



LEN HUBBARD

# VILLAGE VOICE

February-March, 1995





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Founded by Dudley Drabble.

Cover pictures by Len Hubbard

EDITED AND PRINTED BY

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THE GREAT JOY of living in our villages is the way that our Parish Councils, past and present, have protected them from the changes that those who come from suburbia seek to make, almost unconsciously, to recreate their former surroundings.

The desire for yellow lines, street lights, traffic lights, speed limits, road signs and rumble strips is a strange one for it destroys the very peace and beauty which brought them here in the first place.

However, it now seems that suburbia has won a major victory. We are to get 30 m.p.h speed limits, signs and rumble strips.

Under the name of "traffic calming", the in-thing of the moment, coupled with the odd belief that traffic has speeded up by some 20 m.p.h within the past two years, we are now on the rocky road which will turn us into Margate-on-Sea and destroy all the things which attracted people here in the first place.

As a sop to those who find such a vision horrific, Devon County Council says that our rumbles will only be little tiny rumbles, hardly more than a burp really. They will be laid in strips of five projecting "not more than one quarter inch above the road surface at the selected locations" creating only modest rumbles, "which will not inconvenience ambulances and other sensitive traffic whilst emphasising the 30 m.p.h restrictions".

It was of course bound to come when you consider our dreadful accident record, particularly that nasty five-car pile-up in 1879.

Don't think that the rumbles will go away. When they don't work they will be replaced by bigger and bigger obstacles until we get the same traffic-calmed hell that is Berry Pomeroy today.

But you don't have to go that far to get a good idea of the traffic calmers' mental state. Just look at those humps in Kingsbridge which tempt pedestrians to cross on top. They call these "controlled uncertainties" and actually intend both driver and walker to be uncertain who has the right of way!

It is this sort of weird mind which has now been released on our parish. It is a controlled certainty that the worst is yet to come.

# PUZZLE CORNER

A  
T  
M  
A  
C  
H  
I  
N

## WORD PAIRS.

From the list of words take out two which go with each clue.

This will remove 40 words, leaving just one. What is it?

### CLUES

### WORDS.

- |                                |            |                 |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| (a) A tidal race               | 1. Bow     | 22 Jewels       |
| (b) Two linked with chase      | 2. Fit     | 23. Nelson      |
| (c) Two naval vessels          | 3. Hoe     | 24. Pull-up     |
| (d) Two make a flower          | 4. Ida     | 25. Severn      |
| (e) Ready for battle           | 5. Bore    | 26. Square      |
| (f) Two joined to club         | 6. Corn    | 27. Examine     |
| (g) A flag light?              | 7. Gold    | 28. Lottery     |
| (h) Two anagrams               | 8. Golf    | 29. Midland     |
| (i) Two with Plymouth          | 9. Half    | 30. Parties     |
| (j) Home of Nelson's Column    | 10. Lamp   | 31. Steeple     |
| (k) Two following cross        | 11. Snap   | 32. Traipse     |
| (l) A breakfast dish           | 12. David  | 33. Barclays    |
| (m) A Gilbert & Sullivan opera | 13. Derby  | 34. Corvette    |
| (n) Two linked with crown      | 14. Minim  | 35. Fighting    |
| (o) Two banks                  | 15. Paper  | 36. National    |
| (p) A wrestling hold           | 16. Sound  | 37. Princess    |
| (q) A James Bond film          | 17. Avenue | 38. Standard    |
| (r) A Dickens novel            | 18. Dragon | 39. Destroyer   |
| (s) Saturday's big draw        | 19. Finger | 40. Trafalgar   |
| (t) Two palindromes            | 20. Flakes | 41. Copperfield |
|                                | 21. Indian |                 |

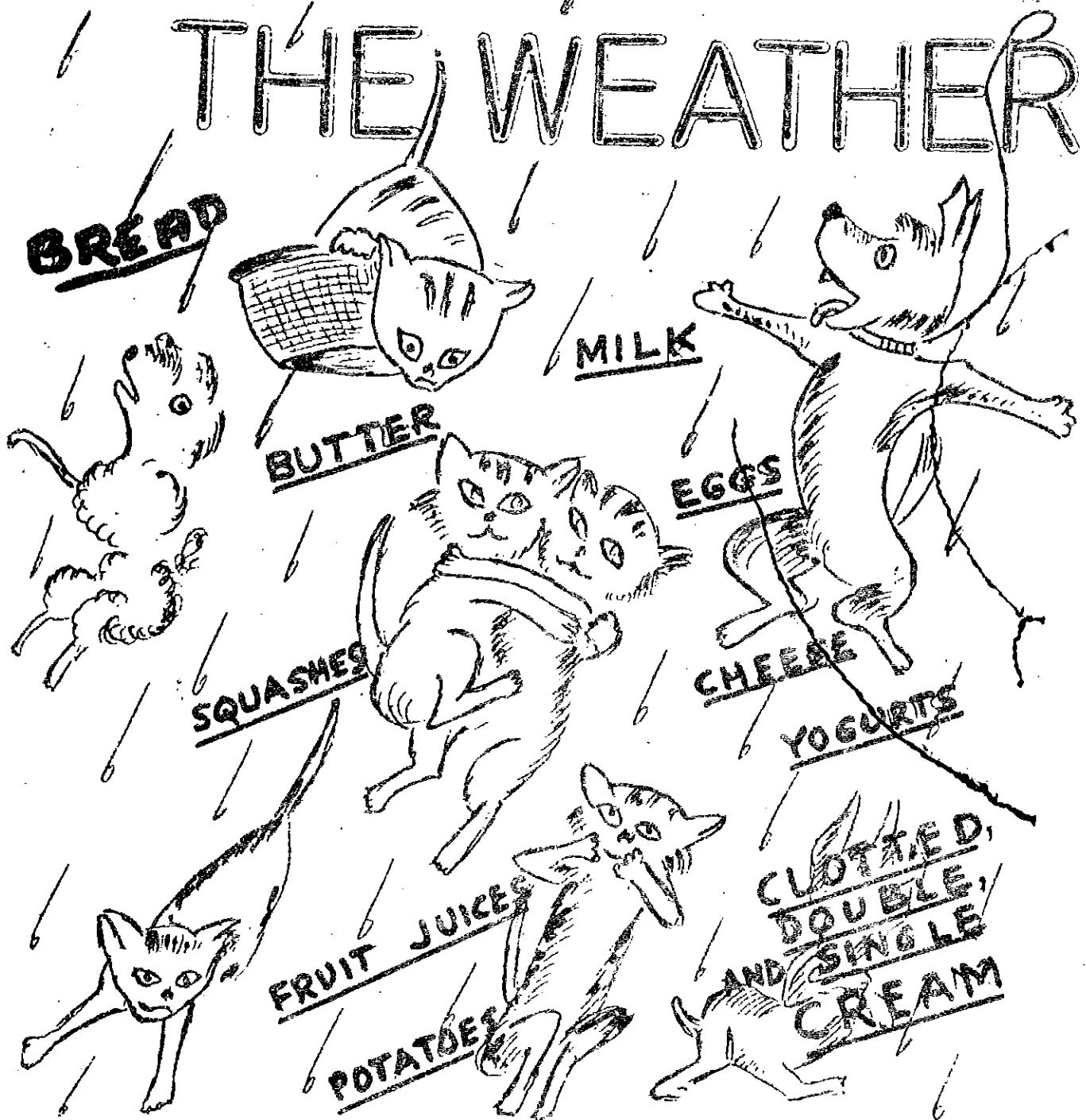
ANSWERS ON A FOLLOWING PAGE.

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

Thurlestone and South Milton Horticultural Show committee are holding a JUMBLE SALE on Saturday, February 25 at 2.30 p.m. and a PLANT SALE on Saturday, May 20 at 2.30 p.m. Both events in Thurlestone Parish Hall are to raise funds for running the ANNUAL HORTICULTURAL SHOW.

This year it is Thurlestone's turn to provide the venue and so it will be in THURLESTONE PARISH HALL on Saturday, August 5.

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Taking a look at  
this magazine's  
future - and its past..  
Giving praise where  
praise is due...  
And putting the  
record straight....

THE OLD ASTONISHER, which is what we older yokels call the Kingsbridge Gazette, astonished us all once again by failing, in its report of Village Voice changing hands, to give proper credit to the man who started it all.

For it was Dudley Drabble of Backshay Close, South Milton, now 85, who founded Village Voice in 1982.

It was Dudley Drabble, former clerk to Thurlestone Parish Council, who nursed the magazine through its difficult early stages, and who single-handedly printed every issue in his garage and who, with his wife, Lilian, put the magazine together.

It was Dudley Drabble, the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the South Hams until his retirement in 1975, who built up Village Voice's readership, despite having conquered lung cancer only months before.

It was Dudley Drabble who won, with Village Voice, a Certificate of Merit in the Devon Village Ventures competition. And it is Dudley Drabble, who has in his files, a letter from Buckingham Palace saying how interested the Queen had been to read Village Voice!

And, of course, as all regular readers of the Voice will know, it is Dudley Drabble, who contributed "Drabblemania" for years. His acid comments on our lords and masters earned him a big following. And though he has now stopped contributing this column regularly, he has not finished writing for the magazine.

