmly, anyone who wanted their bins collected from their back door and was not having it done should simply ring up Mr.G.Hodgson at the Kingsbridge Depot (852246) and Mr.Hodgson would arrange it. The 14 parishioners present sat speechless in their seats at this astounding revelation - but all made a careful note of the number! So now you see why we believe that Thurlestone on a Thursday will never look the same again.

STOP PRESS. Mr.Jack Thomas has confirmed to Village Voice that the refuse collection is from the back door. Two bins will be collected of which one can be garden rubbish. Large kitchen equipment, such as fridges, cookers and freezers, will also be collected free of charge.

THEY PUNCHED THEMSELVES to a standstill. And if you think that is the description of a prize fight, you'd be wrong. That was the November Parish Council Meeting that was. You will of course be be delighted to know that all the punching there was of the verbal kind, but it was a right ding-dong all the same. In fact it is fair to say that this was the liveliest parish council meeting for years.

War broke out right from the start with a row between the District and the Parish over putting a litter bin at Leas Foot. In one of those gobbledegook District Council decisions they agreed to the Parish request for a bin near the beach there, but in the same breath refused to empty it. Unless it was moved to one of their collection points. As the golf club, which has much collecting and emptying, is only 50 yards away, this seemed a bit much.

Such parsimony triggered demands from parish councillors to know how the District Council spent our money and rumbles of rage greeted the revelation that the D.C. spent some £143,000 on marketing the South Hams for tourism and yet couldn't find the money to move some rubbish 50 yards. This in turn led to demands that the D.C. took its hands off tourism and spent the money on keeping the South Hams clean. "If they keep the place clean," said one prominent councillor "we'll get the people down here!" In vain did the Vice-Chairman of the South Hams District Council protest that the refuse collection was privatised. "I'll do it for £20,000 less," roared a councillor, and then the war swept off the sand dunes of the Gulf of Leas Foot and stormed up the village street.

Yellow lines around Parkfield were the next subject and a small moment of relaxation came with the revelation that a recent road-block in the village was the work of the Tory Environmental Council delegates who, meeting at the Hotel, double-parked in the road instead of using the new environmentally-friendly Hotel carpark.

Another digression came with the unveiling of the Derrick Yeoman patent method of killing the rabbits which are plaguing golfers and other parts. His method seems to concern a brick, a carrot and some pepper, but those who need to know should ask him for further details.

But the Parish Council were not lighthearted for long. Soon they were planning more protests, this time about sewage in the Buckland Stream. And then they moved on to the revised Devon planning for future document - Devon Into the Next Century, which replaces another disastrous document "20C1". The parish were unhappy about both documents.

"This is planning gone bananas", said Councillor Grose, adding for good measure that the document foresaw 80,000 more jobs in Devon by 2001, which was "absolute rubbish - they are more likely to lose 80,000!" And so the Parish Council Commando stormed on until they came to "Open Forum", which is where the public gets its chance to fight back. And they did (as you'll see on Page One of this issue).

There were only 14 parishioners in the public seats at the meeting. There should of course be many, many more. So there is no excuse, here are the dates for next year's meetings as announced at that November meeting:

JANUARY 18; FEBRUARY 12; MARCH 12; APRIL 9; MAY 14 (Annual Parish Council Meeting); JUNE 11; JULY 9; AUGUST 6; SEPTEMBER 10; OCTOBER 8; NOVEMBER 12; DECEMBER 10. All with the exception of February's which is at the Sloop, Bantham, are in the Parish Hall at 7.30 pm. THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IS ON TUES, MARCH 26 in the Parish Hall, Thurlestone, at 7.30 pm.

THURLESTONE AND WEST BUCKLAND W.I.

At the Annual General Meeting in November the following ladies took office:

President: Mrs. Patricia Millman. Secretary: Mrs. Valerie Brown.

Treasurer: Mrs. Joan Reece.

Committee members: Win Cousins, Eve Cuming, Connie Hughes,

Pamela Jephcott, Rosemary Mackay, Sheila Parker, Margaret Savage and Veronica White.

On Saturday, November 17th, husbands and guests were invited to a FORTIES EVENING in the Parish Hall. A war-time supper, reminiscent sketches, and our own 'Vera Lynn', who led everyone in singing old, well-loved songs, proved a successful recipe for a walk down memory lane.

The years slipped away and we were back in the 1940's - and many dressed as they were then. We had a nurse, a nanny, an ARP warden, evacuees and 'children' in blazers and pigtails to name but a few. We heard wireless bulletins, advertisements, remembered rationing and eavesdropped on two washerwomen exchanging chit-chat over the garden wall. We even saw the rabbit succumb to the gun - he didn't "run rabbit, run" fast enough! It was great fun and all in aid of the Parish Hall fund.

On December 13th there will be the Christmas Lunch Party - always a happy occasion and a lovely way to start Christmas festivities.

The first meeting of 1991 will be on Thursday, January 10th when Fergus Mackenzie will reveal the secrets of our ancestors' self-sufficiency...so it isn't a new idea after all!

Have you been thinking of joining the W.I.? Why not come along and see what we do - we will be delighted to welcome you.

DON'T THROW YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS AWAY!

When you've finished with your Christmas cards, please bundle them separately and put them out with your old papers. All cards will help deserving causes. Happy Christmas.

Ian C. Young.



In this issue, Villager says goodbye to the Brown Bungalow, casts an eye on the village green, and, of course, takes this opportunity to wish absolutely everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

WEEP NOT AND BE SAD ABOUT the loss of one of Thurlestone's thatched houses. And if that sounds surprising coming from one of the hottest conservationists (as far as the village is concerned) in the parish, then perhaps you should know I am not mourning the imminent death of the Brown Bungalow in Court Park Road, Thurlestone, for the simple reason that it was a real eyesore - a bad mix of two cultures. It was in fact a World War One prefab with a thatched roof stuck on top.

It is now going to be knocked down and a modern bungalow is planned to be put up in its place. That in a way is just history repeating itself. For there were originally two of those thatched 1914-18 prefabs in Court Park Road and the other one burned down some years ago and in its place is now another bungalow. Derrick Yeoman tells a lively tale of the fire at the first prefab. As he tells it the woman owner was inside when the thatch was well ablaze and went on cooking over her stove completely unaware that the roof had turned into a torch.

The Brown Bungalow used to be the property of Squadron-Leader Michael Wray, a former Mayor of Kingsbridge. I was told years ago that the prefabs were brought to Thurlestone from an Army camp near Plymouth in 1919 and thatched over their real roofs.

Mrs. A. M. Scarratt, the architect of Bigbury who has designed the building to take the prefab's place tells me that it was not unusual to thatch bungalows - in fact there was quite a vogue for it in the 1920's. She also was not happy about the sloppy way in which I flung the word "prefab" about and pointed out that prefabricated buildings had been around since man came out of caves. She added the fascinating tit-bit of information that Brunel built a complete hospital by that method and it was shipped out to be assembled in the Crimea. There seems to be no information though about whether Florence Nightingale worked in it.

Those of my generation, however, only mean one kind of building when we talk about "prefabs" and find it amazing how long some of these temporary wartime structures have stood the tests of time and weather. In London, for example, there are still a group of Second World War prefabs at the back of the Elephant and Castle which are still lived in and are much-loved homes of their proud owners.

Continued overleaf.

VILLAGER CONTINUES.

THEY ARE DOING A National survey of town and village greens. And "They" in this instance are the Rural Surveys Research Unit, University College of Wales, the Countryside Commission and the National Federation of Women's Institutes. "They" are particularly cunning in including the W.I. because who do you think is going to do all the work - you're right, the W.I.

So Thurlestone and West Buckland ladies are hard at work on finding out all about our village greens. The idea of the survey is to have the details of all the village greens in the land down on paper (or more likely computer tape) so that they can be protected from anyone who might come along and think that the village green was a nice site for a block of flats. And we know all about that sort of thing around here don't we?

But getting all the details of Thurlestone's village green is not all that easy. And finding out about Bantham's is even more difficult.

Take the Green down by the Church, for example. This is clearly marked "Green" on the Sir William Courtenay map of 1777. This was the map that Sir William had drawn up by his agent, George Lang, in 1777 and with the map Mr. Lang also drew up a list of all his master's property.

As you'll see if you look at the reproduction of part of Sir William's map opposite, the Green appears to go right round on the West side of the Churchyard and right up to the start of the footpath of today, which amazingly enough is marked on that 1777 map and covers the same route to Bantham!

Sir William obviously claimed ownership of the Green (you'll see it is marked with a figure 1 the same as the farm) and on his agent's list of his property it is shown as leased to a Mr. Thomas Square with the farm, two meadows and parts of two more. The Green is actually included with the farm and is listed as "House, Outhouses, Courts, Gardens, Green, and Lane leading to the Warren". In all Mr. Square had over 300 acres to go with the farm and that included the Warren, which is listed as 35 acres and three rods of pasture land where the golf course is now. It was directly behind "Yarmoor Sands" and ran right down to "Leys Foot Sands".

Back to the Green, which though it is clearly marked as such on the 1777 map does not then seem to have belonged to the village. But it does look a natural meeting place at the end of the village.

The next map of value is the Tithe Map of "Thurleston" of 1840. On this some sort of shed or small barn seems to have appeared on the Green near where Swallows is now and some other buildings along the Southern wall from the Lych Gate of today to the West, but only an examination of the original documents in Exeter Public Record Office might make it clear what they were.

Then there is a more recent reference to the Green. That comes in the book, published about 1919 by the Rev. F.E. Coope: "As I write, steps are being taken to erect a granite village cross, copied from what I conceive to have been the original design of the ancient cross at S. Zeal. It will stand upon the village green outside the churchyard to commemorate the men of the Parish who gave their lives for us during the Great War".

