

# VILLAGE VOICE



**FEBRUARY - MARCH 1997**





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**FIFTEENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION**

**FEBRUARY - MARCH 1997**

**A Happy New Year!** Especially to Thurlestone Golf Club, which celebrates its centenary in 1997 to follow up the Thurlestone Hotel's in 1996.

Neville Oswald appropriately turns his attention to historical land ownership in Thurlestone in his latest report; while the story of the resuscitation of one of the oldest houses in the area comes at the same time as the news of a possible 87 new dwellings within the parish. **Read all about it in Village Voice!**

If any reader is disappointed that we have had no appreciable snowfall this winter, Weather Wag reminds us how it can be on occasions here in the favoured South Hams. And if we should find ourselves snowbound there is a splendid recipe from Kate, as well as two puzzles, and a quiz to satisfy the inner politically correct person.

Finally, as house prices edge upwards, we can reflect that the new hire charges for our parish hall (see inside) still provide excellent value for money, and that we are lucky indeed to have such a good, well-maintained, and well-used property for our community centre. Or is that being too complacent?

# *Is this to be the year when Thurlestone parish as we know it disappears under the developers' thumbs?*

## *I ask the question*

because a recent unofficial count revealed to the Parish Council that there are 87 plots due to be built on in the parish and, though most will not see completion this year, it is a worrying prospect. That count, by the way, did not include large alterations to existing houses such as those at Bantham.

It was in **Village Voice** No 42, the February-March issue of 1990, that Villager revealed the first drawings of the development of Homefield and Homefield Farm. Today, six years later, those plans have come back to life as the *feel-good* factor returns to the British housing market.

And once again **Village Voice** is able to give you a first glimpse of the future with the architect's drawing for a new village shop to replace Bromfield's when the time comes. I say "*when the time comes*" because as yet no one has seen any time schedule for this first step in the development of the farm and Homefield.

However, an application was published at the very beginning of this year from Evans Estates for planning permission for the "**conversion of part of barn to shop with living unit over**" at the road side of the farm. At the same time they sought conservation area consent for partial demolition of the right hand end of that same barn (when seen from the road) to allow access into the farm area.

This is obviously the keystone of the whole operation. Not only will it allow the village



post office to operate from new shop premises when Bromfield's closes down, but it will also open up the narrow entrance into the farm to become something more fitting for the driveway into the houses and bungalows planned for the area around the back of the church.

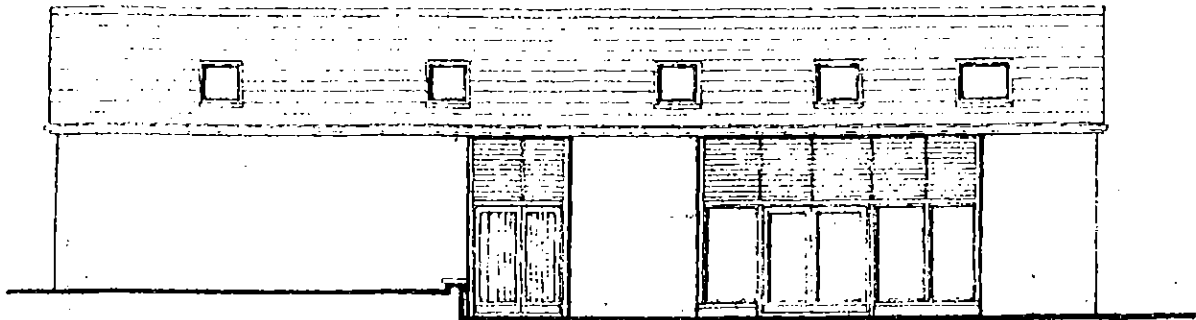
Just a stray thought here ..... how long do you think it will be after those houses by the church are occupied before one of those new residents complains about the noise of the church bells and asks the courts to have them silenced?

Another thought for the Parish Council.....

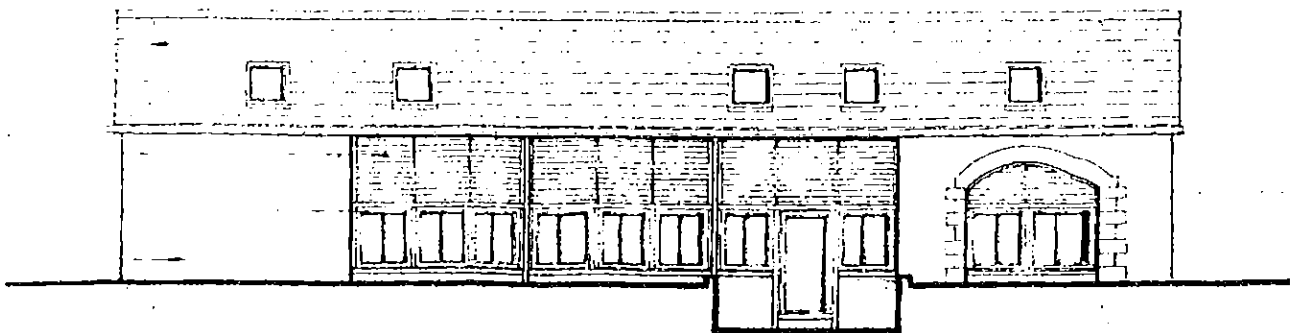
Can something to stop this be written into their deeds?

Once the shop premises have been completed then the development of Homefield itself can get under way - with all the extra accommodation that it will squeeze into the village. So I would think the work cannot be long delayed. Now here is Villager's exclusive preview of the way the new village shop will look (a) from the road and (b) from the rear.

## **The New Village Shop**



**(a) From the road**



**(b) From the rear**

The drawings show that the barn - minus the chunk lopped off the right hand end nearest to the hotel - still stands. The double doors in the centre are the way into the shop, which occupies the ground floor to the right of the building. To the left, nearest to the church, both downstairs and upstairs is the so-called "living unit" which was never shown or mentioned on the original plans. (Gosh, how building plans change as time goes by!)

The "living unit", a sort of maisonette, has one bedroom downstairs and one up, and its lounge / dining area is over the shop. There are windows to give light in the slate roof of the barn and at the rear where the living quarters has its entrance.

**Footnote:** The idea of anyone living in that barn is not new. Many, many years ago Ben Jeffrey and his wife, Ginny, did just that!

**"Villager"**

# Pat Machin's Puzzle Corner

## WORD-SEARCH ONE

In this grid are the names of 26 trees and shrubs. They can be read forwards, backwards, up, down, or diagonally. Can you find them?

L	I	M	E	R	O	M	A	C	Y	S
A	C	E	R	W	B	U	S	D	A	P
R	R	V	H	O	A	L	H	N	S	R
C	O	I	M	L	A	P	D	C	P	U
H	W	L	M	L	J	A	E	A	E	C
E	A	O	N	I	L	N	E	M	N	E
R	N	Y	E	W	A	L	N	U	T	H
D	O	I	O	L	P	X	F	S	O	C
E	G	O	P	P	E	C	E	D	A	R
L	D	T	A	M	A	R	I	S	K	I
M	A	P	L	E	R	H	C	E	E	B

## WORD-SEARCH TWO

The answers to the clues are made up by combining 3 sets of 3 letters in the grid to form 9-letter words. When complete, 3 sets of 3 letters will remain. From these form another 9-letter word.

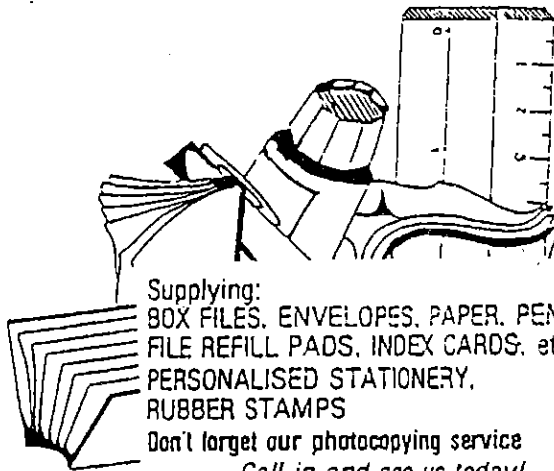
LAG	MAL	WAI	RAZ	ULL	RIN
AXE	FRE	NAV	EST	QUO	EJU
UFT	HAR	LIA	RTC	TLE	DYT
RDR	ACL	EID	ADE	HAN	AWN
ISE	INT	TER	SKI	IGA	AKE
OWN	CAL	ILL	CAN	OAT	MAR
DER	ICE	GER	PRI	BIL	BUC
STC	EST	TUR	DER	OVE	AVA
LEY	RDS	LIM	SWA	BAL	NFL
TOR	SHO	BAT	ICK	ERD	ORB

### CLUES

1. A colour
2. A game
3. A breakfast spread
4. A black & white auk
5. A boy's name
6. A flower
7. A battle
8. An ex-PM
9. A course plotter
10. A small pistol
11. An ancient weapon
12. A miserly person
13. An article of clothing
14. A soft drink
15. A teatime treat
16. A bed cover
17. A novelist / playwright
18. A European capital
19. An English lake
20. ? ? ?

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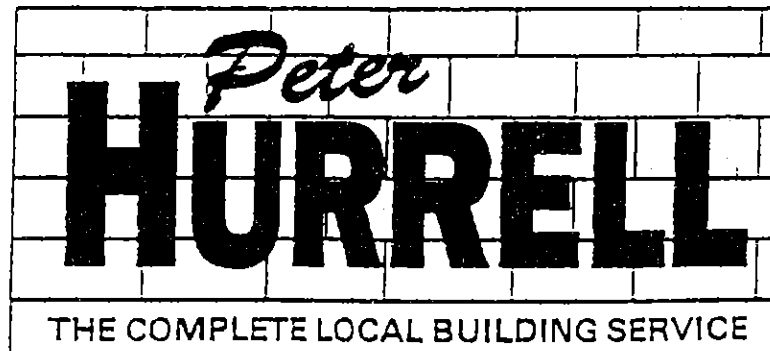
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Charles Mitchelmore	560602
Geoffrey Stidston	560695
Veronica White	560236
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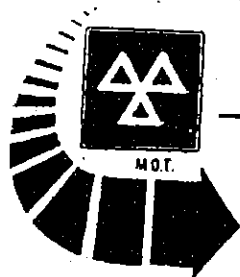
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## Neville Oswald researches

### LAND OWNERSHIP IN THURLESTONE

The four square miles of fertile land that comprise the parish of Thurlestone have had many owners. They formed one of the 108 manors granted by William the Conqueror to the Norman, Judhael, until he was dismissed for rebellion. Further Norman overlords followed him, administering their properties from their splendid castle at Totnes, the ruins of which still dominate the town. The Domesday Book of 1086 gives valuable descriptions of the rural manors in the South Hams, with their scattered farms connected by narrow winding lanes or paths. Most of the farmers were able to purchase their properties, but were required to pay a small annual fee to their landlords. The farms were of two kinds, as they were elsewhere. They were either single dwellings surrounded by small fields with high hedges, or groups of houses built on open land. Later surveys show that the sites of very many of the buildings, which of course dated at least from Saxon times that preceded the Norman



William as Conqueror

Conquest, have remained unchanged to the present day, some having developed into hamlets or villages.

