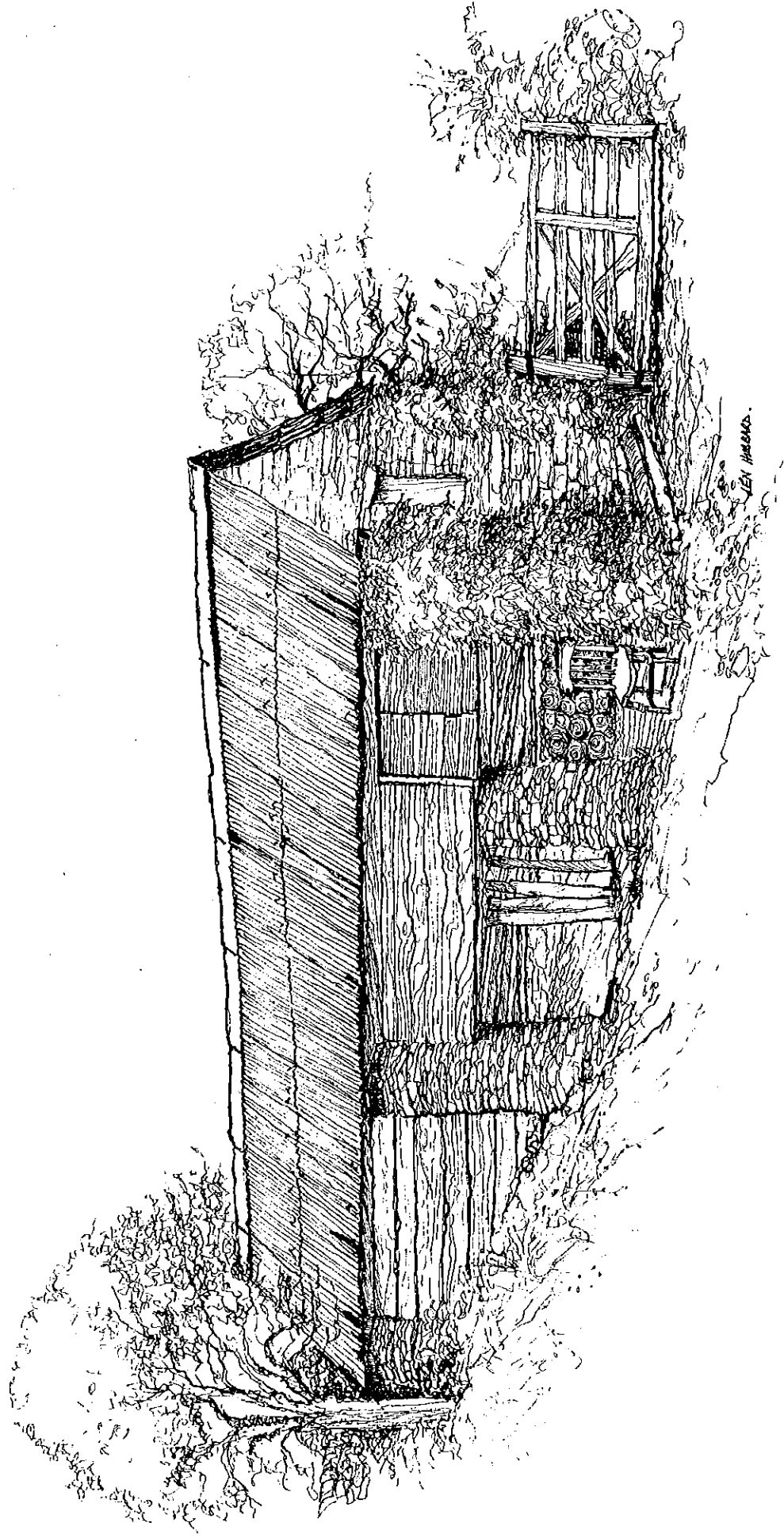


VILLAGE VOICE



OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2001



NUMBER 111
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2001

September's Manhattan massacre and its aftermath currently overshadow all other considerations, and will continue to do so for a long time to come.

Perhaps the worst aspect of this terrorist strike is that no-one is prepared to own up to it. The perpetrators (including the suicidal assassins now dead) inhabit a shadowy, secret world in which their discontent and disaffection is nurtured into an overwhelming hatred of their perceived enemy. These terrorists have no conscience - and remain a law unto themselves.

For the free world governments the task of protecting citizens everywhere from terrorist attacks is hard enough. Trying to identify, and then find, gangs of these secret, anonymous terrorists is even harder. Bringing them to justice is hardest of all.

Strong words cost nothing, and are often conveniently forgotten. But we can already hear the rattle of sabres around the world. It is a time for cool heads, steady hands, and resolute actions. Somehow the West must combat effectively the "asymmetric" warfare now being waged against it by extremist Islamic militants without starting a new "war of the crusades" in this millennium.

Here in Thurlestone our cosiness has hardly yet been disturbed by the momentous happenings elsewhere. Can we remain immune? Although we may be unlikely targets (except in the eyes of the Inland Revenue), we may well have to pay a somewhat higher price in the future to secure our way of life. Let us hope that price is not "more than we can bear".

Front Cover : An old barn in Buckland

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? QUESTIONS ?

WHICH NEED TO BE ASKED

"They're going to build a new church hall in Thurlestone graveyard!"

That was the first rumour. Then came

"The hall will have a kitchen so they can serve cream teas among the tombstones!"

And on top of that

"There won't be any room left for us locals to be buried here with our family. They're going to pack us off to Totnes!"

No wonder that a recent Parish Council meeting had some Councillors exploding in fury about the reported plans for a church hall in the graveyard at All Saints. But the trouble was that there were **no plans**, only **stories about plans**.

The whole thing got well out of hand, which is why there is an **"Open-to-All" parish meeting on THURSDAY 4th OCTOBER in the church at 7.30 pm**

You see the parish has suffered a complete communications breakdown over the past few months, resulting in an angry split of a kind not seen in our villages, so a local history buff tells me, since Prince Maurice and his army camped at Whitley Farm before marching on Dartmouth and the villagers divided between Cavaliers and Roundheads. That was in 1643, of course, and to compare the two disputes would be rather a wild exaggeration, but I'm sure you get the idea. *Who today would you class as a Roundhead?*

Seriously, it would help matters in future if a Parochial Church Council member of some stature were detailed off to attend each Parish Council meeting and, though being there only as a member of the public, he



could still put the facts about any church matters which affect the whole parish during the Open Forum section of the meeting.

If that system had been in place the whole row could have been nipped in the bud, or at least cooled swiftly down. It would not have had to drag on until the October 4th meeting, which will hopefully clear the air and answer everybody's questions.

For there *are* questions to be asked by parishioners as a whole about this proposed building, which the church insists is not a church hall but a 'meeting room' which would accommodate forty people and have a kitchen to cope with cream teas (the cream teas which used to be held in the very ancient Rectory Barn and garden on Thursdays in the summer raised considerable sums for charity).

The new 'meeting room' is planned for the top west corner of the graveyard, just below the field which Evans Estates have given to the parish for a football pitch and children's

play area, and where a joint Parish and PCC committee have talked about creating a car park (for fourteen cars of church-goers on Sundays and beach-goers at other times).

Apart from that, very little has leaked out. **So here are some of the questions which should be answered at the open meeting in All Saints church:**

- # *What is the building for?*
- # *Is it really necessary?*
- # *How often do you have 40-plus meetings?*
- # *Why not use the new parish hall when it is built?*
- # *Is it true that architects have been appointed?*
- # *How big is it? What are the dimensions?*
- # *Sounds expensive - how much will it cost?*
- # *We are often asked for donations for this or that by the church - where is the money for this project coming from?*
- # *Will it be a modern-looking building?*
- # *Has planning permission been applied for? Do you expect to get it?*
- # *Will cream teas really be held among the tombstones?*
- # *Will the meeting room be fenced or walled off from the graveyard and have its own 'garden'?*
- # *How many burial plots will be lost in this way?*
- # *Will any graves be disturbed?*
- # *Will anyone now alive here have to be buried miles away when they die?*
(Totnes has been mentioned.)

Why not leave things as they are and spend the money on keeping the church itself up to scratch?

I am sure all of you intending to go to this Open Meeting will have plenty of other questions to ask as well!

* * * * *

The people of Thurlestone, West Buckland and Bantham are asked to put forward ideas for the way we should celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in the parish next year.

Apart from the essential bonfire party, like our highly-successful Armada anniversary effort, which we should hold on our new football pitch, thenceforth to be called the Queen's Stadium or Golden Acre, there is tradition to be followed in the naming of the new houses (for locals only?) to be built by Seaview.

In 1887, to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, we named new cottages in Thurlestone's village street, guess what - "Jubilee Cottages"! So next year we should mark Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee by calling the new Seaview houses something similar.

But as there is already a Jubilee Cottage left from Victorian times, what should we call the new Elizabethan ones - to avoid confusing our postman? Suggestions, please.

* * * * *

I can hardly believe it, but I'm told that when Tony Blair was looking for a place to stay and holiday down here to boost West Country tourism, he was heard to say: "I would have liked to stay in Thurlestone, but then I heard about the yellow lines....."

Villager

THURLESTONE & SOUTH MILTON HORTICULTURAL SHOW

Heavy showers on 4th August neither dampened the enthusiasm of the entrants, nor deterred the public who attended the 23rd Annual Show held at Thurlestone Parish Hall.

Successful entrants included David Coward of Buckland (Show Chairman), who won 17 classes and three cups, and Tony Church of Bantham who also won 17 classes and two cups. Tony was also presented with a pewter tankard for having won, for three consecutive years, the Open fruit & vegetables section and the Marshall Trophy. Other highly successful competitors included Derrick Yeoman and Derek Brown. The awards were presented by Miss Jennifer Yeo.

The Chairman thanked all the residents who entered the 2001 show and took the time and trouble to make it an excellent occasion, as well as all the committee for the hard work they put in to make the day such an enjoyable one, saying *"We have a first rate committee who all pull their weight and work together to make this annual event a success for residents and visitors alike". He made a particular appeal to local flower arrangers and artists to enter the 2002 Show which would mark HM The Queen's 50th year on the throne.*

Cup winners

Ben Horn Memorial Cup (onions & shallots)	D.Coward
Yeo Cup (Amateur best vegetable)	D.Coward
Fruit & Vegetables Amateur Cup	D.Coward
Wray Cup (Open best vegetable)	D.Coward
Fruit & Vegetables Open Cup	T.Church
Cut Flowers & Pot Plants Cup	C.Atkin
Marshall Cup (single rose)	C.Atkin
Chapman Bowl (overall winner classes 64-66)	C.Atkin
President's Tankard (fuchsia)	T.Church
Kingsbridge Garden Shop Cup (flower arrangement)	Mrs H.McKillop
Oswald Junior Cup (junior children)	Laura Tregelles
White Cup (best exhibit senior children)	Ross Harrison
Oswald Senior Cup (senior children)	Alice Henderson
Doris Tyler Trophy (set cake recipe)	Mrs J.Yeoman
Domestic Challenge Cup	Mrs L.Gunning
Doris Jackson Trophy (class 99 sewing)	Mrs J.Booth
Handicrafts Cup	Miss C.McKillop
South Milton Resident's Cup	Mrs H.McKillop
Thurlestone Resident's Cup	T.Church

Certificates of Merit

Section A Fruit & Vegetables (Amateur)	D.Coward
Section B Fruit & Vegetables (Open)	Derrick Yeoman
Section C Cut Flowers & Pot Plants	D.Coward
Senior Children	Ross Harrison
Cookery & Baking	Mrs L.Gunning
Handicrafts	Mrs S.Dwyer
Photography	T.Burr

The Show AGM, which is open to all, will be held on Monday 22nd October at 7.30 pm at 25 Mead Lane, Thurlestone, courtesy of Mr & Mrs R F Macdonald.

Roger Hind

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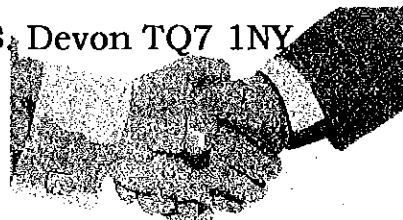
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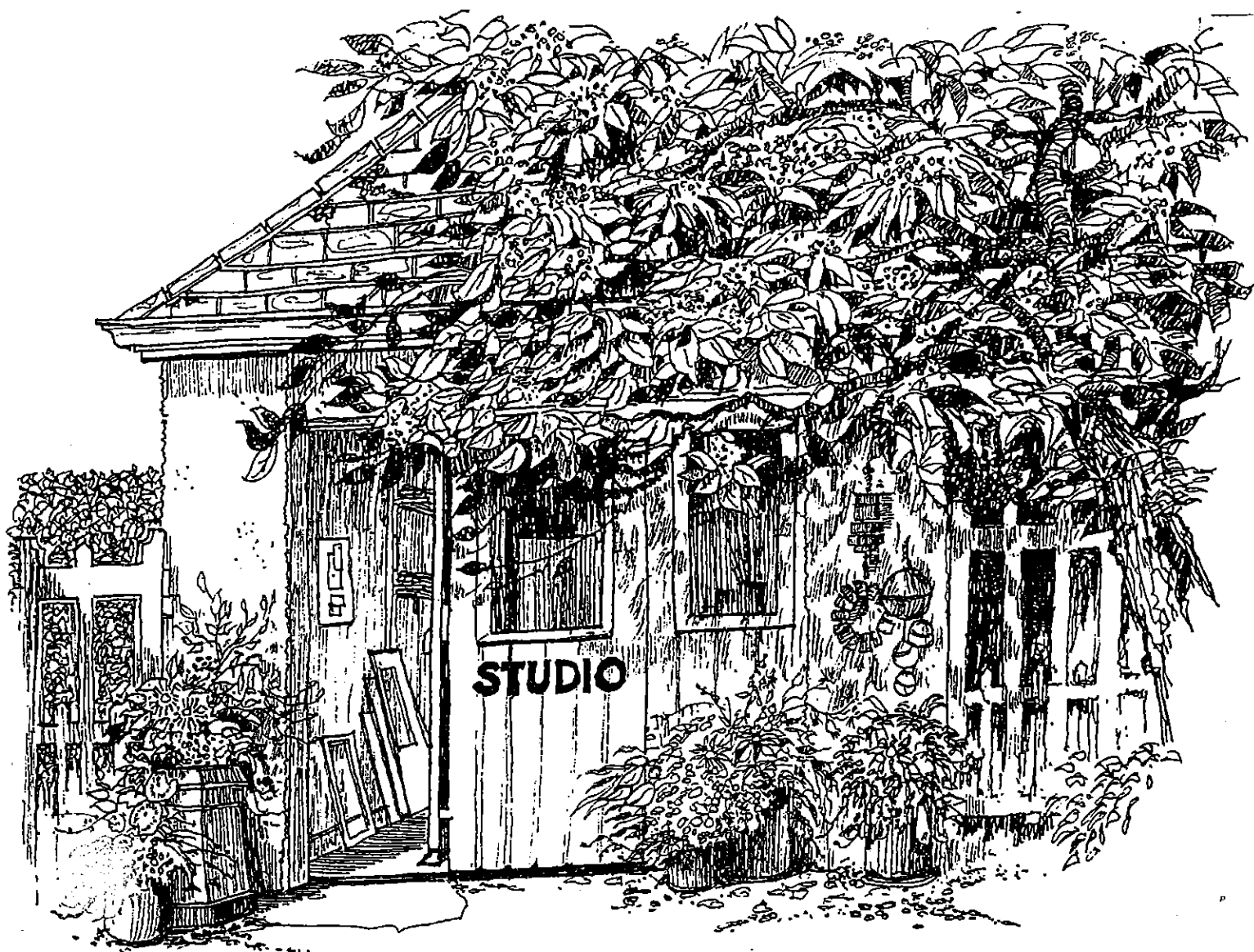
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Village News Round-Up

October Parish Council Meeting

Please note that the October Parish Council meeting will now take place on Monday 15th October instead of the 8th.