I'd like to find out more about our village greens, but for the moment I'll have to leave it there. I hope the W.I. ladies have made more discoveries and that they'll tell us all about them...

Happy Christmas! And a Happy New Year to villagers everywhere!

8-3-9.

Balls Park.

7-2-8

6.

Wright Park.
6-1-24.

6.

Page Park.

5-3-10.

Lower Park.
1-1-19.

Higher Park.
1-1-19.
Field.
0-3-9.
Terry
21.
Hend
0-2-22.

Higher Park.
1-1-19.

Lower

Wegman

18. School

Clabe Lapid.

Lower
Terry
Field.

15. Lapid.
10-3-35.
18. Lapid.
10-2-35.
19. Lapid.
10-2-35.

Headstone Park.

13-0-24.

Headstone Park.

18. Lapid.
10-2-35.
19. Lapid.
10-2-35.

Talking About

LETTING THE LANDLORD OF YOUR
FAVOURITE PUB HAVE A HAPPY
NEW YEAR..

AS THIS IS THE ISSUE OF VILLAGE VOICE WHICH COVERS CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR - AND ALL THOSE GOOD RESOLUTIONS WHICH WE NEVER KEEP - HERE ARE SOME RESOLUTIONS FROM LANDLORD TO CUSTOMERS, WHICH HE DREAMS OF BUT KNOWS YOU WILL NEVER KEEP:

During the following year I (the customer) resolve that I will not:-

FREQUENT any hostelry within a five mile radius of this one, foresaking all blandishments and enticements to do so from rival licensees, breweries...and bar maids with big eyes etc.

APPROACH the licensee or his staff with entreaties for cash or credit advances, nor invent stories of mind-numbing improbability as to the reasons for my temporary stage of impecuniosity.

NEITHER will I summon the licensee or his staff to provide further sustenance during busy (or quiet) periods by: (a) sending Mayday Morse code messages by tapping a coin against my empty glass; (b) Making loud and objectionable snoring noises as the bar servant passes by; (c) Employing such theatrical attention-getting devices as apparently expiring on the bar counter through lack of liquid nourishment, or drinking the entire contents of the water jug in desperation.

ENQUIRE SARCASTICALLY if the licensee or bar servant had a nice holiday when he or she returns to my area of the bar after being absent without written permission for more than 4 minutes.

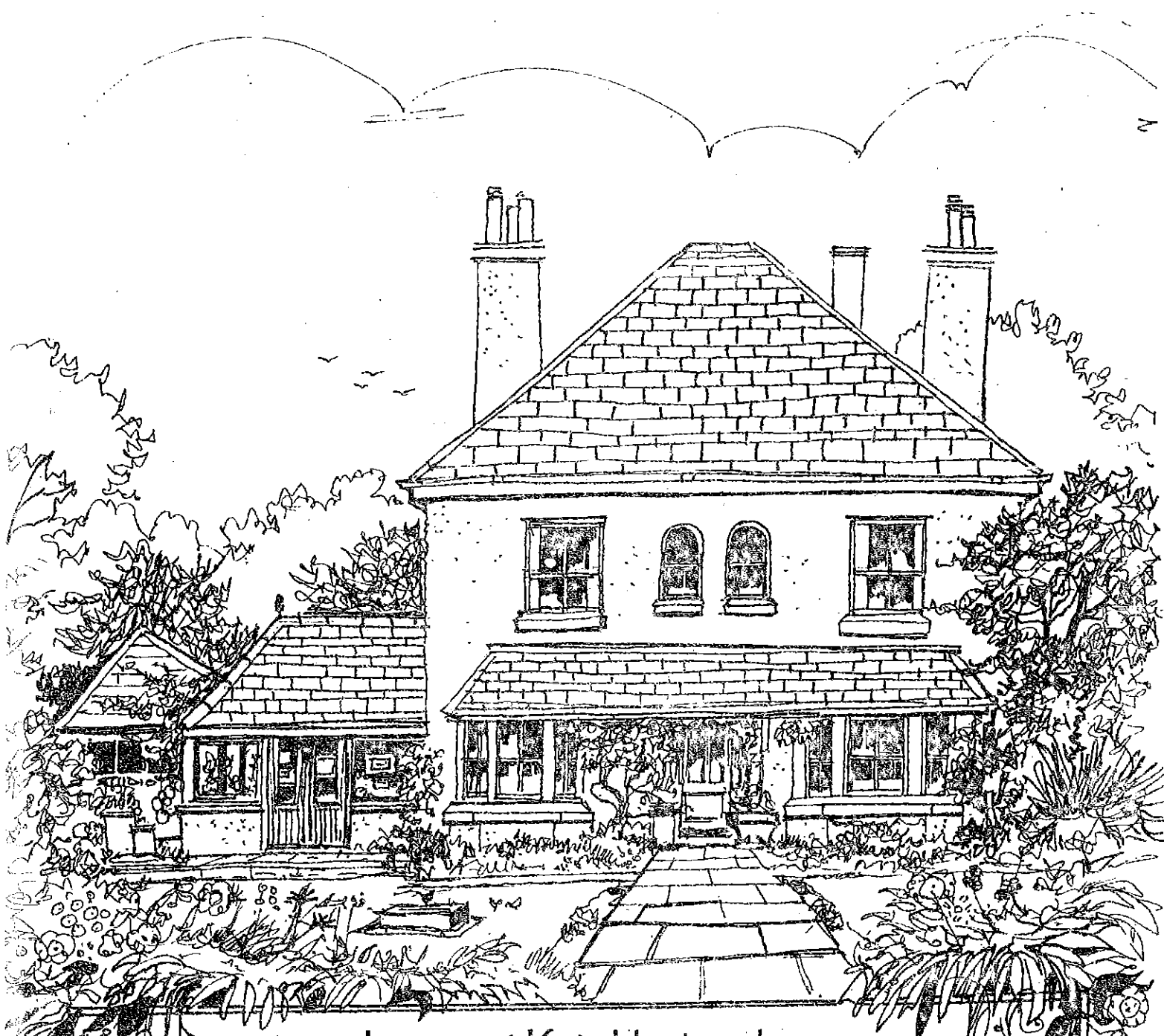
ASK the licensee when he or she intends retiring to the Bahamas after any or all reasonably busy times.

TELL him at great length the same unfunny joke that he has already heard at least ten times that day.

COMMENT on the quality, clarity and/or price of the house ale in any deprecatory manner - especially after having drunk several pints of it without demur.

EAT all the darts match food provided for the said teams (This to particularly apply when you are not even a member of the home or visiting team).

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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.

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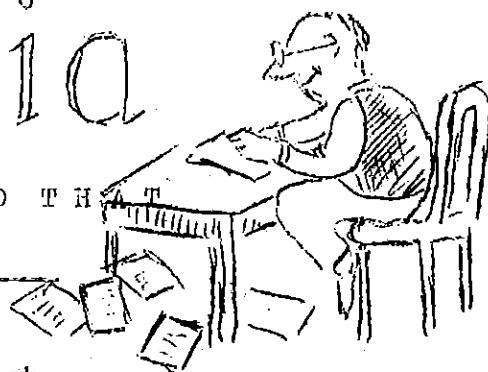
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Drabblemania

A MISCELLANY OF THIS AND THAT



"I don't want a National Health Service in which pensioners queue for their operation in an end-of-season sale or General Practitioners ring up the Rotterdam Spot Market for the latest price on a hernia. "

Robin Cook - Shadow Health Secretary.

+ + + + +

BAGPIPES - AN ENGLISH TRADITION !

Generally regarded as Scottish or Irish, the bagpipes were once a traditional English instrument. They were played all over the British Isles until they became unfashionable and many types became extinct, leaving only the Northumbrian small pipes surviving. These bag-pipes are bellows-blown and have up to six drones (pipes) and 17 keys on the chanter, or finger pipe, with a stopped end. They are the most sophisticated members of the bagpipe family and have been played for more than 300 years. At Morpeth in Northumberland is a museum devoted to the bagpipes.

So, what about that, you Scots !

+ + + + +

GENTLEMAN JOHN

You've only a fustian coat, my lad,
You sleep upon straw, maybe;
When my lord goes by, it makes you sad,
You want to be as rich as he.
You hate to be called a son of the soil,
You'd like to be a gentleman born;
Never to want and never to toil,
And never go tattered and torn,
But broadcloth or fustian, what you've got on,
Never will make you a gentleman, John.

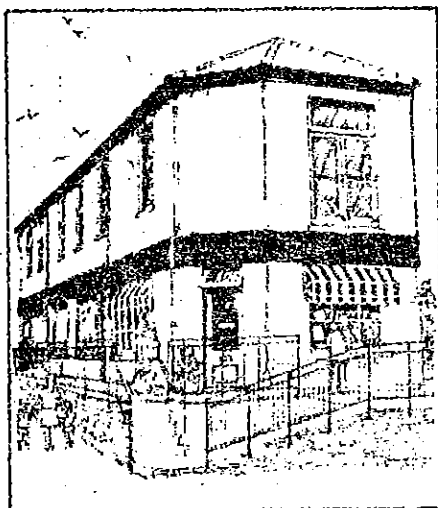
'Tis not the honest brown dirt, my lad,
Makes a man's hands unclean;
'Tis what he does that is base and bad,
'Tis what is cruel and mean.
Don't be ashamed of your coat or your toil,
Each has its work to do,
Loyally, faithfully stick to the soil,
And you'll be a gentleman too,
'Tis what you have in you, not what you have on,
That ever will make you a gentleman, John.

