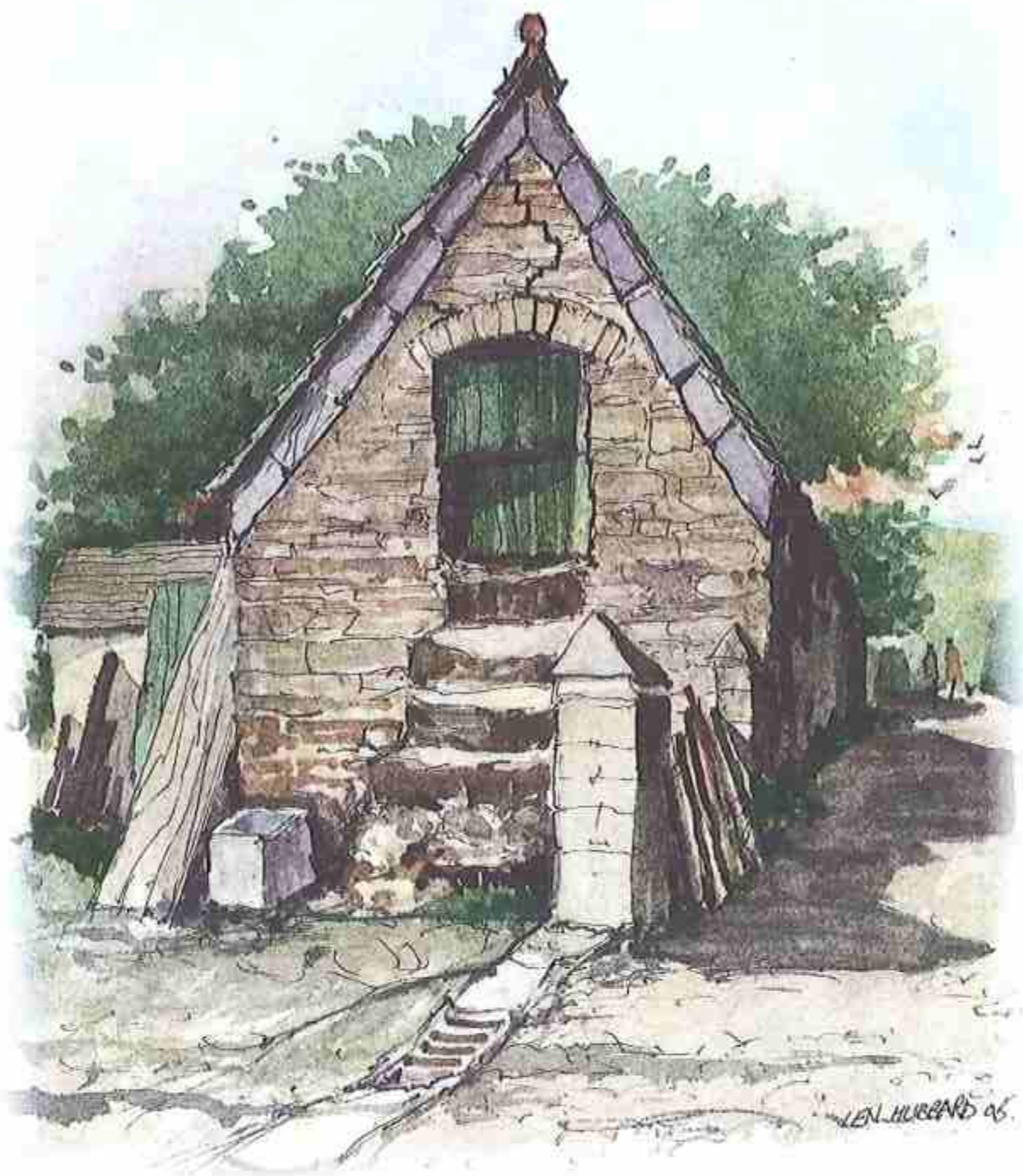


VILLAGE VOICE



APRIL - MAY 2006



NUMBER 138
APRIL - MAY 2006

It seems to have been a long winter. Despite the warnings of a big freeze, we have seen hardly any snow, and not that much rain. But it does seem to have dragged on, doesn't it?

So did the affair of the blocked sluice, with the Golf Club and the Council eventually locking horns in Court. But at least that matter has now been (un)happily (if rather expensively) resolved.

Down on the Mead flood-plain, however, the planning applications for oversized dwellings are being fought "on the beaches". Mooring rights on Lake Stidston can no longer be guaranteed, though Thai chic thatched cottages on stilts may yet add an exotic dimension to the Mead marina.

These long-running events have clearly caught the imagination of Mike Yeoman and Kathy Norris, who are now well into training for their respective Tresco and London marathons. Bravo to you both. *Come on, Delson*, give your support!

Sadly, the Mead marathon seems set for a somewhat longer course, with the smart money as yet undecided, and floating capital taking on new shades of meaning. But it's an ill wind, etc., and the Village Store remains unfazed. It could prove to be a good year for water-wings, when all's said and done.