Mary Bromfield

It is with great sadness we have to record the death of **Mary Bromfield** on 17th September at the age of 85, and we send to Gordon, Peter and Ann our sincere condolences.

Queen's Jubilee

The Parish Council has suggested that the weekend of Saturday 1st June 2002, and the Monday and Tuesday following, is a good time to have an event or events in the parish to celebrate HM The Queen's 50th year on the throne.

The Council would like to hear the views of parish residents, and asks them to write to Village Voice 'Postbag' as soon as possible with their ideas, or to let their Parish Councillors know:

- (1) do they think the event should be celebrated
- (2) if so, what form is suggested.

More Gardening Triumphs

Tony Church of Bantham won two gardening cups at the recent West Alvington show in the Open sections - the George Edwards Memorial Cup for potatoes and the Burgoyne Cup for roses, to add to his successes at our own show in August, as reported elsewhere in this issue. Well done, Tony!

Surf Life Saving Club

The Bantham Surf Life Saving Club raised over £4000 on its Open Day and thank **Evans Estates** for generously donating the Ham car parking fees for the day, which considerably boosted their total. The money will be used on rescue and training equipment for their eagerly-awaited new premises, where training facilities for all ages will be much improved.

Bantham team came a very creditable 9th out of the 22 teams from all over the country who were competing in this summer's National Surf Life-Saving Masters championship at Newquay. One gold, eight silver and four individual bronze medals were won by Bantham. Congratulations!

Parish Hall Fair

Chairman of the Trustees, **Rowland Cole**, would like to thank everyone who made donations and worked to raise the sum of over £500 at the recent Autumn Fair.

He says: *"We are most grateful to all the people who made this splendid result possible. A lot of hard work went into achieving this and we particularly appreciate the response to the event by the organisations that use the hall on a regular basis"*.

Bell Ringing Lessons

Derrick Yeoman will be giving Bell Ringing lessons at the Church for anyone interested, commencing Wednesday 24th October, at 7.00 pm.

Now, there's a challenge for you! Why not come along and give it a try!

Kate's Kitchen



Ratatouille

Ratatouille is one of the most useful of dishes. Not only does it absorb any number of tomatoes, courgettes and peppers that may be left over from the summer harvest, but it can appear in a number of different guises as well as being very good on its own.

The crumble is a delicious combination of the vegetable stew with a crunchy top and the pancakes filled with ratatouille and baked with cheese make a quick and easy meal. Neither dish really needs potatoes as an accompaniment unless you are very hungry; a green vegetable or a simple salad of lettuce and watercress should be enough and would look appetising. For either recipe it would be possible to open a couple of tins of ratatouille (available from all the supermarkets) but unless you are in a great hurry, it is worth making your own. As far as taste goes, there is no comparison.

Ratatouille Crumble

8 ounces onions, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
1lb. aubergines, diced
1lb. courgettes, diced

1lb. tomatoes, chopped
2 red peppers, de-seeded and sliced
4 tablespoonfuls tomato puree
4 fluid ounces good olive oil

Thyme, rosemary and basil to taste

6 ounces breadcrumbs, toasted in the oven
2 ounces each sunflower and sesame seeds, also toasted
3 tablespoonfuls parsley, chopped

2 ounces rolled oats
6 ounces grated cheddar
2 ounces butter, softened

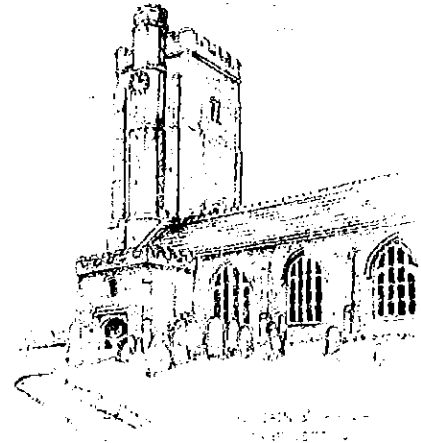
Heat the oil, saute the onion for a few minutes, then add the aubergine and garlic and cook for five minutes, stirring to coat them with oil. Add the courgettes and peppers and cook for a further ten minutes before adding the tomatoes, puree and herbs. Cover the pan and simmer for twenty minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Tip them out into a shallow baking dish.

Meanwhile, mix together all the ingredients for the crumble and scatter it evenly over the cooked vegetables. Press it down gently to make sure the ratatouille is completely covered and bake it at 150C, 300F, Gas 2 for half an hour or until the crumble is nicely browned.

Pancakes Filled With Rataouille

Bought pancakes are excellent and can certainly be used if you do not want to make your own, but make sure they are not the sweet variety! Fill each one with ratatouille, lay them side by side in a shallow, lightly buttered baking dish and spread them thinly with creme fraiche. Then cover them with grated cheddar and put them in the oven at 200C, 400F, Gas 6, for about twenty minutes until the cheese has started to brown on top and is bubbling.

All Saints



Priest in Charge: Revd. Andrew Girling 562219
Churchwardens: Graham Worrall 562016 & Liz Webb 560090

ANDREW GIRLING WRITES:

TOWER AND TEMPLE FALL TO DUST

The devastating attack on the World Trade Building and the Pentagon wreaked unimaginable trauma and pain in the hearts of thousands of individuals, their families and friends. For the rest of their lives those directly involved will have their minds and bodies scarred by an experience none of us can begin to share or imagine.

The collapse into rubble of those twin towers, the symbols of western economy and culture, will transform the life and national psyche of America for ever. We will not know for years, the full impact that it will have on our own society.

Suddenly we have been made to realise, far more than we ever did, even in the foot and mouth crisis, the vulnerability and transient nature of the life-style we so easily take for granted. Lulled, as we are, into a false sense of security by our comparative wealth and ease: even cocooned in the countryside, we do not know what financial and social implications this tragedy will have on us.

Our way of life, and indeed life itself, is fragile. In times of crisis like this, we are forced to ask ourselves again some of the important questions. We are certainly made to ask if the meaning of our existence and its ultimate fulfilment are ever to be found in this life alone. If meaning is to be found, the eternal dimension must be a focus for the here and now. Do we not need to rediscover the plan and purpose of God for our society? Can we put our trust in western civilisation in isolation from Him? I believe not. I believe that in the last resort we can only truly trust God's love and purpose for us and the future of the world. That whatever tragedy or trauma befall, He will be there to give future hope and ultimate meaning.

I am reminded of the outstanding hymn of Robert Bridges:

All my hope on God is founded;
He doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
Only good and only true.
God unknown, He alone
Calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,
Sword and crown betray his trust;
What with care and toil he buildeth,
Tower and temple fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
Is my temple and my tower.

Andrew



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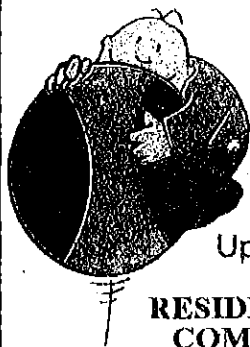
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POSTBAG

Dear Editor

John Crawford's letter was no doubt deliberately provocative with a view to inviting some response.

It is not true to say that "no initiative was forthcoming from the Parish Council" during the Millennium year. The Parish Council had special mugs made which were presented to all the children in the Parish. The presentation was held at the village hall and thanks to the backing of the Thurlestone Hotel it proved a most enjoyable social event for both young and old alike.

The Council is in the somewhat extended throes of providing a sports field for the village despite the fact that the planners now require some 3500 cubic metres of earth moved. It also sponsors the play area behind the Village School.

Whilst golf caddies are a thing of the past John should walk down to Thurlestone Golf Club on a Monday evening to see the many youngsters lined up being encouraged, taught and playing the royal and ancient game. A junior membership costs just over £1 a week. Tennis is also readily available and juniors favourably welcomed.

It is true skate-boarders have a rough passage, but reading the saga of Kingsbridge in trying to provide a venue for this sport it is unlikely that many villages can provide the facilities which I understand would cost a minimum of £5000 not to mention the problem of noise pollution.

The bus shelter has indeed been the scene of some skulduggery, but hopefully this is purely temporary. Perhaps John has forgotten when he was a lad in Thurlestone and there was no bus shelter, a shed on the golf course provided refuge from the elements for many a nefarious adventure.

At a recent Council meeting the Chairman of the Parish Hall Committee made it quite clear to John

that the facilities of the present and planned new hall are available for use by all members of the Parish whatever age group subject to normal conditions. However, it was not the Committee's duty to organise and supervise such activities.

It has to be the responsibility of parents, not the various parish entities, to bring up children, to guide them and teach them the basic values of living in a community. Where help is needed I am sure it would be forthcoming.

Thurlestone provides many facilities, a first class primary school, not to mention sand, sea and surf and I agree with John "every village gets the youth it deserves". I am sure, therefore, that we will have plenty to be proud of.

Kit Marshall
Leaside, Ilbert Road

Dear Editor

Proposed new Parish Hall

The letter from Mr John F. Crawford in your August-September edition contains a statement, which is totally without foundation, on the Parish Hall committee's attitude and decision regarding youth facilities in the proposed new hall.

In the same edition you printed my article on the proposed new hall which was written following our Extraordinary Meeting on 26th June, and I believe that anyone reading this article will appreciate that Mr Crawford's allegation is baseless.

If there were a Parish Youth organisation booking and using the hall on a regular basis, then an adult representative would automatically have a place at our committee meetings and would participate in our deliberations and decisions.

It is my belief that the design of the proposed new hall will fulfil the reasonable requirements of the parish, its groups, associations, societies and

clubs, not only as we know them today, but also as far into the future as it is sensible to predict.

However, as so often happens with buildings of every type, should there be, in the years ahead, a need for an additional facility then the hall could be altered providing, of course, funding and other related conditions were satisfied.

Rowland Cole
Parish Hall Chairman
West Buckland

Dear Editor

Let's hear it from the young!

I would like to take issue with John Crawford on his denigration of Thurlestone parish, its inhabitants, the Parish Hall committee and the Parish Council. At a meeting of the Parish Hall committee, a suggestion was made that the roof space should be made with a room for the young to have a pool table etc. A special meeting was called (26th June) and the architect had made fresh plans to incorporate a room in the roof space. A discussion was held in depth as to the viability of this project and, by a large majority, it was deemed unsuitable. However, the proposed small meeting room could be extended and a pool table could be out in there.

Where are the parents of the young, and are they prepared to organise a rota to run a youth club? I am sure some of the less-elderly inhabitants would gladly help if asked. (Most of us, and I include myself, are far too old!). Let's hear from

the young themselves regarding raising some money for the equipment they need. Incidentally, I never call the young 'brats' - this is surely an old-fashioned word.

Rosemary MacKay
Thurlestone

Dear Editor

New archaeological finds at Bantham

So what's the betting then? I can just picture it. Those tin-for-wine traders of the Dark Ages, and smugglers and yeomen of old no doubt, sitting around the remains of yet another Bantham beach party and, after the lords and ladies had departed, saying: *"They alus come a lot, don't they? Looks like being a bumper year for parties, perhaps us better call that there fortress up on the hill 'Camelot'! Care for another drop o' Byzantine, me old mates, before we gather up the bones?"*

Looks like time for Land of the Five Beaches - Part Two. Title: *'Land of the Five Hundred Beach Parties'* or maybe *'Celtic Wine Connoisseurs'*. So who has started a roaring trade in miniature amphorae? POTS, and if not why not? Let us know when the first 21st century Byzantine wine party is being held, and we will be straight off to the airport in Perth and back to Devon!

Cheers to everyone.

David & Diana Smeeton
South Yunderup
Western Australia

Notices for visitors in a French hotel

"The hot water production is belling to the hotel so let sink the water for a long time" *

"You may be a light sleeper, your neighbours as well so, please do walk quiethly in the corridors ands in rooms"

* (N.B. A knowledge of French is an advantage really to understand the first one. They got the wrong meaning of the verb 'couler'!)