FRED WEATHERLY (1848-1929)

(An eminent barrister in his day, who wrote poetry for pleasure.)

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

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTH HAMS II

" The Chairmanship of the Conservative party is not a romantic job.....Half my party think there could be a better chairman and the other half know there could be a better chairman. "

Kenneth Baker.
(Grapevine- Sunday Times 14.10.90.



Well, what do you know !

From May 1991 we shall have to face another five years of newly elected representatives elected to serve on the South Hams District Council. Will it be shock, horror, or will they actually serve in support of the aims and desires of the various communities which elected them. So much depends on the representative, naturally. Shall we see the paid servants - the officials - of the authority telling 'em all what is good for us rather than some truly genuine democratic and knowledgeable consideration of what the people want?

Thurlestone has not had the benefit of a Thurlestone resident elected to the District Council since the time of the late Donald Turner in the seventies.

+ + + + +

Did you note a recent BBC report which said there were some six million - yes, six million - illiterates in this country? When I think of the fact that more than half my community charge goes to education I consider we should all benefit from a fifty percent rebate.

Dudley Drabble.

+ + + + +

A lot of people will perhaps urge you to put some money in a bank, and in fact - within reason - this is pretty good advice. But don't go overboard. Remember, what you are doing is giving your money to somebody else to hold on to, and I think it is worth keeping in mind that the businessmen who run banks are so worried about holding on to things that they put little chains on all their pens !

+ + + + +

I love Christmas tide and yet,
I notice this, each year I live,
I always like the gifts I get,
But how I love the gifts I give !

Although its is just a little early - a very Happy Christmas-tide to all (both of them!) who read Drabblemania.

+ + + + +

And . . . to all District and County Councillors . . .

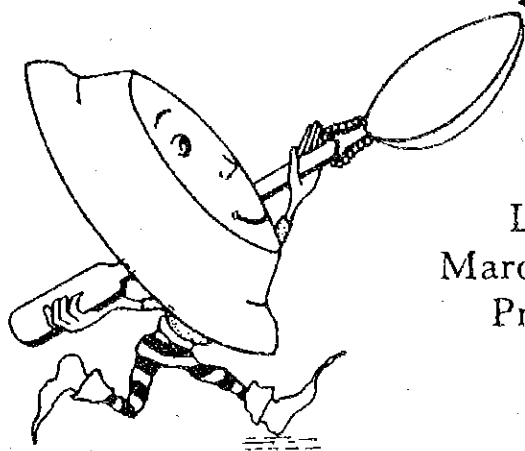
'Tis not the colour of your politics that matters a damn,
'Tis loyally and faithfully serving those who elected you

+ + + + +

A LITTLE MORE OVERPAGE:

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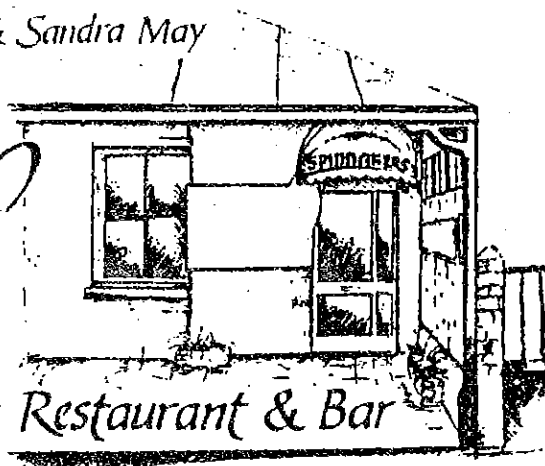
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WHEN HAPPINESS WAS HALF A CROWN !

I do miss the dear old half-crown. It was such a comforting coin to have and it used to mean so much. For half-a-crown my great-grandmother did a full day's washing for a doctor's family in Bethnal Green - twelve hours with copper, tub and scrubbing board. But this was quite generous when you consider that it was also the weekly rate of pay for a pupil-teacher at the local infants' school. For half-a-crown a week my father performed twice nightly at the old Walthamstow Palace as part of the locally-augmented Terry's Juvenile Troupe.

By the time I was a child in the 1930s, half-a-crown could still buy a lot. I once won this sum in a competition run by the Sunday Dispatch to write a thriller on a postcard. My entry was called "The Mystery of Whitewell Ferry" and had, as I remember, spies, flashing lights, sinister Chinamen and no less than three corpses. I can't think how I managed to write so small! When I cashed this enormous sum I went straight into my favourite sweet shop and bought a whole pound of Fry's chocolate coffee creams - and I still had sixpence change.

Half-a-crown was the going rate for letters published in 'Film Pictorial' and the price of a Marcel Wave or a 12 inch teddy bear from Gamages. For 2/6 you could even obtain a front row stalls seat to see Lily Morris at the Stratford Empire.

When the Second World War broke out we dug up our back garden and planted vegetables. Gamages did a large box of mixed vegetables for half-a-crown - enough to sow a whole patch, and the crops were magnificent. Even as late as five years after the war, for half-a-crown you could still get a three-course meal at the Vega, a vegetarian restaurant just off Leicester Square, or a gallery seat at Drury Lane or Sadler's Wells - 2/- for the seat and 6d. for a stool in the queue outside. And my husband still remembers the shock of first paying 2/6 for a pint of bitter in the mid-1960s.

Of course, when we went decimalised the price of things became blurred overnight. It seemed as if 12¹/₂p sounded less than half-a-crown. And now - what on earth can you buy for that?

MARGARET REED

+ + + + +

GARDEN SENSES

When I enter my garden at daybreak
As the first rays of light appear,
I listen to sweet sounds of birdsong
And I thank the Lord I can hear.

In my garden during the morning
As the rays of the sun grow bright,
I look around at the beauty
And I give thanks for my sight.

In the afternoon in my garden
As I sit in the shade for a spell,
I notice the perfumes around me
And I thank the Lord I can smell

In the evening in my garden,
The garden which I love so much,
When I feel the soft green foliage
I give thanks for my sense of
touch.

The fallen leaves in my garden
Are much too precious to waste,
They nourish the vegetables and
fruits
Which I thank the Lord I can
taste.

HILDA M FORBES.

History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.

ABBA EBAN

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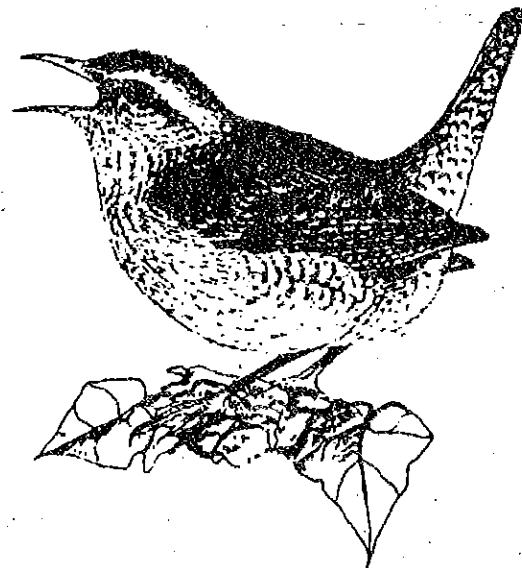
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HARRY HUGGINS



"BIRD-WATCHERS ARE TENSE, competitive, selfish, shifty, dishonest, distrusting, boorish, arrogant, pedantic, unsentimental and above all envious!" Bill Oddie wrote that in his Little Black Bird Book. He did qualify his statement by saying that most were not those things all of the time, but some were, and the majority were some of them some of the time.

I reckon I can add another one which Mr. Oddie just infers - being unpleasant to other birders.

Needless to say, rare birds are usually the reason. Take for example two which appeared at Plymouth one day last March. Someone rang to say that a Woodchat Shrike was at Jennycliff and a Night Heron at Radford Lake. Not mega-ticks like the Yellow Throated Vireo they found in Cornwall during the autumn (the first ever for the British Isles) but worth a diversion none the less. And as we had planned to attend a field meeting of Deven Bird Watching and Preservation Society (DBWPS) in Saltram Park next day, we diverted.

As doubtless you know, or maybe do not, to get to Jennycliff you turn left at the first roundabout where the A379 becomes dual carriageway on the outskirts of Plymouth. You then get lost in Plymstock, ending up in a vast car park, after which you find you should have taken a little road up on the left; this takes you past Radford Lake, which is a piece of fresh water they made by damming off an arm of the Cattewater. Adjacent is a fair-sized park, extensively used for exercising dogs and children. The lake is quite good for grebes, ducks and gulls, rare ones sometimes, and is a regular haunt of the Plymouth birders.

A few cars can park in a little turning near the top of the lake; we left ours, walked down towards the dam looking for twitchers (it being much easier to find twitchers than birds), and found a sizeable heap of them gazing across the water to the other side where the Night Heron was stalking through the treetops on large yellow feet: it was about the size of a Herring Gull, pearly grey with black back and black cap; it ought to have been somewhere in southern or eastern Europe, unless it had got out of someone's collection, apropos of which they say that two White Storks which appeared at Charleton during the autumn have now gone home to Whipsnade - it is much easier to eat the food provided than to look for your own.

We returned a couple of days later: Radford is not a bad place at which to eat your crust after a morning's shopping in Plymouth. The Night Heron was still there, quite low down in a tree above a marshy stream, only yards from the parking place. It was standing on one foot, fast asleep, its bill jammed tightly under its wing and the little white plumes on the back of its head sticking up in the air. I whistled to it: it put its head up, gave me a filthy look, I took a photograph and it went to sleep again. You can see

HARRY HUGGINS CONTINUES:

why they call them Night Herons.