However, Harry Huggins, who has brought the birds of the South Hams to life in these columns for the past seven years, has chosen this time of change-over in the Voice to announce his retirement from these pages. As Harry flies off into the sunset, he can have no greater tribute to his writing and birding skills than the comment of a near neighbour of his, who was always complaining - "Why does Harry get all the best birds in his garden..I never see them in mine!". Village Voice will be much poorer without Harry's regular column.

## VILLAGER CONTINUES...

AND NOW, TO THE FUTURE of the Voice. New Editor, as most people know is Mrs. Pat Macdonald. She is well-qualified for the role, having lived in the South Hams for the past 29 years, and 17 of them in Thurlestone. She is no relation to the retiring editors though there have been dark mumblings in the villages about them "keeping it in the clan"!

Village Voice's new Editor serves on Thurlestone WI committee, and is also involved with wider ranges of the WI as an elected member of the Devon Federation of WIs executive committee, the County Publicity Officer, and Devon correspondent for the WI national magazine, Home and Country. She also works for the National Federation as a voluntary county organiser.

And as if all that wasn't enough to keep her busy, she took special pleasure in gathering together the material for two very successful books, "Devon Within Living Memory" and "The Devon Village Book" - that's not all, she helped with the compilation of a book of poetry and prose by W.I. members throughout Devon called "A Garden of Bright Images".

Her local qualifications for editing the Voice include being a founder member and now Vice-President of the Horticultural Show. She is on the Cookworthy Museum management committee too.

Deputy Editor of the new-look magazine is Mrs. Jo Parkin. It is in the Parkins' "Smeatons" that VV will be printed, though the editorial office will be at 25 Mead Lane, Thurlestone, TQ7 3PB, Pat Macdonald's home.

The new Village Voice production and editorial team will include Pam Brewster, Peter Candy, Margaret Cullum, Anne Grose, Norma Kendall, Joan Lane, Peter Luddington, Rosemary and Bruce Mackay, Sheila and Al Parker, Judith Reynolds, Chalky and Veronica White, Jim Woodrow.

Len Hubbard has promised to continue to give the magazine a new front-cover illustration for each and every edition to come. All of which - new team, new ideas - together with most of the stalwart band of contributors keeping up the high standard of the words seems certain to set Village Voice off again on to new heights and new success in the years to come.

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## LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..

The Annual Parish Meeting is on April 18. That evening in the Parish Hall, you can expect even more local government talking heads to appear than ever before. Not only is there an election in the offing, but they're still trying to get themselves upgraded - and upsalaried - into a unitary authority, despite the Local Government Review saying that the South Hams should stay as it is.

In fact it'll be quite a night for making Black Pumas out of pussy cats, for making every little thing into a cause celebre!





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## YOUR MAGAZINE

VILLAGE VOICE can only be distributed FREE TO RESIDENTS 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. But this does not mean that the views and opinions expressed in these pages are the views or opinions of any member of the Thurlestone Parish Council and should be ascribed only to the authors concerned.

Your copy is delivered to you by volunteers. In Thurlestone, this is dairyman Peter Bromfield, and in Bantam and West Buckland, Mrs. Jean Hurrell.

Extra copies may be bought from local newsagents, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Morley at the Village Stores.

There is also a subscription service, which sends copies to readers all over the country at an annual cost of £6, which includes postage.



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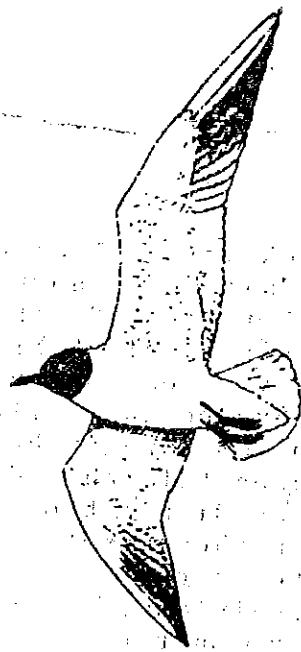
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# HARRY HUGGINS



IN THE LAST issue this column told how it went to mid Wales to chase about after Red Kites. Hardly had we returned when the Plymouth group of the RSPB had a thing devoted to the birds of prey you find in Wales; a talk with slides on the Friday night; on the Saturday morning a coffee morning and chat (I can't spell conversazione, which is what they called it but they couldn't spell it either) and then in the afternoon a film show. All to be addressed by one Dee Doody. We had no idea whether that was man or woman, black, white or green. In fact it was a slim dashing young man with a mop of hair, he had worked for 20 odd years for the RSPB, and was a good bird artist to boot - he had some of his pictures there. Not quite good enough to make a living from painting, for that you have to be a pretty good painter, and even better at selling yourself, but good all the same.

We didn't go to all of it; one trip to Plymouth in any three months is enough. We can wait for the films, which will probably appear on the goggle box eventually; in any case I was repelled because one was about a Red Kite called Barcud. You have to give a dog or a cat a name, if only to call it in from the garden. But wild things don't need names and when a film maker gives one to an animal or bird I always dread the appearance of some artificial story about a half humanised creature; like Lassie films, such things always make me heave. As for the coffee morning, there are plenty of those and you don't need to go to Plymouth for one. But Doody's talk, with slides, we enjoyed, likewise a little natter with him in the comfort coffee interval (we always have ice cream, the queue is shorter).

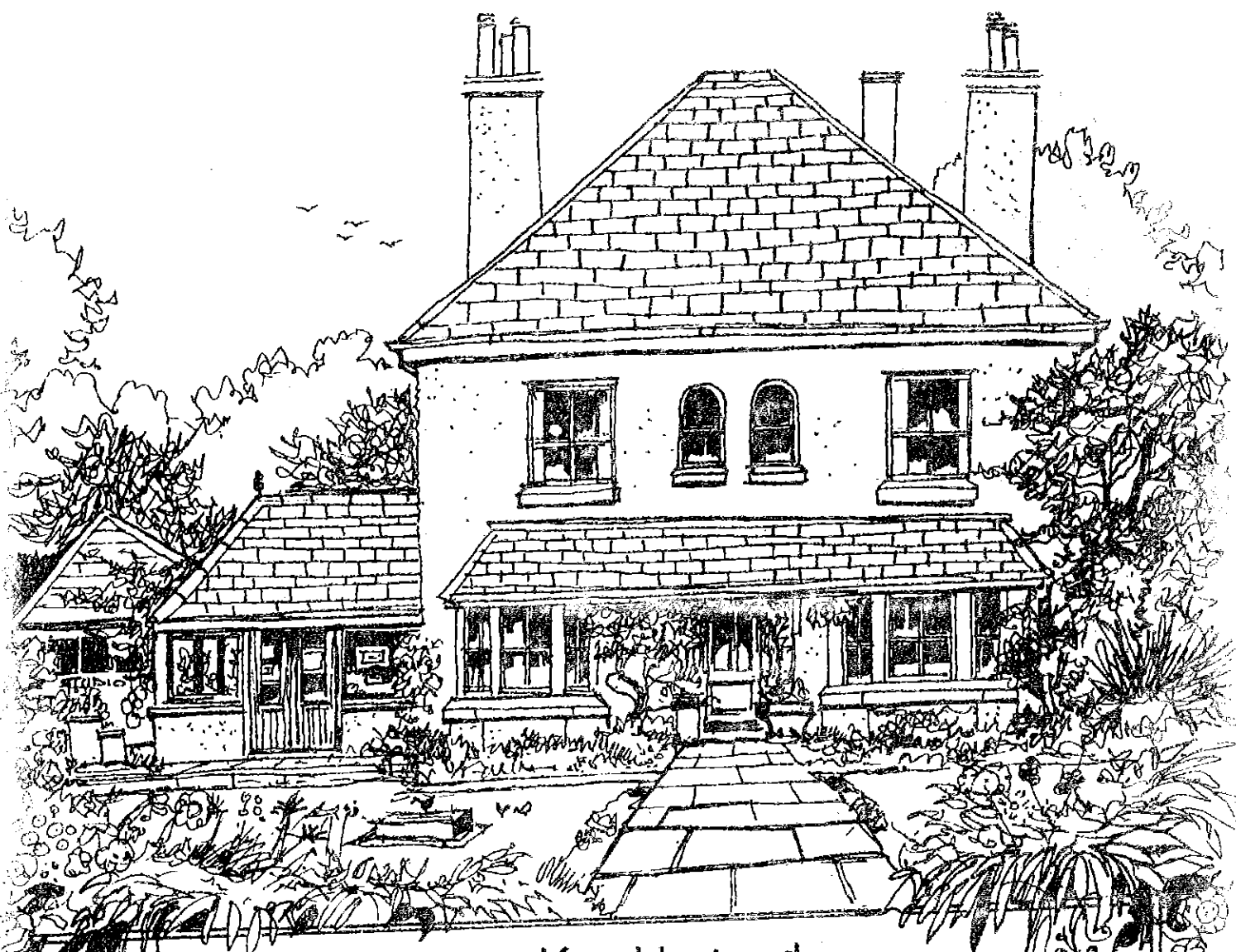
As we expected, much of what he had to say was about Red Kites. This is a buzzard-like bird. He said it weighs less than a Buzzard, and he should know, has handled enough. But it looks bigger, has longer wings and long tail which is deeply forked. Its head is whitish, body reddish-brown, its tail looks orange and from below its wings are brown with prominent white patches near the ends. It sails the sky in a floppy way, twisting its tail. It looks weak and foolish, but it isn't. We saw one in Essex once, the only one we ever saw there. It was making its way against a full gale of wind at a ground speed of about ten to fifteen miles an hour so without apparent effort it must have been doing fifty miles an hour through the air.