Sent in by Pam Brewster

VERONICA DROPS IN AT THE RAINFOREST CAFE

On Monday 6th August in the space of five short hours Thurlstone Parish Hall was dramatically turned into a TROPICAL RAINFOREST.

The main ingredients consisted of an army camouflage net, tons of coloured paper, heaps of off-cuts, remnants, foam rubber, a profusion of feathers, piles of stuffing, litres of paste, an assortment of plastic milk and water bottles, umpteen paint brushes, crayons and coloured pens, bags of enthusiasm and imagination, 22 children (between the ages of 4 and 12) and Caroline, Ali, and Simon.

After a "getting to know everybody and what is involved" session, no encouragement was needed to start the Herculean task. Within minutes scissors were shaping enormous brightly coloured butterflies, which were then variously decorated with rainbow-coloured tissue, and cellophane paper stripes and spots glued on with liberal dollops of paste (I fear the present-day "Gloy" does not have that alluring aroma of yore - nor does it have the same grip).

There were many versions of insects and colourful creatures and an incredible poisonous tree frog together with a formidable and venomous snake. The poisonous tree frog was the work of Sean who took it home with him on the Monday night to sew up securely its dark green bulging body. Dad provided two grommets for its eyes which were outlined with bright yellow rims (a pipe cleaner) the next day. I understand it now enjoys pride of place on the TV.

The venomous snake was something else. It must have been more than two metres long and it was a work of art. Victoria, Rachel, and Marina, helped by Denise, cut the body out of a length of sinister looking green

material and decorated it with a sickly green and yellow zigzag stripe and dangerous looking red (paper) spots. The base of two plastic cups became its eyes with black blobs the irises. They very kindly donated their artefact to the Play Scheme and it is now slithering its way around the South Hams.

And then there were the birds. Toucans, parakeets, kingfishers, and any number of brightly coloured varieties were sculptured courtesy of recycled water bottles. The necks of the bottles provided support for the beaks shaped from foam rubber - the Toucan offering unlimited potential. The bodies of the bottles were shaped and then covered with coloured tissue paper before being embellished with delicate feathers of gorgeous hue welded into place with shots from the glue gun (stronger than UHU and probably the only concession made to the 21st Century in the whole project).

As all these accessories were completed they were added to the camouflage net which had been strung across the top and down the back and right sides of the stage. The effect was striking and the whole scene became almost real thanks to the loan of a tape recorder which enabled us to have the sounds of the tropical forest in the background.

Meanwhile, at the back of the stage, the older boys were building the living quarters - a cross between a wigwam and a bivouac. But it was not all work as during the day there were games on the school playing field with Simon and stories about the folklore of the forests told by Caroline.

On the second day, with the tropical forest in place, the project concentrated on "living", with the main task of the morning based on matters culinary. Ali started with a display of edible items produced from the forests, viz.

chewing gum, cocoa beans, Coca-Cola, coconut, vanilla pods, spices, quinine (for medicinal purposes), and so on.

Fruit kebabs were prepared with such exotic fruits as mango, pawpaw, and passion fruit, as well as the more mundane banana. Somewhat surprisingly, considerable interest was shown in the cooking aspect of the operation by the male element, but this may have had something to do with the fact that the main ingredients consisted of chocolate and desiccated coconut.

Finishing touches were made to the forest and living quarters, more games were played down on the school field, and face-painting transformed some of the more enterprising into young tribesmen and women who had made themselves rainforest costumes, including jewellery. Masks made from recycled plastic milk bottles completed the dramatic effect and somebody produced a bow - fortunately without the arrow.

A more serious note was struck when there was a discussion about what poverty means to people like rainforest dwellers who live at the margin of subsistence, and their need to enhance trade in sustainable products with developed countries.

The finale found the twenty two participants sitting in a circle in the forest eating the fruits of their labours. Interestingly, exotic fruits seem to be more exciting to prepare than to eat judging by the amount retrieved from the floor - but the chocolate coconut disappeared

without trace. There followed a last folklore story and a five minute tableau from which it looked as though Simon was about to be cannibalised (all in good fun, of course).

The Rainforest Playscheme with SPARC - recycling scrap-store - was sponsored by South Hams District Council and generously supported by South Milton and Thurlestone Parish Councils. I would like to thank, in particular, Jacquie Smart (who, I think, enjoyed the two days as much as the children) and Ali, Caroline, and Simon who were inspirational or, in modern day parlance, "cool". Leisure and Parks Section (SHDC) are to be congratulated on a first rate and imaginative initiative and hopefully we will be in a position to participate again next year.

What did I learn from this exercise? Well, today's youngsters may be potential computer whiz-kids, budding interior decorators, or commercial artists, but one thing is for sure. They are well entrenched in the throwaway society - none of them could thread a needle. That's what I was there for!

Veronica White

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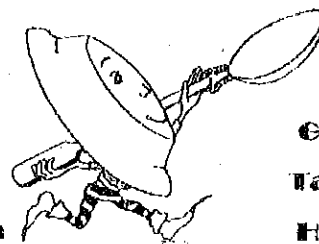
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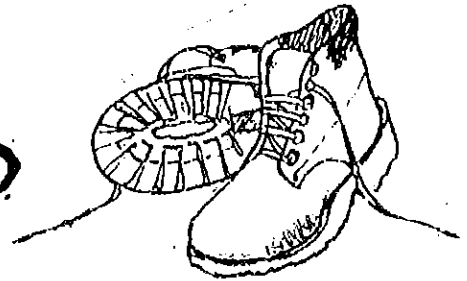


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TRAMP



1 Despite a rather poor weather forecast, a group of just six optimistic walkers gathered in the Parish Hall car park on 11th July to set off for East Prawle.

By the time we arrived there we were greeted by bright sunshine, which continued throughout our walk. On the first stretch we took inland paths towards Lannacombe Green, the foot & mouth restrictions having been lifted.

About half way there, while crossing a field containing three friendly, hand-reared, lambs we completed our 'good deed for the day'! One of the lambs had managed to wedge its head through both a gate and attached wire fence. The two men with us revealed their talents as sheep-handlers by freeing it, whereupon the lamb insisted on loudly thanking each member of the group before scampering off.

Hardy swimmers were observed in the rough seas at Lannacombe Beach, but fortunately *they* didn't require saving and, after a windy walk along the coast path, we found a sheltered spot on the beach at Langerstone Point for our picnic. After lunch we climbed steadily back up to East Prawle where we enjoyed tea, cake and ice creams outside at the café before heading for home.

TW

2 Our group of twelve included two dogs on our first August walk. In order to throw off possible pursuers we had reached our destination -

Sampford Spiney - by various routes, some devious. It was pouring with rain which somewhat delayed our start as waterproof clothing had to be put on. The dogs didn't bother: they must have known something for

quite soon the rain stopped and it was not long before the sun came out.

For a short while we walked down the lane but then took to the moor and followed the path towards Moortown and to Merrivale. There a rural sight met our eyes: half a dozen horses were tethered to the railings outside the pub while, presumably, inside, their riders were enjoying a "horseman's" washed down with a stirrup cup.

It was not part of the plan to pause there to take refreshment, although, strangely, some of the men arrived rather late at our chosen picnic spot, one of our best down on the grassy river bank by the bridge. It is not easy to leave such a place, particularly on a sunny day, but we were reasonably strong-minded and soon set off again.

We did not follow the path we have sometimes taken but after a short stretch of moor we went down the more wooded track, shorter, perhaps, but good walking. At well intruder-proofed 'Stoneycroft' we left the lane we had been following for a bit, to go up the path beside the house (no welcoming guard dogs this time) and across the fields to get back to our starting point - so different now from this morning. Once again we had been lucky with the weather.

PB

3 It was grey and overcast with a slight inclination to drizzle on the day of our second August walk. Sixteen of us, dog-less, gathered at a pre-arranged map reference somewhere on Dartmoor. We set off along the road and turned down to Heathercombe, an attractive little hamlet, and then through some woods and fields, obediently dipping our boots into a bucket

of what we supposed was disinfectant, although subsequent buckets looked more as if they held stagnating leaf-filled water. We did not test it.

Soon we came out on to the moor and the Two Moors Way which, according to the map, seems to come and go in a slightly idiosyncratic fashion. We saw a number of hut circles, one in particular, un-named, being easily recognisable. It was not too steep a climb to the top and then the track levelled out. From Bennett's Cross we walked up the road to the Warren House Inn.

Under the grey sky the horses tethered to the railings over the road did not present such an idyllic sight as on our last walk, nor did the welcome have any of the warmth of the fire which, it is claimed, has not gone out for some 150 years. We did not realise that the purchase of a drink does not entitle you to eat your own picnic at the tables on the other side of the road, but we were soon told!

However, if you happen to be passing the place, pause just long enough to look at the inn sign on which are depicted three hares,

sharing three ears, running nose-to-tail in a small circle. This, it seems, symbolises the Trinity and there is the same symbol on one of the bosses in Widecombe church.

We struck off across the moor again and after a mere hundred yards or so came to a grassy spot in the valley which would be as nice for a picnic as outside the inn, if not nicer. Then it was over Headland Warren, down to the road and up to Grimspound, perhaps the best known, and one of the biggest, hut circles on Dartmoor. Its popularity with visitors has probably something to do with its proximity to the road. As on a previous walk we passed the memorial to the airmen whose plane crashed there during the Second World War.

When we reached the road our leader gave us the choice of the short way back to the cars along the road or the slightly longer, but more interesting, way through the woods. Most of us chose this one. It had been a good day for walking, neither too hot nor too cold, and the walk itself neither too strenuous nor too easy. All very satisfactory.

PB

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THE WELLS OF THURLESTONE PARISH

Continuing Hubert Snowdon's previous article on our local water

After surface water springs were taken into use, where could further settlers, who wished to take advantage of our fertile South Hams soil, obtain water? Wells were the answer, they are of ancient origin, but who knows when the first was sunk in the parish? Was it the one under Thurlestone village pump, or (more probably) the one behind the old farmstead of Pearce's Farthing/Rockhill, or in Buckland or Bantham? Thurlestone's well was the village nucleus.

Bantham, waterless, could not have established a village before wells. There is one behind the Sloop Inn, recently restored as a feature, and probably one behind The Old Bakehouse and another at Whiddons when it was a blacksmith's forge. There was a pump installed behind the four Coastguard houses (later called The Watch), which my grandfather, Roger Moore of Rose Cottage, West Buckland, built c.1900. These are all in line on a ridge from the spring in Pond Field and probably tap the same source.

There is a tale about the Sloop Inn well that coined a local phrase. When it was necessary for a workman to go down the well, his worried wife shouted down for him to hurry back. His reply was *"All right, I'm coming up by degrees my dear"*!

Several wells were dug along Buckland valley side. One served the old Buckland Farm and local cottages. Another, for public use in East Buckland, was on the hillside opposite Peter Hurrell's house and served the old slaughter house (also on his property) as well as the cottages. It may have also served the farmstead, Lovatt's Court, which is now demolished. There was a pump in The Old Mill too.

In Thurlestone there was a broken pump in the boys' playground at the school when I was there in the 1920s. I wondered if there

was a failed well below it. We fetched water in a large enamel jug for school use from Mrs Emily Snowdon's house, Rockhill, where our school teacher lodged. As for wells in private properties, their owners may not wish their whereabouts to be divulged!

Wells were usually situated outside the back doors, even if many were later brought under cover by extending the house over them. This begs the question - was the site of the well established before the house was built? By the 1800s hydraulic rams could raise water to great heights, allowing houses to be built on higher ground, like Buckland Park Farm and also Higher Clanacombe Farm (Cross Park), where my grandfather William Snowdon farmed until 1920.

The hydraulic ram worked from pressure of a large head of water inducing intermittent strokes which pumped water up a smaller pipe to a great height. Mechanically pumped water advanced quickly with the introduction of internal combustion petrol and diesel engines. Pump houses were set up at the spring sources and especially reliable diesel engines pumped water to reservoirs high on the hills. Their monotonous thump, thump, could often be heard late into the night.

Again, when at Thurlestone School, I saw a trench dug through the gateway of Hill Crest (opposite the top of Court Park Lane) and into the field opposite - now part of Celts Corner garden - where a reservoir was buried (still there, defunct). Evans Estates were laying a pipe to pump water to Thurlestone from Bantham meadows under Wragmore Copse. A good, previously untapped, spring there - on land unsuited for building development because of the steep, north-facing hill and marshy ground below - could now be brought into use.

The reservoir served Thurlestone Estate

property below that point. Development above that point was from Stidston's property and they pumped water from Court Park to a reservoir built in North Down, above Kerse Cross. Increasing development demands were bound to follow and for housing below the church the Estate built a pump house over the small spring in the field behind the old golf course 16th green, which small stream ran down to Yarmer beach. It pumped to the notorious and unsightly water tower built on the ridge by the old 11th green, which could be seen for miles around.

Evans Estate had first established a pump house at the Aunemouth supply, which pumped to a reservoir above Bantham. In about 1930 they built a huge reservoir at Aune Cross to meet increasing demands at Buckland and Bantham. They also laid a pipe from Bantham to Aune Cross, augmenting that. The Yarmer spring was inadequate and the Estate also linked Bantham meadow to pump to the Thurlestone water tower. Thus Thurlestone parish, with ever-increasing demands for water, was about at the limit of supplying itself from its own small springs when, in 1939, World War Two broke out!

The Royal Marines Officers Training Unit (OCTU) were interested in commandeering the Thurlestone Hotel, but doubted that the water supply was sufficient. The nearest large supply was a reservoir at Upton, South Milton, which Devon Country Council had piped from the Bala Brook on Dartmoor, behind South Brent.

The OCTU compelled it to pipe the water to Thurlestone and it was extended to Buckland and Bantham. I well remember German POWs, very fit men, digging through the shale rock of Buckland to lay the iron pipes that are now giving rust problems! For the first time, therefore, our villages were on mains supply.