You should never do what I did. I should not have done it then, but luckily the bird was so sleepy that no harm came of my waking it. But it might have been scared away when another twitcher wanted to see it, although as far as twitchers were concerned it was old hat by then. Worse, if a bird is sleeping it needs its rest, and if it is eating, well, you know how you feel when someone telephones to sell double glazing when you are eating dinner.

Meanwhile, back to the first visit. The twitchers just arriving said the Woodchat Shrike was still present, so on we went to Jennycliff - you pass a lot of little houses, formerly the married patch for RAF Mountbatten I believe, go up a tiny lane, and find yourself with a panoramic view over the Sound. There is a large untidy car park, grotty loos, an extensive greensward at the top of quite high cliffs and a cafe.

There were twitchers with telescopes skirmishing about - the Shrike had just been mislaid. But soon a howl of "There it is" went up and we all congregated to watch it through our telescopes - a lively little thing, a bit bigger than a sparrow but not as large as a Starling, black and white almost like a magpie with quite vivid chestnut on the top of its head and down the back of its neck. It performed very well, dancing about on top of a fence and making short excursions to catch insects. The shrikes are song birds which have developed hooked beaks and raptorial habits; many birds are predatory in that they take caterpillars and insects, but these catch quite large prey for their size, big insects, nestling birds, lizards and things, all of which they are wont to impale on thorns for future consumption, which is why the vernacular name for them is butcher bird: especially as they are not too fussy about killing their prey before impaling it.

The similarly sized Red-backed Shrike used to nest in Britain, but after declining for something like a hundred years does so no longer: no-one knows why, the facile explanation for a bird's fading out is the effect of pesticides on its prey, but this Shrike began to fail long before modern chemical sprays were thought of. Woodchat Shrike is common enough in southern Europe and the Mediterranean, in Corfu they sing away on cypress trees outside your hotel window, but it is never more than a rare vagrant here.

After this we took ourselves across to Saltram, where twenty or so DBWPS members had gathered to be led on a walk along the Plym estuary. Promptly we were beastly to the leader: we could not keep to ourselves that we had just seen two rarities within a mile of each other, just across the other side of the city. About a third of the party enquired the way to Jennycliff and left immediately. The remainder looked at their watches. In fact we had a good expedition down by the estuary.

All you vociferous protesters who bleat about the limpid waters of Leas Foot beach should go to the Plym! There, just below the concrete-cancer bridge to Marsh Mills roundabout is the outfall from the sewerage works, and what comes out has to be seen, and smelled to be believed. The treatment plant itself does not smell of violets either. But the people who sail-board and water-ski, and presumably fall off, a little way down the estuary do not seem to mind and the birds love it.

We saw a lot of waders, and gulls, and a duck over which we are still arguing. Ducks as opposed to drakes, are difficult. They are mostly just brown. Usually these things come in twos and all you

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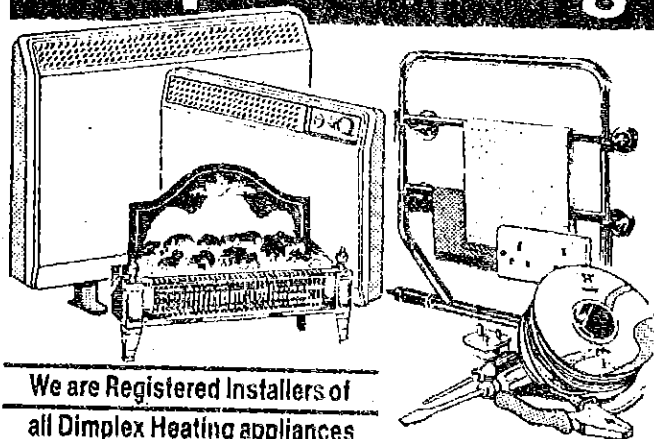
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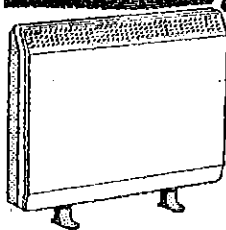
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HARRY HUGGINS CONTINUED:

have to do to identify a duck is to pair her off with her drake. But this one was on her own. She was one of the sawbills - ducks which have toothed beaks the better to grasp the fish on which they feed, so she was either a Goosander or a Red-breasted Merganser, but the ducks are as similar as the drakes are different. Well it was something to argue about. To our relief the people who walked the estuary went to Radford and Jennycliff after and found both birds.

On the next day a friend in Kingsbridge was asked by a neighbour if Woodchat Shrikes were very common in this country; the neighbour was not a birder, but knew them from working in the Middle East, and had just seen one at Thurlestone by the golf club. When our friend had picked himself up, he dashed off to see, gasping to his wife, whom he met on the doorstep, to telephone us (we gathered it was to be tongue pie for supper when he got home!).

We were ten minutes off dinner-time, but the pots and pans were put on hold and we too pounded down to the golf club. There the bird was, tripping about on the brambles close to the third tee, quite tame. We watched it for some time, picking up worms from the grass, and lost it finally in the gathering dusk somewhere in the car park.

I noticed that the neighbour's teen-aged daughter seemed to wince when I shouted at our dog not to go on the course/chase rabbits/frighten the bird; I thought maybe the young lady's hearing was very sensitive. Then I realised her name is Lisa, like the dog! On the following morning the Shrike was up the Valley below the Mead, on one of those piles of earth which Farmer Stidston cherishes, and finally it drifted away out of sight inland.

A little later two very smartly suited young gentlemen climbed out of their company cars in the car park and proceeded to set up telescopes on tripods. They had come to see the Shrike and if required to account for their movements that day would doubtless explain that they had planned to sell something to the golf club.

We were across the road; we heard a sort of altercation between them, of the "yes I did", "no you didn't" variety. It seemed that one had heard a Tawny Owl; the other said it was impossible, in the middle of the day, no suitable trees, etc.

But he had heard an owl call. It was on tape, and was back in my pocket.

I should explain that on occasion we find ourselves cajoled into doing surveys for the British Trust for Ornithology, and such. This usually entails our walking about for a set time in a given place recording everything we see or maybe find breeding. Some other people do likewise elsewhere and from the data thus obtained the boffins and their computers calculate the total population of the British Isles: it is a bit like the tailors in "Gulliver's Travels" who fitted the man out with a suit by working out the measurements from the circumference of his thumb.

If you try to put it all down in a notebook you drop it in the mud, or lose the pencil, or miss something which flies up while you are writing down something else. So we use a small cassette recorder. We still have to write it all down but that can be done later at home, over a cup of coffee.

The cassette recorder has other uses. You can entice little birds out of their bushes: not all, but especially some of the warblers. If you tape a singing male and play his song back to him he thinks there is a rival and comes out to do battle. A

CONCLUDING HARRY HUGGINS:

Nightingale will get so excited that it will almost come out and sing on your hat. We do this very, very seldom. It is a rotten thing to do to upset a bird who is stressed already by the tension of holding a territory and retaining a female. It is all right to be rotten to people. They can be rotten back. But birds cannot.

Or you can go out with a tape made from one the gramophone records or cassettes they sell. One day in the autumn we followed a young bird-watcher down the Pigs Nose valley at Prawle. Frequently he emitted the harsh jeering call of a Jay, hoping no doubt that small birds would emerge to mob a predator they detest. He might have been clever enough to make the noises vocally himself - that he had a tape was much more likely.

We always hope to find a Dartford Warbler (very rare) in the gorse and brambles along the coast, and have taken out a recording in the hope of enticing one. Never with any success - all we have called up is a Whitethroat, a near relative with similar song.

However, to return to the Tawny Owl. The ones which live around the garden of the Thurstlestone Hotel seemed in the spring of 1990 to have deserted their posts - probably the combination of winter storms and building work at Merchants Garden disturbed them too much. Thinking to try and find out if they were there or not we taped a song from an RSPB record to play after dark: if one was present it would perhaps respond.

In fact we never tried it out; as far as I know the owls did not nest in 1990 although we have heard them in the autumn, after the breeding season.

But we still had the tape and what the young gentleman heard was my running it on before dictating a note of something we had seen. I suppose I should have gone to him and confessed, but I did not - there is nothing like a little mystery in life!

JUST HOW OLD ARE YOU?

YOUTH - is not a time of life -- it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination. Youth means a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over love of ease. This often exists in a man of 60 more than a boy of 20.

NOBODY grows old by living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair - these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust. Whether 17 or 70, there is in every being's mind the love of wonder, the amazement at the stars, the unfailing child-like appetite for what comes next and the joy in the game of life.

YOU are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. So long as your mind is receptive to messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage from men and from the infinite, so long are you young.

ANON

(but contributed by Al Parker).

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Kate's Kitchen



SAYS KATE:
Christmas is
coming, but..
DON'T
PANIC!

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY MADE the traditional Christmas pudding, don't panic! In fact you may like to try one of these alternatives. They can all be made in advance, which is a real bonus. The first I call Igloo Pudding. It is totally different and is a frozen dessert.

IGLOO PUDDING (Serves 6-8)

2 ozs Raisins; 1 oz Sultanas; 1 oz Currants; 2 ozs Maraschino Cherries quartered; 2 ozs Blanched Almonds toasted and chopped; 2 tablesp. Medium Sherry; $4\frac{1}{2}$ ozs Marshmallows; $\frac{1}{4}$ pint Milk; 1 tablesp. Instant Coffee Powder; 1 tablesp. Cocoa Powder; 10 fl.ozs Double or Whipping Cream.

Place the raisins, sultanas, currants, cherries, almonds and sherry in a bowl. Leave to soak for 1 hour.

Place the marshmallows, milk, coffee and cocoa powder in a saucepan and heat gently until the marshmallows are melted. Allow to cool.