If you look in an older bird book you will find this creature referred to as "Kite", without qualification. We call it Red Kite now, because there is a Black one (dark brown, actually but you know what bird names are). Black Kite is in fact much the commoner bird, distributed over most of the Old World. Red Kite is found only in parts of Europe and a little bit of the Caucasus. But Black Kite used to be so rare in Britain that the books could ignore it. We have been told the odd pair breeds now - I don't know how true that is, we didn't know that Honey Buzzards nested in Devon until long after they started doing it. You are just as likely to see a Black Kite in the South Hams area as you are to find a Red one; the odd individual of each species wanders through occasionally, though you won't find many records of Black ones. Red Kites are very distinctive and easy to describe to record committees, Black Kites are not and if you say you have seen one they don't believe you.

Red Kites used to be very common in this country; they were the universal scavengers of mediaeval London and doubtless most other places too. I don't think there were too many municipal dust carts then, nor sewers for that matter, and anything unwanted, which was quite a lot, was flung out into the street for the attention of the cleaners uppers, dogs, pigs, rats - and Kites. But towns got more hygienic, which cut down the amount to be scavenged. With the improvement of sporting guns, about a couple of hundred years ago, folks began to take an active interest in shooting Pheasants, Partridges and things. This meant gamekeepers, and if there is one thing a gamekeeper cannot abide it is a predator with a hooked beak. So Buzzards, Sparrowhawks, Harriers all went - there is no great shortage of Buzzards in Devon, but to this day you will never see one in eastern England. And the Red Kites went too. Until there was just a very small population, probably no more than ten pairs, hanging on in mid Wales. No, none in Scotland, there were more sporting estates there than just about anywhere and woe betide you if you had a hooked beak - remember that the Ospreys were wiped out (they took salmon and trout) and weren't able to make a comeback until the 1950s.

Once Red Kite got rare, collectors coveted its eggs and that made it rarer. A few people in Wales started to guard nests against collectors' depredations, but there was, still is, another serious worry - poisoning, a big reason for losses. Kites love nothing better than a meal from a nice dead sheep and succumb to poison put out by farmers (and gamekeepers) to destroy foxes.

The local Kite committee began to make a success of its protection - an exhausting business it is, because to foil egg thieves you have to watch a nest 24 hours a day until the eggs hatch, which takes well over a month. It is worse if you are protecting Peregrines - the young birds are just as valuable as the eggs and have to be watched until they fly, which means a session by each nest of three months or more. I don't think many people want young Kites, you can't use them for falconry and once the eggs hatch the chicks are fairly safe unless their parents forget to feed them or let them fall off the edge of the nest which is always high in a tree. Then the RSPB came in, with more resources than a few people locally could provide. I don't know when the army began to help. But it does. Soldiers have to guard things for practice and they might as well guard Kites' nests for real using of course the sophisticated night vision equipment and other things which the army has. I imagine the mere



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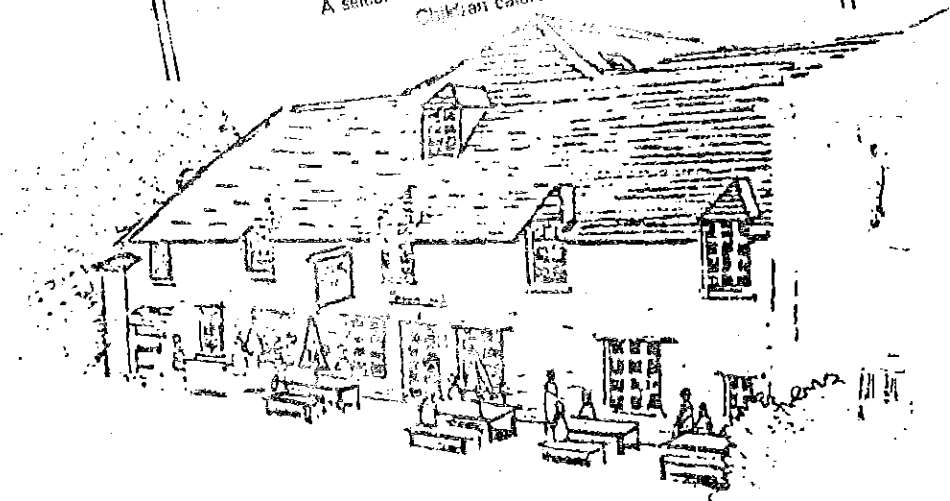
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threat of there being soldiers around is a pretty good deterrent - Doody said that in one case soldiers caught egg thieves up a tree and wisely they elected to remain up until the police arrived. He said that sometimes gurkhas did the watching but there was the difficulty with them that there had to be an officer for every two soldiers - gurkhas are not very big but they aren't half fierce!

Doody was employed by the RSPB to work on Kites. He climbed trees to mark eggs (to render them less acceptable to collectors, there came a point when there were too many nests for every one to be watched). Sometimes he swapped Kites' eggs for Buzzards', so that a thief only got Buzzards' eggs. They had one Buzzard so tame that he could lift her off her eggs, exchange them for Kites' eggs, and put her back. Then he nipped back to the Kite's nest and put the Buzzard's eggs in for her to incubate. When the Kite had hatched out baby Buzzards and the Buzzard had hatched baby Kites he swapped the changelings back again. It didn't have to be done the instant the eggs hatched, the lifestyle of the two species is sufficiently similar for Buzzards to feed Kites for a while and vice versa.

They studied the development of the chicks, weighing and measuring them from time to time. He said he could be up the highest tree, down with the chicks for weighing etc. and up to put them back again all inside twelve minutes.

They found through DNA studies (please don't ask me what DNA stands for but we all have it and from it they can tell our relationships to one another and to other species) that until recently every single Kite in Wales was descended from one female. Lately there has been some infusion of other blood - maybe the one we saw in Essex, that was flying west! They reckon this original female was a bit scatter brained, and passed it on through her genes. We read plenty about feckless human parents, Well, there are feckless bird parents, the ones which don't feed their chicks properly, and don't fetch them back when they get too near to the edge of the nest. They think another result of her genes is that Welsh Kites do not start to breed until they are three years old. There is a programme of introducing them into England and Scotland - I expect you have seen on television people letting them go. These birds have been brought from foreign parts, Sweden I think; they have done very well, and to folks' surprise start to breed when one year old.

Ah, you say, if these birds are all descended from one female, they are seriously inbred, and why not introduce a few virile young birds from somewhere in Europe to strengthen the population. If they can bring in birds from Sweden to try to repopulate England and Scotland, surely they could pop down a few in Wales. Not an easy decision. Should you play at being God and try to replace species which have died off? The butterfly people do - somewhere on the edge of Dartmoor they have released Large Blue butterflies which were found at Bolt Head until wiped out. And they have reintroduced the Large Copper at Wicken Fen, in East Anglia. Bird people are trying to re-establish White-tailed Eagle, otherwise known as Sea Eagle, or Barn, in the Western Isles of Scotland. They were widespread until killed off - I'll never prove it, but I am quite sure that Yarmer Beach derives its name from pairs which nested there hundreds of years ago.

Sometimes however they are reluctant to interfere. Several years ago Snowy Owls (an arctic species) bred in the Shetlands. Just one pair, male and female, must have wandered there at the same time, and did what comes naturally. Breeding continued for some years;

then there were no more males. Females remained. I don't know whether there are still any left, there were in 1993, but of course with no male no breeding. There was serious talk of catching a male somewhere and letting him go with the females. But it was not done. I imagine it was felt that with so few birds and so far south of their normal range, there could never be a self regenerating population.

Likewise with the Welsh Red Kites. It may be all right to turn birds loose in England and Scotland, where there was none before. But the ones in Wales are doing their own thing quite successfully, with a bit of help, and so leave them alone. If you introduce birds from afar there could be the complication of migration. Welsh birds stay put, mostly in the quite small area centred on Tregaron (especially as a lady feeds them there throughout the winter - near the road,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Tregaron, they tell me). But some Red Kite populations migrate. If they brought to Wales birds from one of those, they might impart an instinct to migrate to the Welsh birds; these might then wander off and not come back, or try to go south to Africa and run the gauntlet of Spanish gunners, like our Haldon Honey Buzzards have to.

The Red Kites in Wales number now over 100 breeding pairs and the RSPB feels it need no longer expend resources on them. So after 12 years doing Kites Dee Doody has moved to other birds of prey, to Merlins and Hen Harriers. Merlin is a fierce little bird, the male not much bigger than a Blackbird (in many of these raptors the male is much smaller than the female, hence a male Peregrine is called a tiercel, meaning he is a third smaller than the falcon). We have seen the occasional Merlin in our parish here, dashing along a hedgerow, but you are lucky if you come across one.