During the medieval period, from about 1100 to 1400, the population of the South Hams steadily increased, partly because successive

abbots of Buckfast Abbey, founded in 1030, acquired much agricultural land, established an outpost at Leigh, near Churchstow, where the ruins remain, and fostered the markets and seaport of Kingsbridge. Many strangers from elsewhere in the county and further afield sought property in the South Hams, as did the tenant farmers who were looking for ways of increasing their holdings. A uniform system of buying and selling land was obviously desirable and so the letting for "3 generations or 99 years" was introduced and was adopted by the whole county by 1400. The three generations had to be named on the lease and ordinarily consisted of the farmer, his wife and eldest son. Usually the three generations were completed long before the 99 years which meant either the addition of one or more names for a fee or a new lease going to the highest bidder, something that could not always be settled amicably. Yet the system worked well, allowing farmers ample time to build their homes and develop their land.

Farming during the period 1350 to 1600 was much hampered by recurrent epidemics of plague, following the Black Death of 1348-49. Towns and villages were invaded every few years "leaving many farms in the hands of the Lord for want of tenants". Yet farming in the South Hams continued to develop, partly by the recovery of wasteland. There followed the Elizabethan age in which farmers prospered, producing much beef, lamb, corn, apples and Devonshire cream for their own needs and for the army, the navy and the merchant fleet; the quality of their produce was acclaimed.

By 1600 many farms had enlarged through acquisitions and were recognised as the homes of the local gentry and yeomen, their properties often having been acquired originally by successful lawyers and businessmen from

London, Exeter or Plymouth. It was a time when "a variety of squires and gentlefolk passed their time chiefly on their estates...living in harmony with each other and with the respectable yeomanry" whilst the mass of countryfolk worked for and were paid by them.

They withstood the rigours of the Civil War in the 1640's, picking up the pieces afterwards with few changes in the ownership of the land. In the following years, farming had an off period, many properties remaining isolated and enclosed with dilapidated buildings or with unsatisfactory owners some of whom were in difficulties after borrowing money to pay for their land. Yet many husbandmen managed to acquire small holdings that they could call their own, perhaps 20 acres or maybe no more than a small allotment with a few fowls or a pig. Then came the prosperous years during the Napoleonic Wars from 1797 to 1815 when many would-be farmers acquired land and then regretted having done so in the depression that followed.

By 1850, with a return of prosperity, landowners had reached their peak of opulence and political influence. Then a profound change set in, due principally to rising standards of living. Farmers with their large bills for wages could no longer finance the new and much more expensive way of life brought about by the industrial revolution, improved transport and communications and, not least, education; trade unions sought to improve the lot of the poorly-paid. Thus, agricultural manpower was reduced and replaced by machinery and land was sold piecemeal for

cash. Thurlestone, almost all of which had been owned by the Earls of Devon since the early 1300's, was bought in 1869 by Mr. Brunskill, a prosperous Exeter men's outfitter, much of it passing to Commander Evans, a South Wales industrialist, three generations later. By 1900, as elsewhere in the county where farming was the principal occupation, Thurlestone became a dwindling community. Then World War I saw the end of the country houses and the old village life as it had been for centuries. Soon afterwards new tenants occupied most of the half-a-dozen farms, as they did again after World War II, most of the farms by then having become freehold properties.

Since 1900, considerable changes in the ownership of land have taken place in Thurlestone. Through the sale of agricultural land, about one-third of the parish is now occupied by the golf club, opened in 1897, and the homes of strangers. The influx of retired people and owners of second or holiday homes, mainly from London and the Midlands, has more than doubled the population (from 354 to 819) and raised the number of dwellings to 450, of which 30 per cent. are holiday homes. From the beginning there was a mixture of residences and second homes, the second homes often becoming residences when their owners retired. Latterly holiday homes, with sub-letting for most of the summer months, have proliferated and have become increasingly attractive as financial investments.

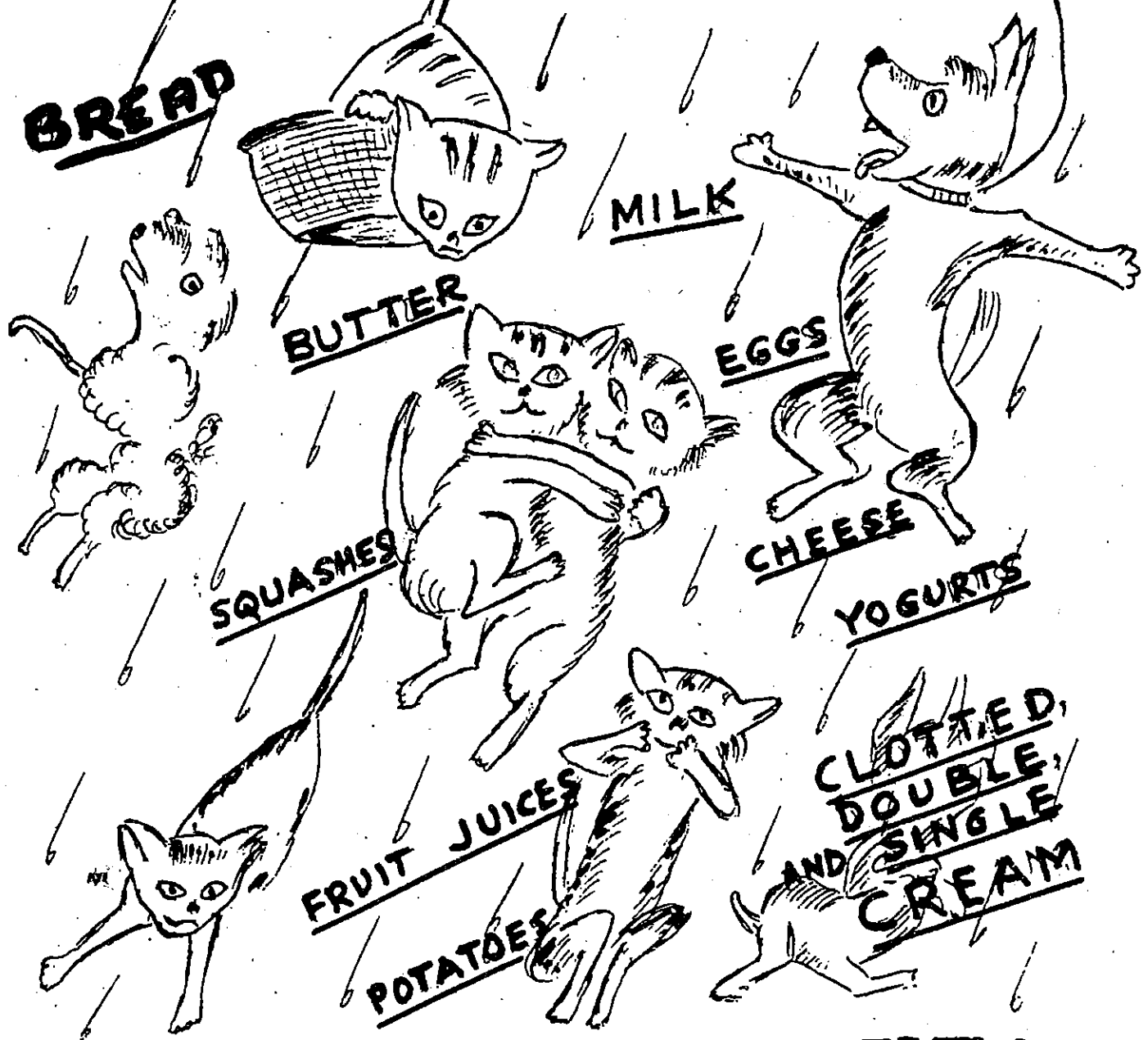
**Neville Oswald**

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## PICTURE PUZZLES?

Our front-cover artist, LEN HUBBARD, tells us that in future he plans not (in most cases) to tell us the venue of his cover pictures. He wants us to *s - t - r - e - t - c - h* our powers of observation during 1997 and work out the locations for ourselves. (If you're stumped, but very anxious to know, have a word with Len directly. Sorry, but there will be no prizes for a right guess!)

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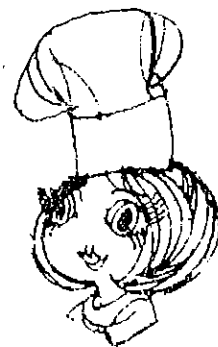
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# Kate's Kitchen



## Ringling the changes on Fish-and-chips

*Potatoes* are still the staple diet of the British population and are not likely to be totally usurped by the pasta, rice and other fashion fads whilst fish-and-chips are still in demand.

We are extremely fortunate in the South Hams to have a plentiful supply of fresh fish, together with good quality potatoes grown on local farms. A variety called Estima is a very good all-rounder -- it boils, roasts, and bakes well.

The following recipe for a light lunch or supper dish uses smoked haddock or smoked salmon and serves 3-4 people.

- 1 lb potatoes (peeled)
- 8 ozs. parsnips (peeled and both ends removed)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 oz. butter
- 1 large onion (peeled and sliced)
- 8 ozs. smoked haddock or smoked salmon (cut into small pieces)
- 1 heaped tablespoon freshly chopped dill (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 heaped tablespoon freshly chopped parsley
- 1 heaped tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### METHOD

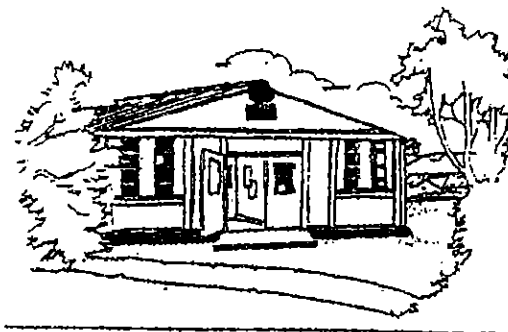
Cook both the vegetables whole in boiling salted water for about 10-15 minutes or until just tender (parsnips take less time). Drain well, allow to cool and then cut into large dice

Heat oil and butter in a large frying pan and cook onion until soft. Add the potatoes and parsnips, stir together and cook until the under-side is golden brown. Stir in fish and herbs, (the fish being smoked will be cooked sufficiently when it goes under the grill), and season to taste. Sprinkle on the Parmesan cheese. Place under a hot grill and cook until it is brown and crisp on top.

**(Village Voice chief Tester's comment: "Umm, delicious!!")**

# PARISH HALL HIRE CHARGES

From the Parish Hall Management Committee



## REVISION OF HALL HIRE CHARGES FROM 1st APRIL 1997

**HIRE OF HALL** The following charges include the use of tables, chairs, china, cooker, electric lighting and hot water BUT EXCLUDE HEATING (see below). The minimum time for rental is one hour. Any additional preparation time in the hall may incur an extra charge.