Whip the cream until stiff, whisk in the marshmallow mixture, then fold in the fruit and sherry mixture.

Turn into a $2\frac{1}{4}$ pint pudding basin. Cover and freeze until solid. Unmould just before serving and decorate with a sprig of holly.

Or try...

TIPSY PUDDING (Serves 6-8)

1 Large Jam Swiss Roll, cut into approx half-inch slices; 4-5 tablesp. Medium Sherry; 1 tall tin Pears, sliced; 10 Maraschino Cherries, chopped; 1 tablesp. Maraschino Juice; 4 ozs Ratafias or Amaretto Biscuits, crushed; 10 fl.ozs Double or Whipping Cream, a few flaked Almonds, lightly toasted for decoration.

Line the base and sides of a 1 or $1\frac{1}{2}$ pint basin with the swiss roll. Mix together the sherry and maraschino juice and gently pour over the sponge. Put in alternate layers of pears, biscuits with cherries, starting with the pears. Cover the top with the remainder of the swiss roll and sprinkle on a little extra sherry. Place a piece of greaseproof paper on the top and a saucer with a small weight on the top. Just before serving, unmould and cover with whipped cream and decorate with the almonds and a sprig of mistletoe.

AND IF YOU'RE STILL DETERMINED TO GIVE THEM CHRISTMAS PUD NO MATTER HOW LATE YOU'VE LEFT IT, TURN ON TO FIND KATE'S KITCHEN EXTRA!

KATE'S KITCHEN EXTRA...KATE'S KITCHEN EXTRA.

FORGOT TO MAKE THE CHRISTMAS PUD? DO NOT WORRY. HERE IS OUR SUPERCOOK - KATE OF KATE'S KITCHEN FAME - RUSHING TO THE RESCUE!
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KATE'S QUICKIE CHRISTMAS PUDDING

5 ozs White Bread Crumbs (2-3 days old bread); 1 oz S.R. Flour sifted; 2 ozs Shredded Suet or 2 ozs Butter; 2ozs Soft Dark Brown Sugar; 1 teassp. Mixed Spice; 4 ozs Mixed Dried Fruit; 2 tablesp. Chunky Orange Marmalade; 1 teassp. Coffee Essence; 1 oz Ground Almonds; $\frac{1}{4}$ pint Milk (with one tablesp. taken out and replaced with 1 tablesp. Brandy if desired); $\frac{1}{2}$ oz Sliced Almonds; 1 Egg beaten.

Mix together all the ingredients until well blended. Put into a buttered $1\frac{1}{2}$ pint pudding basin. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and foil. Put in the fridge until next day. Steam for 2 hours before required and eat the same day. Serve with clotted cream, brandy butter or a plain custard. This is obviously not as dark and rich as the traditional one, but forgetters can't be choosers!

Don't forget the cook's nips...Happy Christmas, says Kate.

THURLESTONE PROBUS CLUB.

AT OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING Peter Wall gave a very interesting talk spiced with comedy entitled 'Collectors Corner' during which he passed around a wide selection of collectors items from silver and brass through to glass and porcelain. It gave all members present a chance to handle these items stimulating a lot of extra interest.

In October we had our annual golf match which took place in near perfect conditions, terminating with a well-attended and very enjoyable relaxed lunch at the Clubhouse. Our congratulations and thanks go to the Clubhouse staff, as well as those members winning the valuable prizes.

Our November meeting includes a talk by S/Ldr. John Raglan from the Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Mount Wise.

The Ladies Evening has been planned for Saturday February 2 at the Cottage Hotel, Hope Cove. Transport will be provided if sufficient numbers require this facility.

Our Christmas meeting on December 14 will not at the time of going to Press include a speaker, although this may change if a suitable speaker can be persuaded to join us in our festivities.

No meeting will take place in January as the Hotel is closed from January 7 - 14. So the first meeting of the New Year will be the AGM on February 8.

D.M. Yeoman. Hon Sec. 560300.

HAVE YOU SEEN

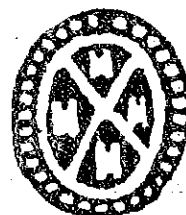


1585

Exeter marks

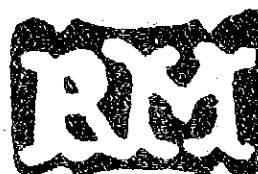
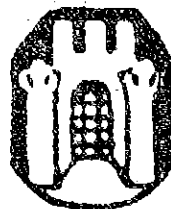


1720



1600 -1700

Plymouth marks



1370 - 1730

Barnstaple marks.



Lion Passant
for
Sterling Silver.
1720.

THESE MARKS ?

ASKS NEVILLE OSWALD

IN THE LATE 1200s much of Devon was scoured for silver which was eventually found in commercial quantities at Bere Alston a few miles up the Tamar from Plymouth and at Combe Martin near Ilfracombe. The subsequent history of the two mines was similar and so only Bere Alston will be considered.

With the discovery of silver at Bere Alston in the 1290s the King, Edward I, promptly claimed the mine for himself and installed a Keeper of the Mines with a Court and a jury of miners to dispense justice. He transported over 300 press-ganged quarrymen from the lead mines in Derbyshire to open up the seam, paid them their wages and forbade them to go anywhere near the mine outside working hours, in case some of them had itchy fingers.

The silver lode was traced to Mary Tavy and on towards Okehampton Castle and was explored at several points, but was richest at a

NEVILLE OSWALD CONTINUED:

a cluster of mines at Bere Alston, which yielded 20 to 120 ounces of silver per ton of ore. At first the silver, mixed with lead, lay near the surface but as digging progressed the pits became waterlogged, limiting work to the summer months in most years.

After smelting, the silver was handed over to wardens who arranged for it to be refined and finally made into a mould which was marked and sealed by a King's Assayer and sent off to London. This method of marking, showing the name of the mine and the year, continued throughout the medieval period and may be occasionally identified in some silver of that time. It was replaced in 1544 by the Lion Passant (side view of a lion), the formal assaymark indicating high quality silver, which was adopted by law in all provincial assay offices when the 92.5 per cent pure or sterling silver was introduced in 1719.

Ever since about the year 1300 the craft of silversmiths has been regulated by Acts of Parliament, so that most silver objects since then bear marks to show the year and place of assay, although examples before 1550 are now extremely rare. As Guilds of Silversmiths were established in London and provincial towns, each was given a Mark of Origin. Amongst the earliest was Barnstaple where the first mark can be traced back to 1370 as shown on the previous page. This was possibly in association with the mines at Combe Martin, but most of the important assay offices came into being in the 1500s. Exeter was granted its assay mark in about 1550, but silver plate had been made in the city long before that (see previous page). Plymouth had its guild and assay mark from about 1600 to 1700.

Over the years the county's silversmiths maintained quite a substantial output, making many high quality ecclesiastical vessels, tankards, loving cups and coffee pots. In Thurlestone we have our own Elizabethan chalice and cover with its Exeter mark, a large Roman capital X crowned and enclosed in a dotted circle with two mullets, one in each side-angle of the X (see figure on previous page). This was the original Exeter mark which continued, with variants, until it was replaced by a three-towered castle, as shown, in 1701.

The output of silver objects fell off and stopped in Plymouth and Barnstaple in the early 1700s, but was maintained at a peak in Exeter until about 1800 after which it faltered and ceased entirely in 1882. There is, or was until recently, a fine display of Exeter silver at Buckland Abbey and a splendid set of spoons may be seen in the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter. Odd items from Devon often appear in local exhibitions and sales, affording a memorable and sometimes beautiful glimpse of the past.



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POSTBAG

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITORS,

As a holiday home owner I fully agree with the comments in Village Voice's last issue regarding litter from plastic bags split by animals, but this nuisance occurs all over the parish, not just in Island View.

When I first bought my holiday home some 13 years ago, I found that refuse was not being collected unless it was put out on the pavement, and tenants were asked to put out the plastic bags on the morning of collection day and Not overnight to combat the animal problem.

Recently the Torquay District Council has confirmed that the refuse collection is a House-collection, not a Pavement-collection.

If the Parish Council pressed that point, plastic bags could be tied up the night before and left ready for collection from within the secure bin itself, and the village would remain neat and tidy as it should be.

Incidentally, if every litter conscious person carried a plastic bag with them while out walking, litter could be picked up and disposed of in a litter bin - and the village would be even cleaner and tidier.

R.YOUNG, Etwall Road, Hall Green,
Birmingham.

DEAR SIR,

I always read with interest and amusement DrabbleMANIA! However, I feel I must state some facts on the comments in your Oct/Nov issue under "Parish Caretaker".

Any readers who attend Parish Council meetings (and I wish none would do so!) would know that as a result of District Council, Parish Councils and other opposition Devon County Council's 2001 was scrapped and a new draft is under preparation for consultation.

The District Council is already preparing local plans in anticipation of this and I believe it will mean little if any alterations to present development boundaries affecting this area, apart from allowing sites outside the boundary for local housing as has happened at Thurlestone so that the development can be controlled and kept for local people.

I entirely agree you need a caretaker, but if you had to deal with the many queries and sometimes childish comments I receive you might also add NURSEMAID.

JACK THOMAS, Little Thatch,
South Milton.

DEAR MADAM EDITOR,

Having recently been a complete idiot and locked the keys inside the car in Kingsbridge top car park, I wonder if any of your readers have a fool-proof way of preventing me doing this again. I know one of your readers has a spare key tied to his trousers by a long string - but is this the final solution?

Please allow me through your columns to thank the Lethbridges of Loddiswell who drove me back to Thurlestone for the spare keys.