Hen Harrier is a Buzzard-like bird, much less in weight but with long wings and tail. Despite the name they take neither chickens nor hares, except maybe very tiny young ones. We used to see wintering birds on the Essex marshes. With wings raised in a shallow V they drifted along just above the rushy ditches, hoping to pounce on a small bird or a small mouse. You can find one sometimes in winter on Dartmoor and the odd one appears over South Milton Ley. The lady has barred brown plumage with a white rump. The gentleman is a beautiful silvery grey, with black wing tips.

Both Merlins and Hen Harriers nest on the ground, among the heather. Therein lies their downfall. As far as the Harriers are concerned, gamekeepers cannot abide them, because they take grouse, which particularly in northern England, and Scotland, are now extremely valuable birds - people are prepared to pay vast sums to shoot them. They pay big money to shoot pheasants as well, but keepers rear those - the birds killed at the big shoots are wilder than battery chickens, but not much. All grouse, though, are wild; they have not cracked the problem of breeding them in captivity. So if a gamekeeper comes across a Harrier's nest with eggs or young he will trample on it. I don't think they have the big sporting estates in Wales. But they have a worse problem - forests, and in forests foxes. The RSPB can probably persuade a landowner to tell his keepers not to kill Harriers. But it cannot tell foxes. Much of the uplands has been lost under conifer plantations. This has cut down the area in which these birds of prey can hunt and nest. And the plantations make wonderful places for foxes to live in. A fox is handsome, resourceful and has a good sense of smell. He comes out of his



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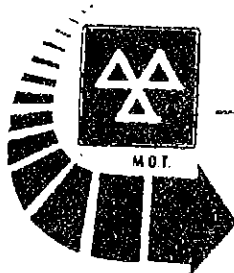
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forest and finds every Merlin and Hen Harriers' nest there is, to say nothing of those of Golden Plovers, Meadow Pipits, - and Grouse.

Doody and his companions are trying to protect these ground nesting birds, but there is little enough they can do. Some of the Merlins have taken to nesting in trees, in old crows' nests at the edge of the plantations, and there they are reasonably safe; but there are still predators like Crows and Magpies, but to judge by the way we saw a Merlin go for a Buzzard when last we were in Wales, I imagine these fierce little falcons would soon see off a Crow and its relations. The Harriers persist in trying to nest on the ground. You can protect ground nesting birds like gulls and terns from foxes. They breed in colonies and you can surround a colony with an electric fence. But you cannot do that on an open moorland where there is perhaps only one nest in a vast area. Nor can you get rid of the foxes. Poison might do it, but to use that would be unthinkable for the RSPB and it is a rotten cruel way to kill a fine animal; and with poison you kill things you don't want to kill, like Buzzards, Red Kites - and people's dogs. Trapping is no better. You cannot get at the foxes to shoot them and anyway a shot fox takes a long time to die. What is more, if you got rid of foxes there are still polecats (like big brown ferrets). We are told they are just as common as foxes in that part of Wales. So for the present Doody has met his match.

Bird species have their ups and downs. Here off Leasfoot Beach we saw just one Guillemot in 1994, and that was probably an oiled bird. No other auks, no divers, no grebes. In the past we never saw a lot but every winter brought some. Overall there may be fewer numbers of these birds. Or their absence may result from South West Water's Clean Sweep which in closing the outfall has made our sea less attractive to fish, and so to birds. But if these seabirds have got less, other sorts have increased. You can nearly always find a Little Egret or three around our parish somewhere - only ten years ago if you saw one it made not just your day but your year. And as for Canada Geese; they are supposed to have put down half a dozen on the pond at the Stokeley farm shop, near Torcross. That was a few years ago. We have not counted them this year, but there were 150 last year. So when Farmer Stidston sees those sixty or so in his valley opposite the golf club, he can console himself as to how many he will have in a year or two.

Likewise in Wales. Merlins and Hen Harriers are down. Red Kites are up. Goshawks are too. Goshawk is a blunt-winged woodland hunter, like a great big Sparrowhawk. The female is brown, as big as a Buzzard, the male greyish and quite a bit smaller. If you want to see one, go to Haldon Forest, to the birds of prey viewing point (you turn left off the A38 at the Happy Eater place at the top of Haldon Hill). Then you wait, and wait, and wait. I have never seen one, but my wife has. I was taking the dog for a comfort walk. She said it nearly knocked my hat off and if I didn't see it surely I must have heard it, it was so close! They think the present population in Britain is all descended from birds which escaped from falconers - you let a bird fly, she says "yippee" and doesn't come back. They can take quite big prey, like rabbits and wood-pigeons (there are plenty of those, the Goshawks need never go hungry). It is estimated there are now over 200 pairs in Wales.

Sadly, the time has come to say this column had reached the end of the line. It began when the editor suggested a piece or two on what birds to look out for, and has gone on without a break for over seven years. My thanks to Penny and Kendall for all their help, forbearance and above all encouragement. It has been a delight to work with them and I wish them well.

### NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

It seems a long time since I wrote my last article for Village Voice; summer and Christmas have come and gone and I enter my fifth year as headteacher of the school. During the last year, children in the junior classes have forget links with pupils at schools in Yaroslavl(Russia) and at Adumasa, near Kumasi, in Ghana.

At the moment, there is an attractive display of work, photographs and artefacts from Ghana in the entrance hall. The children are collecting items that may be of use to children in the 150-strong primary school in Adumasa and would welcome any contributions. One of our parents, Mrs. Rosemary Curtis, has visited Ghana within the last six months and keeps us full informed of local developments.

We had a visit last term from a teacher from a school in Yaroslavl which specialises in the teaching of English. As a result many of our older children wrote letters in the hope that these would be of interest to the Russian children. There is no doubt that they will be of interest; however, we know from bitter past experience that the vagaries of the Russian postal service make letter writing an uncertain means of communication.

During the last part of the autumn term, several children organised a bring and buy sale to raise money to supply well water to Indian villages. This was well supported by the parents, pupils and governors as well as by people from the local community. This was a spontaneous effort by the children and raised over £105.

Since the school, over the years, has continued to develop interest in countries overseas, it seems appropriate that the staff should try to follow the example set by the pupils. I am hoping to spend some time in New England during the Easter holidays (when American pupils are not on holiday), visiting schools and comparing primary education in the two countries. This is an initiative set up between Devon and New England and has been operating for about six years. The idea is that a member of the host family will spend a similar amount of time in Devon studying our primary schools. We hope that this will be an enriching and enlightening experience for all those taking part and for the schools they represent.

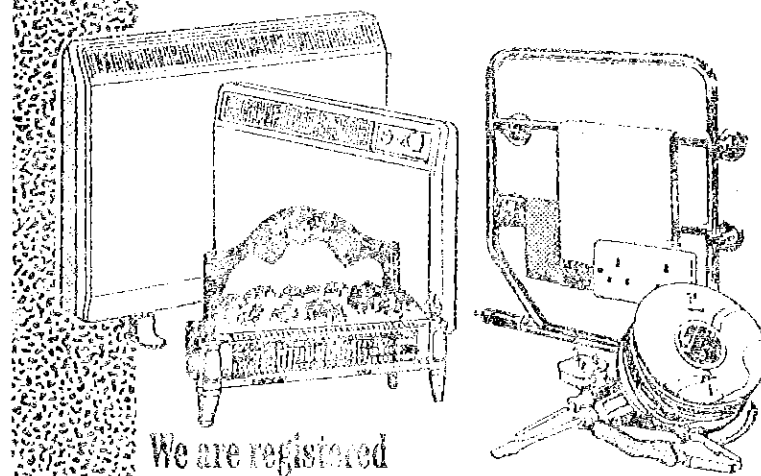
I hope that those of you who went into Thurlestone Church during the Christmas period will have noticed the "Prince of Peace" frieze which was made by the older pupils of the school. This has now been taken back to the school and is on semi-permanent exhibition in the school hall.

ALUN WILLIAMS, Headmaster.

### LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..

The appeal against the planning refusal for four flats at Rowan Cottage, Thurlestone, has been refused.