	Per Hour
Parish organisations (Bridge, Bowls, WI, etc.) Plays, Pantomimes, Concerts, Social Evenings, etc. Parish meetings, Lectures, etc. Devon County Council classes Horticultural Show Jumble and Car Boot Sales, etc.	£3.00
Political meetings, Receptions, Film Shows, etc.	£3.50
Parish, District, County Council, or General Elections	£4.00
Discos, or any events with music for dancing (£10.00 deposit required)	£4.50
Any other event	£4.50

**RENTAL CHARGES** Equipment for use indoors and within the parish boundary only:

Wooden tables (five)	50p. each
Chairs (subject to availability)	10p. each
Crockery (subject to availability)	Discretion

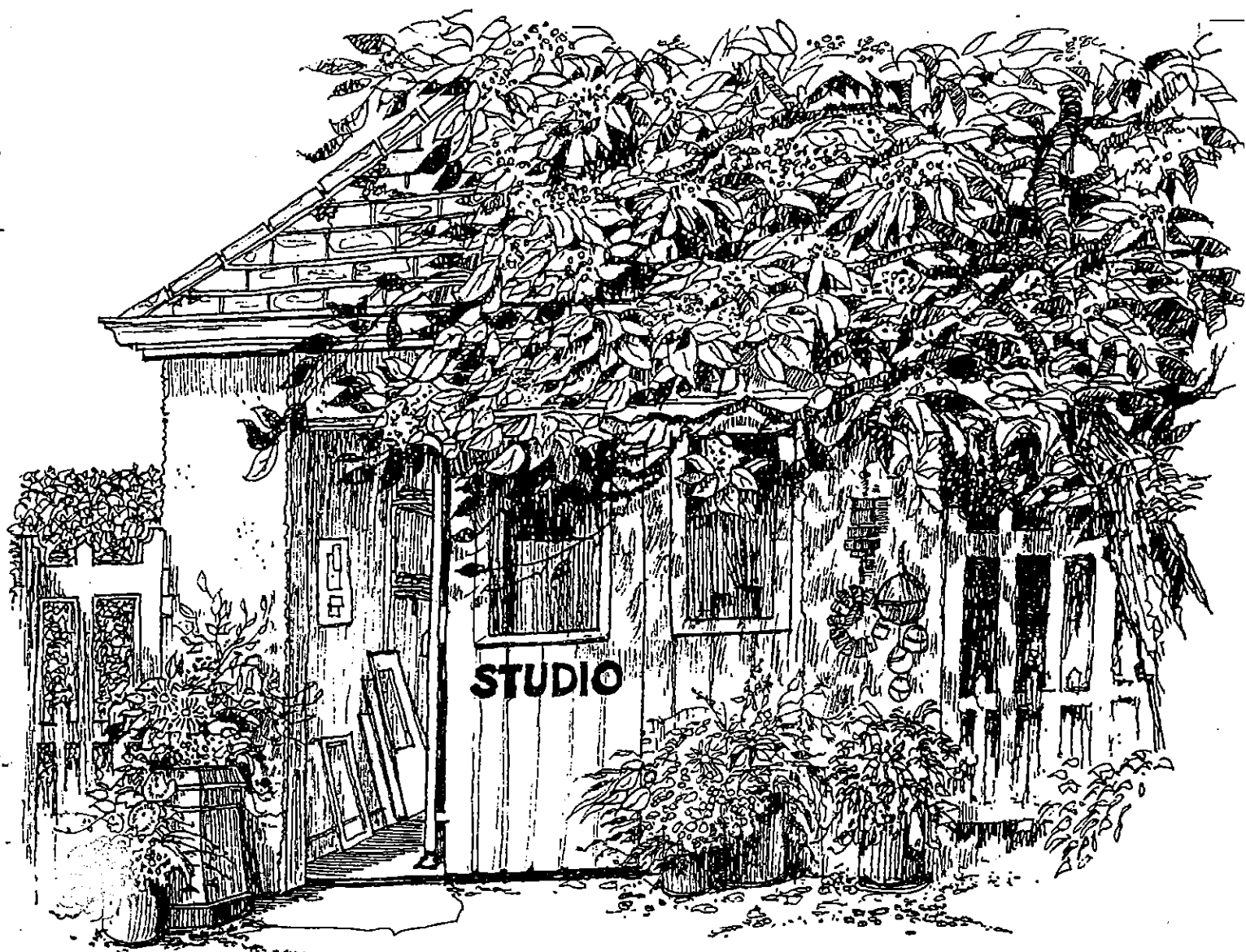
Please note that the newer large tables are not for hire under any circumstances. All hirings are made on the strict understanding that any breakages or losses will be made good immediately, either with a similar article or by a mutually agreed sum of money.

**SAFETY & SECURITY** The fire doors should not be opened except in cases of emergency. They are not for ventilation. This may be achieved by opening windows.

**HEATING** The metered system provides approximately 40 minutes heating for £1.00, irrespective of the number of heaters in use. Under no circumstances must any other form of heating be used as it would contravene our terms of insurance and the hirer of the hall would be responsible for any ensuing costs.

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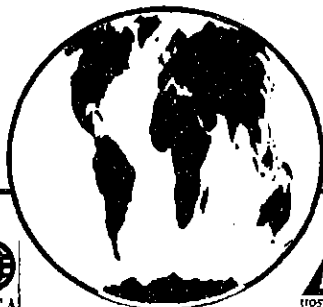
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# WEATHER WAG - ON SNOW

My friend Ingrid Holford says *"Snow activates a kind of love-hate relationship in people. It is beautiful when freshly fallen, and a superb playground for adults and children alike when it remains preserved in a dry state by cold temperatures. However, it causes chaos to transport and is an unmitigated nuisance when it is in a wet slushy condition or frozen into ice, so that people often wish it gone as soon as it has arrived. Moreover, the manner in which snow often arrives (in a blizzard) or departs (by avalanche or thaw flood) means that snow must be considered a treacherous enemy."*

It does, of course, fall over every continent, although not always where people can witness it. Indeed there are many millions who have never even **seen** snow. The study of, and knowledge of the shape of, the individual snowflake, or crystal, is a comparatively recent thing. In the 16th century Claus Magnus, a Swedish historian and Archbishop of Uppsala, first studied and drew their shapes. Johannes Kepler, a 17th century German astronomer, was the first to describe the characteristic six-sided symmetry of every snowflake.

Other equally fascinated persons followed including one William Bentley, an American farmer fascinated by snow. He built up, over 40 years, a collection of 6000 photomicrographs of snow crystals, all being different. Sadly he died in 1931 just before a book containing 2000 of his best photographs was published.

We now know every snowflake that falls is a of a different shape, but every one is also a symmetrical six-sided crystal. Their final

shape depends on humidity and the temperature at which they fall. The exquisite shapes which result are caused by complicated sequences of evaporation, condensation, sublimation and deposition in the micro-environment around each crystal in a super-cooled cloud. All in all, Mother Nature has to pull out all the stops in order that we can experience these wonders!

Snow has two main characters.....**WET** and **DRY**. Mostly we have the wet sort. This falls where the temperatures are high enough to bond crystals into large snowflakes. This is typical of the maritime borders of continental land masses between latitudes 40 and 60, where intensely cold airstreams from inland can clash with mild airstreams with abundant vapour from the sea. Good snowball-making stuff, this, but deadly difficult to remove from the roads, and snowploughs or shovels have to be used. The dry sort is easy to blow off the roads as it doesn't bind together easily, and this type falls on areas well away from the sea....like the interior of a continent, not just

in the middle of Dartmoor. We do get it occasionally. One of my students who lived down by the sea at Beesands could not understand how her bedroom, that faced the sea, could be filled with snow when the window was shut. It was a sash type and the dry snow simply blew in through all the joints around the window-frame.

Recording amounts of snowfall can be difficult. An even surface has to

be found, well away from obstacles, on a calm day. You have to get there as soon as the snow has stopped falling. The depth of snow has to be translated into rainfall at the average rate of 25mm of rain for every 300mm of snow (1 inch = 1 foot).

This can vary considerably according to the type and density of the snow !



We all tend to remember the times when bad weather, such as we have experienced recently, affects us in one way or another. I remember 1947 very well. My dad looked at the sky on January 22nd and decided he didn't like what he saw. Without any waste of time the workmen and we girls (me and Elizabeth), the sheepdogs and father, set off to bring all the lambing ewes into the farmyard. In those days there were no huge roomy barns, so we moved the machinery out and made shelters with bales of straw and tucked sheep and those lambs that had already been born into every available space. The snow started as we finished and the rest is history.

Almost every ewe lambed whilst they were under cover, and the air was so cold that lambs were freezing before they were properly born. The bottom-left oven and the space in front of our wonderful Aga was constantly full of pathetic balls of fleece called lambs. We struggled against the odds as, unless the lambs sucked within seconds of being born, or we removed them to the kitchen, death was inevitable. School was closed so we were all able to help.

The flock was to stay under cover until almost March when the thaw revealed grass that had continued to grow in places where the snow had insulated it against the severe temperatures.

Another occasion etched in my parents' memory, though not mine, is 17th May 1935. This was the day the contents of Shute Farm went under the hammer on behalf of Mr. White. It snowed and my mum and her mum were fully engaged in the kitchen keeping the Lidstone range going and the cups of hot tea flowing to relieve the frozen hands of the farmers at the sale. The records show that between January 22nd and March 17th that year snow fell somewhere every day in our country. 1963 was even colder but the quantity of snow was less. Lastly, there is the classic photograph of Thurlestone during the 1891 blizzard. What MUST it have been like without all the modern conveniences of today?

Having snow is not the end of it because the thaw can be as devastating as the snow. It is warm air, not the sun, which is the most efficient snow-melter. In mountainous areas a dry warm wind can develop on the lee side of the mountain and can literally eat the snow at a great rate. In North America it is called the Chinook (an Indian word meaning snow-eater) and occurs on the east side of the Rockies. In Europe it is the Fohn wind on the northern sides of the



Alps, where it can evaporate a snow cover as rapidly as two feet per day. In Britain the rate of melt when the winds go from east to south-west can be up to 2.5 inches (65mm) a day. If the sun is shining too this can increase to 7 inches (175mm) whilst falling rain increases it to something like 10 inches (250mm) a day. You can imagine the horrors of such quantities of water being released on our countryside. This happened in 1947 with dreadful consequences. Our water courses, unlike the Alps, are just not equipped to take such sudden influxes of water. I guess we are not destined to have any great quantity of snow this year..... not yet anyway!

Yearly weather statistics for 1996 are given over the page. If anyone would like a complete set of statistics quarter by quarter for their own interest, please let me know and I'll do my best to provide them.

Have a Happy 1997, and here's to an interesting meteorological year!