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PARISH HALL NEWS

By Chairman Ron Parkin



The Annual General Meeting of the most momentous year for Thurlestone Parish Hall will have been held on 27th March - after this edition of Village Voice has gone to press. Less than a year ago, the old hall was demolished and on the 2nd December the splendid new one opened to great acclaim by one and all. The appreciation of all the parishioners to all those who gave so freely of their time and expertise will have been recorded at the AGM.

Under the rules of the charity Trust Deed, all the members nominated by their respective user groups and the Officers of the Parish Hall committee retire at this meeting. However, three of the most diligent and active of these will not be offering themselves for re-election - **Joan Mackenzie** (Friday Bridge), **Bill Clarke** (Treasurer) and **Rosemary Mackay** (WI).

Joan was Chairman when the Parish Hall won the 'Best Kept Village Hall' shield in 1991 and she has, over the years, kept a wonderful photographic record of activities at the Hall filling lots of albums. She also commissioned excellent commemorative slate drinks coasters and generously donated the proceeds of their sale to the Hall funds.

For ten years **Bill**, with wry and dry good humour, has kept a firm and steady hand on the tiller of our finances, collecting monies from a multitude of sources and preparing annual accounts to the satisfaction of the Charity Commissioners. These will have been particularly complex for the year ending 31st December 2005, by when expenditure on the new Hall was £423,599 - with further commitments including the retention payment to the contractors to be made.

Rosemary, though a more recent addition to the committee, served on behalf of the WI, and brought characteristic, and welcome, Scottish energy and pragmatism which has

proved invaluable. To all three, many thanks indeed for your great contributions to the Hall.

We were delighted by the results of the **South West Opera** visit, and thank all those who supported it - see Village News Roundup. As this goes to press, the **Bowls Club** are just about to hold their 1st April Barn Dance, the proceeds from which they are also generously donating to the Hall, and we wish them a happy evening.

We are delighted to say that the number of extra activities in the new Hall is growing apace - badminton, Tai-chi, junior ballet, youth group, sporting events on the 'big screen' and increasing use by All Saints school, as well as our thriving Teamakers computer tuition classes and Saturday Internet Café in the Yeo Room. Quite a number of private parties and functions have already been held in the main hall which, combined with the use of the Yeo Room, provides an ideal venue. There is still room for plenty more activities....so keep coming forward with your ideas.

There are firm dates for two future 'fund-raisers' advertised below, but there are several others under negotiation, so watch these columns for announcements. Or if you have signed up to our e-mail Newsletter scheme (see Village News Roundup), you will be advised via your computer!

CREAM TEAS & GARDEN OPEN

Warren House, Thurlestone
(by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Atkins)

Saturday 3rd June

AUTUMN FAIR

Parish Hall
Lots of stalls

Saturday 23rd September

Village News Round-Up

Expert Patients

Andrew Kennedy of South Hams & West Devon Primary Care Trust would like readers to know about the **Expert Patient Programme** courses which will be running on Mondays at the South Hams Hospital, Kingsbridge, from **Monday 24th April to Monday 12th June** (but not on Bank Holiday Mondays) from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm.

The sessions are aimed at people with long term or chronic health conditions, and cover such topics as better relationships with your general practitioner and other healthcare professionals, healthy eating, exercise, dealing with anger, fear and frustration, and symptom management. The course has proved to be beneficial to such patients.

NSPCC

The local committee would like to express their thanks to *".....all those people who gave us their unwanted goods for our sale on the 18th March and to the helpers who sorted it all and then sold it. We made over £350 for the children of the south-west"*.

At the end of the sale the helpers then set to and cleared the Parish Hall in record time so that the Rugby enthusiasts could watch the England v Ireland match on the Big Screen - a game that sent the England supporters home with tears in their eyes!

Opera South West

An audience of around 120 Thurlestonians and friends enjoyed yet another magical evening of music at the Parish Hall on Saturday 11th March. A total of twenty singers, and an accompanist, from many parts of Devon and Cornwall performed well-known and well-loved arias and choruses from a wide range of operas. All were in fine voice. Their musical director, **Dr David Crocker**, introduced and linked all the items

in a light-hearted and entertaining way and demonstrated his sparkling virtuosity at the piano with several solo pieces. The group were all very complimentary about the new hall and its equipment, particularly the electric Clavinova piano! And the additional good news is that the Parish Hall will benefit to the tune of around £800.

Parish E-Mail Directory

An idea is afoot to produce a short e-mailed Parish Hall Newsletter at regular intervals so that on-line residents can be kept updated and informed about Hall activities and future events more effectively than at present. If YOU have an internet connection and would like to join the scheme and receive this information, please send your e-mail address to **Gillian Marshall** at TPHmail@aol.com right away, as it is hoped that the first edition will be out in May!

A Fair Cop, Guv?

Our spies tell us that the mysterious case of "Who damaged the rails at the Parish Hall entrance?" has been neatly solved by the new CCTV camera which is now in operation there. When the film was run through, the incident was clearly identifiable - and so was the car involved. *So please park prettily when visiting the car park - Chairman Ron has his eye on you!*

Village Voice

Publishing of this magazine is now carried out in the Parish Hall. A large cupboard in the store-room houses the Ricoh printer and our stocks of paper. Thanks are due to **Derek Brown** for the construction of an intricate shelving arrangement which has optimised the space available. Printing (and work in progress) is completed within the store-room, with collating, stapling and dispatch requiring the use of the Yeo Room on the final morning only.