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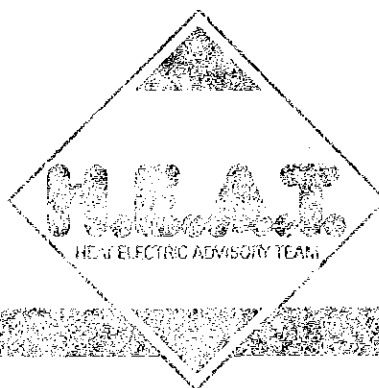
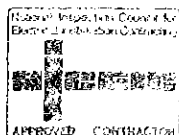
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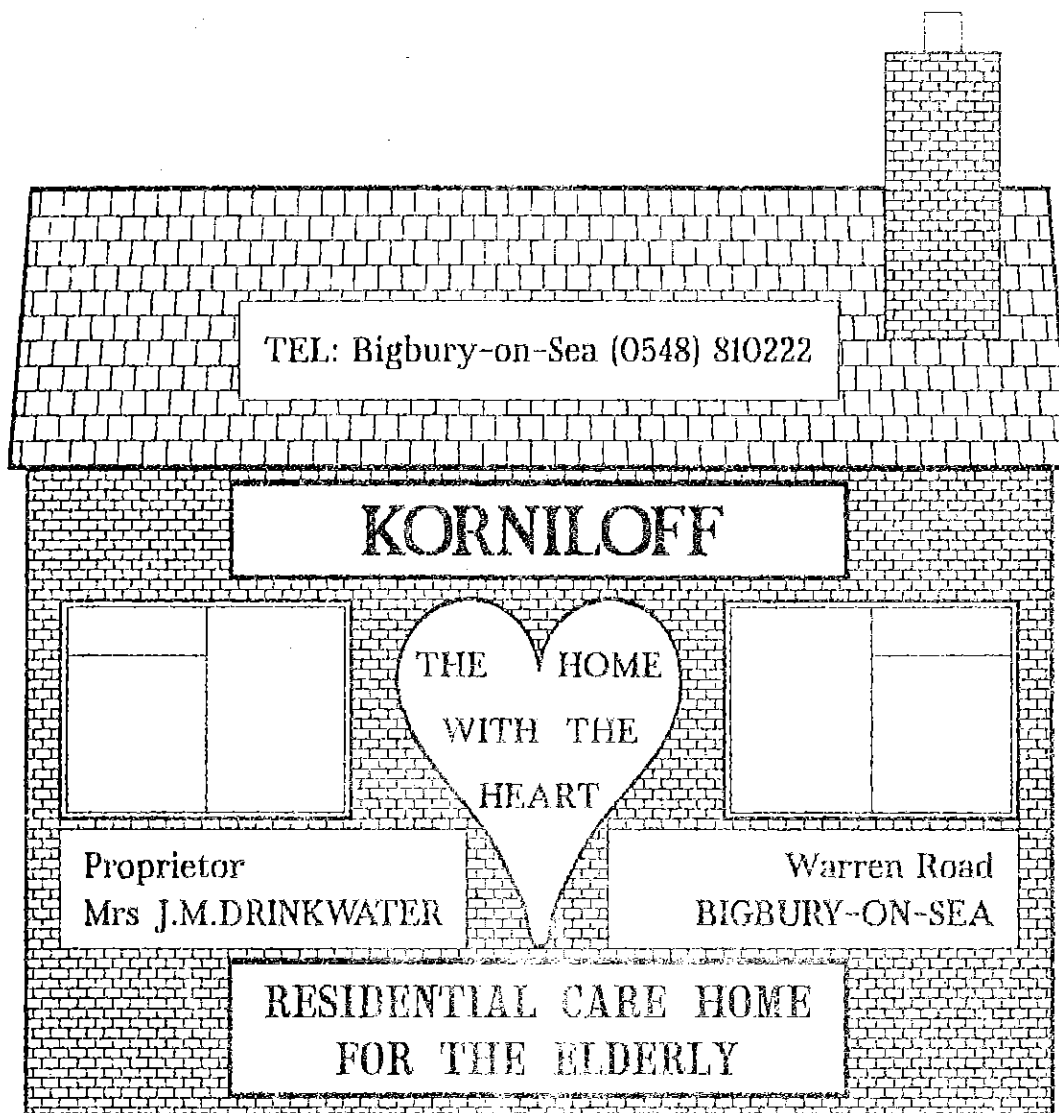
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## Village Voice Book Review.

Nightfighter Navigator by E.G.White, OBE.

KNOCK on any door, old Fleet Street news editors are alleged to have said, and you'll find a story that needs telling.

Knock on the door of 7, Crosslands, until recently, and you'd have found a man who would never dream of telling you war stories. Chalky White kept his past to himself. If pressed he would admit to some vague connection with the Diplomatic Service in India and elsewhere, and if you pressed on might confess to being in the RAF at one time.

But there it ended. Now, however, mainly to keep the record straight for his grandchildren and, one suspects, to still a long-held desire to write a book of his very own, he will confess to having gone into print. He cannot very well deny it. His 80-page book, published by V.P.White at £5.00, and printed by E.J.Rickard of Plymouth, is now on sale.

Even so he has not gone in for dramatics. This factual approach makes the book a good read. A crash landing at West Malling after being hit by flak over France when train-busting and strafing in his Mosquito, is treated not much more fully than the entry in his logbook, extracts from which are studded through the combat sections of the book.

The book does, however, give us enough detail to learn that "Chalky" White joined the RAF in 1941 by adding six months to his age and served from the Spring of 1942 until the war ended as a nightfighter navigator in both Fighter and Bomber Commands.

But if you knock on his door on the Mead, don't expect war stories, he is more likely to tell you how to make a proper curry or cook a duck. Now he has got the taste for writing, I suspect a cookery book is on the way... KM

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# Local News from the W.I.

THURLESTONE & WEST BUCKLAND W.I. have pleasure in publishing their 1995 programme and extend a warm invitation to you to come to any of the events as a visitor, if you are not already a member. It would be appreciated however if you would contact Pam Brewster (560345) beforehand if you would like to attend any item marked \*\*. All meetings take place in the Parish Hall at 2.30 pm unless otherwise stated.

JANUARY 12 Jane Holt "Reflexology"  
JANUARY 23 Alice Foster demonstrates "Flowers for dried arrangements" 2.15pm \*\*  
FEBRUARY 9 Louise Kenton "A Musical Afternoon"  
FEBRUARY 14 Valentine Bring/Buy coffee morning, 5 Crosslands, 10.30/noon  
MARCH 9 Chris Pierce "Improving your Photography"  
MARCH 13 Miniature Ribbon Embroidery day school, 10.30/3.30 \*\*  
APRIL 3 Sea Coast Spring Group Meeting, Salcombe, 7.30 pm  
APRIL 13 D.J.T.Rose "Seaside Gardening"  
APRIL 24 Jean Lee "Improve your Knitting" 10.30/3.30 \*\*  
APRIL 26 "Lunch with Betjeman", Ivybridge \*\*  
MAY 11 Discussion & debate on current affairs resolutions for NFWI General Meeting  
MAY (date to be fixed) Guided Tour of Historic Modbury \*\*  
JUNE 8 Roseanna Rothery "Dance, Exercise & Movement"  
JUNE (date to be fixed) Outing to Forde Abbey & Gardens, Dorset \*\*  
JULY 13 Betty Goodman demonstrates Savoury Party Fare  
JULY (date to be fixed) Garden Lunch  
SEPTEMBER 14 Dr. David Taylor "Chemicals in the Environment"  
OCTOBER 12 Margaret Pratt "Growing up in the Thirties"  
OCTOBER (date to be fixed) Jumble Sale  
NOVEMBER 9 Annual Meeting, election of Committee and President.  
NOVEMBER (date to be fixed) "A Dickens of an Evening" (social supper)\*\*  
DECEMBER 14 Rev. John Delve "Stories of Christmas Carols"  
DECEMBER (date to be fixed) Christmas Lunch Party \*\*

Art classes will continue from 17 January, on Tuesdays, 2.30/4.30;  
Alice Foster's Flower Arranging classes - there will be a further three commencing 6th January; A Calligraphy Taster session will be held on a date to be fixed, with a series of lessons to follow.

## LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL NEWS..

The Kingsbridge and Thurlestone Branch of the NSPCC thank everyone who supported their Christmas Fair and bridge evening. Together these two events raised £745.

The Thurlestone Church Christmas Fair raised £555.

Have you given Village Voice Your Dates for the April-May issue? Don't miss getting your event into Superguide.

Next Copy Deadline for the April Edition is MARCH THE FIRST.





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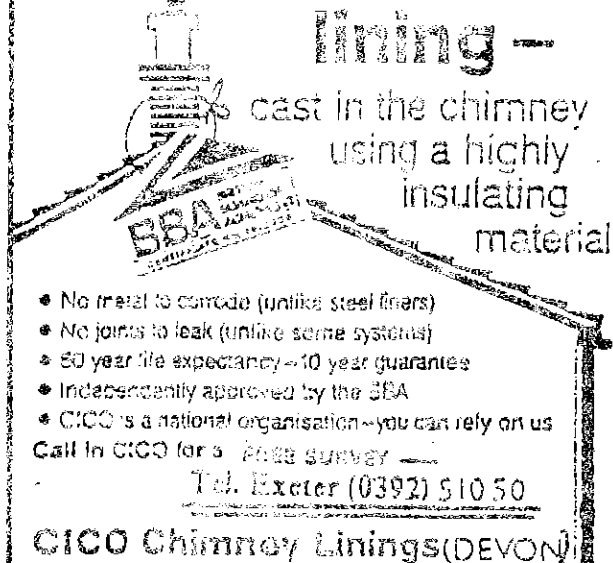
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# Neville OSWALD reports



ANYONE GOING down the hill into Kingsbridge and glancing to the left will notice a large austere building in Union Street, overlooking the town. It opened in 1837 as the Kingsbridge Workhouse Infirmary and for the next 60 years was the only establishment in the neighbourhood for the residential care of the sick and disabled. Why was it built and who used it? What did it mean to Thurlestone? It is rather a long story.

Arrangements for the care of the sick and needy in Thurlestone have undergone many changes over the years. Yet they remained remarkably similar from the Norman Conquest until the early part of the nineteenth century in that they were ordered within the parish. In 1066, with no more than about thirty inhabitants all told, most needs were necessarily provided within families. As the population grew and a church was built, authority was assumed by landowners and the parson who, however well intentioned they may have been, resented any interference from outside. They arranged for the distribution of alms, food, fuel and clothing as necessary and found accommodation for the elderly, especially in Church House in the village street.