**Jan Turner**

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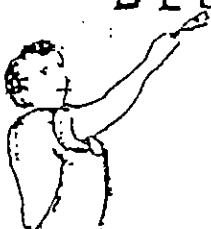
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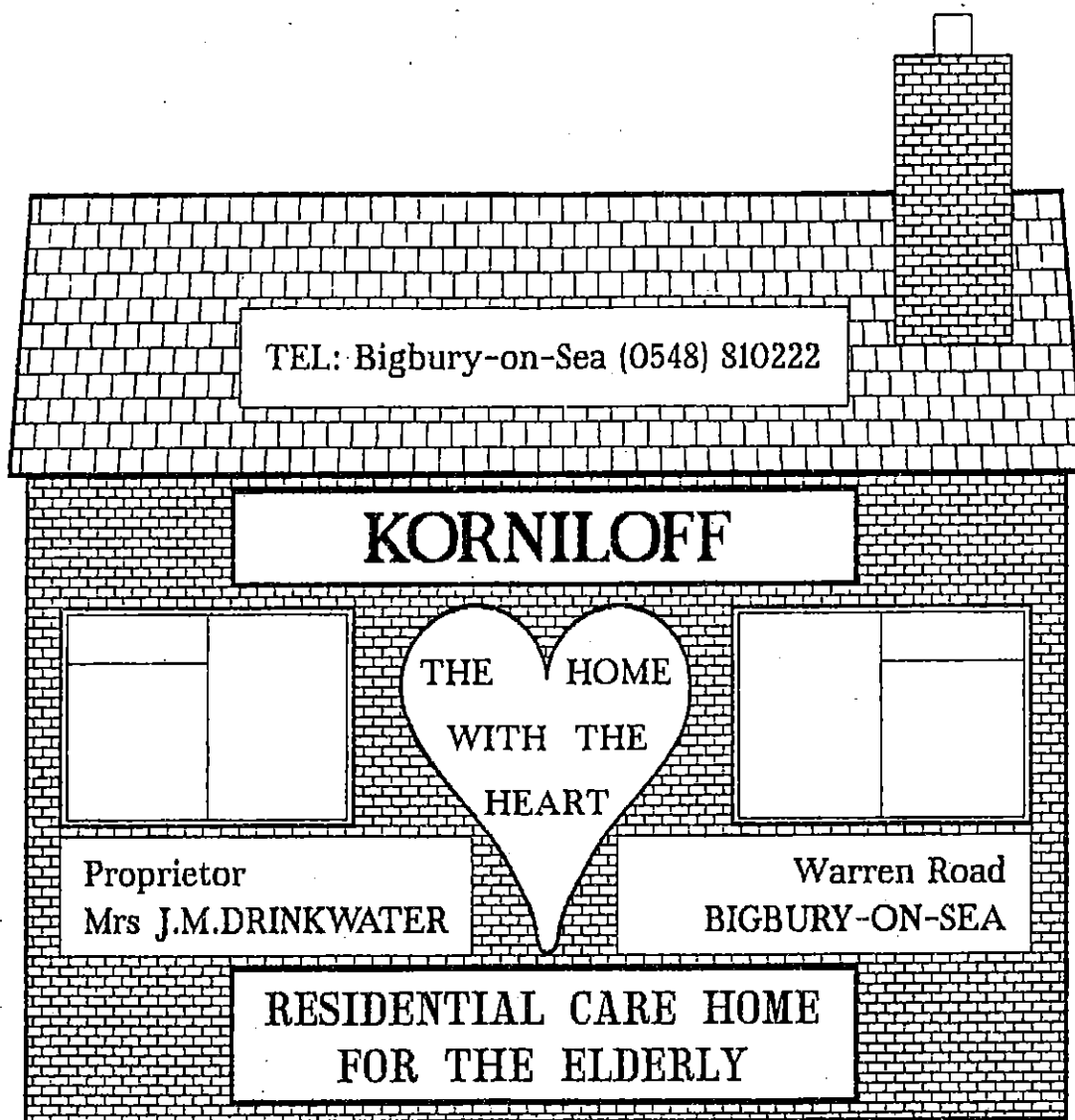
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# Postbag

**Dear Editor**

ALL SAINTS CAROLLERS would like to thank all those who joined them singing in Bantham, Buckland and Thurlestone and to all those who gave so generously.

A total of ~~£286~~ was raised for "Children in Distress", £120 of which will sponsor Miorica Pasca (see December issue of Village Voice) with the balance to help the work of the Christian charity in Romania.

On the first Sunday there was a good sized group of singers who, after venturing into new territory down Court Park, then went on to The Mead where we sang carols at the Parker's house with their guests. After partaking of their excellent refreshments, we then tried to cover as much of The Mead as possible, ending up at the Macdonalds as usual for mulled wine and mince pies.

On the Friday I was luckily in bed with 'flu because the heavens opened dead on cue at 6.00 pm and did not let up all night! However, "the faithful few fought bravely" down through Thurlestone imbibing mulled wine with the McDonalds at Cradles Cottage and ending up at Joan Galloways for much-needed soup, more mulled wine and mince pies.

I am told that later, on undressing, one lady found that even her VEST was wet!

The Sunday before Christmas saw several youngsters join us and, although it was cold, we had a good evening particularly enjoying our usual treat of Swedish biscuits at the Longsforths.

We should like to thank all those who gave us such wonderful hospitality to keep us going.

**Liz Webb**

**Dear Editor**

The recently announced penalties on dog owners for allowing their pets to foul our paths and roads seem, so far, to have had a pretty good result. However, there are still a few owners who still allow their dogs to foul our lawns, footpaths and verges.

In many parts of N. America, every dog-walker must, by law, carry a few plastic bags and with them pick up ALL droppings for deposit into the nearest bin. We hope that this practice will be copied here, so that in 1997 and the future, Thurlestone parish can set a good example to the rest of UK.

**"T.A.D.D.Y.K.I.M.S."**

("Thurlestone Against Dog Droppings - You Know It Makes Sense")

**Dear Editor**

## **Yesterday I sod pottage**

How many readers can honestly say, hand on heart, not tongue in cheek, "Yesterday, I sod pottage"? It so happens that I can make this claim, which is probably what prompted me to ask this question. What is more important, however, is how many of you men can say "Yesterday I sod pottage" or even "This morning I sod pottage"? Very few, I am sure. If so, why not? After all, Jacob sod pottage (Genesis 25 v. 29); not yesterday, admittedly, some time ago, in fact, but he did it without the help of a pressure cooker, as I did, or a microwave or any culinary skill most likely; which is all the more reason why you could.

Therefore, honest readers, pull up your socks, light your stoves and get to work, so that we, the people of Thurlestone, united, can each proudly declare "Yesterday I sod pottage".

**P.B.**

# **WEATHER WAG'S YEARLY COMPARISON OF WEATHER STATISTICS**

	1994	1995	1996
<b>RAINFALL</b>			
Total	1113.46 mm	858.87 mm	1344.88 mm
Wettest Month	Feb 154.9 mm	Jan 137 mm	July 299 mm
Highest daily rainfall	Jan 4/5 24.44 mm	Sep 11/12 38.12 mm	May 18/19 29.63 mm
Driest Month	June 22.82 mm	June 10.6 mm	June 9.19 mm
<b>TEMPERATURE</b>			
Hottest Month	August 18.96 C	August 20.07 C	July 17.46 C
Highest daily average	N/A	August 3rd 25.6 C	July 29th 20.05 C
Highest max.	N/A	August 1st 32 C	July 20th 26.8 C
Lowest min.	N/A	Dec 26th -3.8 C	Jan 27th -3.5C
<b>WIND</b>			
Westerly	213 days = 58%	168 days = 46%	127 days = 35%
Easterly	124 days = 34%	173 days = 47%	209 days = 57%
Northerly	N/A	12 days = 3%	6 days = 2%
Southerly	N/A	11 days = 3%	3 days = 1%
Highest Gust	Jan 27th = 86mph	Jan 22nd = 80mph	Oct 29th = 84mph

## **A NEW (BM) MEDICAL DICTIONARY..... .....FOR THE MILLENNIUM?**

ARTERY	Study of painting	LABOUR PAIN	Getting hurt at work
BACTERIA	Backdoor to a cafeteria	MORBID	Higher offer
BARIUM	What doctors do when treatment fails	NITRATE	Cheaper than dayrate
BOWEL	A letter like A, E, I, O, U.	NODE	Was aware of
CAESARIAN SECTION	A district in Rome	OUTPATIENT	Person who had fainted
CATARH	Stringed instrument	PELVS	Cousin of Elvis
COLIC	A sheep dog	POSTOPERATIVE	Letter carrier
COMA	A punctuation mark	PROSTATE	Flat on your back
CONGENITAL	Friendly	RECOVERY ROOM	Place to do upholstery
D & C	Where Washington is	RECTUM	Damn nigh killed him
DILATE	To live a long time	SECRETION	Hiding something
ENEMA	Not a friend	SEIZURE	Roman Emperor
FESTER	Quicker	TERMINAL ILLNESS	Getting sick at the airport
FIBULA	A small lie	TIBIA	Country in NAfrica
GENITAL	Non-Jewish	TUMOR	More than one
HANGNAIL	Coat hook	URINE	Not out
IMPOTENT	Distinguished	VARICOSE	Nearby
		VEIN	Concelted

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Engine size \_\_\_\_\_ CC

Year of manufacture \_\_\_\_\_

Approx Value £ \_\_\_\_\_

Years of NCD earned \_\_\_\_\_

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# HORSWELL DIARY

*I love this quiet time of year. After the rush and excesses of Christmas the sudden peace is like a pause, a slow intake of breath before one rushes headlong into the challenges of a new year. It gives one time to think back over past years and time to formulate one's hopes and goals for the year ahead.*

*I think back to the first time I saw Horswell House. It was love at first sight. Like finding the Sleeping Princess slumbering in the forest, waiting for the kiss that would awaken her. I saw an elegant, dignified lady who had been stripped of all her pride and beauty. All her treasures stolen and her fine proportions camouflaged by ill-conceived alterations. There were bats and rats, mould and decay.*

*By the time of the auction the property had been stripped completely bare; fine moulded skirtings had been ripped out along with the fireplaces, all plumbing, heating, piping and electric cabling stripped for scrap. Chimney cows, glass houses, gates, pumps, stone troughs and garden plants all gone (goodness knows where) to people with no respect for her age or beauty.*

*Because the house had been unattended for so long the garden had disappeared under a wilderness of brambles, providing an undisturbed haven for every type of wildlife. Ravens and buzzards nested in the trees, huge bumble-bees drifted over the weeds and wild flowers, sizeable adders slunk through the bracken whilst their offspring lay coiled in the sunshine. Adult foxes grazed on the apples fallen in the orchard and the cubs played tag or snoozed in the long grass. Squirrels were busy everywhere*

*stripping the bark from trees and rabbits demolished all the young plants we had brought with us.*

*At night, it became like the ghostly house of horror films. The air was filled with the shrill sound of vixen barking, owls screeching and hooting, and badgers fighting and squealing and thundering through the undergrowth. Low-flying bats raced down the corridors like fighter planes, strong winds screamed around the chimney pots with the strangled cries of souls in torment, windows rattled and doors swung eerily closed.*

*When this Christmas I stood back and looked around at the twinkling Christmas trees, the candles and blazing log fires, the house looked so beautiful and content I felt that at last we had given her back her dignity and all her ghosts were smiling.*

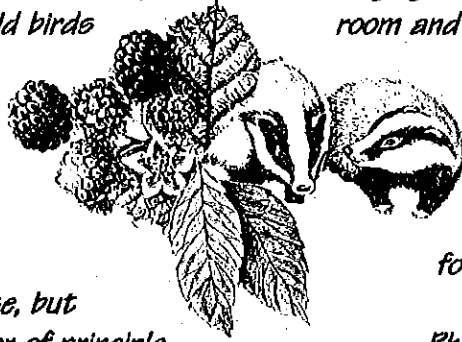
*Although our efforts to restore the garden and the determined onslaught of our three dogs have frightened some of our original residents away, the number of birds that come to our feeders are a continuing pleasure. Our breakfast room looks out on to the old stable yard, a cobbled courtyard where we feed the birds twice a day.*

*Our first callers are our four peafowl who honk like grumpy geese if they think we are running late. They sleep in a 300 year old cork tree at night, but swoop down and waddle across the lawn in time for breakfast. Peanuts and digestive biscuits are their favourite, along*



with cheese and leaves. Unless they are really hungry they leave the ordinary birdseed for the little wild birds which arrive next.