KENDALL McDONALD, Cradles, Thurlestone.

PAT MACHIN'S
PUZZLE
CORNER

KEEPING UP WITH THE SPIRIT
OF CHRISTMAS, HERE ARE A FEW
SEASONAL WORDS...

CHRISTMAS IS COMING - So here are some anagrams of things we may
associate with Christmas events, food, places and people.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. FILTER. | 12. LO SCAR. |
| 2. GLEANS | 13. RC.CREAKS |
| 3. SLIGHT | 14. AIR STEP |
| 4. CAR LED | 15. NITRE EGGS |
| 5. NET PRESS | 16. SPICE MINE |
| 6. STILE MOTE | 17. ERIN REED |
| 7. PLACERS | 18. YEO GULL |
| 8. MATIN POEM | 19. SO TRIO DANCE |
| 9. KEY RUT | 20. SULTANA SAC |
| 10. THE HEMBLE | 21. GILD WOOL |
| 11. BLEATS | |

and a MACS TRIM SHERRY

and PAY WARY PEAHEN.

Answers at the foot of another page.

POSTBAG EXTRA...POSTBAG EXTRA.

DEAR EDITORS,

If, next summer, when you walk through the village you over-
hear one-sided conversations do not panic, instead rejoice, for it
will mean that residents have taken heed of the good advice of a
builder from Yorkshire and are encouraging potential exhibits for
our Horticultural Show.

A recent edition of The Economist revealed the whole story:
"...A builder from Yorkshire set a new record for the whrl'd's
biggest onion. After talking to his onions every day before work,
he produced a winner. His 10lb 14oz onion is now insured for £5000."

SECRETARY, Thurlestone and South Milton
Horticultural Show.

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Cod
Steakwiches

EVENINGS

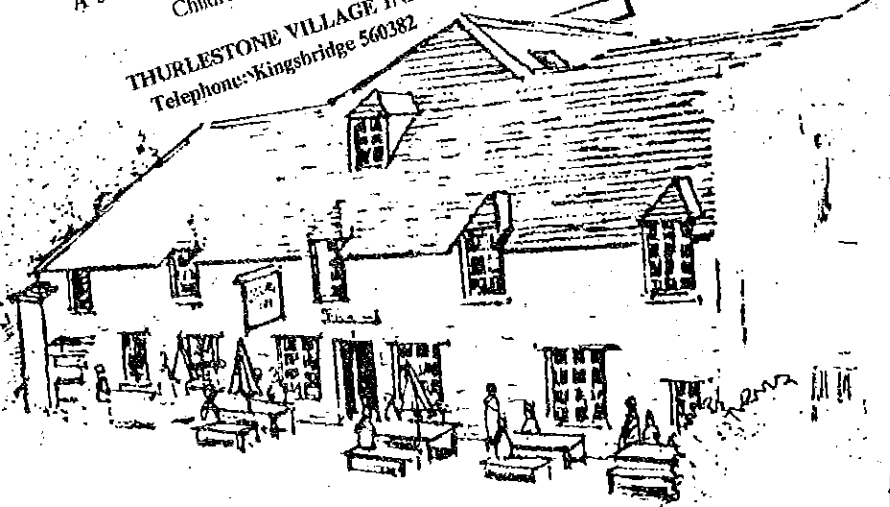
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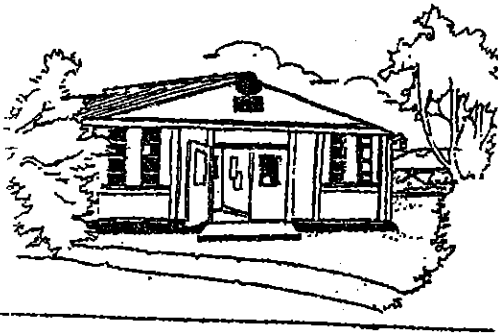
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THURLESTONE PARISH HALL

YET ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT!

WE ARE NOW THE PROUD possessors of splendid new stage curtains, thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Cora Murray-Smith who so kindly commissioned them to be made for the Parish Hall. I am told the old ones have been there for some forty years - they certainly smelt like it on taking them down!

Come 'hail and high water' - you came to support our annual fair - thank you. In spite of all the rain on that day it was an excellent village day which raised £550 towards our toilet improvements. The various organisations presented their stalls so well.

How good it was to find a volunteer from our request in the last issue of V.V., who will do the typing which so often needs the more professional touch.

We shall be attending the Annual Devon Village Hall conference at Sandford near Crediton. This hall has had a new extension.

A 1991 note for your new diary. The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Hall will be on Wednesday March 6th at 7.30 p.m. At last year's AGM it was passed that the Parish Hall financial year will end on December 31st and the AGM be brought forward to March each year. This will be the time to come and put your ideas to the Management Committee.

Thank you for your support during 1990. The Committee and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and enjoyable year to come in the Thurlestone Parish Hall.

JOAN MACKENZIE. Chairman.

WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED...WANTED

The Parish Hall hope to have a Christmas tree in the Hall for the various events in December and are in need of items to dress the tree.

Does anyone have any surplus decorations for our tree that they may not require?

The Hall would also be pleased to receive any surplus cutlery, especially teaspoons, which you might care to donate.

If so, please contact Mrs. Joan Mackenzie (560671) who will gladly collect them from you.

DANCING IN THE DARK? THEN THAT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME. YOU SHOULD HAVE CHECKED WITH THAT SUPERGUIDE TO WHAT'S ON, WHEN AND WHERE...

VILLAGE VOICE'S DATES FOR 1990-91.

1990.

Sat 1st December. Thurlestone Conservatives Bazaar Parish Hall 10.30.

Tues 11th Dec. Parish Council Meeting. Parish Hall 7.30 p.m.

Wed 12th Dec. Thurlestone Ramblers Christmas pub lunch/walk
Normandy Arms, Blackawton.

Thurs 13th Dec. All Saints Fellowship. Guest speaker.
Rectory Barn 2.30 p.m.

Mon 17th Dec. "Rising Generation" Thurlestone Parish Hall 7.00 p.m.

1991.

Wed 9th January. Thurlestone Ramblers local walk.

Tues 12th February. Possibly village pancake race

Wed 6th March. Thurlestone Parish Hall AGM 7.30 p.m.

Sat 3rd August. Horticultural Show. Thurlestone Parish Hall.

Sat 28th September. Thurlestone Parish Hall Annual Fair 2.30 p.m.

PLEASE HELP TO KEEP THIS LIST UP TO DATE. WHAT ARE YOUR
EVENTS FOR THE COMING YEAR?

DON'T LET YOUR FUNCTION MISS THE LIST. EVENT ORGANISERS
USE THIS LIST TO AVOID CLASHES. CHECK IN WITH YOUR DATES
NOW.

DETAILS TO MRS. JOAN MACKENZIE, 7, OLD RECTORY GARDENS,
THURLESTONE (in writing please) by January 1st 1991 for
inclusion in the next edition of Village Voice in February.

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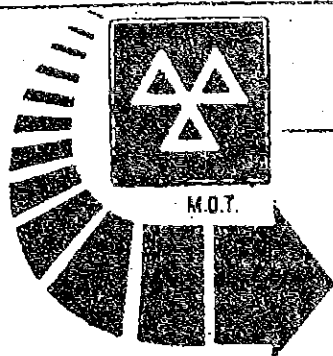
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Mr Geoffery Stidston - - 560695
Mr David Grose - - - - 560375
Mr G.S. Wilkinson - - - - 560512

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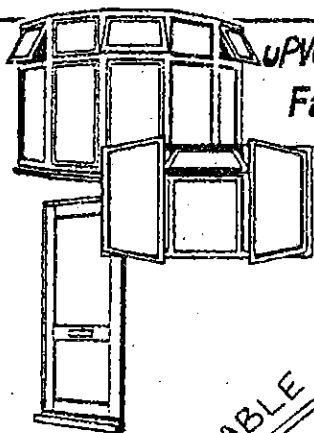
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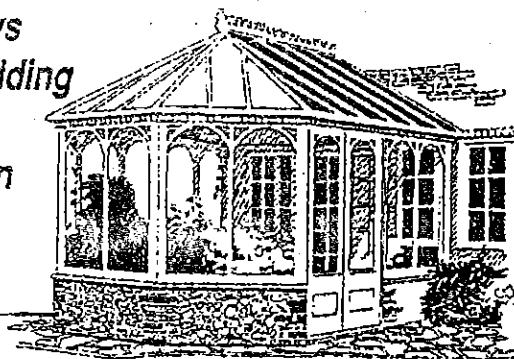
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The Rector Writes

MRS. THATCHER CONTINUES to attract to herself considerable hostility for her willingness, and indeed her determination, to stand by her principles. What has amused me in listening to her critics on both sides of the House and on both sides of the Channel, is their accusation that she has caused Britain to "stand alone". As though that in itself were some calamity! I seem to recall that what history has acclaimed as our "finest hour" was when we were doing exactly that - "standing alone" some fifty years ago.

Whatever the rightness or wrongness of a single European currency, with all that concept entails, the Prime Minister's stand has at least caused it to be a matter much more talked about and, hopefully, thought about, and with far more vigour than would have been the case had she been content to be led by the nose as presumably some of her critics would have it. Most of us, including the politicians in the forefront of all this, have only the haziest notion of what lies ahead. We do well to remember our Lord's warning - "Can the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall into the ditch". The Prime Minister's stand at least gives us time to move forward with our eyes open.