This system was substantially recognised by the Poor Law Act of 1601, which ruled that collections of money, food and clothing must be made regularly in every parish for poor relief. The voters in Thurlestone elected two Overseers of the Poor to supervise the distribution of these monies and goods, especially to the elderly and infirm who relied much upon charity; for many years some 4 to 5 pounds were shared out in this way every month.

With the passage of time and the increasing population, the facilities the parish was able to provide became quite inadequate. Eventually, in 1834, the new Poor Law Act virtually removed poor relief from individual parishes by grouping them together to form Unions. Thurlestone and the neighbouring parishes thenceforth became part of and were administered by the Kingsbridge Union, which opened its workhouse in 1837.

## The Workhouse Infirmary.

The Kingsbridge Workhouse Infirmary originally had accommodation for 350 "inmates". It reached its highest recorded total in 1871 when it housed 167, including 23 idiots and imbeciles, six deaf and dumb and two blind people. In the following years it soon fell to below 100.

It was no more popular than similar institutions elsewhere and provoked an editorial comment in the Kingsbridge Gazette in 1865.:-

"In a union, the poor man does not look upon the workhouse as his legal refuge in distress, but as a prison; it is worse than a prison, for a man in a union has to pick 4 lb of oakum a day to a prisoner's 3, and is moreover worse fed, bedded and cared for. Again, the ratepayer in a union loses the notion that he is paying for his own poor. Let him have the knowledge before him that the men of his parish are cared for at his proper cost and he will look with much less distaste on rates which should be regarded by him as a contribution to the sacred cause of charity, not as a hateful tax"

The union maintained an infirmary of about 40 beds with an isolation ward for fevers in the charge of a matron, but it was not a happy place. In 1867 the patients were still sleeping on straw, quite unnecessarily. Alcoholism was always a difficulty. Between 1867 and 1873 a nurse was discharged for drunkenness, two disorderly old ladies were deprived of their pint of gin a week and the chaplain was inebriated during an episcopal visit and was persuaded to "sign the pledge". There were in 1850 no training schools for nurses, nor indeed was there much to teach them beyond the application of poultices and bandages. Instead, they spent their time serving meals, laundering clothes and keeping the wards clean. When the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, opened in 1860, the systematic training of educated nurses started and rapidly spread to established hospitals, but did not reach workhouses before the end of the century. Remarkably, State Registered Nurses date only from 1919 and the General Nursing Council from the following year.

With the Board of Guardians meeting at the Kings Arms Inn every Saturday at 11 and reporting its deliberations to the Gazette, many facets of life in the workhouse are known. In 1861 a pauper arrived at the gate one night in labour. She rang the bell for two hours before being admitted, during which time she delivered herself of a healthy child; both subsequently survived. The custodian protested that he had not heard the bell and was subsequently reprimanded by the Board.

The workhouse was probably no better or worse than most of the similar establishments in the country, yet villagers seemed to dread going into or indeed having anything to do with it. This attitude was exemplified in 1899 when an ill boy on a farm in Malborough was admitted and died the next day. The Board expressed disapproval that a farmer should employ a boy of fifteen and "get all he could out of him and then, when he was ill, thrust him out and put him in the workhouse in a dying condition. He was a most inhuman cruel thing to do". The doctor was censured for approving the transfer.

Some years ago I was given an insight into conditions in the infirmary by Mr. Leonard Pedrick of Kingsbridge who maintained machinery in the workhouse before joining the Army in 1917. Male "inmates" were then employed in the large garden while the women mended clothes and knitted; stone cracking was kept in reserve as punishment. He frequently visited the infirmary which usually housed 30 to 40 patients and cannot remember any of them having been operated on or referred elsewhere for an opinion or treatment. He agreed with his contemporaries in condemning the place, adding "I do not know why it

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was allowed to exist. It would not now". The workhouse and infirmary closed in the 1920s.

#### Medical and nursing care at home.

The lack of alternative accommodation meant that most illnesses and even severe accidents were cared for at home. For example, Kingsbridge Gazette reports:-

Mar. 12, 1859. Gig accident. Mr B. Reeve met with a serious accident... turning the corner in New Bridge on the Charleton side, the vehicle overturned and he was thrown out... he was taken home where he remained senseless for some hours. He had sustained concussion of the brain.

Nov. 17, 1860. Mr Paige of Southpool returning home from Dartmouth races... fell off horse.. lay in road for some time senseless and bleeding profusely until assistance arrived and he was carried home. Mr. Martin, the surgeon, had every hope of his recovery, though he is much injured about the head and face. The horse was found at Slapton on the following day.

For Mr. Pedrick's wife's confinement in 1927, nobody in the immediate family was sufficiently knowledgeable to take charge. He was advised to seek the help of a farm labourer's wife who, though she had no nursing training, was well recommended. When the time came, he cycled over to Galampton and brought her back in a pony trap. She successfully delivered the baby to the delight of the assembled family, the doctor arriving shortly afterwards. A similar incident is related by Mr. William Burgoyne of Thurlestone who in 1922 cycled to Kingsbridge to summon Dr. Tudor Webb, a corpulent and cheerful character who prided himself on his horsemanship. Dr Webb rode over, as befitted a master of foxhounds. The Burgoynes were delighted with the outcome and commented "You could not have had a better service". Another lady in Thurlestone at that time, a private patient, employed the same surgeon who then elected to be driven over in a carriage by his coachman, the nursing being supplied by a "monthly nurse from the Co-op in Plymouth"

#### Cottage hospital.

In 1887 a meeting was called in Kingsbridge to consider the provision of a cottage hospital, a bequest of £2000 having been made for the purpose by Mr. Peek some years previously. After lengthy deliberations the idea was approved as being appropriate to the dignity and prosperity of the town and a suitable way to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, but subscribers were slow in coming forward. Eventually the Kingsbridge and District Hospital was opened in a terraced house in Duncombe Street opposite the present Masonic Lodge, with seven beds and two cots in 1898. Various minor procedures were undertaken, such as the setting of fractures and dental extractions. The chairman reported that during the first 21 months 53 patients were treated which he claimed was "a good record of work in proportion to the funds entrusted to the Council". By then, the hospital was in debt to the extent of £40 and was closed for three months. It re-opened for a few months but never gained the confidence of the doctors or the community and was in competition with larger premises at Totnes where an operating theatre and maternity wards were available. It must be accounted a failure.

## The twentieth century.

The remarkable medical and nursing advances of this century have been exploited by several Acts. The National Health Insurance Act of 1911 allowed workers to "go on the panel", instead of paying for medical care directly or through approved societies; it was only partly successful because wives and children were often excluded from benefits. If in-patient treatment became necessary the patient would be admitted to either a voluntary hospital and assessed on his ability to contribute to the cost or to a local county hospital. The National Health Service in 1948 changed the face of medicine at the stroke when hospitals and medical workers of all kinds were drawn together in a single organisation paid for by the state. The Cottage Hospital in Kingsbridge, which was opened in 1929, became part of the NHS. Thurlestone, with the South Hams, was affiliated to Plymouth for specialist and hospital services. This situation continues.

---

## LOCAL NEWS...LOCAL NEWS...LOCAL NEWS...LOCAL NEWS...LOCAL NEWS...LOCAL NEWS...

"We don't want beastly people bound for Thurlestone using the road through our wonderful village..."

That is said to be the thinking behind South Milton's request to the Highways people to delete Thurlestone from the directions sign on the A381 at Milton Lane End. And the name has been blocked out.

Thurlestone, however, is occupying the high moral ground and not asking for their name to be replaced on the sign, saying that they are not that petty. And anyway people will continue to visit Thurlestone Sands and Thurlestone Rock as they are properly called on Ordnance Survey maps, sign or no sign...

---

People shouldn't worry about the change of site for the rubbish skips from Manor House in Kingsbridge out to Torr Quarry.

There's not much difference in distance by car and Torr Quarry may be slightly easier to get to from Thurlestone with your rubbish. But Kingsbridge shop-owners should be worried. People who dumped their garden rubbish at Manor House would undoubtedly combine it with a shopping trip to the town. Now Torr Quarry is well on the road to Totnes and tippers might keep on going to do their shopping!

---

## ANSWERS to Pat Machin's Puzzle Corner:

a) 25-5; b) 15-31; c) 34-39; d) 11-18; e) 35-2; f) 8-21; g) 38-10; h) 30-32; i) 3-16; j) 40-26; k) 1-27; l) 6-20; m) 37-4; n) 13-22; o) 29-33; p) 9-23; q) 7-19; r) 12-41; s) 36-28; t) 14-24.

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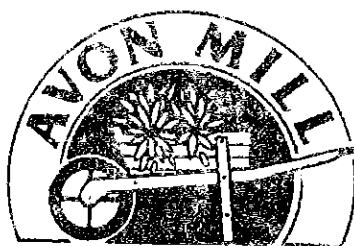


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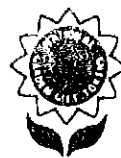
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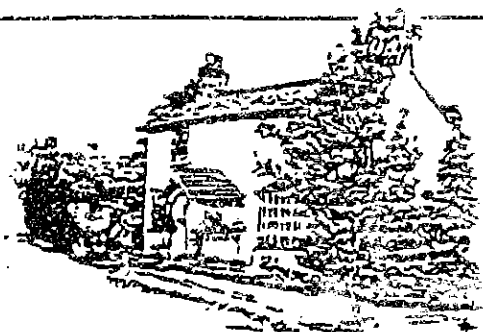
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cc

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manufacture

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value

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has had any recent accidents or convictions.