POSTBAG

Dear Editor

Plot 6 Leonards Close

The application for a dwelling on the above plot was considered by SHDC Planning Committee at their meeting on 15th March and adjourned for a site inspection by all the members. As the registered spokesperson for the Mead at the meeting, I outlined the reasons why 67 residents were objecting to the proposal for a large two storey house. These were essentially because (a) it was entirely out of character with the existing lower edge of the Mead, which is wholly comprised of bungalows (b) it was contrary to previous planning policy and (c) it would have an overbearing effect on the wildlife site - the "wet lands" - below.

In preparation for the meeting I read the Planning Officer's report to the Committee and was disappointed - to put it mildly - to see that the Thurstlestone Parish Council (TPC) had raised no objection apart from a mildly expressed comment about the visual aspect of the property and the suggestion that there should be some reduction in height. The Planning Officer seized on the latter suggestion and highlighted the fact that the plans had been revised to reduce the height by 19" (0.5 metre); a reduction of little impact since the ridge was 27 feet 8 inches.

A number of questions spring to mind:

1. Was the TPC aware of Policy SHDC 1 that "...new development must be compatible with the character of the site and its surroundings and should have an acceptable neighbour relationship"?

2. Did any TPC members (other than the vendor!) visit the site?

3. Why did no TPC member discuss the application with Mead residents along the bottom of the Estate?

Here it is relevant that the decisions on Plot 6 are likely to set precedents for the size and appearance of future buildings on the other 25 plots on this development.

Overall my neighbours and I feel totally let down by the TPC.

David Hugo
3 Leonards Close

Dear Editor

Thoughts on the New Parish Hall

There are strange things going on at that new Parish Hall. For one thing, the car park always seems full of posh cars - no old bangers are allowed in, let alone end their days in peace there.

Then I tried the hall door one day to see inside but, unlike the old hall, it was very firmly locked and no other windows or doors seemed available to peek inside. I hear they have something called an Internet Café on Saturdays. Do they serve tea and buns then?

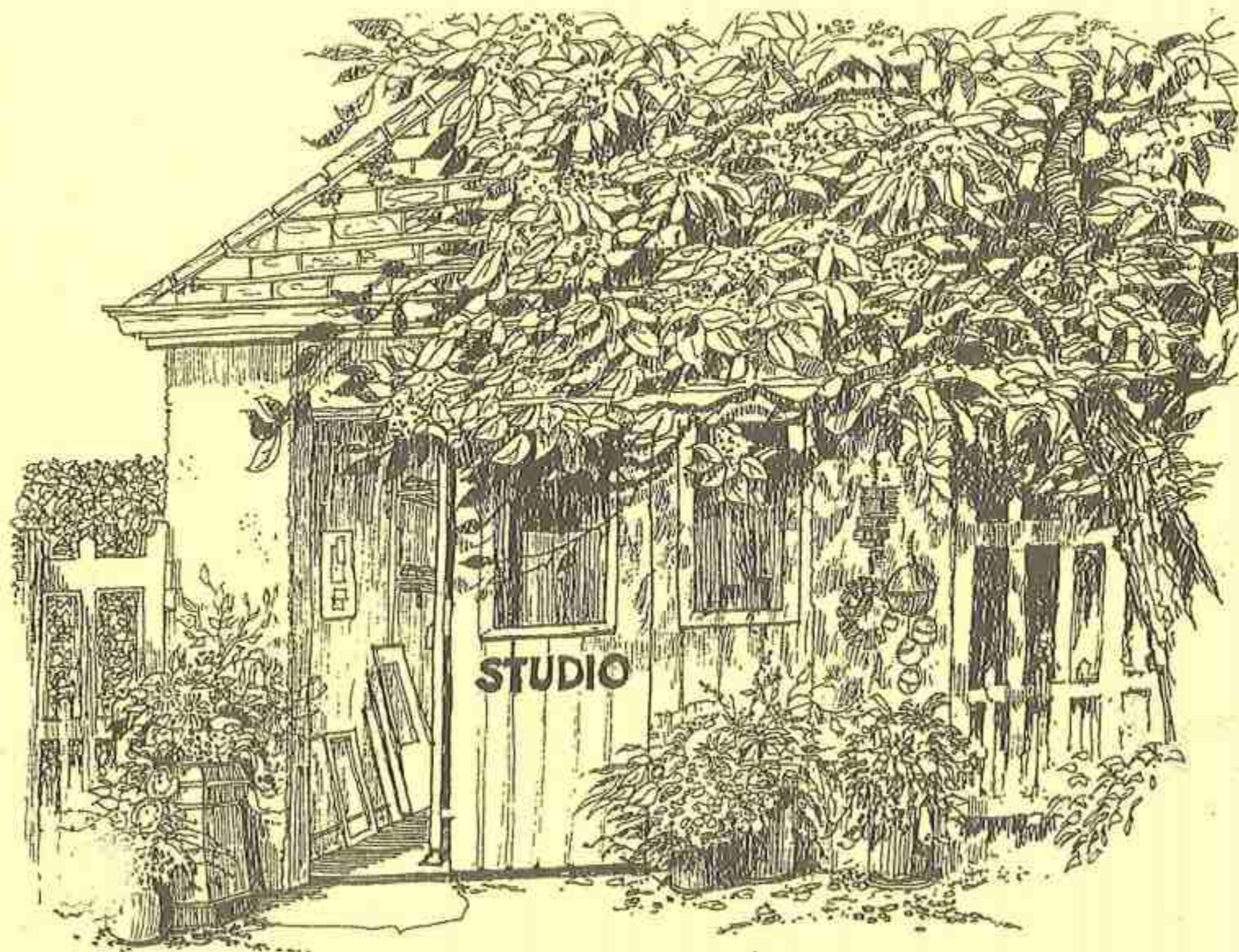
While I was loitering, lots of people arrived and went in, and then I discovered the secret. They all trooped into a small hall (what luxury, not content with one new hall, they now have to have two) and sat down in front of a row of typewriters. They didn't get on with the job of putting paper in and writing their letters, but waited patiently for a senior adult to start teaching them what to do.