After the war, when Mr Robert Prouse of Thurlestone was chairman of the South Hams Water Board, a new dam was mooted for and

built across the River Avon on Dartmoor. The large reservoir would supply the whole of the South Hams' needs. Every house, except the most isolated, and many for the first time, could have water indoors, a tap at the kitchen sink, bathrooms, flush toilets, showers, and a hosepipe in the garden. Here I think we can spare a thought for the generations who carried buckets of water through the villages to their homes. For many, this situation continued long after World War Two.

But one important thing had perhaps been overlooked, or miscalculated.....water does not just disappear after use. The sewerage systems were not adequate to deal with all the extra water and problems arose in almost every village with sewage overflowing into the streets. The price of water had not yet been paid. At great expense new sewerage schemes had to be implemented - but not for poor old Buckland, where the problem has raised its ugly head yet again.

Another means of raising water has not been mentioned - windmills - notably the one at the Gray House, later called Downs Hotel, and now known just as Downs.

Thurlestone parish had no major source of water and this restricted development. It retained its natural and rural agricultural beauty. With mains supply available has urbanisation now begun? And lest we take water for granted when we turn on the kitchen tap should we ask ourselves "will our cup always run over"?

Hubert Snowdon

[Hubert Snowdon's first book, entitled "Born to Farm in Devon", was published in 1996. His second book "Keep Faith with the Soil" was published earlier this year, and is reviewed on our Bookshelf page in this issue. It is available from the Thurlestone Post Office and Village Store at £5.95. Ed.]

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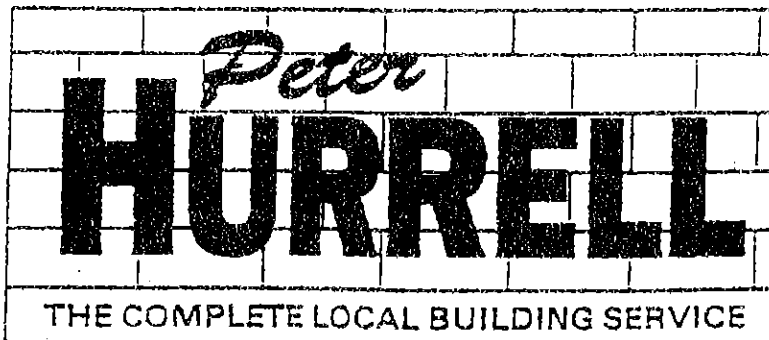


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Puzzle Page

by Keith Farrelly

NINE-LETTER WORD-SEARCH

The answers to the clues can be made up by combining three sets of three letters from the grid. When complete, three sets of three letters should remain. Combine these letters to find another 9 - letter word.

1. Thurlestone school provides this
2. A brilliant idea
3. A secondary river
4. Pre whisky and wild women
5. Directors sit here
6. Wet behind the ears?
7. Popular MacCartney song
8. Film makers work here
9. A golden oldie?
10. Comes after gardening
11. Song "It's a world"
12. Getting married
13. Get your fast food here
14. All on your own
15. Study of heavenly bodies
16. South West naval base
17. Tennessee country music locus
18. Scandinavian
19. Garage for your dinghy
20. S. American country
21. ???

ARY	ION	RLI	NER	BUT	THO	BOA
LDS	BRA	LYW	WEG	TER	MAT	LLE
GHT	RIM	ENH	NAS	DEV	ION	FFN
GRE	IAN	WON	ARE	AST	ONA	TRI
RON	OOD	CAT	BOA	ONY	ORN	LAT
INW	ESS	STI	ISO	TTE	PEN	INA
ONP	CIG	ENT	FUL	USE	NOR	OOM
SIO	RDR	HVI	DAY	OMY	EDU	ORT
ARG	MCD	YES	AVE	DER	STA	HOL

TEN TEASERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Acrophobia means the fear of.....? | 6. Which is the most populous state in America? |
| 2. What is the world's most common first name? | 7. What is a group of Rooks called? |
| 3. Who wrote "The Forsyte Saga"? | 8. What did Alexander Bell invent? |
| 4. In which county was the artist John Constable born? | 9. La Gioconda is better known as? |
| 5. What is the most popular game in Russia? | 10. What is the name of the BBC Teletext system? |

NEWS FROM THE WI



Denman College

Jean Yeoman was surprised and delighted when, at the September meeting, her name came out of the hat as winner of the next Denman College bursary, and now she will have the pleasure of choosing a course from the several hundred on offer at the WI's own college near Oxford.

Dorothy Candy and **Monica Dickins** had recently returned from the college, where they attended a course on the canals and waterways of Oxfordshire. This included the enjoyment of energetic legwork as well as the sociability of fellow-members from all over the country! Dorothy has also come back with the news that Denman is offering dinner, bed and breakfast for members and their spouses for the bargain price of £38.00 p.p.

September Guest Speaker

Using stencilling, iron-on applique, quilting, and a variety of sewing methods, **Wren Loasby** of Totnes was able to demonstrate the making of quick, easy and attractive small fabric gifts. She was thanked by **Sheila Ward** for being an enjoyable and entertaining speaker who had provided loads of ideas.

Parish Hall

£228 will be donated to the Parish Hall, the profit from several earlier events, and the WI will also provide the cake stall at the hall's Autumn Fair. **Jo Parkin**, our representative on the hall committee, reported that plans for a new hall are now before the District Council.

October Meeting

This will be on 11th October when **Pam Wigfall** will be the guest speaker with "Spice-

Up Your Dishes"! Don't forget to bring your home-made chutney, jam, jelly etc. for Val's sales table - proceeds to the DFWI's Fiver Fund.

Coming Events - get your diary out!

Saturday 20th October - Five members are going to Exeter University for the county meeting, travelling on the special coach from Kingsbridge.

Saturday 17th November - A fun social Italian Evening & Supper will take place in the parish hall.

Wednesday 21st November - Salisbury is the destination for a county outing for, amongst other things, Christmas shopping.

Friday 7th December - This is the new date for the December meeting, and the Christmas Lunch Party (not 13th December).

Friday 14th December - Thurlestone WI host the Sea Coast Group's annual Christmas Carol Service at Thurlestone Church, followed by tea and mince pies at the Parish Hall. Everyone welcome!

Visitors

If you are not a member, but would be interested to hear any of the speakers at our regular meetings held on the second Thursday of the month at 2.30 pm in the Parish Hall, you are most welcome to attend - and this applies to gentlemen as well.

You will not be pressed to join the WI, but can have the opportunity to see your local branch in action on its home ground!

For newcomers to the parish, it is an excellent way to meet people!

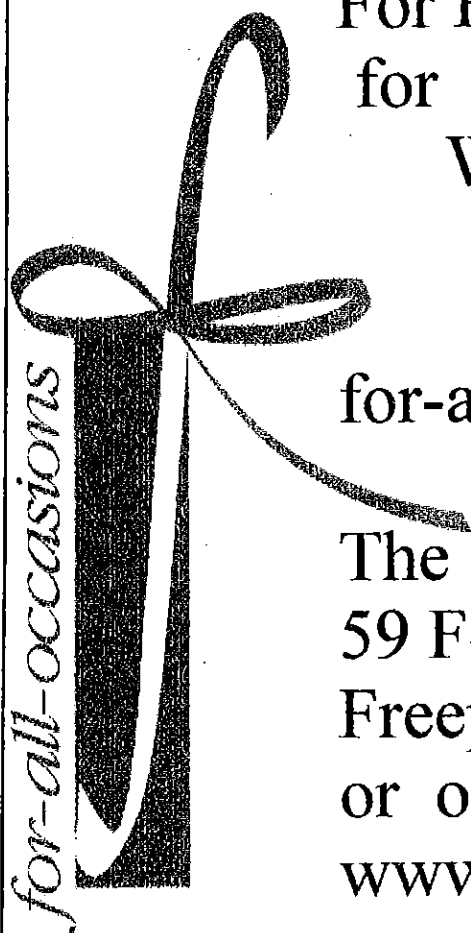
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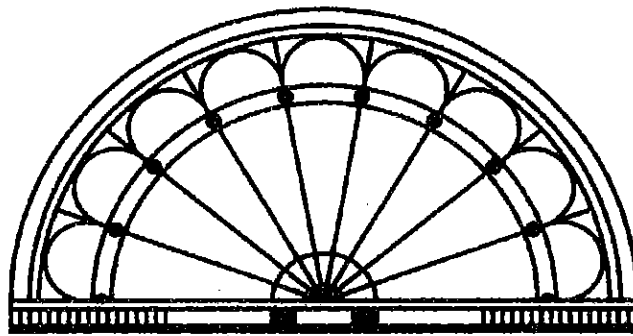
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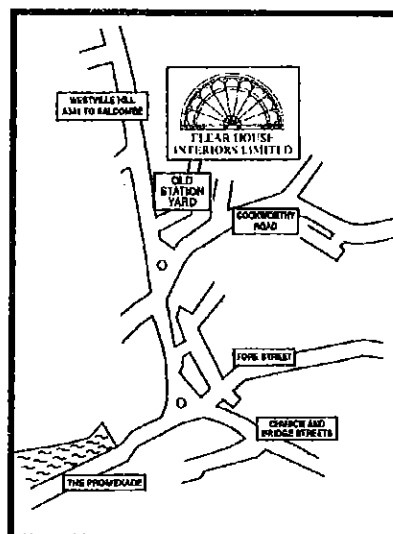
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HORSWELL DIARY

I love September. It's a high altitude plateau between Summer and Autumn. A place where one can pause to take stock and admire the view. Look back - and one can relive the pleasures of the Summer. Look forward - and we can prepare for the new season that lies ahead.

As the last car door slams after the last tearful goodbye and the grandchildren disappear down the drive in a flurry of waving hands it is with mixed feelings that we realise the holidays are over. The children leave looking brown and fit, wearing their new surfer tee shirts and clutching their beachcombed treasures. They enquire anxiously about the safety of the pottery they have hand-painted in Totnes and the whereabouts of the small stuffed elephant so disastrously forgotten on a previous visit. Exhausted, we stand on the step and wave our goodbyes. We are left with our ears still ringing and a house strangely still, but also with the warmth of their love, an assortment of their artworks, and a wealth of unforgettable memories.

The terrace where we dine by candlelight provides a natural stage for those with theatrical leanings. There we have been entertained with handstands and cartwheels, virtuoso performances from the latest school play and the *basso voce* solos of newly broken voices. On the beach young sharp eyes turned our attention to luminous pebbles that gleamed like agates amongst the oatmeal tweed of granular sand, to the pretty white shell and the small rounded fragment of worn green glass. Each a new and wondrous discovery, that without reminder we may have taken for granted. Back home for tea, the daily procession to Grandad's Bench is a memory I hope we will never forget.

Grandad's Bench, a birthday present from the children earlier this year, is sited in the far paddock where it commands an outstanding view. In one direction is the tower of South Milton church and, across the valley outlined against the green hills, that of Thurlestone. Being far enough from the house to warrant a reasonable walk, the new seat has made it a favourite place to stop and rest awhile, an ideal spot for a picnic tea.

And so to the procession. First is Bertie, our big hairy dog proudly leading the way, barking importantly to frighten the rabbits and announce

our arrival. Then comes Grandad wearing the idiotic hat of the day, driving his red tractor-mower. Behind the tractor he tows its small trailer containing a collection of the youngest grandchildren and their mother, all squealing with laughter and alarm in equal measure. Flossie the sheepdog is next, rushing around and around in chaotic circles, barking furiously at her unruly flock. In desperation she snaps at the tractor wheels and yelps with uncontrollable excitement.

The rest of us follow on, bearing blankets and baskets, ready to push when the trailer gets stuck on the slippery slopes. Behind us comes the best sight of all. Old Abo, our much loved and threadbare Labrador, reclining on a tartan blanket in the wheelbarrow as he is pushed with some difficulty uphill by our long-suffering and kind-hearted son-in-law. As we progress ceremonially along the narrow woodland paths he peers nonchalantly over the barrow's edge, waving a regal paw. Attracted by all our laughter and hullabaloo Imran and Betty, two of the peafowl, complete our retinue, pecking at the greenery and eyeing us in ever-increasing disbelief.

But now that all our visitors have gone, there is lots to do. In the garden, ever keen to take advantage of our neglect, nature has been stepping up the battle to regain its territory. Flowerbeds have become tangled and overgrown while roses amaze us with their profusion of second blooms. Hydrangeas and camellias wilt from lack of rain and hanging baskets beg for water. The lawns are parched and undermined by voles, their excavations now so extensive they rival the London Underground. Tawny owls swoop and hoot through the trees and badgers root up the grass in search of leatherjackets. Squirrels are darting from tree to tree, stripping bark and stealing nuts. They sit in the plum trees eating fruit we cannot reach and drop the conkers from the chestnut trees to burst them from their spiny shells. Autumn cyclamen make welcome colour beneath the trees as high above them a pair of buzzards soar against a cloudless sky.

The new waterfall we have created is looking good. It will take a while for the stone to mellow and for the small ferns pushed into cracks to take root and grow, but the sound of water tumbling into the pond is very pleasing. We are eagerly assembling waterside plants to grow

around it, with Gunnera, Rheums and Zantedeschia already in position. But first there is a lot of clearing and preparation to do around the whole area. Michael's elbow crutch is proving very useful for feeling the way across to the island. By using it to locate the building blocks we placed underwater at the shallowest point we can just manage to make the crossing without our waders filling with water. Even with it, crossing is a perilous business as the pondweed is dense and slimy and on either side of our makeshift causeway the water drops ten feet deep.

Yesterday, after a hard few hours clearing brambles and detritus from the island and having negotiated the causeway several times to assemble relevant tools and remove the considerable heap of clippings and rubbish I had accumulated, I had barely the energy to return to the house. Determined to get all my paraphernalia home in one go I tied the bucket around my neck and used it as a container for all my hand tools, gripped the crutch and rake in one hand, the spade and fork in the other then shuffled across the lawn as best I could with a back that was too stiff to hold upright and a pair of thigh waders that were four sizes too big.