Mostly the peafowl are happy to share their food with the robins and blue-tits who bravely hop right up close, but occasionally, as a matter of principle, the peacock will take exception and subject an astounded robin or blackbird to a full display of his quite magnificent tail - causing the smaller bird to blink in amazement, but rarely give ground.



Imran, the larger of the two peacocks has commandeered both the girls, Jemima and Betty, to be his wives, pecking poor Ghenghis into submission and ensuring he has the least of the peanuts. Both cocks are looking beautiful now with their newly-grown tails that sweep the floor and vibrant jewel colours of brightest blue and green and gold. The hens, too, are looking well enough although their only colour is around their necks - a ruff of iridescent green, turquoise and gold. After they leave the arena, the hanging feeders become alive with little birds. Blackbirds, thrushes, robins, hedge sparrows, blue-tits, great-tits, greenfinches, chaffinches, greater and lesser-spotted woodpeckers, collared doves, predatory magpies and screeching jays, all take their turn.

This morning they were joined by three fluffy grey squirrels and to my amazement and much honking from the curious peafowl, by a three-legged black-and-white cat who appeared from under the granary! The poor cat was so desperate for food that it ran into the house as soon as I opened the door. It gulped down a saucer of warm milk

whilst our three dogs watched in disbelief, hanging over the half-door between their room and the kitchen. A plate of meat later and another bowl of milk and our surprise visitor disappeared back under the granary where I hope he or she will be safe for the night.

Phone calls to the police proved unfruitful. I'd hoped, with such distinctive markings, we would soon find its owner. It had been a magnificent cat but it is now very, very thin and hungry and its coat matted and dirty and in need of care.

I hope I'll see it again tomorrow. I've saved it some Christmas ham.

After the birds, we usually have the fish to feed but now it is too cold. The trout swim slowly in the depths of their pond and do not want to come to the surface and the goldfish in the fountain are encased in the most amazing ice sculpture, much to the bemusement of a passing heron who flapped away unfed.

The fountain finally trickled to a stop, forming spectacular icicles and sculpted curves. The cherub in the centre now looks as though he's holding a crystal ball aloft in the palm of his hand.

With a new year beginning it looks not only beautiful but surreally prophetic.



Prunella Dart

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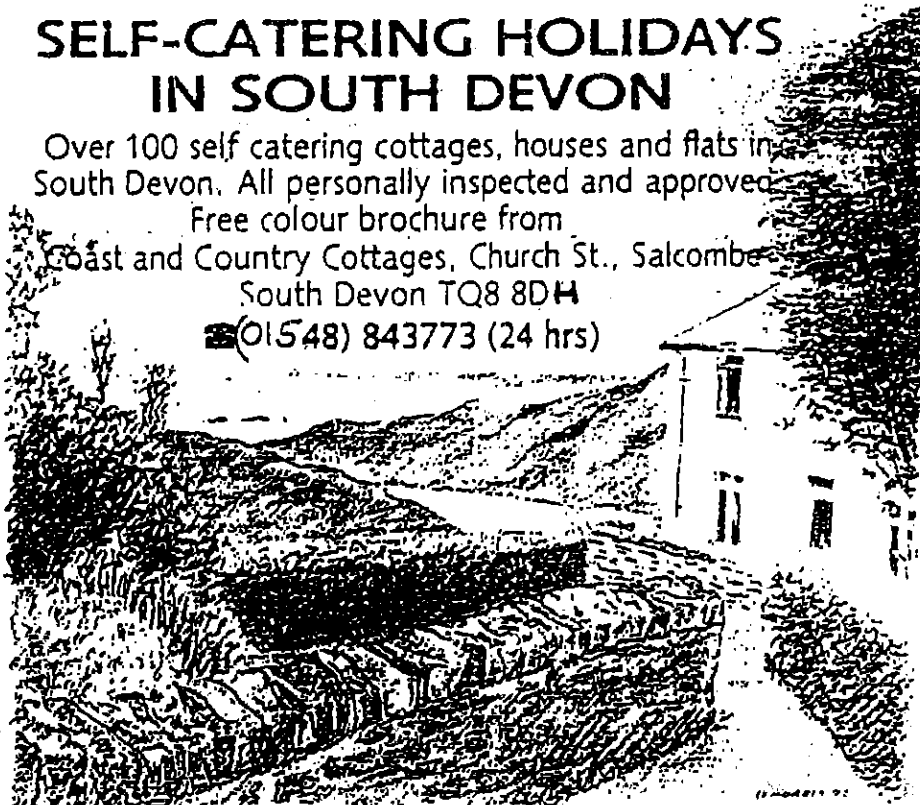
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# Parish Council Report

## Thurlestone Parish Council's Response to THE DEVON STRUCTURE PLAN (First Review 1995-2011)

We are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Coastal Preservation Area within an area of Development Control.

In order to assist in meeting the aims of this policy, this Council can envisage accommodating **81 units**, which include the **14 starter homes for young people** this Council has long been waiting for. We would oppose any increase in numbers beyond this figure on the grounds that such development would be contrary to the objectives of Policies C1, C4, C7, C13, C19, C24, E13, T1, T5, and T10 for the reasons stated hereafter.

### **POLICY C1 (Sustainability and the Environment)**

Bantham and West Buckland have no mains drainage system. West Buckland stream is already polluted and discharges into the sea over Bantham beach. The Avon River is similarly polluted. Any increased development would add to this pollution and further damage the environment and health risks for bathers.

### **POLICY C4 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within an area of Development Constraint)**

Any development which results in increased numbers of houses and consequent increase in vehicular traffic and associated road improvement schemes will inevitably damage the area designated to be worthy of protection.

Also, development in towns which surround our area will cause increased vehicular traffic to our beaches and coastal area for recreational purposes.

The air ambulance has had to be used in the summer when the roads have been blocked by the volume of traffic trying to get to the beaches. The police have closed roads to stop further traffic trying to get into Bantham on many occasions. The fire brigade has been unable to reach Bantham, the scene of a car fire, for the same reasons. Double yellow lines have been found to be necessary to keep the roads open for the passage of public service vehicles. The Heritage Coastal Footpath is being eroded through increased usage even at the present time.

### **POLICY C7 (The Coast)**

*"Within Coastal Preservation Areas to permit only (1) those essential to the benefit of the public ... which cannot be accommodated elsewhere..."*

Any large increase in permitted development within our parishes would be against this policy.

### **POLICY C13 (Conserving Devon's Biodiversity and Earth Science Diversity)**

Heavy lorries undercut the roadside hegerows in the passing places of the narrow lanes. This leads to the collapse of the hedgerows and loss of wildlife. Bantham and West Buckland have no mains drainage system. West Buckland stream is already polluted and discharges into the sea over Bantham beach and the River Avon is similarly polluted by properties at Bantham. Any increased development would add to this pollution and further damage the environment and increase health risks for bathers.

### **POLICY C19 (Waste Management and Disposal)**

*".....(iii) minimise the need to transport waste by road"*

This area no longer has a landfill site. Rubbish has to be transported to Plymouth, 20 miles away. Any increase in the number of households in our parishes will increase the expense and pollution caused by carriage out of the area.

### **POLICY C24 (Protecting Water Courses)**

*"Proposals for development should not be provided for where... (1) such development would lead to an unacceptable deterioration in the quality, quantity, or natural flow of underground, surface and coastal waters."*

Bantham and Buckland have no mains drainage system. West Buckland stream is already polluted and discharges into the sea over Bantham beach as does the River Avon which is similarly polluted by discharges from properties at Bantham. Any increased development would add to this pollution and further damage the environment and increase health risks for bathers.

### **POLICY C24 (Protecting Water Resources)**

*"Proposals for development should not be provided for where...(2) adequate water resources do not already exist."*

Year after year S.W. Water warn of water shortages, impose restrictions and threaten cuts in supply. To conserve water, meters are now obligatory for garden

sprinklers, etc. Cuts in supply must be expected from any increase in demand due to many more dwellings being created.

#### **POLICY E12**

*"New recreational development affecting river estuaries only allowed when consistent with Policies C13, C24 and would not adversely affect their value as wildlife habitats."*

One third of properties in the parish are holiday homes and any new units could therefore be described as recreational development. Any development would be contrary to Policies C13 and C24 for the reasons already given and will add to the pollution of the River Avon and adversely affect the habitat for wildlife.

#### **POLICY T1 (Integrated Transport Strategy)**

*"Development of the transport system will be co-ordinated as part of a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy such that the need to travel is reduced and alternatives to the private car encouraged."*

Increased development in our parishes would be contrary to the aims of this policy as it would increase the usage of private cars because of the absence of appropriate public transport.

#### **POLICY T5 (Public Transport Strategy)**

*"An effective public transport network will be developed by (1) Providing for development in locations accessible by public transport."*

Our parishes are served by "B" roads, single track lanes with passing places, which in summer are unable to cope with the existing volume of light traffic and are inadequate for heavy commercial vehicles which undercut the hedges in the passing places leading to the collapse of hedges. It can be envisaged that in order to maintain access to the beaches some form of appropriate public transport may be necessary in order to reduce the sheer volume of private cars which on numerous occasions have saturated the roads and brought traffic in the area to a standstill.

#### **POLICY T10 (The Devon Road Network Policy)**

*"...(4) will ensure that the unique / distinct character of each settlement is retained and enhanced."*

To improve accessibility major road changes throughout the area would be necessary which would destroy the distinct character of our parishes.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Our parishes are served by "B" roads, single track lanes with passing places. The "A" roads into the area, from Plymouth, Torbay and the A38 Expressway provide slow, meandering routes for commuter and heavy goods vehicles.

#### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The air ambulance has had to be used in the summer when the roads have been blocked by the volume of traffic trying to get to the beaches. The police have closed roads to stop further traffic trying to get into Bantham on many occasions. The fire brigade has been unable to reach Bantham, the scene of a car fire, for the same reasons.