Suddenly a funny picture turned up on the front, and a thing called a mouse was put into use. I would have caught it in a trap and put it, and the person using it, out of their misery.

But at last I realised what all the messages on the television at home were about with their references to "slash", "dot" and so on. But who is this Dot Com? I looked her up in the phone book and she doesn't seem to live around here.

Not for me, all this.....or shall I?

Pensioner
(Name & address supplied)



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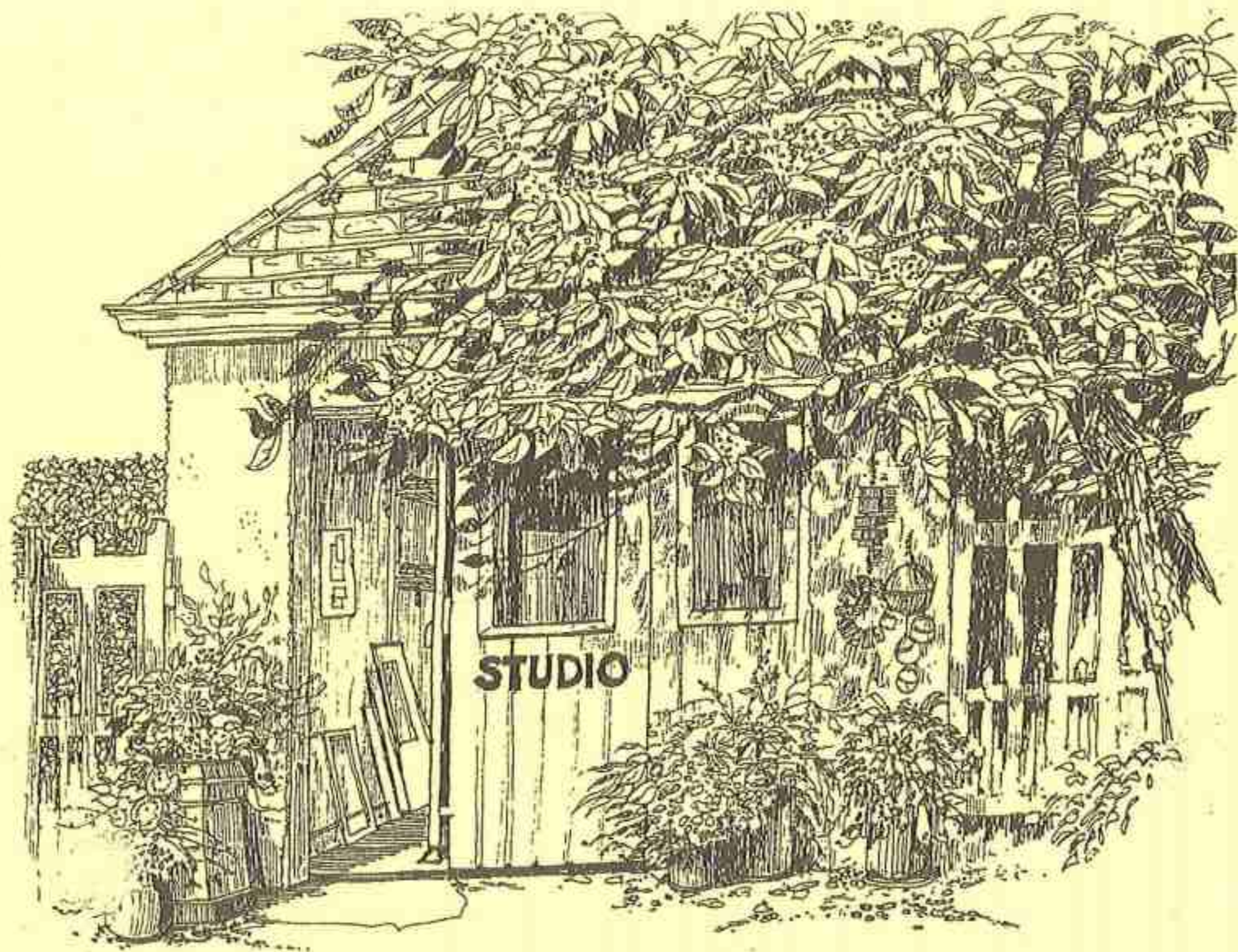
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Parish Council Meetings

6th February & 6th March 2006

News and Views by Citizen

A Tower Block for the Mead?