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Acceptance is subject to the satisfactory completion of a  
proposal form.

**Local News...Local News...Local News...Local News...Local News...**

**THE Police** are drawing attention to the increasing number of thefts from local churches. Sadly, the spate of thefts from local churches at the end of last year and early this has included Thurlestone, in addition to three churches in the Kingsbridge area, one at Ideford and another near Ivybridge.

Thurlestone's All Saints loss was a bishop's chair. The size of this item and the fact that other pieces stolen have been other pieces of furniture on the large size means that a van or large estate car must have been used. The police suggest that if in doubt take any van or estate registration number.

In the meantime everything moveable in the church - not much now - has been specially marked.

There is no doubt that property marking deters thieves anywhere. Have you marked your valuables and photographed them? The police will advise you how to do it and you can get easy-to-use marking kits from stationers and DIY stores.

---

**ALL SAINTS** Carollers thank everyone who supported them or sang with them around the villages in the week before Christmas. A cheque for £240 has been sent to "Children in Distress", a Christian charity which helps children in Eastern Europe.

---

**AN EXTRA for your diary:** The NSPCC are holding a special Bridge Evening at the Thurlestone Hotel on March 16 at 6.30 pm.

**For bookings phone:** Mrs.Jax Auster 560578; Mrs. Kitty Cooke 560264.

---

**QUOTE** (or sound-bite) from a local paper: "The commission's Devon and Cornwall area manager, Claire Jenkins , said:' Many people rely on their village shop for essential food shopping...."

Now come, come - it hasn't been raining that much!

---

**THE CHANGING FACE** (and faces) of Village Voice...Watch out for a new bridge column. Rosemary Mackay has already drafted an opener. It will appear in the next issue.

# **NOTICE TO ALL SQUIRRELS!**

**Why hoard those useless treasures?**

**Blitz your wardrobe - your cupboards - your  
loft - your attic - and let us have the rejects...  
(We can even arrange collection!).**

**The NSPCC is desperately in need of  
funds, so please support the**

**Mammoth Jumble Sale  
Saturday, April 8th  
Parish Hall 2.30 p.m.**

**Usual stalls....Raffle....free cup of tea...**

**Further details from:**

**Mrs. Oswald  
560 555**

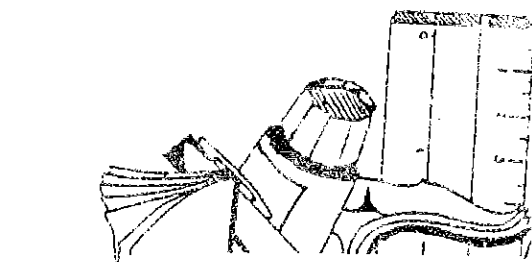
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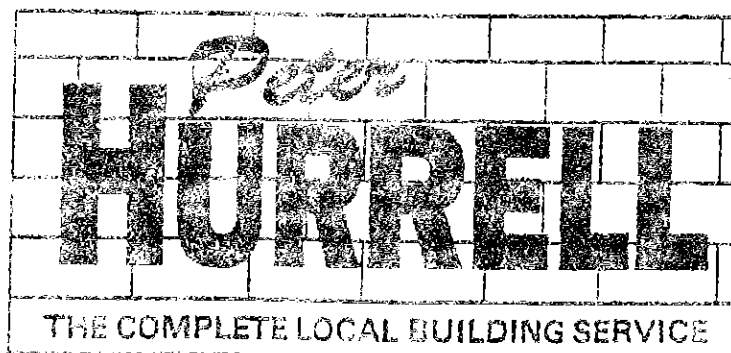
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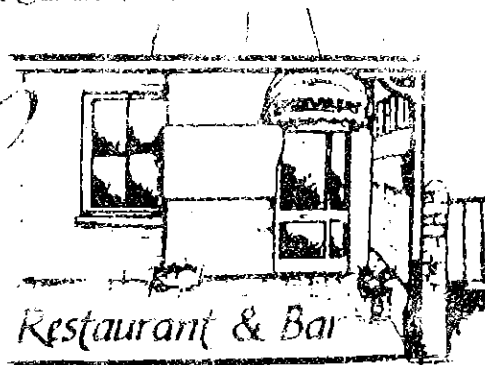
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# Kate's Kitchen



SOUP was my first introduction to cooking, after "How to launder a handkerchief", in school domestic science class. War time shortages coupled with a Scots teacher made for economy in all our endeavours.

More of a meal than a starter and marvellous for cold, wet February days, is this soup with a mild curry flavour.

4 ozs. Chopped Chicken (turkey, beef or other meat as desired)  
1 medium Onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, finely chopped (optional)  
1 teasp. Tomato puree.  
small pinch of cinnamon  
" " " turmeric  
" " mild curry powder (use more if a stronger taste is desired)  
1 small bay leaf  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  red pepper, chopped small  
1 pint good stock  
salt & pepper to taste  
1 tablesp. cooking oil  
6 - 8 small cherry tomatoes, skinned and left whole.

Using a heavy based pan, put a tablespoon of water, the tomato puree and spices and mix together, cook for a few minutes till bubbling, but do not burn or let it stick to the bottom of the pan; this is to take away the raw taste of the spices. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaf and stock and leave to simmer. Put a tablesp. of cooking oil into a pan and cook the pepper quickly, but do not burn, till just slightly cooked, drain on a piece of kitchen roll, then add to the soup. Continue to simmer for about 15 - 20 minutes, then add meat and small tomatoes.

Serve with French bread or crusty rolls.

If you prefer, substitute vegetables for the meat, and a little cooked rice.

---

## LOCAL NEWS..LOCAL N WS

### THE SEAVIEW ROAD HOUSING PROJECT...

...is bogged down again. Latest report from the South

Hams District Council says it is unlikely that this

Thurlestone scheme could even start during 1995 or 1996.

Trouble is, of course, money. But, as the site is now owned by the SHDC, they insist that the houses will appear eventually.

T.R.A.M.P.'S 1995

Walk Leaders.

Pam Brewster	(PB)	560345
Susan Dwyer	(SD)	560648
Ian Fraser	(IF)	560892
Bob Nicholls	(BN)	560876
Ron Parkin	(RP)	561215
Stuart Reynolds	(SR)	560643
Ron Savage	(RS)	852861
Roy Travis	(RT)	0364.72104
Derek Yeoman	(DY)	560300

The rendez-vous for all walks is the Thurlestone Village Hall Car Park.

There will be two walks per month from March to September on the first and third Wednesdays. In January/February the walk is on the third Wednesday and in October, November and December on the second Wednesday. Details of all walks will be posted in both the Post Office and Village Stores approx. nine days before the walk, and for this facility we extend our thanks to Frances Bromfield and Kay Morley.

Brief details of walks proposed. These can, of course, be varied at the leaders discretion.

January 18th	Loddiswell/Chantry etc.	BN
February 15th.	Salcombe/Prawle	BN
March 1st.	Holne Woods, N.E. of Ashburton.	RS
March 15th	Local walk via Avon Valley.	PB
April 5th.	Lee Mill area	RT
April 19th.	Kingston area	DY
May 3rd	Horrabridge area	RS
May 17th.	Local walk	IF
June 7th	Yealmpton area	RT
June 17th.	A trial Saturday walk	SD
June 21st	Details to be arranged	RP
July 5th	Bow Creek, Ashprington	BN
July 19th	Newbridge Area	SR
August 2nd	Down Thomas area (West of the Yealm)	SD
August 16th	North Moors Walk (Details to be arranged)	SR
September 6th	South Moors walk (Details to be finalised)	PB
September 20th	Moors walk (6 Stepping Stones)	RS
October 11th	Col Jones Path (Dartmouth area)	DY
November 8th	Marlborough, S. Milton	DY
December 6th	(Christmas Walk) Details to be arranged)	SR

D.M.Y.



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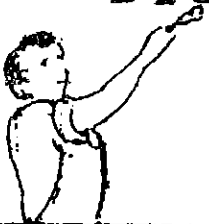
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Oh, woe is me and lackaday;  
Do that show 'ee enough dismay?  
I've bin and gone and done it now  
As sure as blossoms on the bough  
This bright May morning. 'Tis the Spring  
As they do say such feelings bring.  
T'was all so sudden-like you see  
The minute that 'e looked at me  
Me 'eart fair bounced right out me chest  
An there I sat as if possessed.  
Fer I were milking Betsy Ann  
And just reached in to fetch the pan  
From under 'er. Now Betsy 'ere  
Knowed zummat strange were 'appening near  
Er suddenly lets out a kick  
The shippen floor's a milky slick.  
Then with a word of kindly cheer  
Was wiped away my final tear,  
T'was the new cowman Jake Tremaine  
An 'ere I be in love again.