#### **VIALE TOWNS**

##### **Employment**

Ivybridge with a population of 12,000 to 13,000 is said to need a further 1500 population increase to be regarded as economically viable to attract industry to provide employment. The enlargement of other smaller towns within the South Hams will mean an increase in commuter or residential traffic which will add to the holiday traffic congestion. As already stated the roads within the parish are lanes and the main roads to Plymouth and Torbay are currently being used to their maximum capabilities leaving no room for increased volume of vehicles by numbers or weight.

##### **Rail**

The re-opening of South Brent railway station (12-14 miles distant) included in Proposal T8 serves to highlight the difficult communications within the area when the access road is a "B" road. Plymouth station is some 20 miles distant and Totnes 17 miles.

##### **Utilities**

There is no gas supply to our parishes.

##### **School**

The village C of E primary school has limited space for expansion.

Prior to producing this response, we would have appreciated more time to consider the Green Paper "Household Growth: Where shall we Live?" produced by the Department of the Environment, received within the last few days.

(Signed) **PETER HURRELL**  
Chairman, Parish Council  
18th December 1996

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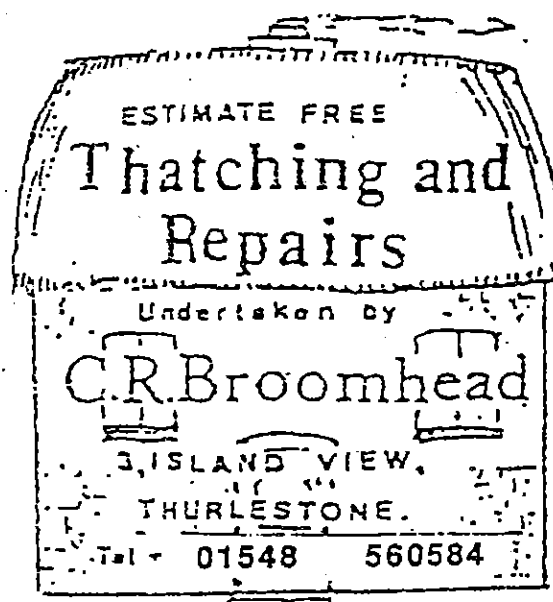
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# W.I. UNROLLS ITS MAGIC CARPET

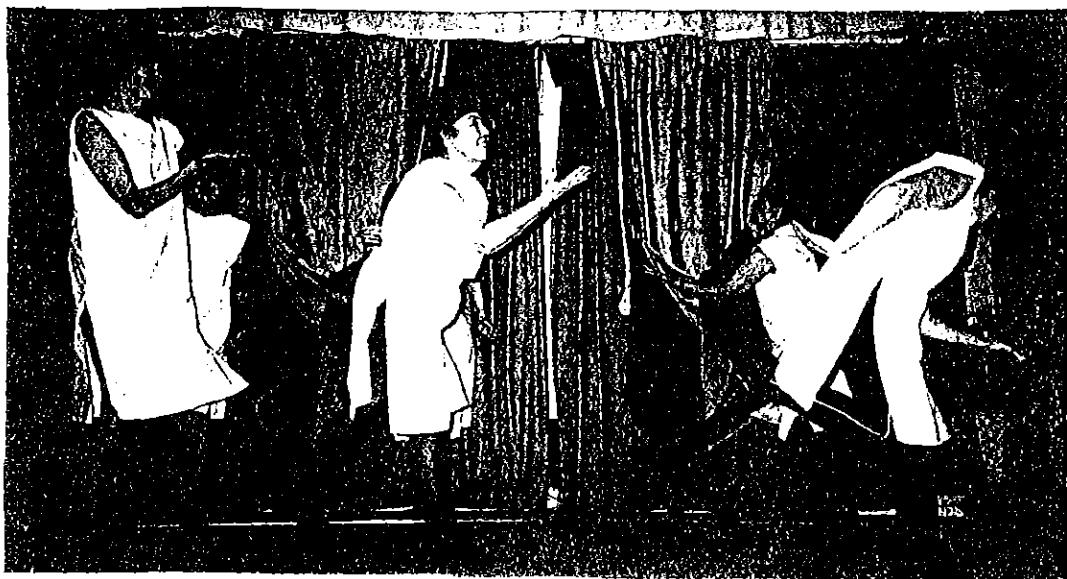
## The Eastern Evening

On Saturday, 30th November, the parish hall was transformed into a **Sultan's Palace** lined with silk and satins, baubles and beads, for the **Eastern Evening** social supper and entertainment. The attending diners further enhanced the illusion both with their choice of dress and their reception of the various stage "turns".

An eight-strong chorus took the audience on an Oriental travel excursion, in prose as well as song, ably supported by "invited" guest artists. Al Parker's rendering of **Gunga-Din** was stirring enough, but the panache with which he later emerged from the "Fifth Sheet" (as opposed to the Seventh Veil) brought the house down! Another guest artist, Basil Smallman, also entered magnificently into the occasion and not only provided the piano accompaniment for the whole show but also contributed a number of piano solos, and joined in duets with Judith Reynolds (violin). In oriental snake-charming disguise he also made an appearance on stage, this time playing a recorder to entice the reluctant serpent from its basket.



Following curries and poppadums, the W.I.'s **magic carpet** provided an unexpected trip for two large gentlemen volunteers - as well as their two oriental lady attendants!



The closing "**sand-dance**" was performed by Judith Reynolds, Val Brown, Ann Smallman, Pat Macdonald, Dyan Newcombe and Pam Brewster. (Contrary to rumour, they have NOT been asked to accompany the Kingsmen on their next American tour!)

Val Brown was warmly thanked for devising yet another great village entertainment. Joan Lane, Wyn Cousins, Pam Brewster and Dorothy Candy prepared the food, Dyan Newcombe provided the costumes, while lots of members assisted with the decorations and generally turned their hands to the chores. Appreciation was expressed to all these helpers, and also to the guests who contributed to making the evening so much fun.

### **Christmas Lunch**

In December a "full house" of members enjoyed a delicious **Christmas Lunch** prepared by Rosemary MacKay, who received a warm vote of thanks for her generosity and hard work. Visiting speaker Jean Lee then gave one of her highly entertaining talks - this time about her life and experiences as an hotelier.

### **Pakistan**

Lesley Austin came in January as our guest speaker. She certainly had members sitting on the edge of their seats with her illustrated talk "**Living on the edge**" about a valley and a village 4,000 feet up in the Karakoram Mountains in remotest North Pakistan. It was her personal account of life in Shimshal, which can only be reached after a very difficult and dangerous four-day trek from Gilgit, where everything that reaches the village has to be carried in on foot over very inhospitable terrain. She has made journeys to this region on several occasions in the past ten years, once on her own and at other times with members of her family, sometimes going as high as 15,000 feet into the mountains.

Her desire to visit this remote area started some 20 years ago when she leafed through a National Geographic magazine which featured the village and showed a yak being ridden. She was so impressed by the article that she vowed one day to visit the area and ride on a yak too! Lesley made us all aware in her fascinating talk of the simplicity and kindness of the people in a far-off land for which she has never lost her love.

In her vote of thanks Norma Kendall echoed our feelings by declaring the talk to be one of the best we have had.

### **That Monarchy Debate**

Four members, at the invitation of Carlton TV, were taken by coach to the NEC Birmingham on Tuesday 7th January for the much-publicised TV debate

**"Monarchy - The Nation Decides."**

Although not getting back to Thurstlestone until 4.40 am, they all agreed that they would not have missed the experience of attending what was described as the "*world's largest live television debate*"..... despite the subsequent controversy surrounding the event!

### **Coming Events**

An old-fashioned fish pie lunch will follow Betty Goodman's 10.30 am demonstration of **Fish cookery** on Monday 3rd February. On the following Monday, 10th February, also at 10.30 am, a **line-dancing** "taster" will be held. A **skittles** social evening, with optional meal, will be held at the Taverners Inn, Aveton Gifford, on Monday 24th February. Family and friends are welcome to come to any of these events.

---

### ***.....and now for some more of your limericks!***

*A boastful young golfer namd Piers  
Just bored all his partners to tears  
But as he got older  
And his tales became bolder  
He found they all fell on deaf ears.*

*Fat golfers try desperately, but  
Being well over par round the gut  
Fail to see that it means  
Fewer chips round the greens  
To ensure that their handicap's cut*

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# I REMEMBER...

(Last year Joan Hillyar wrote an article for Village Voice under the "I REMEMBER" heading. In a footnote to that article Joan was invited to tell us more about her adventures, particularly of her time in the WRNS during the war. She now continues her story.)

## WARTIME IN THE WRENS

"After doing my training at the RNC Dartmouth, I was sent to Brixham. Uphams Yard had been taken over by the Admiralty. "Captain M.L. Devonport", to use the official title, were in residence at the Berry Head Hotel, which had been commandeered by the Admiralty. The Captain, his wife, and his naval staff were all installed, the staff consisting of a First Lieutenant, (a commander RN), two Lieutenants, two Sub-Lieutenants, Engineering Officers and a Doctor. He had additional civilian staff, these being engineers and a supervisor who was also an engineer.

The Admiralty had taken over about ten small boat-building yards from Holyhead down the coast of Wales and along the south-west coast to Brixham. There were three other Captains, but my Captain was senior and was responsible for the building of motor launches (MLs) from Falmouth to Brixham. Another Wren and I were the only females on the base!

We were both in the Communications Branch, which meant that when the signals came in over the telephone from all across the country - and some from abroad - we were the first to know just what was going on. Being a small community, Gwen and I became more like personal assistants..... especially when we had to sort out the troubles caused by girlfriends of the younger members of staff!

After the MLs were built, as far as we were concerned in Uphams Yard (which had been enlarged and a big dry dock built) a Captain and other officers would arrive and the boat was taken out for trials in Torbay and the English Channel. When it was passed by my Captain it was officially

handed over to the Admiralty and sailed off to Portsmouth for duty around the coast of England.

A net was put up from the Thatcher Rock at Torquay to Berry Head to keep out German U-boats. There was a gate at the Berry Head end which was opened at sunrise and shut at sunset so that fishing boats and the like could come and go about their work, which of course had to go on. I remember one night several trawlers had to spend the night on the "wrong side". It was not very pleasant for them, and panic stations for their families.

About the spring of 1944 sufficient MLs had been built, so we were all closed down. Brixham was taken over by HMS Vernon Portsmouth, and life was never the same again. Masses of Wrens arrived, a big house was taken over and turned into a "Wrennery" as it was called, and naval personnel were all over the place. My arm became quite stiff with all the saluting that took place.

Instead of just the two of us, four Wrens were always on duty by day and three at night. About sixty lines were put in - it was like a very large telephone exchange - and we never seemed to stop for a minute either answering calls or getting calls for the officers....who all seemed to want someone or something at the same time. The lower the rank the ruder they seemed, sub-lieutenants being the worst. The Captain, however, was a real gentleman. In fact some of the sub-lieutenants were so bad I asked to see the Captain. I don't know what it was he said or did, but our treatment from then on became a bit better!