Imagine, will you, my lack of enthusiasm when I was greeted by a husband too weak with laughter to speak coherently. When finally he managed to stammer a few words of greeting it was to tell me that I reminded him of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. If I had had the energy I would have told him I didn't know he was so old.

Through all of this our lovely house has looked like a ship in dry dock undergoing a refit. It is shrouded in scaffolding from top to toe with builders, carpenters and decorators crawling all over it as if playing a giant game of snakes and ladders. On the basis of *"If you're going to have a face lift you might as well have any other little flaws sorted out at the same time"* repainting the house has developed into a complete overhaul of seemingly unlimited duration. It is like living inside an Advent calendar during the run up to Christmas, wondering which face will appear at which window, and, more importantly, when?

In fact, I'm now beginning to wonder how Christmas lights will look hanging from the scaffold. Better than the decorator!

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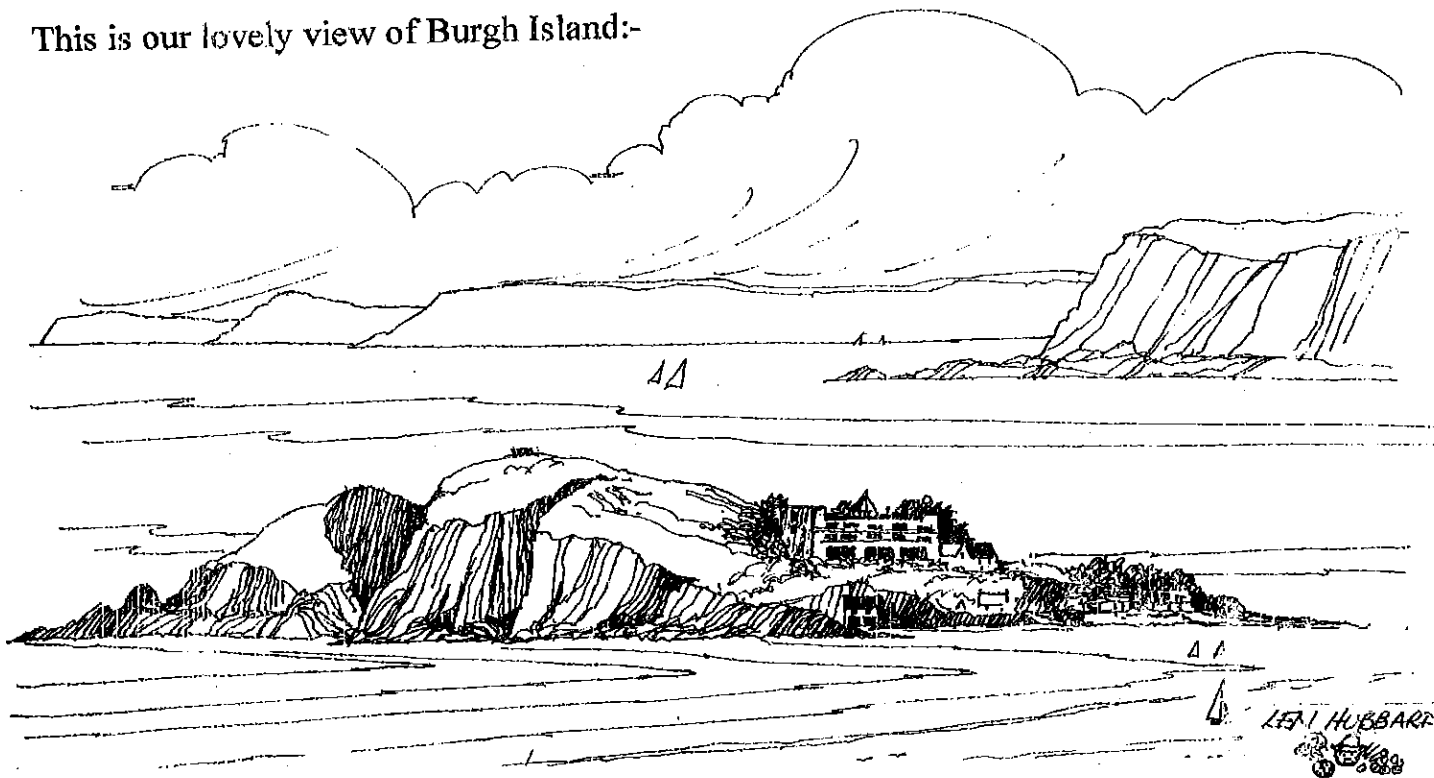
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SUMMER 2001 RESULTS

The Tennis Section ran a successful busy holiday programme during July and August. Thirteen junior round robin tennis tournaments were played and eighteen junior coaching sessions were organised by Lawn Tennis Association coaches Jonathan Harvey and Jane Richardson.

Senior mixed, ladies and men's doubles also were played during August. All events were supported by locals and holiday-makers. The winners of the cup competitions were as follows:

EGAN CUP (junior doubles under 13 years)	Laura Waleski William Hatch
LEONARD CUP (junior doubles 13-16 years)	Ruth Newton Edward Yarrow
BRYAN BROWN CUP (senior mixed doubles)	Mrs V.Handover Mr Z. Anton

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

The following events will be running during the autumn:

LADIES DAY-TIME COACHING

Dates : Thursdays 4th, 11th and 18th October
Cost : £18.00 for a seven-week course
£15.00 for a seven-week course *for golf & tennis members*

LADIES SOCIAL AFTERNOONS

Tuesdays from 2.00 pm

COACHING

Junior courses will be run at half-term and small group and individual lessons all the time. Contact Janet Richardson on 01548-856007 (or mobile 07950-002265).

COURT HIRE

Non-members and visiting players can hire a court for £8.00 per one-and-a-half hour sessions. Courts should be booked and paid for at the Thurlestone Golf Club Professional's Shop (01548 560715).

Tennis Section enquiries - Lindsey Fletcher on 01548-560157

CHASING TRAINS IN BUDAPEST

A headmaster's further adventures in Eastern Europe

We went to the Keleti Station in Budapest to reserve our seats for Oradea the next morning.

The information counters are discreet, almost apologetic apertures in an impenetrable wall; the openings are low and to talk to the chain-smoking desk clerks involves physical discomfort as well as reservoirs of stamina to cope with the torrent of verbiage that inevitably accompanies something more helpful.

On this day, only one of the five counters was operating and a lively exchange seemed to be taking place between a young woman and a grey-haired grandmother behind the counter. The grandmother looked to be a natural communicator, good at pressing home points and not overburdened with the priorities of others. She lacked the semi-statutory cigarette so we would not have our information diffused and suspended in a trail of acrid vapours.

"Interesting", we thought, "*how English is now the first language of communication.*" Often, of course, it is and is almost unnoticed because it has become so commonplace. Here, however, was a piece of exquisite irony. The young woman tried to engage the grandmother in English and left because she had failed to do so. Without realising this, I tried to ask her how we could reserve seats for Oradea, our first port of call in Romania. Instead of telling me, grandma then rattled off the languages she could speak, Deutsch Francais, Magyar, Italiano. Rushki - each language receiving, like a number in a nursery, a finger, stiffened and then wagged as if to emphasise a fluency in that tongue - but not English.

She became a surreal figure in my mind as I began to wander; she was, to me, the declaimer *par excellence* as she held forth. I no longer heard her words. When would the elderly polyglot end this litany of languages? Basque, Finnish, Catalan, Tibetan, I pondered. But, no English. Half-imagined and non-existent scenes from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* fluttered in my mind. Making the most of a pause in her verbal battery, I tried to practise some schoolboy French that had been braced and ready for action for years. By this time she had lost all interest in our purpose and was firing an arsenal of an increasingly rarefied catalogue of linguistic exotica - Urdu, Tamil, Bantu, Lap - but no English.

We might go to Oradea, I mused, and travel throughout Romania, singing and feasting, arguing and wallowing and disbelieving. We would admire the chic women of Cluj, be mesmerised by the pre-Dacian farmers near the northern border with Ukraine, drink their sour soup and sleep on their plum brandy. Then we would return, years later, only to find the old darling - weaker and more ancient - still stabbing out each fingered language in a schedule that now included Armenian, Erse, Icelandic and Afrikaans - but no English.

The vision evaporated. Standing behind us was a smart man, crisp and efficient, who immediately took charge and gave her the German that she required. However, her response came as a shock. We had come to the wrong station. *Trains to Oradea do not leave from Keleti.*

Alun Williams

South Hams Society

FINDINGS AT BANTHAM HAM

A talk by Stephen Reed

Project Director, Exeter Archaeology

MONDAY 22nd OCTOBER

Thurlestone Parish Hall, 7.30 pm

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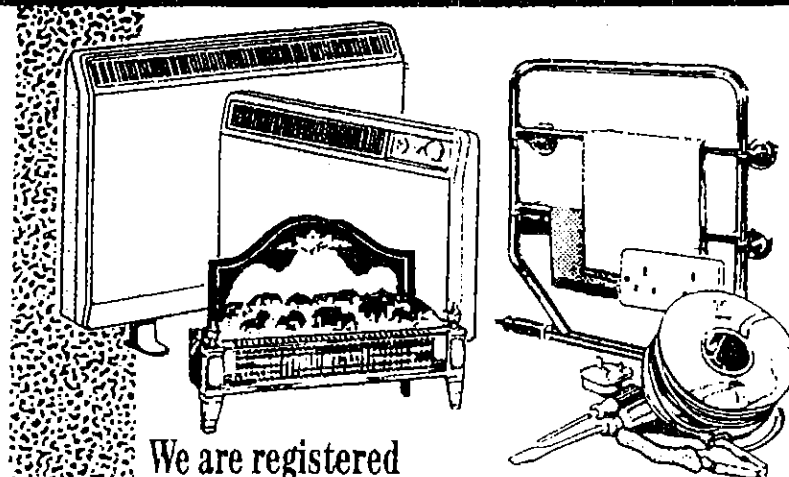
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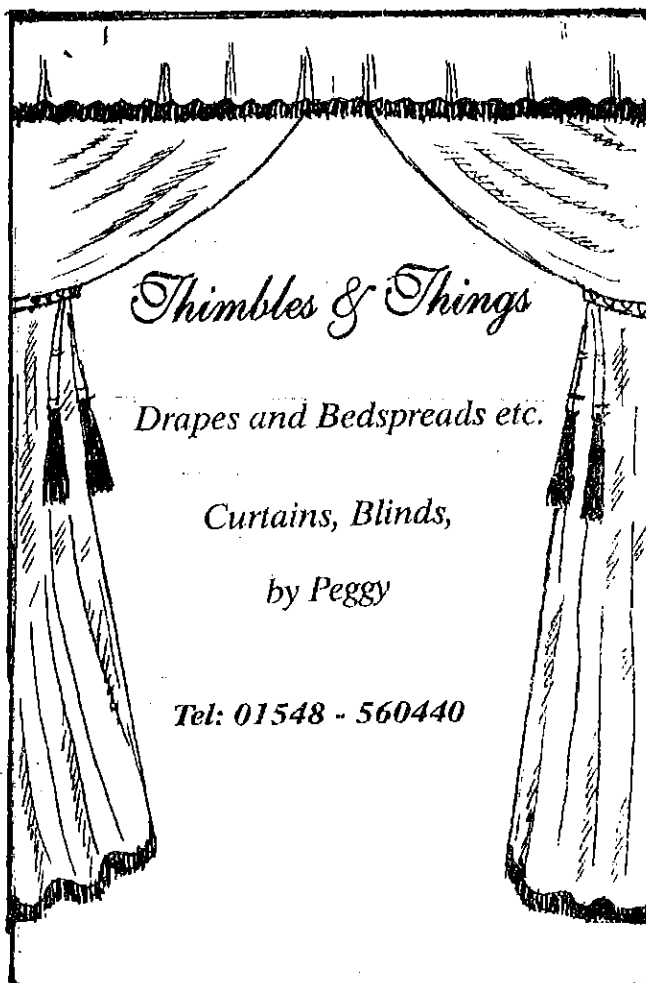
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BEDTIME READING

Bedside books. Things you have read umpteen times before and can read umpteen times again. Not too heavy to hold up in bed. Written preferably in snippets so you can get to the end of each piece before falling asleep.

I think the bedside book to end them all is Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* (Selborne is found between Winchester and Farnham). I read somewhere that it has been translated into more languages than any book except the Bible, and that it is highly popular in Japan. Why what an eighteenth century clergyman had to say about the English countryside should be of interest to modern Japanese I don't know, but that's what I read.

White was *not* the vicar of Selborne. He couldn't be, because the living was within the gift of Magdalen College, Oxford, and he was an Oriel man. He was not the curate, though sometimes he took services and, on occasion, described himself as such. Having inherited the family house, The Wakes, he declined to offer himself for preferment because he did not wish to leave Selborne.

I believe he caused something of a *hoo-ha* in his college because, having been elected a Fellow, he failed for the rest of his life to give it up: they made someone a Fellow to allow him something of an income until a living was found for him, when he was expected to resign, but White never did resign - nor did they dislodge him. He was Junior Proctor of Oriel for a stint; tried to be Dean but was not elected.

He was born in 1720 and died in 1793, four years after the *Natural History* was published and thus half a century before Charles Darwin wrote about his theory of evolution.

One wonders what White would have made of that, believing, as he must have done - everyone did then - in the literal truth of the story of creation which Genesis describes. In fact, he had enough to worry about over the migration of birds; they were starting to think about it, and didn't know whether to believe it or not.

The *Natural History* consists of letters to two friends, Thomas Pennant, who wrote about the zoology of Britain, and appeared to use White for information, and the Honourable Daines Barrington. The latter gentleman gave White his first *Garden Kalendar*, in which he wrote the dates when birds appeared, plants flowered, etc., hoping this information would tell him when to plant seeds and so on. They say that stone circles, such as Stonehenge, were intended for astronomical observations so they could tell when seasons were arriving - like you plant shallots on the shortest day and pull them on the longest. How people know whether that is correct I do not know, because the folks who built Stonehenge didn't bother to write anything down.