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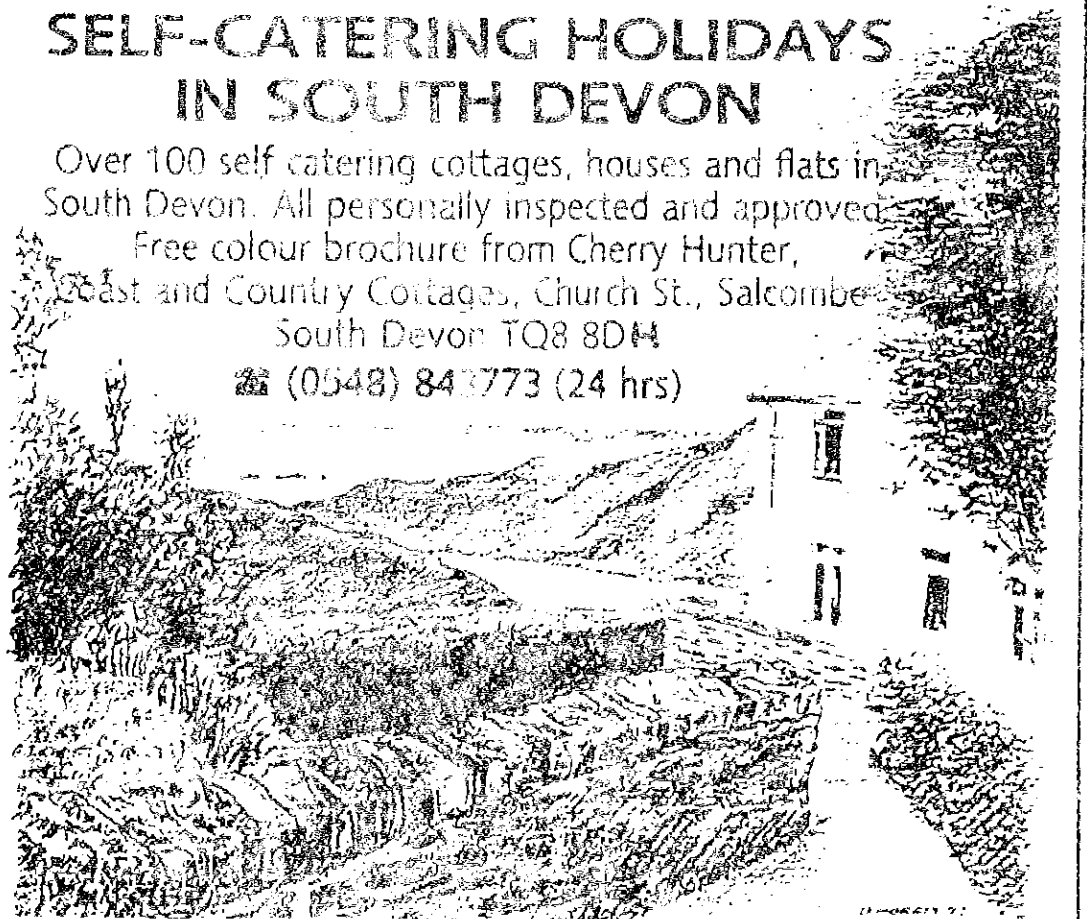
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## February

- Sat 4th Jumble Sale. Horticultural Society. Parish Hall 2.30 pm.  
Wed 15th Peter Hurrell Presents Pictures from the Past. Parish Hall. 2.30.  
Tramp Walk. Salcombe/Prawle.  
Fri 24th Conservatives AGM (and lunch). Thurlestone Hotel. Noon.

## March

- Wed 1st Tramp Walk. Holne Woods near Ashburton.  
Tues 14th Boutique 144 Fashion Show in aid C.R.M.F. Kings Arms,  
Kingsbridge.  
Wed 15th Tramp Walk. Avon Valley.  
Thurs 16th NSPCC Bridge. Thurlestone Hotel. 6.30. Details 560518/560578.  
Sat 18th Devonshire Association. Slide talk. Parish Hall. 2.45pm.

## April

- Wed 5th. Tramp Walk. Lee Mill.  
Wed 19th. Tramp Walk. Kingston.  
Fri 21st Merrie England Barn Dance. South Milton Hall 8pm.  
Mon 24th Mead AGM. Parish Hall. 8pm.

## May

- Wed 3rd Tramp Walk. Horrabridge.  
Wed 17th Tramp Walk. Local area.  
Sat 20th Flower and Plant Sale. Horticultural Society. Parish Hall. 2.30pm.

## June

- Wed 7th Tramp Walk. Yealmpton area.  
Sat 17th Tramp Walk. A trial Saturday walk.  
Wed 21st Tramp Walk. Details to follow.

## July

- Wed 5th Tramp Walk. Bow Creek/ Ashprington.  
Wed 19th Tramp Walk. Newbridge area.  
Sat 22nd Church Fete. Rectory Garden 2.30pm.

## August

- Wed 2nd Tramp Walk. Down Thomas area (West of Yealm).  
Sat 5th Thurlestone and South Milton Horticultural Show. Parish Hall  
Wed 16th Tramp Walk. North Moors  
Tues 22nd Barbecue on the Thurlestone Village Green 6pm.

## September

- Wed 6th Tramp Walk South Moors.  
Wed 20th Tramp Walk Moors (Six Stepping Stones)  
Fri 22nd Harvest Thanksgiving. All Saints Church 7pm. Supper Parish Hall.

## October

- Wed 11th Tramp Walk. Colonel Jones Path (Dartmouth area)

## November

- Wed 8th Tramp Walk. Marlborough/South Milton.

## December

- Sat 2nd Christmas Fair. Parish Hall 10.30 am.  
Wed 6th Tramp Walk. Christmas Lunch. Details later.

# THE SLOOP INN

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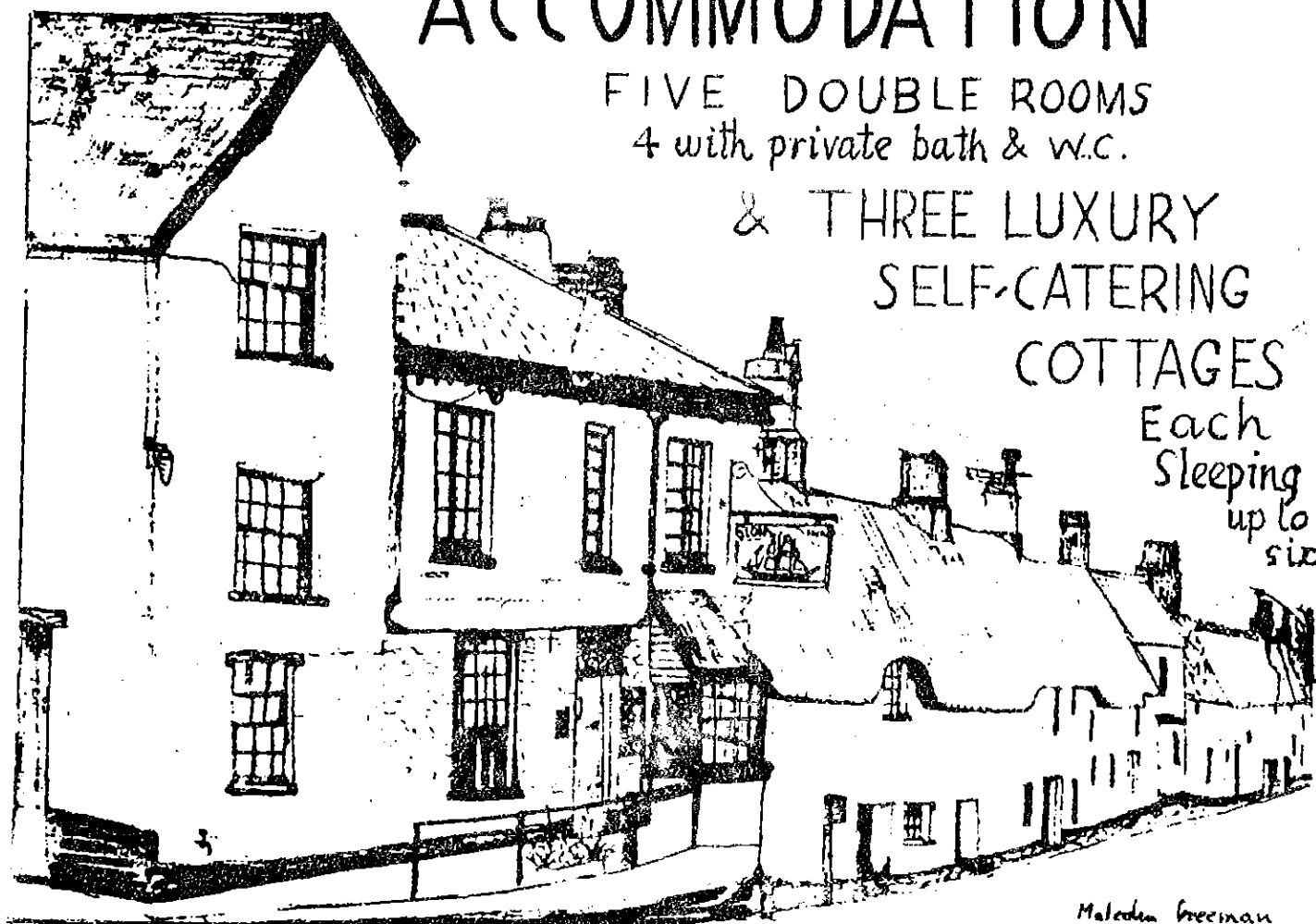
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