The meeting on the 6th February was well attended and the first item for discussion was an application to build a two-storey edifice on the new site below Mead Drive.

Protesters were given not very encouraging - but wise - advice by our District Councillor, **Shonaugh Rankin** :

Don't protest *en bloc* as a Residents' Association.

Do write individually as the Planning Committee count the number of protests.

Do check out the Council website for planning policies, because a reference to a policy has more impact than expressions of disgust/despair/frustration!

Poltergeists at work?

Thurlestone is full of strange happenings. First, a green Dalek pops up next to the bus shelter. No one seems to have asked for it. Ivybridge services delivered it and say they want £70.00 to move it somewhere else, even though it has been dumped on private land. It will almost certainly be confused with its black sibling which for some years has comforted dog-walkers on the War Memorial site (which is parish land but not particularly appropriate).

And there's more: a mysterious white van has removed chain-link fencing from the newly-acquired Seaview Green. Foul play is not suspected as it was in terrible shape and would have cost the parish a mint to remove. Obviously the poltergeist has a friendly side to its character.

Road Safety

Can the roads in our parish be made safer for our children? Not if Devon County can help it. They have still done nothing about the promised virtual pavements from the school to the Parish Hall, and to the entrance to the school lane along Downs Road, while the drop-off arrangements in Court Park road are still like Pancho Villa's shooting gallery.

Maybe we would like blinking warning lights, maybe we should have street lights, but then maybe not - the Council have just received a consultation document on light diffusion. Can parents be persuaded to bring back the crocodile on national Walk-to-School Day? Do we qualify for a lollipop person? And what about the three parents who claim to have been given permission by the Council and the police to drop their kids off by stopping on the zig-zag markings outside the school gate? After all, it's not their kids who are at risk.

School Portakabin

The school has applied for permission to keep as permanent the unsightly portakabin which doubles as a music room and teachers' refuge. Some parishioners are unhappy about this, especially as the school, so far, is making no regular use of the new Parish Hall - part of the justification for which was the school's need for additional space.

Buckland sewage

A vote of thanks was given to **Dean & Dyball**, the contractors for the Buckland first-time sewage works, for being so tidy and courteous in their work.

Our District Councillor reports

Good news about the old telephone exchange site *[on the corner of Parkfield, opposite the pub]*. Plans for affordable housing have been drawn up and are available for inspection. A round of applause for our District Councillor.

Bad news about the £2 million increase in rate receipts from second homes which has been funding affordable housing - this has been snaffled for the coming year by Devon County for "more worthwhile objects". Instead, we are to get a new initiative to review housing. *[Noises off at this stage as a bursting balloon interrupted our District Councillor's report]*

And, showing singular courage, **David**

Locke - responsible for Council street cleaning - has agreed to attend our Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 3rd April. Don't miss it! See you there!

POSTSCRIPT

An addition to Citizen's 'Binge Drinking' anthology in the last issue. A recent point-to-point meeting at Buckfastleigh had to be postponed to the following week because of foul weather. As a result, their liquor licence (requiring 10 days' notice) was invalid and the event was run dry. But there - that's Teignbridge Council for you. Parishioners who commute from 'Down Under' will be reminded of the Aussie hit song "The Pub With No Beer".

Citizen

MORE ABOUT A LOCAL HERO

[At Peter Hurrell's recent presentation of old parish photographs, a picture was shown of Henry Sherriff recording the presentation to him of a gold watch, by Commander Evans. Following the show, Hubert Snowdon has sent the following interesting background notes about Henry, a former resident of Bantham.]

Henry Sherriff was shown being presented with a gold watch for the brave rescue he made at low tide from the very dangerous area on the south side of Bantham Sands.

When young, Henry was very strong and good-looking, the heart-throb of all the girls. He worked at delivering bread, by horse van in those days, for his brother Jack, the baker. A young junior teacher at Thurlestone School, Miss Dibshaw (from Plymouth I believe), fell for Henry and made the mistake of riding in the van on Saturdays with him. She tried to hide behind the van's weather curtains, handing out the bread to Henry at each delivery stop.

Unfortunately villagers noticed and tongues began to wag. Henry's reputation was not thought good enough for association with the young teacher and the church school council shipped her back to Plymouth. I had three older sisters at the school at the time (in the 1920s) - I was too young for school then - but remember seeing Miss Dibshaw on occasions.

Henry never married and in his later days lived a solitary life in a caravan. He had a soft speaking voice, but developed a love of drink, especially cider. One day, returning from Thurlestone on his bicycle, and going down the steep hill, unfortunately the forks of his cycle broke, Henry was thrown off and cracked his head open on hitting the road. The men who went to his assistance said his last words before dying were "My dear mother".