Because we knew so much of what was going on, it was difficult when the wives and girlfriends asked us about what was happening. I think the worst time was on the occasion of the St.Nazaire raid, especially so as the daughter of our neighbour at Paignton had married a naval officer who was the Captain of one of the MLs engaged in the attack. I knew he and his crew had been killed. I cannot remember just how many boats were involved but only about sixteen came back, some badly damaged.

Another very sad memory is of the time an exercise took place off the beach near Torcross. They were practising for the Normandy landings. All was going quite well but one night several U-boats managed to get amongst the boats and many were sunk.

Each morning I had to leave my house at Paignton at 6 am and walk a mile to the bus-stop in order to reach work for 8 am. I had to try to catch a bus that went to Brixham but as it was the workmen's bus it was always very crowded. I never had a seat but nearly always managed to squeeze in somehow.

Because the mud in the harbour was nice and thick, Brixham was chosen as the place to train men to work under the sea learning how to de-fuse the mines that were laid on the French side of the Channel and which had to be cleared in advance of D-Day. All these men were volunteers and there were many casualties - suffering from nose and

ear bleeding - whilst training. This meant they could not carry on with the job. I had many boys, because they were all young, weeping on my shoulder thinking they had failed in their duty - which of course they had not.

I was eventually allowed to stay at the Northcliff Hotel which overlooked the harbour. Part of it had been taken over by the Admiralty and many naval officers were billeted there. I made many friends whilst at the hotel. I lived in luxury, very nice bedroom, good food, and I was allowed to mix with everyone...but was supposed to be in uniform all the time.

I can still see in my mind's eye one of our destroyers, ready to put to sea. Goodbyes had been said and she was all ready to sail within the hour, when suddenly five German planes flew over the harbour raining bombs on the boat. Men were jumping overboard and the boat soon sank. Many were below deck with no chance of escape. I am sure we must have had spies or someone talked when they should have kept silent otherwise how could the Germans have known the precise time the ship was due to leave?

Living in the hotel rather than in the "Wrennery" made my life much more free. I don't think I abused that freedom but need I say I enjoyed my life? Oh I could tell you a few more stories but I think I've taken up enough space!"

**JOAN HILLYAR**

## GW SHOWS HOW TO FIND WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK YOU WERE BORN

1. Take the last two digits of your birth YEAR (eg 18.10.1928) = 28
2. ADD a **quarter** of this number, disregarding any remainder +7 = 35
3. ADD the date of the month +10 = 45
4. ADD according to the month:  
     Jan(1) (or in a leap year 0) March (4) May (2) July (0) Sept (6) Nov (4)  
     Feb(4) (or in a leap year 3) April (0) June (5) Aug (3) Oct (1) Dec (6) +1 = 46
5. ADD for 18th century (4), 19th century (2), 20th century (0), 21st century (6)
6. DIVIDE the total by 7, and the REMAINDER will give the day of the week as follows:  
     1 = SUNDAY 2 = MONDAY 3 = TUESDAY 4 = WEDNESDAY 7 into 46 = 6  
     5 = THURSDAY 6 = FRIDAY 0 = SATURDAY and 4 over = WED

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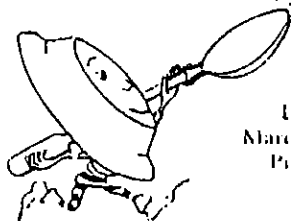
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**THURLESTONE TRAMPS**  
**WALK PROGRAMME FOR 1997**

15 January	Malborough	Derek Yeoman
19 February	East Prawle	Bob Nicholls
5 March	Slapton Walk	Ian Fraser
19 March	Clearbrook	Sue Dwyer
2 April	Aveton Gifford	Rosemary Mackay
16 April	Heligan Day Out	Sue Dwyer
7 May	River Erme	Roy Travis
21 May	Cremyll/Mount Edgecumbe	John & Christine Walker
4 June	Yealmpton -> coast	Sue Dwyer
18 June	Burrator	Pam Brewster
2 July	Merrivale	Ian Fraser
16 July	South Moor	Roy Travis
6 August	Dartmoor	Stuart Reynolds
20 August	Dartmoor	Stuart Reynolds
3 September	South Moor	Ron Parkin
17 September	Surprise Walk	Derek Yeoman
8 October	East Allington	Ron Parkin
12 November	Hallsands	Bob Nicholls
10 December	Christmas walk	Sue Dwyer



# Tramp's Progress

It would appear that the prospect of mincepies and sherry for elevenses has not the same appeal for dogs as for their two-legged friends, since 24 of the latter but only five of the former set off from the *Forces Tavern, Blackawton*, on a grey and rather chilly day in early December.

To begin with our path led us across the fields towards Tideford. On the top the wind was decidedly fresh, but it was pleasant walking and our leader found a sheltered spot for the appreciative consumption of mincepies (generously provided by a member of TRAMP whom a broken collar-bone had prevented from coming)... and accompanied by rather more than a mouthful of sherry.

With the weather now undeniably warmer the way onward to **Cornworthy**, over the fields still at first, then along tracks, and finally down a stretch of road, seemed surprisingly short.

There was then the choice of continuing down to the estuary and round back to Cornworthy - or of sneaking immediately into the pub and lurking there until the more courageous returned. It is good to report that

we were all more courageous and the extraloop was well worthwhile; the estuary always has a certain beauty even at low tide and on a grey day.

We could now feel we had really earned the "best game and pork soup in Devon" (or even in England), served in the rather overwhelmingly foil-and-tinsel-lined pub dining room. Only two opted out of the final stage of the walk, both for very good reasons, a car having conveniently arrived to transport them!

By way of **Allaleigh** now and up what is claimed to be the most beautiful valley in South Devon (clearly a walk of superlatives, this) it did not take us long to get back to our starting-point and the cars.

At the close of our tramping year we would like to express our appreciation to **Frances Bromfield** and **Kay Morley** for the use of their respective shop windows for our notices. Many thanks!

ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE YOU WILL FIND A COMPLETE LIST OF WALKS FOR 1997. DETAILS CAN ALSO BE SEEN AT THE TWO VILLAGE SHOPS

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## ANSWERS TO WORD-SEARCH PUZZLES

### Word-Search One

1. Ash 2. Oak 3. Elm 4. Yew 5. Acer 6. Lime 7. Palm 8. Pear 9. Pine 10. Plum 11. Apple  
12. Aspen 13. Beech 14. Birch 15. Cedar 16. Larch 17. Maple 18. Olive 19. Plane 20. Rowan  
21. Spruce 22. Walnut 23. Willow 24. Sycamore 25. Tamarisk 26. Sandalwood

### Word-Search Two

1. Turquoise	5. Frederick	9. Navigator	13. Waistcoat	17. Priestley
2. Billiards	6. Candytuft	10. Derringer	14. Limejuice	18. Bucharest
3. Marmalade	7. Balacava	11. Battleaxe	15. Shortcake	19. Ullswater
4. Razorbill	8. Callaghan	12. Skinflint	16. Eiderdown	20. Overdrawn

---

# BOOKSHELF

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**"JADE" by Pat Bar.**

This is an easy fictional way to learn some of the history of China, and when I asked in the library what else she had written, a great many titles flashed up on the screen. They are mostly about China, so I shall put a few on my list.

**"THE RADIANT WAY" by Margaret Drabble.**

I felt I had to read one of today's "most popular" authors, but it sits by the bedside, six weeks later, with but a few chapters waded through. Perhaps VV readers would like to comment or, indeed, give their own suggestions on books they have enjoyed or which they have found informative.

Do Village Voice readers realise what a golden treasury they have in our local Kingsbridge Library and what 'golden treasures' their staff are?

**Rosemary MacKay**

**"WRITING HOME" by Alan Bennett**

If you are interested in the theatre this is the read for you! It's a wonderfully entertaining autobiographical collection of Alan Bennett's prose, over 25 years, with extracts from his diaries, reminiscences, broadcasting and revues. Witty, and full of brilliant observation, it also demonstrates the compassion of a writer who never loses sight of his roots - despite being one of our most considerable modern playwrights.

**Pat Macdonald**

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## INDEPENDENT SURVEY SAYS SOUTH HAMS COUNCIL UP TO THE MARK

As part of the government's Citizens' Charter Initiative, local authorities have to publish a table of performance indicators showing how well they provide services to local people. The table covers such services as housing, refuse collection, development control, paying of benefits, repairs to council properties, recycling and local sports and leisure facilities. An independent survey of the SHDC performance has revealed that:

- \* The percentage of Council Tax paid during the year was 97.24% out of a total of £16.51 million (an increase of 3% over last year)
- \* The percentage of household planning applications decided within 8 weeks was 94%
- \* The percentage of phone calls answered by the main switchboard within the target time of 30 seconds was 99% (an increase of 1%).
- \* 9.5% of household waste was recycled (an increase of 2% over last year)

**Note:** At present recycleable materials are not collected separately from household waste, because of a lack of disposal centres, but it is planned to introduce a pilot scheme in part of the district in April 1997 when new facilities become available in Torbay.

**STOP PRESS:** A copy of the survey is included in this issue of Village Voice

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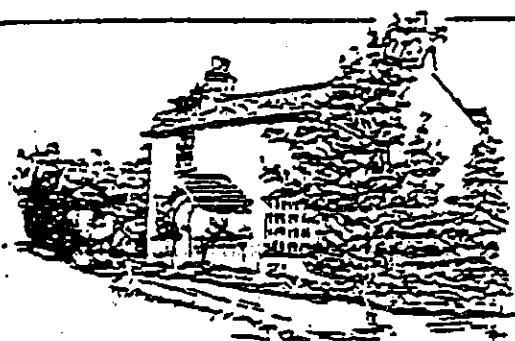
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# SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Performance Indicators –

Here are this year's Performance Indicators. It's an opportunity for us to show you how we've done in the previous year.

The categories are set by the Audit Commission who also verify our figures.