Quite early in the series White expressed his regret that he never had a neighbour interested, as he was, in what he called "natural knowledge" because with someone else with whom to discuss things he felt he might have made more progress. But to our eyes he did not progress. He was a fantastic observer, refusing to believe anything he did not see with his own eyes. Sometimes he tells what he has been told and does not accept it, as when people said that when a large chunk of cliff fell down one stormy winter "at Brighthelmstone", they found hibernating swallows amongst the rubbish!

Much of what we take for granted he had to

find out for himself. For example, harvest mice. He said they were "nondescript", i.e., had never been formally described and were not known to science despite being, in those days, very common. Some were brought to him and he preserved them in brandy. He writes to Pennant about "Willow wrens" (every small bird was called a wren). The scientific name then ascribed to them was *Motacilla trochilus* (*Phylloscopus trochilus* now). White realised there were in fact three species, which we now call Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Wood Warbler. In August 1768 he wrote that he had specimens of all three sorts lying before him. He had no hesitation in having something killed if he wanted to examine it. He and his contemporaries believed implicitly in Genesis *"Let us make man....and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air....and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth"*.

All through the book he continues to puzzle about the migration of birds. You feel he half thought they hid up for the winter - after all he had a tortoise which did just that - and he half thought they flew away. He remarks in a letter to Barrington that in riding in December from Selborne to Ringmer, near Lewes - seventy or so miles - he kept a sharp look out for the summer short-winged birds - Redstarts, Nightingales, Whitethroats etc. He saw none. But he had never heard that any of these had ever been found in a torpid state, as he seemed to think that Swallows and Martins sometimes were (though he never found any).

He was even more puzzled that he saw not a single Wheatear (we see them every spring and autumn along the cliffs and on stone walls - you know them by their prominent white rumps). In autumn the shepherds on the downs where he was riding trapped these: *"At the time of the Wheat-harvest they begin to be taken in great numbers; are sent for sale in vast quantities to Brighthelmstone and Tunbridge; and appear at the tables of all the gentry that entertain with any degree*

of elegance". He says the birds retired about Michaelmas, not to be seen again until March. And although they were taken in many hundreds of dozens they were never seen to flock and were seldom seen more than three or four at a time, so he concluded there must be a constant progressive succession.

He writes to Barrington that one year he saw flocks of House Martins around high ground near his home. He saw them last on 22nd October, none to be found on 3rd November. The area was bushy, and he felt sure that if he had all the bushes dug up and the place properly examined he might well find all the Martins from the district hibernating. But the land was not his property and therefore he could not have the digging done!

Not all the letters are about birds, nor migration - he dilates on a range of subjects. He writes about a row of pollard ash trees, used in the past to cure ruptures in babies. When young and flexible the trunk of the tree was split down and two pieces held apart by wedges. The poor naked infant was passed through the split, after which the two sides were put together and bound up. If the parts of the tree became reunited, the rupture was cured!

Probably his best-known commentary is that on the making of rush lights. The rush they used grew in damp places - still does, I suppose, though I don't recall seeing any around here. They grew to a bit over two feet tall, the interior soft pith with a hard green skin outside. Folks peeled off the skin, leaving a thin strip to support the pith, and they then dipped the rush in fat. White remarked that a good long rush, two feet or so, would burn for an hour and calculated a poor family would enjoy five-and-a-half hours of comfortable light for a farthing. The very poor, who were *"always the worst economists and must therefore continue very poor"* would buy a half-penny candle every evening which in their draughty cottages would not burn for much more than two

hours. Thus they had two hours' light for their money instead of eleven.

And now we go from a book published in 1789 to one of 1999 - *Collins Bird Guide*. This is a field guide, one you can take into the countryside with you. A lot of pictures - paintings - of birds, with some words. Surely not what you read in bed? But no, you do. On our sailing boat we carried a bird guide, plus *The Yachtsman's Weekend Book*, which to my lasting regret went when the boat was sold. We sailed on the coasts of Essex and Suffolk. Tides ran hard, you went with them because you made little headway against them. So each day you had six hours or so sailing, followed by what? You anchored somewhere. If it was fine, and if there was anywhere to go ashore you went ashore. Much of the time you lay on your bunk, waiting for the rain to stop or the wind to go down. Often it blew so hard you couldn't get ashore. So you read the books. I had a detailed knowledge of that field guide. When June found a male Citrine Wagtail - the yellow Wagtail of Russia and places east, which had never been seen in Britain before - we knew it at once. We had the greatest difficulty in getting our local expert even to go and look. When at last he did, he arrived back on our doorstep at midnight shrieking "It is, it is, it is!" So reading a field guide has its uses.

The Collins one was illustrated by Killian Mullarney, a tall handsome charming Irishman who took us to Israel in about 1992. He had been working on the pictures for ten years. His words-man had died on him. So had his publisher. I reckoned he had missed the boat and his labour was in vain as the Swedish artist *Lars Jonsson* had beaten him to it with his *Birds of Europe* which Killian carried everywhere with him. But somehow he got taken up by a new writer, another Swedish gentleman; he was assisted by a Swedish artist, and the book was published in Sweden. It was so well received that Collins brought it out in Britain. It is brilliant. There are several pictures of every bird. More than

twenty of some. It describes over 700 species found regularly in Europe, North Africa, and large chunks of the Middle East. It shows also twenty or so birds introduced by man or escaped from captivity which now breed wild. In all there are something like 3500 pictures of birds.

We like it because it is so complete. Pica Press does a smashing *Pocket Guide to Birds of Britain and N.W. Europe*, but it does not cover Spain or the Mediterranean - and if you see a bird you can't identify you think it must be something not in the book. Mind you, a book which includes everything can mislead.

You see something strange. So you plough through the book until you find it. We had a friend in Hope Cove who saw in his garden a Tristram's Grackle, a sort of starling. Well, he said he did. He had been right through the book and that was all it *could* be and was most upset when we said we didn't believe him. Birds do strange things, like June's Citrine Wagtail which I wrote about earlier. But the nearest place for Tristram's Grackle is the southernmost bit of Israel and, unlike the Wagtail, it doesn't migrate. We think he saw a Black Redstart - similar colouring but much smaller.

The *Collins Guide* is heavy but at least it is small enough for someone like me to take on an expedition, which the Lars Jonsson book is not - unless, like Killian, you are big and strong. When published in Britain it was an instant success. It appeared in hardback and then they brought out a version in larger print so you can see the pictures better. In the original they are a bit small. Then they produced it in paperback to make it easier to carry in the field.

If you want a field guide (there are lots of them) this is *the* one. I read it constantly.

Harry Huggins

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He tells you.....

Yes, we have no bananas
We have no bananas today
We've string beans and onions
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We have an old-fashioned tomato
A long Island potato
But yes we have no bananas
We have no bananas today

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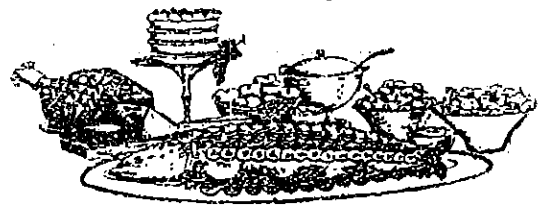
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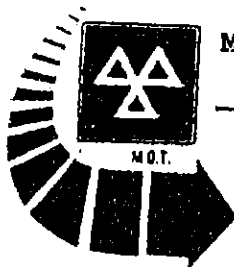
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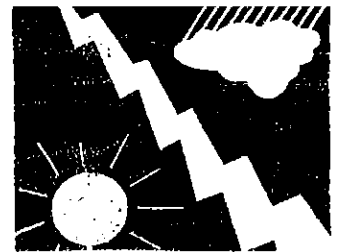
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Weather Wag

By Jan Turner



St Swithin did not materialise this year as I predicted last time. There was some rain on a few days, but overall the children broke up to a lovely spell of fine sunny weather. It lasted until August 1st (when our grandson arrived), then it became dull, rainy and windy apart from a few days. However, we all got to the beach and played in the rock pools and watched the dolphins for a time. We were able to examine a variety of jellyfish washed up on the shoreline. Most were the common one inhabiting our shores, some were very large and quite forbidding. No Portuguese Man-O-War thankfully. Many more sunfish this year though, and recently a sting ray not normally found in our waters.

August this year was much drier than last year but had only one more hour of sunshine. There was a fairly constant film of high cloud for much of the time, which kept the record down (and also the incidence of sunburn, I suspect). Rainfall for July and August was much higher this year at 117.2mm owing mainly to the deluges in July. August was well down on 2000 at 28.1mm. Over July and August the temperature was only 0.6C down on last year at 18.6C, with August being slightly warmer than last year. Looking at the overall picture 2000 was a better year than 2001 - but only by the skin of its teeth!

Do you, like me, tend to try to forecast the weather more often in the summer than in the winter? I wondered why when I was researching for this article. While reading **Paul Simons'** 'Weird Weather' it was the section on *Forecasting with Plants and Animals* that caught my eye. I'm sure that you all know one or two little sayings which mention animals or plants reacting to conditions in the atmosphere around them. Many of them have no foundation at all and are totally unreliable, e.g., cows lying down when rain is about to come. They lie down at any time, don't they? But perhaps lying down

as it begins to rain means that they reserve a dry place to put their bulk. However, while reading the section just mentioned, I realised that most of the animals or insects are about more in the summer than in the winter.

Paul writes that, despite everything "*there are some pretty striking bits of animal behaviour which show how well-tuned the natural world is to the weather*". How about birds? Paul writes about the robin who has his own little proverb about his barometric prowess:-

*Robin singing high, fine and dry
Robin singing low, too wet to mow.*

For as long as anyone can remember, robins forecast rain within twenty-four hours when they sing on low branches with their tails down, but when singing on high branches with their tails up they signal fine weather. Maybe there's something in this because robins are very stropky about their territory, and need song-posts to trumpet their patch. Only if the weather turns bad will they take shelter and warble a few muffled notes.

Another is the mistlethrush. The male is one of the few birds that sings when a thunderstorm approaches, hence the name 'storm cock'. The green woodpecker is sometimes known to 'laugh' when rain is due. My Dad used to call him the rain-bird, we don't often hear it down here by the sea but up in the valley it is quite often heard. (Chance for some research here. Someone on the Mead may like to take me up on this)

Some birds can tell us about the atmospheric conditions by the way they fly, e.g., rooks fly low and tumble if it's going to rain, but if they fly high it's a sign of fine weather due. Swallows and swifts flying high while feeding signal fine weather the next day, as the insects they feed on would be close to cover

nearer the ground if it was going to rain. Last evening we were puzzled at the sound of a cricket in the conservatory, the chirps it made seemed to follow us around. Paul says this about crickets: *"When the temperature at night is below 13C (55F) most of them are silent, then at about 13C they chirp at 60 clicks per minute and the rate steadily increases with the rising temperature"*.

The most impressive forecaster of them all is the bee.

*When the bees crowd out of the hive,
The weather makes it good to be alive.
When the bees crowd into the hive again,
It's a sure sign of storms and rain.*

Bees adore flying in warm weather. In fact, they are extremely fussy about the weather conditions. Too cool, or too dull, or too windy, and they stay at home. But 20C, low humidity and winds of less than 4mph see them busily at work. They can predict a thunder-storm very accurately, becoming extremely bad-tempered, and bee-keepers never open a hive in such conditions. We don't know why, but bees may be sensitive to the build up of static electricity, as they are known not to like the area around power lines.

Spiders too have a long folklore of weather forecasting, because of their sensitivity to weather, says Paul. Their preoccupation is rain, and small wonder! After spending a fortune in time and energy spinning a glorious web they don't want it torn to shreds by heavy raindrops. Precaution against total destruction sees some punch holes in their web to offer less resistance. Others hang on a thread below the web with legs stretched out to act as down-pipes! The gossamer web supports they spin are tighter in unsettled weather, so a loosely supported web indicates a settled spell. There are many more to add to these.

A quick mention of flowers. They are good at short-term forecasting by opening or

closing their blooms, but are not altogether reliable. They actually don't like getting their pollen grains wet, so they just close up (e.g., bindweed and the scarlet pimpernel - the latter has been called the 'Poor man's Weather-glass'). Some plants have extra-sensitive pollen sacs that close as the moisture content of the air rises; e.g., the plantain whose anthers squeeze shut on dewy nights or in wet weather. Some are remarkably quick: e.g., the bastard toad-flax whose anthers shut up within 30 seconds of being moistened. Flowers are also very tuned in to warmth. A passing cloud can cause a tulip bloom to close up. The fastest mover among flowers is the gentian *quadrifuria*, which is said to close in ten seconds if the temperature drops fast enough.

There are also many plants that follow the path of the sun through the sky. This is particularly true of flowers in the cooler regions of the world, or in cold places. In the brisk sunshine of early spring, when the first flowers bloom, the open flowers trap heat like miniature solar collectors. The few insects that are on the wing fancy a bit of warmth, so the solar heated flowers are a welcome invitation to shelter, and the insects pollinate them in return.

We know that plants can affect the type of weather, and the pattern of weather, to a certain extent. This is principally found in the *water cycle*. I know I have written about this before but I make no apologies for repeating the information.

Plants evaporate water through the pores in their leaves in order to keep cool and to draw nutrients through their living tissue system. This is *transpiration* and the amount of water is staggering. An acre (0.4 hectares) of grass between May and July transpires over 500 tons of water! This colossal evaporation actually affects local weather, because the water vapour lost by the plants makes the air more humid - a tropical forest is humid partly because the plants are transpiring. In turn, the humidity helps clouds form and drop rain,

which the trees feed on, and so the water cycle goes round and round. This cycle can be interrupted by man when forests are cut down. The air becomes drier and there is less rain; e.g., south of Bombay annual rainfall of 400 inches per annum has fallen to about 236 inches, with summers now oppressively hot.