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NEWS FROM THE WI



FEBRUARY

We were encouraged to think positively by **Sue Thomas**, our guest speaker, whose talk was called '*How to get what you want from life*'. Make a list of the things you would like more of in life, she urged, and **act** to attain them. Don't just sit around and hope that they'll happen - they won't unless you put in some work!

On 11th February the hall was full of enthusiastic 'Beetlers' who groaned and cheered at each turn of the dice. The prize was, of course, to have a jolly evening, which appeared to be won by everyone. **Roger Cole** was the experienced and admirable 'Beetle Driver'. **Bruce Farr** came first, and the best drawing of a **Beetle** was won by **William**, grandson of **Jan Poyser**. £300 was raised to go towards our charity of the year, the **Prawle Station of Coastwatch**.

MARCH

Best wishes were expressed to **Dorothy Candy** for her speedy recovery following heart surgery and new member **Vida Alexander** was welcomed.

The new hall and its great facilities were much admired by **Sarah Orme** when she came to tell us a little about the history of gardens. Her commentary and slides on gardens were very enjoyable: from the early Roman, monastic and Islamic ones, through the changing fashions brought about by the increase in prosperity of landowners, and the famous horticulturalists who have left their mark through the centuries, such as the **Tradescants**, '**Capability**' **Brown**, **Humphrey Repton** and **Joseph Paxton**, down to the more recent **Gertrude Jekyll** and **Piet Oudolf**.

On Sunday 5th March who would have thought that the original home of the Eiffel Tower was in Thurlestone, even if there was

disagreement about its position? And that the great-grandmothers of the present WI both commissioned and posed for the visiting painters **Picasso**, **Renoir** and **Manet**? Well, there was proof positive on the big screen in the Parish Hall at the '**French Folies**' evening in the suitably decorated, candle-lit **Café René** - and the audience had brought plentiful supplies of wine with which to sustain themselves.

The evening kicked off in decorous mode with '**Clair de Lune**' (Debussy) beautifully played on the piano by **Brian Parker** (Al's brother) who is visiting from Australia. **Jo Parkin** and **Al Parker** then sang, charmingly and poignantly, '*I remember it well*' as sung by **Maurice Chevalier** and **Hermione Gingold** in **Gigi**. **Heather Hickey** and **Ron Parkin** gave us mood-enhancing readings. Heather's, from '*A Year in Provence*', had us salivating with the description of a country café midday meal while Ron told us of a military officer's post-war experiences joining town officials in heavy consumption of '*fine au vin*' in the café in total disregard of the fire raging all around them!

The WI Singers - **Julie**, **Margaret**, **Karen**, **Heather**, **Val L**, **Jo O**, **Shirley B**, **Chris**, **Wendy**, **Lisa** and **Judith L** enthusiastically joined **Edith Piaf** in '*Je ne regrette*' and '*Milord*', followed by '*The Song of Angry Men*' from *Les Misérables*. **Joan Booth** and **Wendy Neukirchen**, looking very *chic* (!) brought the house down with their portrayal of two well-preserved French ladies - albeit pensioners - looking (unsuccessfully) for 'lurve' in Thurlestone.

The announcement of a reading of Milton's poem *Spring* by **Val Brown** suggested a lifting of the tone. Alas, no, as this was the introduction to a farce on the lines of the tv show '*Allo, allo*' with **Wendy** as **Helga** the stripper, **Karen** as **Mama**, **Lisa** as the **Piece**

de Resistance, **Chris** playing Madame Edith, **Judith L** the waitress, supported by **Gordon Field** as Rene. **Val**, increasingly desperate, tried to read the original poem with dignity, but the increasing speed of the stage business meant she had also to quicken the tempo of the reading to a breath-taking pace....but she won.

More songs were followed by an energetic Can-Can (or should that be Can't-Can't?) from Les Danseuses, **Jo, Julie, Val** and **Joan** who, stylishly dressed, kicked up their legs for the sake of art. The evening finished with 'Le Marseillaise'. The participants all thoroughly enjoyed themselves, *and we think the audience did too!* Grateful thanks were expressed to **Chris White** for the lighting and sound, **Malcolm Le Grice** who made the film, and to *La Directrice* of the evening, the one and only **Val Brown**.

March also saw the trips to Denman College, near Abingdon, of three groups of members who, courtesy of the 'Awards for All' grant, were attending courses on (a) walking and winding down (b) learning about the elegance of the Georgian era and (c) drawing and painting.

APRIL EVENTS

Our speaker for April will be a Devon Trading Standards Officer and, in

addition to our members, any visitors are welcome to come to hear what the role involves and to put relevant questions.

On 11th and 12th April there will be a two-day hand-bell ringing tuition course at the Parish Hall which is open to visitors - ring Judith on 562135 to enquire.

On the 20th April members are off to Exeter University for the county Spring Council Meeting.

On the 21st April Thurlstone is the venue for the Sea Coast Group meeting, when WI visitors from South Milton, Salcombe and West Alvington will be joining us for a social afternoon.