### Housing

#### The housing stock

The number of dwellings managed by S.H.D.C. at 31.3.96	3278
Dwellings adapted for (or intended for use by) the elderly or disabled	34.83%
F flats in blocks of 3 storeys or over managed by S.H.D.C. as at 31.3.96	363
The percentage of these flats with controlled entry	44.60%

#### Allocations and lettings

The number of dwellings let to new tenants:

S.H.D.C. dwellings	204
S.H.D.C. nominations to housing associations	116
Percentage let to the homeless	41.06%
Percentage let to others	58.94%

The percentage of dwellings that are empty:

Available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	0.85%
Others	1.28%
The average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	4.45 wks

Does S.H.D.C. follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing YES

#### Repairs

The number of repairs requested by tenants at priority levels:

Priority	Target completion	Number of repairs	Percentage of jobs completed within target time
Emergency	1 day	1,841	97%
Urgent	3 days	960	93%
Consequential	7 days	1,969	94%
Normal	14 days	896	92%
Routine	21 days	724	90%
Incidental	42 days	55	93%

The Authority has no policy on offering tenants appointments for repairs to be carried out, at present

#### Rent collection

The rent collected as a percentage of the rent due including recovery of arrears from previous year	100.6%
The percentage of all tenants owing over 13 weeks rent at 31 March 1996, excluding those owing less than £250	0.65%

#### Costs and rents

The average weekly costs per dwelling, itemised as follows:

Management	£10.90
Repairs	£11.46
Bad debts	£0.05
Empty properties	£1.00
Rent rebates	£29.14
Capital charges	£8.19
Other items, net	£2.66
Less Government subsidy	Income -£15.56
Total = average rent	£47.74
Capital expenditure per dwelling on major repairs and improvements	£779.16

#### Housing the homeless

Homeless households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March 1996 and housed in:

Bed and breakfast accommodation	1
Hostel accommodation	10
Other accommodation	30
The average length of stay in bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation	10 wks



### Dealing with the Public

#### Answering the telephone

S.H.D.C.'s target for answering calls – within 30 seconds at the main switchboard  
How performance was monitored – automatically by a call logger  
S.H.D.C.'s performance against target – 99%

#### Answering letters

S.H.D.C.'s targets for answering letters – simple letters: 5 working days  
complex letters: 10 working days  
How performance was monitored – computerised system in operation  
The performance against target – simple letters: 95.04% complex letters: 94.6%

#### Complaints to a Local Authority Ombudsman

The number of complaints determined by an Ombudsman	21
---	----

which were classified as:

Local settlement	2
Maladministration with no injustice	0
Maladministration with injustice	0

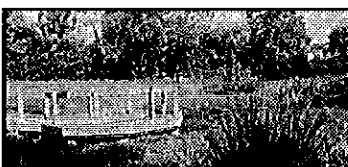
#### Handling of complaints

S.H.D.C.'s definition of a complaint is:  
"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the Council or its staff"

Does the Authority have a written policy and procedure for dealing with complaints which covers all services and which is up to date and readily available to the public?	YES
Does it explain the procedure for making complaints	YES
Does the Council's policy show clearly who is responsible for receiving, investigating and dealing with complaints?	YES
Does it contain time limits and targets for dealing with complaints?	YES
Does the Council's policy specify that when time limits and targets are not met, complainants must be informed of the delays, the reasons for the delay and the revised targets?	NO
Does it specify that those complaining in writing must receive a written explanation of the outcome of the complaint?	NO
Is there a follow-up procedure if the complainant is not satisfied with a response from the department to which the complaint relates?	YES
Does the Authority have a written policy on remedies?	NO
Is there a system for reviewing complaints to ensure that avoidable problems do not recur?	NO
Does the Authority publish a report on complaints which is available to the public?	NO

#### Access to and use of buildings

The number of S.H.D.C.'s buildings open to the public	26
The number of such buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled persons	1
Does the Council have a published policy to provide services fairly to all sections of the community?	NO
Does S.H.D.C. follow the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice on employment?	NO
Does S.H.D.C. carry out formal monitoring of staff as defined in the Direction?	NO



### The Local Environment

The percentage of highways that are:

(a) of a high standard of cleanliness	85%
(b) of an acceptable standard of cleanliness	5%
Method of inspection used to monitor the above:	Inspection which is both guided and random
The average time taken to remove fly-tips:	3 calendar days
The number of public conveniences provided by the Authority:	47

The percentage of these public conveniences providing:

(a) access for disabled people:	38%
(b) baby-changing facilities:	4%

The target time set by the Authority for responding to environmental health complaints and requests for services:	Range of 1–14 days depending on risk or level of detriment
The percentage of responses provided within the target time:	94%
The number of food premises:	1,376
The percentage of such premises due to be inspected which were inspected	98%

# How we did in 1995/96



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



## Refuse Collection

Is household waste collected from the back door of domestic properties?	YES
Is garden waste collected free of charge?	YES
Are appointments given for the collection of bulky waste?	YES
Is bulky waste collected free of charge?	NO
Are recyclable materials collected separately from household waste?	NO
Is a direct dial telephone service available 8 hours per working day and is there an answerphone service which takes messages of complaint at all other times?	YES
Are special arrangements made on request to help disabled people?	YES

### Reliability

The number of household waste collections which were missed per 100,000 collections	17
The percentage of missed collections which were put right by the end of the next working day	97%

### Recycling

The tonnes of household waste collected	27,774
The percentage of household waste recycled	9.5%

### Expenditure

The number of households	36,209
The net cost per household	£26.50



## The Payment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

New claims for council tax benefit	3945
The percentage of such claims processed in 14 days	92%
New claims for housing benefit from local authority tenants	934
The percentage of such claims processed in 14 days	94%
Successful new claims for rent allowance	1896
The percentage of such claims paid in 14 days	93%
The total number of benefit claimants	6,970
The gross cost of administration per claimant	£80.20

### The collection of council tax

The net amount of Council tax which the Authority should have received during the year, excluding reliefs and rebates	£16,515,000
The percentage of this that was received during the year	97.24%
The net cost of collecting Council tax per chargeable dwelling	£13.57



## Leisure and Recreation

The net expenditure per head of population on swimming pools and sports centres:	£6.10
The number of swims:	106,557
The number of other visits:	186,340
The net cost per swim/visit:	£1.85
The number of playgrounds which reach minimum standards:	43
The number of sports pitches available to the public:	10
The hectares of parks and open spaces provided or managed by the Authority:	115
The net expenditure per head of population on parks and open spaces	£9.96



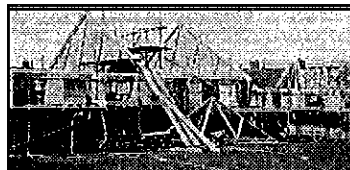
## The Provision of Services Generally

### Net expenditure per head of population, as follows:

Social services	£0.00
Libraries and museums	£0.02
Highways	£0.02
Public transport	£0.00
Environmental health	£6.18
Consumer protection	£2.08
Planning and economic development	£14.15
Refuse collection and disposal	£13.82
Street cleaning	£7.88
Sport and recreation	£14.42
Administration of housing and Council tax benefits	£7.09
Collection of Council tax	£6.34
Other costs and services	£28.73
Capital charges	£7.20
Interest receipts	Income - £6.28
Government grants for specific services	Income - £2.03
Movements in reserves and balances	Income - £10.44
Net expenditure	£87.18

### The percentage of net expenditure financed from:

General Grant from Central Government plus non domestic rates	69%
Council tax	31%



## Control over Development

### The number of applications for planning permission decided

Householder	641
Other	1195

### Householder application

The percentage of householder applications decided within 8 weeks	94%
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### Appeals

The number of decisions on planning applications taken to appeal	65
The number of appeals that were successful	17
The percentage of the Authority's population covered by a unitary or local plan	100%
The number of advertised departures from that plan decided by the Authority or by the Secretary of State	0
The next expenditure per head of population	£8.65

### Searches of the local land register

Percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	100%
The standard search fee	£62.50

### SUMMARY

We would have liked to show line-by-line, a comparison with last year's figures, but some of the methods of calculations have changed, so it makes it misleading to compare.

We set ourselves a target of 30 seconds to answer your calls and this year our performance has gone up by 1%. Our performance against target for replying to your letters has gone up by 4%.

At present, recyclable materials are not collected separately from household waste, but it is planned to introduce a pilot scheme in part of the district in April 1997. More details from Carol Arthur on 01803 861213.

Credit must also go to you, the taxpayer, 97% of you paid your Council Tax which helps us to keep costs down.

If you're not happy with any of our services, or have suggestions for improvements, we welcome your views. Just call on the number below. We'd also welcome any comments on good service - a pat on the back goes a long way.

If you have any queries about this information or any Council service please call us on

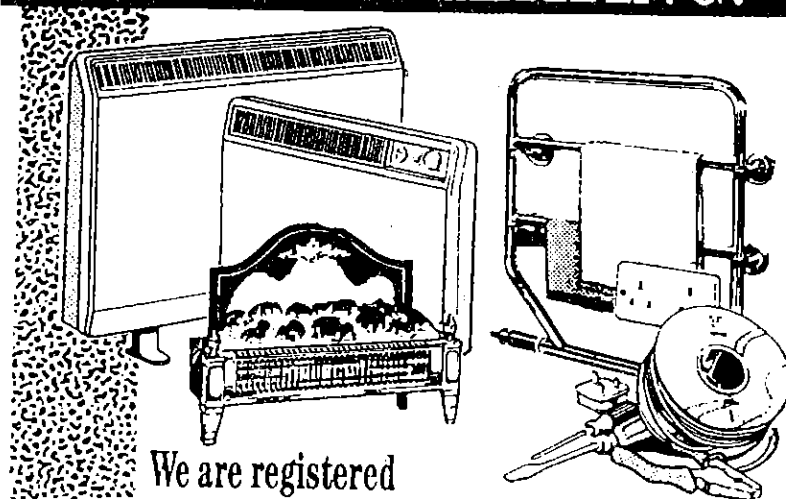
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David Incoll Secretary



Under the Local Government Act of 1992, the Government requires the Audit Commission to set performance indicators for Local Authority services. These are to be published annually for each Council.

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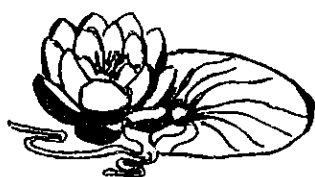


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# SUPERGUIDE

## FEBRUARY

Mon. 3rd WI 10.30 Parish Hall. Fish cooking demo & Fish Lunch  
Mon. 10th WI 10.30 Parish Hall. Line Dancing "taster"  
Thu. 13th WI 2.30 Parish Hall. "Devon Air Ambulance"  
Wed. 19th TRAMP East Prawle  
Mon. 24th WI Skittles Supper, Taverners  
Tue. 25th Parish Council meeting 7.30 Sloop Inn Bantham

## MARCH

Wed. 5th TRAMP Slapton  
Thu. 13th WI 2.30 Parish Hall. Humorous Verse & Worse  
Tue. 18th Parish Council meeting 7.30 Parish Hall

## APRIL

Wed. 2nd TRAMP Aveton Gifford  
Sat. 5th NSPOC Jumble Sale 2.30 Parish Hall  
Thu. 10th WI 2.30 Parish Hall Bill Simpson's Antiques Quiz  
Thu. 17th St.Lukes Hospice Coffee morning 10.30 - noon  
Tue. 22nd ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 7.30 Parish Hall  
Mon. 28th WI Hanging Baskets workshop, 10.30 Parish Hall

## MAY

Wed. 7th TRAMP River Erme  
Thu. 8th WI 2.30 Parish Hall NFWI Resolutions debate  
Tue. 13th ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 7.30 Parish Hall  
Tue. 21st TRAMP Cremyll / Mount Edgcumbe

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**The Deadline date for the next issue is 5th March 1997.  
Please drop any contributions (marked "Village Voice")  
through letterbox at 25 Mead Lane before that date.**

# THE SLOOP INN

## BANTHAM

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