The following item I found very interesting and not a little disturbing. The Panama Canal needs a constant supply of fresh water to replace the water lost each time a ship enters or leaves the canal. The surrounding densely forested mountains feed fresh water into the canal, but ecologists found that, as the surrounding forests were cut down by peasant farmers, the canal was running low. Urgent conservation measures have now been taken to protect the surrounding forests to save the canal.

Remember that the Romans cut down the forests along the northern edge of the Sahara desert to grow wheat to feed their mighty army. Although the early effects were fine for the Roman farmers we now know that the desert was bound to take over as the rainfall began to decrease and continues to do so in vast areas where the plant covering has been removed. Areas in the region that have been planted with experimental tracts of forest trees have proved that deep down there is water enough to sustain the trees.

The task is almost too great to be realised in the foreseeable future, but who knows what our descendants may try and succeed to do where we have failed. *I have to retain the hope that our children's children will learn from our mistakes, just as we have done by learning from those who came before us!*

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This will apply to the currency of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain (although you will be able to cash these currencies at a bank in the country concerned up until February 2002).

If you have any of this (soon to be) unusable money hanging around and you want to get rid of it, **Diane Stevenson** is collecting it on behalf of these two charities. She would be delighted to hear from you on 560273.

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IN YOUR GARDEN

By now we are well aware that summer is over. Despite the warmth of the late September sun - and it has been generous in this part of the world - the nights are beginning to feel decidedly nippy. It is heading up to the time when we may expect some frosts, so watch the weather forecasts and be ready to act to save those tender plants likely to be affected. Seize every opportunity, if the weather holds, to get on with the general tidying up of garden borders - for the more you do now, the easier you will make your gardening next year.

It's time too to turn out the **pots and window-boxes** that you planted up in early summer and replant with things like winter-flowering pansies, small hardy fuchsias, ivies, heathers, and things to add a little 'height' to the container. Very small conifers or hebes, and dwarf variegated euonymous, also fill this role well. You can underplant all these with dwarf daffodils and other small bulbs to come peeping through in early spring. If you like tulips, November is an excellent time to get them in.

Do you want an early crop of **sweet peas** next year? Why not think about sowing seed now, either directly into the soil or in individual pots - if the latter the plants can be overwintered under the protection of glass, hardened, then planted outside next spring. Sowing sweet pea seeds in autumn generally means plants less prone to disease as well as an early crop of flowers.

The greenhouse should now be disinfected if you haven't already done it. Also heighten the cutters on your lawn mower, so that you are not giving the grass too close a shave, and continue to cut as long as the weather remains suitable. Keep leaves and other debris cleared off the grass and brush any worm casts if they are formed. Roses can be pruned back a little - cut off some of the top

growth they have made, to lessen the effects of 'wind rock' as autumn gales set in. While about it, make sure that all your tree stakes and ties are in good order.

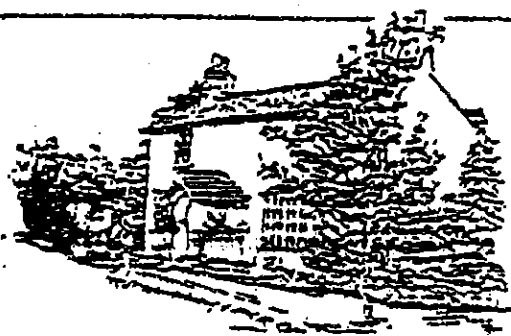
If you have some good lush **parsley** in your garden, remember to put a small cloche of some sort over it to keep it growing as the weather gets colder. That way you will have a good supply come Christmas. Similarly, pot up a few pieces of **mint** and keep them, well watered, in the greenhouse or a frame over winter so you will have a traditional accompaniment for the roast lamb!

As this is being written local gardens are crying out for water, but what a wonderful display of leaf colour this year from some fairly unlikely plants - deciduous azaleas and our spring friend forsythia for instance; the first a light but intense orange, the second the colour of ripe Victoria plums! It is surprising what overall colour there is in the garden at this time of year. Even though the flowers and plants may not bear close scrutiny, they certainly look bright! I have two new cactus dahlias growing in my vegetable patch - 'Apache' and 'Garnet' - and their colours are so rich that they deserve to be in the garden border next year!

Watch out for hibernating hedgehogs who may have settled in for a cosy winter at the bottom of your nice warm compost heap. Leave them to their rest and they will repay you next spring as they go after the slugs! I would dearly love to have one in my garden. I haven't seen a single one in this garden in all the 24 years I've lived here, though they were always around in my previous South Hams garden. The only ones I see now have all been victims of road traffic. Am I just unlucky, or unobservant, or is there a real shortage in the Thurlestone area?

Ladybird

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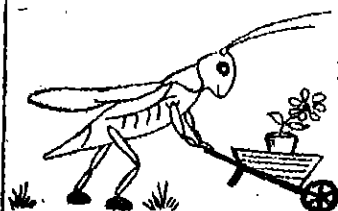
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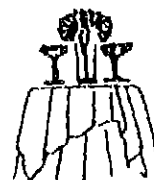


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At the Bridge Table



My August article included an example highlighting the importance of taking time to think and plan before leading or playing to the first trick. Here are two more examples.

1. As defender, you sit West and hold these cards:

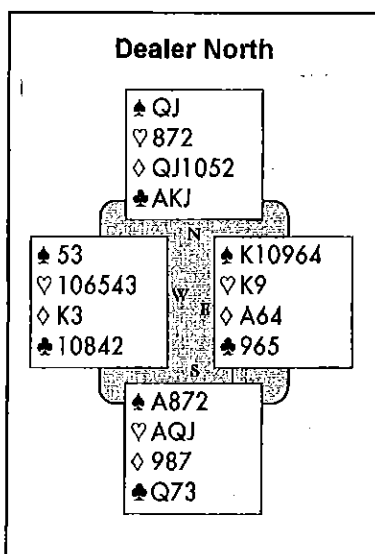
Spades Ace, 3: **Hearts** Ace, 5, 3: **Diamonds** Ace, 9, 5, 3: **Clubs** Q, J, 10, 9:

You hear the bidding go as follows:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
		Pass	1 Heart
Pass	2 Hearts	Pass	2 Spades
Pass	3 Spades	Pass	4 Spades

Many of us sitting West with three winners (the three Aces), and knowing that partner is almost certainly devoid of high honour cards, would opt for the safe opening lead of the Queen of Clubs. But as South opened Hearts and then rebid Spades he is marked with at least 5 Hearts and 4 Spades. His partner first supported Hearts and must have 3 of this suit. Since you have 3 Hearts it follows that your partner has at most only 2 and there is therefore an excellent chance of a **Heart ruff**. West should lead Ace of Hearts followed by a second Heart. When he wins the first round of Trumps he can then lead a third Heart to give East a ruff - and defeat the contract.

2. On the deal shown below South ends up in 3 No Trumps after East has intervened with One Spade. West led a Spade and East's King was covered by South's Ace. On the basis that the Heart finesse would work, South first started on Diamonds as he saw that two tricks were needed in that suit. West took the first Diamond and set up partner's Spades. South continued Diamonds but East won and cashed three Spade winners - **One Down!** South went wrong at trick one when he took East's King of Spades. If he ducks, East will continue the suit. But when West gets in with his King of Diamonds he is out of Spades and this suit cannot be established in time to defeat the contract. *But East also went wrong at trick one!*



See what happens if East just signals with the 6 of Spades. The Queen of Spades will win the first trick, but when West takes his King of Diamonds he can lead his remaining Spade to clear the suit - **One Down!** The situation in this hand often occurs, and so I cannot stress too much the importance of thought and planning before playing to the first trick.

In a current campaign several reasons have been given for the acceptance of Bridge as a "mind sport" and its inclusion in the Olympics. One of the crucial reasons has been quoted as **"helping the older population to remain mentally fit"**. What could be more appropriate for the people in "God's Waiting-Room"? So, if you are not already a member, why not join one of our local clubs?

Victor

BOOKSHELF

Keep Faith with the Soil

by Hubert N Snowdon
(Orchard Books £5.95)

Hubert Snowdon's book "Keep Faith with the Soil" takes up where his first "Born to Farm In Thurlestone" finished. In the former he dealt with his very early life. In this new book his story starts when he leaves Kingsbridge Grammar School in July 1934, determined to become a master farmer.

The photographs and useful sketches done by the author illustrate some of the many farm crafts used in the days before a lot of farm mechanisation. It was an era when, in Devon, the horse still had a large part to play on the land. As well as using drawings and photographs, Hubert also includes some of his own poetry about nature and the seasons.

The farming world by this time, in the wake of the great economic crash of 1929, was suffering severely in the 'depression' years which followed. The story tells of the passing seasons on the farm at Langmans, of which his father was then tenant, and encompasses farming methods employed in pre-war Devon. It covers the lead up to and the effects of war on the parish culminating in 1946, just after the end of hostilities, when he was running Clanacombe Farm.

This book will make a very valuable addition to the written record of what a farming life was like in Devon during this period. The author's great love of this beautiful part of the world and his dedication to his work shine out from every page. Worth buying.

(Available from the Village Shop at Thurlestone and other outlets)

PM

Innocence

by Pierre Magnan
(Harvill Press £15.99)

This novel is exceptionally well printed and beautifully translated from the French. It is rivetting from start to finish. It is the story of a 15-year old boy from a village in Provence, just after the end of World War Two. He stumbles across the dead body of a local Resistance hero, which triggers a series of dramatic events resulting from the passions and jealousies rife during the Occupation, and ultimately to his seduction by the beautiful Madame Henry.

Somewhat unusually, the author apologises in a foreword for the explicit description of the seduction - but says it was an integral part of the story!

GW

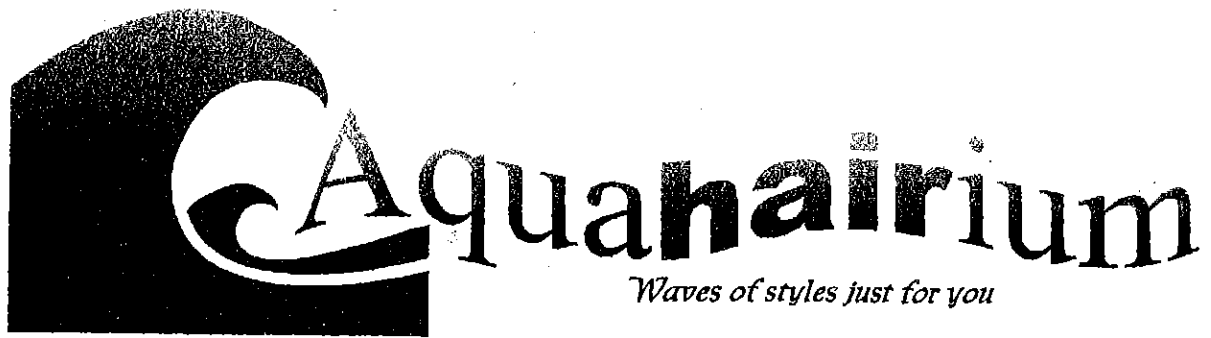
Playing Sardines

by Michele Roberts
(Virago £9.99)

This is a collection of eighteen short stories. Apart from two, I thought they were evocative, beautifully written and wonderfully descriptive. For the Francophiles amongst you it is a 'must', as almost all the stories have a French connection - food, cooking, countryside, ambience and *l'amour*. There are also enchanting tales about Venice and London which keep one turning the pages.

The critic Elizabeth Buchan has said of these stories "Writing as exquisite and tactile as this is not to be missed". What more can be said!

GW



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A WALK IN THE WOODS

Maureen and I set out in the company of eight others on the bitterly cold morning of Saturday 21st April to walk in the woods, no children or dogs being present on this occasion. Our objective was to view the bird life in a variety of habitats and gain a leisurely appreciation of the springtime flora and fauna - or so we thought!

Two days and six thousand miles later we were walking in the forest of the Santa Catalina Mountains of South Eastern Arizona, goggling at the Red-faced Warblers and Painted Redstarts flitting round our heads. Was all this really happening or would we wake up tomorrow to FMD statistics on the Today programme?

The reason for going to Arizona in spring was simply panic at the closure of our beloved Slapton and most other sites and we decided on a bird tour company run by a friend, despite having no previous experience of this type of ushered holiday. We travelled via Dallas to Tucson, our first base, situated on a desert plateau 2,500 feet above sea level which is dotted with mountain ranges which rise like lush subtropical islands straight from the desert floor with peaks from 6,000 to 12,000 feet, known locally as "sky islands". They are alive with birds which can only be seen by plodding up forested canyon trails.

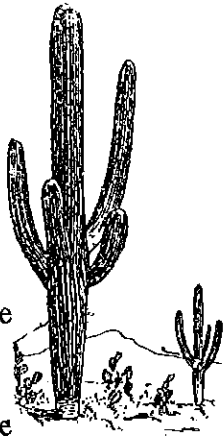
To get our eye in, we began with the more common species of the Tucson area in the Sonora Desert. The soil there is red but the countryside is pale green with its covering of mesquite and the wonderful Saguaro Cactus - the one which develops five or six arms at 15 feet and reaches 50 feet in height at 150 to 200 years of age - the Arizona State emblem. The main desert flowering season was over, but scarlet Ocotillo flowers and those of various cacti and yuccas still provided colourful offerings for the birds.

Nesting in holes pecked into the Saguaro

trunks the busy, brightly-coloured Gila Woodpecker was ubiquitous, and equally abundant were Gambel's Quails which made the canyon ring with their eerie calls resembling a coyote's howl. The only coyote sighted turned out on closer examination to be a rather surprised beagle. We saw our first Humming Birds there. These diminutive creatures are represented in Arizona by a dozen species. At first sight they look like bumble bees, then tiny dark birds which, as they twist and turn in the right light conditions, display such an array of startling colours that you feel you could watch them for ever. More prosaically, at an evening visit to the Sweetwater sewerage works (birders and sewage are inseparable), we saw thousands of Rough-winged Swallows and Nightjars joining forces to hawk for insects over the mercifully non-smelly settling ponds.