As I write the tunnelers from France have met up with the tunnelers from Britain under the Channel. Soon this way into Europe will be opened and will, I guess, be symbolic of the United Kingdom entering more fully into the European situation. I suspect there is only one way we can move and that is forward and that we must do in Faith (but that does not preclude the most careful thought and prudent foresight). As one put it recently:

"We may not know what the future holds,
But we do know who holds!"

Advent and Christmas fast approaches and you may like to note the following:

Joint Parishes Service for Advent 10.30 am Thurlestone
December 2nd.

An "Advent Carol Concert" given by the Alvington Singers in Thurlestone Parish Church on Wednesday, 5th December at 7.30 pm. Admission £1.

The Children's "Toy Gift Service and Lighting of the Christmas Tree" is as usual at All Saints South Milton on Sunday, 9th December at 3p.m.

Continued overleaf.

CONCLUDING THE RECTOR WRITES:

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 18th December at Thurlestone at 11.10 a.m. and at South Milton at 6 p.m.

Placing figures in the Crib will this year at both churches be in the context of Sunday worship made suitably simple to enable the youngest children to be present. Sunday 23rd December at Thurlestone 11.10 a.m. and at South Milton 9.30 a.m.

"The First Communion of Christmas" is, as in recent years, on Christmas Eve, 24th December at 10.30 p.m. at South Milton and at 11.45 p.m. at Thurlestone.

And on Christmas Day our All Family Services are at 9.30 a.m. at South Milton and 11.10 a.m. at Thurlestone.

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

IT'S NEW AND IT'S SPECIALLY FOR RESIDENTS OF THURLESTONE,
WEST BUCKLAND, BANTHAM AND SOUTH MILTON.

Thurlestone has long been known for the number of golfers who live here, but now the number of bridge players is catching up on them.

Following the great success of the Thurlestone Bridge Club since it was formed in 1984, it was inevitable that there would be a long waiting list to join. And so there is.

But now there is a second duplicate bridge club. Its name has yet to be decided - it was only just formed as Village Voice was going to press so for the moment it is being referred to as the "Wednesday Friendly" and will meet at Thurlestone Parish Hall under the directorship of Mrs. Doreen Williamson and members of the parish.

The new club is only for those residing in the parishes of Thurlestone, Bantam and Buckland, and South Milton.

The annual subscription is £5 and members will meet every Wednesday at 7 p.m. So much interest has been shown in joining the new club that numbers will have to be limited. So NOW is the time to join. Any residents who want further details should ring Mrs. Doreen Williamson 856080.

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A VISIT TO GHANA, WEST AFRICA.

Joan Galloway reports on a holiday full of memories.

WHEN, OVER A YEAR AGO, MY ELDER SISTER, Nancy, told me that her eldest son, Anthony, had been appointed High Commissioner for Ghana and would I like to go with her on a visit there, I accepted with alacrity! (For those not certain of the difference between a High Commissioner and an Ambassador, a Commonwealth country has a High Commissioner and a non-Commonwealth country has an Ambassador.)

The particular reason for our excitement about Anthony's appointment was that our father had been Governor of the Gold Coast (as it was called before Independence) from 1926-1932 and previously he had been Colonial Secretary there (second to the Governor) from 1914-1921. In between he had been Governor of Sierra Leone.

I had been taken out to the Gold Coast at 10 months old and was the first white child to go to West Africa, which in those days was known as the "white man's grave". My sister went there in 1928-32 after she left school. Although I did not remember it I had heard my parents talk about it and many names of people and places were familiar to me. So it was that Nancy and I spent 16 days in Ghana in September and had a very interesting holiday.

Ghana changed its name in 1957 when it gained independence, being the first British colony to do so. Nkrumah was the first President; he had formed his own party with its slogan "Self-Government Now" in 1948 and organised a national strike in 1949 as a result of which he was sent to gaol. He was released in 1951 to become leader of the Government when his party won the general election that year and he became President in 1957 until 1966 when he was overthrown by a coup by the army and the police. He went into exile where he eventually died. There were three more coups in 1969, 1972 and 1979. In 1979 there was discontent among the junior ranks of the army and Flt.Lt Jerry Rawlings (a Ghanian in spite of his English-sounding name) gained power. He is still Head of State, but still styles himself Flight Lieutenant and Chairman (of his Party) not President.

After Independence, when Nkrumah denounced imperialism and neo-colonialism, Ghana went downhill badly and it was not until Rawlings gained power that the economy began to improve and he has done much to bring this improvement about, but the country is still very poor and inflation is still rising. It is definitely not geared to tourism.

When our plane touched down at Accra Airport we were met by Anthony at the foot of the aircraft steps and swept into the High Commissioner's car without any Customs formalities. This was the beginning of 16 days' luxury, living in style in the British High Commissioner's Residence. It is a large house built after Independence and security is very evident, the house and gardens being floodlit all night, bars all along the first floor verandah which runs the length of the house, and a guard on night and day. They have 15 servants, 3 stewards, 2 drivers, 4 gardeners, 2 female cooks, 1 laundryman and 3 guards. They were all delightfully friendly as are all Ghanians. We were introduced to them all - you shake hands with everyone you meet - and all gave us a beaming smile and said "Welcome".

The weather throughout was hot and humid with spasmodic sun. There was a beautiful swimming pool in the garden of which I made

full use, swimming two or three times a day.

The first day Anthony took us into Accra, about four miles from the house. I was struck immediately by how run-down everywhere looked. There seemed very few shops (although I later realised that the best ones often looked like private houses and were a little way out of the centre of the town) and the old Colonial buildings appeared to be mostly unused and falling into decay. Everywhere there were milling crowds with rather dicey-looking cars weaving in and out, but we saw very few beggars and physically-handicapped people and all the children looked happy and well-fed.

There is not room to tell you all we did; I will just pick out the two most interesting visits. The second day of our holiday we were taken to Takoradi Harbour, four hours by car from Accra. Takoradi was opened in 1928, when my father was Governor, and was the first harbour in the Gold Coast. After independence it fell into decay and was hardly used until Jerry Rawlings came to power and he ordered its rehabilitation. It was the "Commissioning of the Port Rehabilitation Scheme" by the Chairman (Rawlings) which we witnessed: two hours of speech-making interspersed with dancing and music; a typical African ceremony, very interesting to attend once but too many would pall!

Undoubtedly the highlight of our holiday was our visit to Christiansborg Castle - a 17th century Danish Castle which used to be the Governor's Residence and is now the Residence of the Chairman. My sister lived there when she was there with my parents and loved it, as did my parents, particularly my mother. It is built on the rocks on the edge of the sea and the surf breaks on its battlements - a truly idyllic place.

Anthony had warned us that we would not be able to see it, as no-one is allowed near it except on official business; it is never photographed and is not visible from any point except from a long way off along the beach. Having reconciled ourselves to not being able to visit it, you can imagine our excitement when Anthony came in one day towards the end of our holiday to say he had received the Chairman's permission for us to go there and that he would take us, but that Veronica (his wife) had not been given a pass.

We drove to the Castle in the High Commissioner's official car, Union Jack flying, and were received by the Minister for Protocol and later joined by another official. To our surprise the Minister asked us if we had a camera - we had, but had left it in the car. A soldier was sent for it, but the other official insisted on taking the photos. This may have been from kindness, but I think more likely because they did not want us photographing parts of the Castle as a whole, and so took close-ups of us in a group which could have been taken at any of the similar castles along the coast. However, both officials were very friendly and interested in Nancy's recollections of the Castle and we think that the Chairman occupies what were my parents' quarters and he certainly uses my father's old offices. We did not see much more than Anthony saw when he went to present his credentials soon after his arrival, but we were very thrilled to have seen it at all and it was good to see it is being kept up so well and was much grander than Nancy remembered it!

Anthony and Veronica took us to many other interesting places. We left Ghana receiving the same VIP treatment as when we arrived - waiting in the VIP lounge and then driven out to our plane! A wonderfully interesting visit and one of my chief remembrances will always be of the friendliness of all the Ghanians we met.

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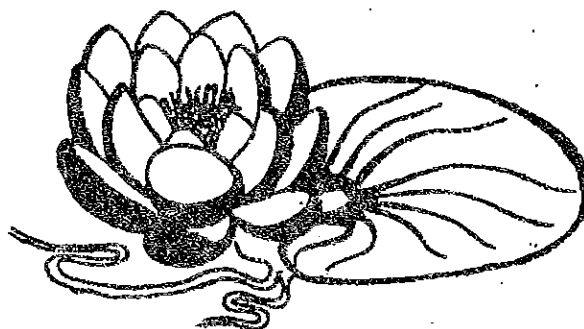
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LOCAL NEWS

JOAN GALLOWAY hopes (but at this stage cannot guarantee!) to make marmalade again in January in aid of the Church.

Please give her your order in good time as oranges are only available for about a fortnight and once they are finished she cannot make any more until January '92! She does not carry a large supply over and above the orders and often has to refuse people when they ask her for extra during the year. She hopes to make Orange, Dark Chunky, Lemon and Grapefruit, but cannot give a price yet. Contact her at Edens, Warren Road, Thurlestone. Tel: 560453.

NANCY GOODALL, an expert on dolls from Plymouth, was the speaker at the October meeting of All Saints Fellowship in the Rectory Barn. She not only displayed a great knowledge of the national costumes of dolls from all over the world, but also showed beautiful examples of hand-made dolls from many countries.

CHARLES MITCHELMORE is the Tree Warden for Thurlestone Parish and would like to hear from anyone having problems about trees in the area. If you feel trees near you need protection Charles Mitchelmore is the man to talk to. He lives at 1, Glebe Field and his phone number is 560602. The Tree Warden scheme is co-ordinated for S.H.D.C. by South Devon Heritage Coast.