On 26th April a group of WI members from the Honiton area will be coming to the Hall for tea.

STORY SACK

It was agreed we should produce a children's Story Sack for Kingsbridge Library which would most probably be based on the book 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Rescue'. These sacks, which contain hand-made toys, games, and items relative to the story, are found to be very popular with small children and an aid to improving reading and stimulating an interest in books. A number of other WIs in the area are also producing similar sacks, based on different books, and all will be on display at the Kingsbridge Show in September.

Annual Parish Meeting

The **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held in the Yeo Room, Thurlstone Parish Hall, on Monday 3rd April at 7.30 pm. At this meeting the Chairman of Thurlstone Parish Council, **Mr Kit Marshall**, will present his annual report and there will be three guest speakers - **Sir Simon Day** (Devon County Councillor), **Ms Shonaugh Rankin** (District Councillor), and **Mr Dave Lock** (Operations Manager from Torr Quarry, and responsible for local street cleaning, litter collection, etc.,) There will also be an **Open Forum** for parishioners to ask questions and express their views.

All residents of the parish of Buckland, Bantham, and Thurlstone are encouraged to attend this Annual Parish Meeting and to exercise the opportunity presented by the **Open Forum**.

*All
Saints*

RECTOR:

Revd. Andrew Girling 562219



Andrew Girling writes:

WINTER AND SPRING

By South Hams standards, it's been a long and miserable winter. We've even had a flutter of snow. Colds and the flu virus seem to have had many of us in their grip as we have coughed and spluttered our way round the villages. Morale is low and there is a deadness of spirit as we try desperately to assure each other that spring is on the way.

Indeed there is plenty of evidence of new life. Daffodils are 'fluttering and dancing in the breeze'. Those buds which have not succumbed to the ravages of frost are pregnant with life. The sun shimmers on the sand and surf. Nature is reawakening.

Yet there is a harsher winter holding so much of the world in its thrall. The dead destructive cold of violence and fear, of hunger and poverty, of disease and disaster. The war in Iraq has opened a Pandora's box of sectarian strife which no one knows how to close. The Aids virus seems to eat into the souls as well as the bodies of millions of sufferers. Corrupt regimes exploit their own citizens and laugh mockingly at the so-called guardians of justice in the West. The disillusionment that so quickly breeds apathy and inertia are at times too close to the surface for comfort. But even here there are real grounds for hope.

Let's take heart in the resurgent spirit of idealism among the young: the growing realisation for many that wealth and possessions lack value without community and peace and justice. Look at the number of people actively engaged in a spiritual search for meaning and purpose. The acorn of hope planted in the hearts of many peoples and the leaders of 'making poverty history' are all making their own contribution in donations to charities and the commitment to buying fair trade goods. The oak tree in all its fullness and glory will take years of careful nurture and care to grow but we have a dream and dreams can come true, if we work for them.

Meanwhile there is no better way to keep hope alive than by celebrating the unique triumph of love over evil, of justice over corruption, of life over death that is revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Here is God's victory over sin and the conclusive demonstration that ultimately love will triumph. Spring not winter, life not death, have the last word.

But He needs all of us to play our part.

Andrew



Everyone is welcome at all services,
which are at Thurlestone, unless indicated otherwise

Sundays

8.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd, 5th BCP, 2nd, 4th CW)

11.10am Morning Worship for All Ages

11.10am Matins (BCP)

11.10am Family Communion (CW)

11.10am Parish Eucharist (CW)

Thursdays

10.00am Holy Communion (BCP) at Bantham

9.00am Holy Communion (CW)

8.30am Informal Prayer

BCP = Book of Common Prayer CW = Common Worship * = change from normal pattern

See Church Notice Boards for variations & more information

Holy Week & Easter Services

10.15am Palm Sunday Procession with pony from Parish

10.30am Hall to church for Morning Worship for All Ages

6.00pm Benefice Eucharist (CW)

10.00am Family Service at South Milton

2.00pm Last Hour Devotion

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) with hymns

11.10am Easter Day Family Communion (CW)

Other Benefice Services

3.00pm Rogation Service - Higher Leigh Farm, Churchstow

6.00pm Benefice Eucharist at West Alvington

You would be welcome to join us for any of these *Activities*

10.30am Coffee-Time in aid of monthly charity in MR

3.30pm Searchlight (primary) in MR

2.45pm Films for All in MR

April: Pride & Prejudice
May: Tea with Mussolini

1.45pm Under Fives in MR

6.00pm All Saints' Rock Club (secondary) in PH/MR

12.30pm Ploughman's Lunch in MR for new church lighting

12.30pm Lunch Club in MR for those living alone - please book on 560090

MR = Church Meeting Room

PH = Parish Hall

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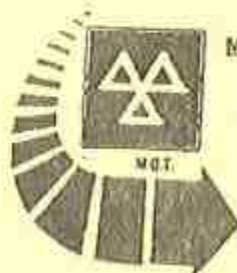
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HARRY HUGGINS & THE TWITCHERS

Last autumn we had an invasion of rare birds, and of twitchers who came to see them. Which makes us ask "What is a twitcher, and why do we call them that?"