The after-dinner call-over of the first day's efforts revealed that we had confirmed sightings of 69 species, of which 40 were new to Maureen and me - "lifers" in birder parlance. This seemed a good return on our investment of 12 hours on our feet in a temperature of 95 degrees (still Fahrenheit over there). Admittedly the 69 included a grey streak flashing past the windscreen of our people-mover travelling at 60 mph, logged as a Goshawk, and a little brown job perched a hundred yards away in a torrid heat haze, so exacerbated by the telescope that the tiny thing seemed to be jumping up and down as if on hot coals.

We innocently thought as we fell exhausted into bed early that night, that a remission might be forthcoming the next day, allowing us the luxury of rising at, say, six a.m. to compensate for the combined effects of the first day's exertions and jet lag. No way, Jose! Our leader was one of the noses-to-the-grindstone school. *"You've paid for this. Why waste time sleeping?"* By six o'clock we had climbed Mount Lemmon and were searching



for birds among the Ponderosa Pines, magnificent trees like living telegraph poles in the straightness of their trunks. They harbour a large number of species, of which we clocked up some 30, including the beautiful Western Bluebird and many colourful warblers.

We left Tucson, one of America's fastest growing cities, for Portal, a sleepy hamlet of two dozen houses and the nearest thing to Nirvana that a birder is ever likely to experience, the whole place being given over entirely to birds, birders and birding. In the middle of Main Street - the only street, in fact, and more like a track - a Great Horned Owl nests in an American Sycamore tree (like our London Plane) a few feet above eye level. Most of the houses have feeders in their yards (gardens) and anyone is welcome to stand and stare, or sit in the chairs provided by the householders to watch the spectacle. The welcoming nature of the Arizonans into their yards never failed to surprise us. One nice lady of our party remarked that after this she would never again complain about people parking in front of her house in St Albans.

Our guide in Portal was Dave, a remarkable naturalist of mixed British and Indian descent. He seemed to know every tree in Cave Creek Canyon, the home of our first star bird, the elegant Trogon, a largish exotic Mexican spill-over, very colourful but devilishly difficult to see in the dense forest. Dave's function was to identify the Trogon's weird grunting call and ours to track down the target. To add spice, he also found for us a variety of owls including the Burrowing and the sparrow-sized Elf Owl. His version of the vernacular was expressive - he spoke of our enthusiasm in getting after the birds (with binoculars) as "*like stink on a pig*".

One evening in the dusk a platoon of swarthy young men filed through the village, who (we were to learn later) were of a species unrecorded in the natural history books. *Immigrans Alienus*, the one-way, non-feathered migrant from Mexico, numbering

some three million a year, and indeed we were to see many more creeping northward along creeks and river banks during our travels. These illegals are driving Dave crazy and he is considering leaving Arizona.

From Portal we began a southerly loop back towards Tucson - with a short, unplanned but popular detour to Tombstone, where the schoolboys amongst us could re-live the shoot-out between the Clantons and Earps at the OK Corral. Although the town is tourist-tatty, Boothill is still curiously redolent of the violent days of the old West, as are some of the grave inscriptions. These range from the simple lower case recording of the result of a fight between two bar girls:

Margarita
Stabbed by Gold Dollar

to the more formal:

HERE LIES GEORGE JOHNSON
HANGED BY MISTAKE 1882
HE WAS RIGHT - WE WAS WRONG
BUT WE STRUNG HIM UP
AND NOW HE'S GONE

and the possibly spurious:

HERE LIES
LESTER MOORE
FOUR SLUGS FROM A 44
NO LES NO MORE

Sierra Vista was our next stopover and in a canyon there Maureen found our second target star of the tour, the very rare Buff-breasted Flycatcher. One of our party had not seen the bird in ten years of trying. She fell on Maureen's knees and the Baker stock was high indeed among our fellows! We joined in a long drag in the dark up the Huachuca Mountain, undertaken only by the keenest and craziest of our party, for another star - the Spotted Owl - which proved abortive. The relief of the non-trekkers who had stayed behind to scoff muffins (American style,

enormous and 700 calories a time) on hearing the negative news was palpable.

This left just one more star for this area, the Zone-tailed Hawk, which closely resembles the very common Turkey Vulture in appearance and flight pattern. The main distinction is that the Vulture has a red face while the Zone-tail's is yellow. Our leader had sternly decreed that every TV seen - and we saw hundreds - had to be carefully examined. Squinting through our binoculars in the heat haze at TVs became our least popular pastime, the inevitable hateful red faces always materialising to mock our efforts. As we were preparing to leave, a single Zone-tail appeared from nowhere and obligingly flew low over our heads. How beautiful to us was that ugly yellow face!

Sierra Vista town itself produced another unlooked for species: *Americanus Giganteus*. Dining in an "all-you-can-eat-for-\$10" restaurant we witnessed an impressive sight indeed as a truck disgorged a household of five. The proud paterfamilias, with the stature of a silverback gorilla and a stomach overhang down to his knees, carried such an overload of avoirdupois that he could move only with the aid of crutches and the support of the brawny arms of the equally huge materfamilias, herself staggering with a gait threatening the splits at every step. Their children were miniature copies of maw and paw. The sheer bulk of fodder consumed and the rate of shovelling of fish, flesh, fowl and everything else the restaurateurs could throw at them, had us gagging. We begged to be allowed to witness the pudding course, but the leader unkindly dragged us away to roll-call.

On to Green Valley, an Arizona sun town devoted to the golfing retired. No-one under 55 can own property here and everyone we met played golf, doubled the golf buggy as a runabout (environmentally friendly, yeah?) in the town for shopping, and had a 4WD for mountain work - camping / fishing / shooting deer or bears - at the weekends. They were

all charming to a man, mainly women in fact, and not totally, we thought, of this universe. Here we picked up some very colourful ticks - birder ticks, not the arachnids that give you Lyme Disease - including two more stars, Vermilion Flycatcher and Lazuli Bunting.

Our final destination was unashamedly touristic - the Grand Canyon in the north of Arizona, 277 miles long, a mile deep and an average of 10 miles wide - 18 in places -and quite breathtaking. There were legions of tourists despite the cold weather; it actually snowed during our time there. Apart from the canyon itself, two memories of our visit remain with us. The bad news first.

The Yavapai Lodge where we stayed had arguably the world's worst restaurant, with food so foul that it was difficult to believe we were in the USA or even the western hemisphere. The stuff dished up by the sullen Navajo Indians to their unwilling captives was literally inedible and we all our went hungry to bed that night. Breakfast next day was equally disastrous, but compensation was at hand in the form of memory number two.

One of the world's rarest birds is the Californian Condor. A large vulture, it was almost extinct some years ago - down to a handful of individuals. These were rounded up and a captive breeding programme undertaken. When sufficient birds to form a viable population were available, some were released into the Grand Canyon, which proved to be the perfect habitat, though none had ever been seen on previous tours. On our second day there five specks were spotted soaring in a thermal several miles away. Could they possibly be Condors? Would they come our way? They were - and they did, swooping down to take up station on a pylon just above our heads. We could almost have reached up and stroked them. Was this brilliant or what?

"What had this fortnight added up to?" we asked ourselves, as we sat with our buddies on the plane to Gatwick, calling down the

blessing of Allah on the heads of the in-flight caterers for their marvellous non-Yavapai cooking? Well, 206 bird species of which over 100 were new to us, a respectable total. True, we had missed some stars, but these had been more than made up for by extra goodies in the form of all the deer, peccaries, squirrels, lizards, snakes and butterflies we had seen.

We had experienced something of the strange life of the car-borne societies of the desert

towns and cities of the Sunbelt; the generous attitudes towards wildlife of the gun-toting Arizonans; air so pure that sunsets are never red (the rising and setting sun looks exactly the same as at mid-day); and even true-life romance. *At one of the sunsets on the Grand Canyon's rim, a gentleman of the party had proposed to, and been accepted by, the nice lady from St. Alban's.*

John Baker

"And gentlefolk in England now arbed shall think themselves accurs'd they were not there, in
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(with apologies to William Shakespeare and Henry V)

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| 13. MCDONALDS | 14. ISOLATION | 15. ASTRONOMY | 16. DEVONPORT |
| 17. NASHVILLE | 18. NORWEGIAN | 19. BOATHOUSE | 20. ARGENTINA |
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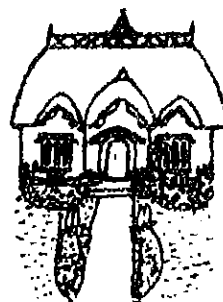
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DIARY DATES

OCTOBER

Thur 4th Open Meeting, Church, 7.30 pm (New building)
 Wed 10th TRAMP - Coletton Fishacre
 Thur 11th WI, Parish Hall, 2.30 pm (Spice up your dishes!)
 Mon 15th Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
 Sat 20th NSPCC Bridge Evening, Parish Hall
 Sat 20th Church Bell-ringing Festival, Service 2 pm, Ringing 3 pm
 Mon 22nd St Crispin's Fair, Parish Hall, 10.30 am
 Mon 22nd Horticultural Show AGM, 25 Mead Lane, 7.30 pm
 Wed 24th TRAMP - South Moors
 Wed 24th Bell-ringing lessons, Church, 7.30 pm

NOVEMBER

Sat 3rd Keep Fit group evening, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
 Thur 8th WI, Parish Hall, 2.30 pm (Annual Meeting)
 Mon 12th Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
 Wed 14th TRAMP - Bigbury (Royal Oak)
 Fri 23rd South Milton Jazz Cafe, Village Hall, 7.30 pm
 Sat 24th Conservative Christmas Bazaar, Parish Hall, 10.30 am

DECEMBER

Sat 1st NSPCC Christmas Bazaar, Parish Hall, 10.30 am
 Fri 7th WI December Meeting & Christmas Lunch
 Mon 10th Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
 Wed 12th TRAMP - Cornworthy (Hunters Arms)
 Fri 14th WI Christmas Carol Service, Church, 2.30 pm

Please notify Village Voice of any forthcoming events, corrections, changes, or additions, by the deadline for the next issue.

Advertising Rates for Village Voice - 12 months (six issues)

Whole Page - £70.00 Half Page - £50.00 Quarter Page - £30.00

VILLAGE VOICE

Your "Cut out and Keep"

PARISH DIRECTORY & DIARY DATES

Village Voice is available free to permanent residents of the villages in the parish.

There is also a subscription service, which mails copies to readers at an annual cost of £8.00. Please apply to:

Sheila Parker, 8 Mead Lane, Thurlestone (01548-560330)

The magazine is entirely self-supporting and is not a charge on the parish rate. It was founded on behalf of Thurlestone Parish Council and is delighted to remain under the Council's sponsorship. This does not mean that the views and opinions expressed in these pages are the views and opinions of any member of the Parish Council, and they should only be ascribed to the authors concerned.

In Thurlestone, Village Voice is delivered by **Bill and June van der Welle** and **Vicki Dent** and a team of volunteer helpers. In Bantham and Buckland it is delivered by **Mrs Jean Hurrell**.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE : 5th NOVEMBER 2001

Please drop any contributions marked "Village Voice" through the letterbox at 25 Mead Lane before that date (or e-mail to RobinMacdonald@compuserve.com)

PARISH

BANTHAM SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB	Clubhouse	560447
BOWLS CLUB (indoor) Tuesdays and Thursdays, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm	Contact Eileen Dayment	560295
BRIDGE CLUBS 7 pm Parish Hall Wednesdays Fridays	Contact Mary Fulford-Smith Contact Dorothy Stone	842467 560708
CHURCHWARDENS	Graham Worrell Liz Webb	562016 560090
COFFEE TIME (Parish Hall) Mondays, 10.30 - 11.30	Contact Liz Webb	560090
FRIENDS OF THURLESTONE CHURCH	Contact Kit Marshall	560214
THURLESTONE GOLF CLUB	Secretary/Manager, John Scott	560405
TENNIS SECTION	Contact Lindsey Fletcher	560157
KEEP FIT Tuesdays, 10 - 11.30 Parish Hall	Contact Brenda Murch	560487
HORTICULTURAL SHOW (annual)	Contact John Lonsdale	560742
PROBUS	Contact Ron Parkin	561215
TRAMP (Thurlestone Ramblers)	Contact Tony Ward	560544
W.L. Second Thursday monthly (ex. August) 2.30 pm Parish Hall.	Contact Jo Parkin	561215
RECTOR	Canon Andrew Girling	562219
PARISH COUNCIL Chairman Vice - Chairman Parish Clerk District Councillor County Councillor Members	Peter Hurrell Veronica White John Lonsdale Carolyn Stean Simon Day David Grose Charles Mitchelmore Geoffrey Stidson Derrick Yeoman Kit Marshall	560496 560236 560742 560683 0370 - 965 683 01752 - 691212 560375 560602 560695 560607 560214

The Parish Council meetings take place on Mondays. See dates on Diary page overleaf.

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MILK DELIVERY	R. Bruckner & Son	01803- 832801
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PARISH HALL Chairman Bookings	Rowland Cole Pat Crawford	561006 560688
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RUBBISH COLLECTION	Thursday (But Friday in Bank Holiday - Monday weeks) Green (recyclable) bins alternate Thursdays from 9 th August 2001	
BUSES Devon Bus enquiry line provides information on all Devon bus services - Monday to Friday 0830 am to 5.00 pm South Hams & West Devon	01392 - 382800 01752 - 402060	
Timetables are available at a price of 20p from the Kingsbridge TTC		
GARAGE (Blight Engineering)	Maurice Blight	560220
LIBRARY (Mobile Library calls alternate Wednesdays) Kingsbridge		852315
11.10 - 11.30am Bantham 11.35 - 11.45am Buckland Old Chapel 12.20 - 12.35pm Thurlestone Church	11.50 - 12.15pm Thurlestone Parish Hall 12.40 - 12.50pm Thurlestone Sands	
MOBILE FISH & CHIP VAN Calls alternate Wednesdays, from 1 st August 2001, 5.00 to 6.30 pm, outside All Saints Primary school, though continued service into 2002 is uncertain in view of the disappointing lack of current support.		

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