ELECTIONS for both District and Parish Councils take place on May 2nd. Posters and advertisements asking for nominations will appear locally on or about March 25th. Nominations for councillors have to be in by April 5th.

THE RETURN OF THE ROYAL MARINES. In our last issue we published an article based on the recording of an informal talk given by Colonel F.C.E. Bye to the All Saints Fellowship. Unfortunately the transcript was a little inaccurate and the Colonel wishes to put the record straight.

The opening paragraph of the article refers to the role of the Royal Marines as it was in World War II. The shore service element included, amongst many other things, about half of each of the four commando brigades. The Army, who were first in the field, provided the other half.

The role of the Corps today is to provide an amphibious force consisting of the Commando Brigade, landing craft, amphibious specialists and a small number of ship's detachments. Its mode of operation was exemplified by the Falklands Islands campaign.

The timing of Colonel Bye's talk co-incided with the start of plans for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Royal Marines arrival at the Thurlestone Hotel. He hopes to give the planners active support and that his former batch-mates will be there on the day to celebrate their personal 50th anniversary of joining the Corps at the same time.

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

It's never too late to be a Brownie!

AT THE AGE OF 34 I have just officially joined the Brownies!! Malborough and South Milton Brownies were in need of a new Brown Owl and helper this year when Pauline Cole (who had been Brown Owl for 15 years) was promoted to District Commissioner.

She persuaded Jan Yeoman from Higher Soar Farm, Malborough, to become Brown Owl - Jan had been an assistant guider for Pauline a few years ago and has been a relief teacher at Thurlestone School so local children will remember her. At the same time she persuaded me to become "Tawny Owl" assistant guider (I had helped Pauline at weekly meetings for about a year).

I was officially enrolled on June 26, a year after my daughter Emily and on the same day as Clare McCarthy and Catherine Stidston from Thurlestone and Corina Bricknell and Elizabeth Rundle from Malborough.

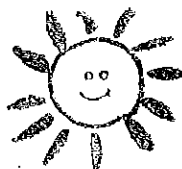
Brownies (officially Brownie Guides) is a game for girls. It gives them a chance to take up a number of interests and at the same time teaches them self-respect and confidence and to think for themselves. Most importantly, it's FUN.

Brownies are by no means always well-behaved and quiet. In fact, when they are playing games or singing the noise can be heard all over the village, but by doing these things, and working on projects together, they find that teamwork can be rewarding as well as fun. Malborough and South Milton Brownies look after "The Pound" at Malborough Church (the Brownie Motto is "Lend A Hand") and they recently replanted their "sink gardens" with bulbs ready for next spring and generally tidied up this small area behind the church where people can sit quietly and enjoy the view. They were very proud of their finished work and because it was all done by them, from choosing which bulbs to buy right down to the watering, they earned themselves a "Venture" badge each.

During this last term Elaine Treleven (known to them as "E.T.") has done some craft work with them and they have done some pottery with Jim Sharp. They have also been working for their Hostess or Cookery badges depending on their choice.

We hold Brownie meetings at the Malborough Church Institute Hall on Tuesday evenings from 4.00 to 5.30 p.m. Girls can start with us from the age of seven up to ten or eleven years of age, when they can move to the Guides. We already have two girls from South Milton and Thurlestone joining us in the New Year and if there are any others interested please let us know. Brown Owl's telephone number is Kingsbridge 561232 and Tawny Owl is on Kingsbridge 560810.

LIBBY SIMMONS (Tawny).



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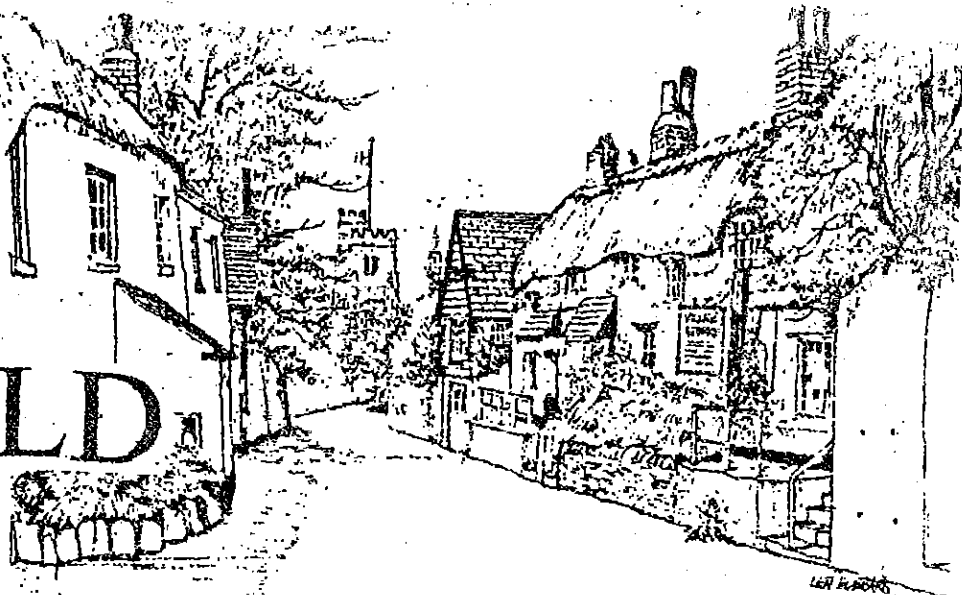
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Neville OSWALD reports



A VIEW OF LOCAL HISTORY (continued from the previous issue).

After writing scientific medical articles for many years, I found the switch to local history a little difficult. Historians are blessed with a plethora of facts. For example, they know that such and such a building was erected in such and such a year or period and, having selected an aspect of it for study, they are able to build on a factual base. Scientists are equally concerned with "facts", but they need to accustom themselves to seeking them in a sea of uncertainty in which solid facts are few and far between. Certainly a broken limb may be real enough, but detailed assessment and management inevitably involve arbitrary decisions which may or may not be right ones. In order to lessen the chances of error, clinicians make use of comparisons and acquire at least an acquaintance with statistics, neither of which has found much favour in local history.

Comparisons are fundamental to the advancement of clinical medicine and it is difficult to see why they should not also be important to local history. Take the example of a baptismal font. It may be described in isolation or as part of a parochial history. For many scientists, a description of several fonts of similar type and period would be preferable in that, having selected fonts as a starting point, they would seek to nibble away at them until they felt they had something useful to contribute and then leave it to others to take the matter further, hoping perhaps that somebody would eventually write a comprehensive study of Devon's fonts.

Amongst the reasons why this is unlikely to happen would seem to be the principle that local historians ordinarily favour an extended parochial history. Also an amateur, having selected his local font, is more likely to limit his observations to his parish than to go further afield, thereby adding one more font to those that have already been described.

A scientist's assessment of figures is often far removed from the popular conception of them and local historians do not ordinarily allow themselves to be unduly inhibited by them. Yet carefully selected figures from the past are able to provide a framework for local history that is rarely exploited by amateurs. For example, the totals of men and ships in Devon ports from the Calais Roll of 1346 to the official statistics of modern times provide a solid foundation for further study. Similar figures are available for populations, husbandry, social services, education and

NEVILLE OSWALD CONCLUDED.

many other subjects. Properly selected, they can give substance to an otherwise undistinguished article, but they need to be used with circumspection. It is often easy to take them at their face value when they are either unreliable or not large enough for conclusions to be drawn from them. Curiously, some authors seem to be carried away by figures, particularly from centuries old wills and the like, and insist on copying long lists of minute amounts of money when a brief summary would suffice.

Interest in the history of Devon is probably greater now than it has ever been. Apart from academic institutions, which have the responsibility of setting standards, there is a considerable range of organisations almost wholly sustained by amateurs, which presents a seemingly infinite variety of subjects in the field and the lecture room to its members. Yet local history has been described as the Cinderella among historical studies. In a sense, it will always be subservient to national studies but, with increasing interest being shown in the day to day lives of ordinary people over the centuries, the social history of a nation can only be compiled with the aid of local publications. Hence the value of some seemingly modest essays by amateurs may, in time, achieve a significance that was not apparent when they were written.

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Thank you to my hard-working helpers and to everyone who contributed so generously.

Watch this space for the 1991 date!

PAT TOWNSEND.

Answers to Pat Machin's Puzzle Corner:

1. TRIFLE. 2. ANGELS. 3. LIGHTS. 4. CRADLE. 5. PRESENTS.
6. MISTLETOE. 7. PARCELS. 8. PANTOMIME. 9. TURKEY. 10. BETHLEHEM.
11. STABLE. 12. CAROLS. 13. CRACKERS. 14. PARTIES. 15. GREETINGS.
16. MINCEPIES. 17. REINDEER. 18. YULE LOG. 19. DECORATIONS. 20. SANTA
CLAUS. 21. GOODWILL and a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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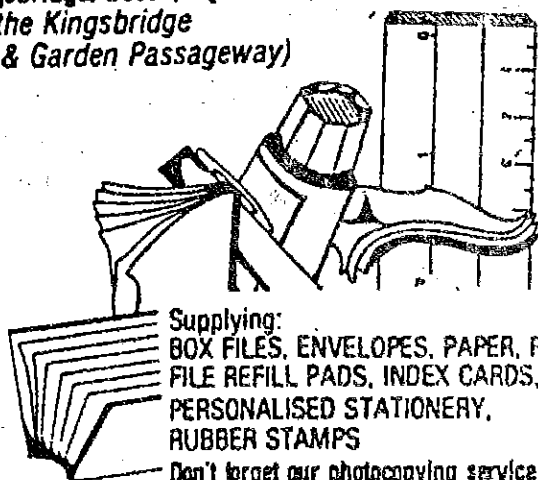
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