Mark Cocker, in *'Birders: tales of a tribe'* says that, put at its most simple, twitching is the pursuit of rare birds. In the popular imagination it involves travel - young men (there aren't many women - they're not so daft) in scruffy anoraks and woolly hats hitch-hiking, or riding five or six in a battered Mini, from one end of Britain to the other and back again. That is how Bill Oddie describes them in his *'Little Black Bird Book'*. All those are middle-aged now, and successful journalists or television presenters or running birding tour companies. I wonder if young ones have taken their place?

But you don't have to travel. You can look out of the window. Here in Devon June saw one of the rarest birds we have seen in Britain - a Sub-alpine Warbler, Blue Tit sized, grey on top, orangey on its breast, with red rims around its eyes and a white moustache. The books say they summer around the Mediterranean. We found them only in what is now Montenegro - it was Yugoslavia then. She watched it from indoors while I chased it with a camera - all very embarrassing because the Brigadier and his lady, who lived next door, were having a drinks party and the hedge was not as thick as it is now.

It kept hiding in the bushes but eventually I got a picture which the rarities committee accepted. That bird was 'suppressed'. To twitchers suppression is the most heinous of sins - keeping quiet about what you have seen, thus denying them the chance of something for their lists. To be fair, we did tell a couple of very distinguished birders who said (a) "It won't stay" - but it did, for four days, and (b) "You don't want 400 twitchers swarming over your gardens, do you?" She saw her Black Stork from the garden (we didn't suppress that one....she couldn't find anyone to tell), and her White Tailed Eagle went so fast it was impossible to let anyone know.

If twitching is the pursuit of rare birds, you have to think what is rare. Sometimes it is obvious. That Ancient Murrelet (a bit like a Puffin but smaller) which they found off Lundy was the

first for Europe and for the Atlantic - never previously seen away from the North Pacific. You can't help wondering whether someone had released it, like what happened with the White Sheathbill (colloquially known as a Paddy) which turned up on the waterfront in Plymouth. This looks like a chicken (though it is a seabird not a chicken). The book says they breed in South Georgia and other islands of the far south, and in Antarctica. They live by scavenging among the colonies of penguins and seals, eating anything remotely suggestive of food. Some disperse as far as South America, and will land on ships. Paddy must have done just that, as he appeared on a dockside in Plymouth after the fleet came back from the Falklands. Sailors must have had him for a pet and dumped him overboard when their ship paid off.

Many birders want to see birds which are not the rarest of the rare. Cirl Buntings for example. Said to be commoner than they were. Many birders going to and from the Isles of Scilly stop off to try and see one. When we lived in Essex a friend complained sadly that he came to Devon and spent fifteen hours searching (he used to time himself - what a bind) without finding one. Likewise Wrynecks. About twenty birders were in South Milton Ley looking for a Spotted Crake, a reed bed skulker. On our way in we found a Wryneck. I stayed to keep an eye on it while June went to tell the birders. She just managed to gasp out "Wry...." before she was almost knocked down in the rush.

A rare bird can be something we may regard as common - it depends where you are. In the early nineties we went to Eilat in the south of Israel. Beside the canal, a couple of miles from our hotel, was a large open hut where people measured, weighed, ringed, then released birds which they had caught. Before dawn they erected nets among the nearby tamarisk trees and we went along as it got light to watch the proceedings for a couple of hours until they took in the nets and departed. Then we went also, back to our hotel for breakfast.

We saw all sorts of migrants passing through Israel on their way to Africa. The bird which caused the greatest excitement was a Dunnock, a little dark brown thing with a greyish head and

one of the commonest birds in our gardens. We don't know how many we have, must be half a dozen. They remain concealed in the bushes most of the time. Interesting little birds; the experts say they have a love life an account of which even the "*News of the World*" would be reluctant to publish. Ours stay with us all year, living on insects and the remnants of sunflower seeds which finches drop from the feeders. The books show that some summer in northern Russia. No food for them there in winter and they migrate south to Turkey and countries around the Mediterranean, including the coast of Israel. But the books don't say they go as far south as Eilat, on the Red Sea. No wonder the folks in the ringing hut were excited!

So why do we call them 'Twitchers'? I used to think it was really "tickers" - ticking off birds on a list. Sometimes I still do. But the said Mark Cocker explains otherwise. In the 1950s Britain's first rarities committee was formed. Hitherto I think rarities had been reported in *British Birds*. There are several such publications now, but then it was the only one which was reasonably middle-brow. The editor, a very well-respected ornithologist, decided whether or not a record should be accepted. There was a kerfuffle because one distinguished gentleman wrote in about a Bee Eater and was asked for a description. He refused, on the grounds that a Bee Eater is quite unmistakable (Bee Eater is an unlovely name for about the most beautiful bird in Europe) - blue, orange, yellow and green with yellow throat and quite unmistakable flight. Its calls are equally beautiful - you hear these bubbling trills as a flock flies towards you.

After this squabble it was decided to form a rarities committee, ten of them, to say what was acceptable or otherwise. One Howard Medhurst was a member of the first committee, and he gave himself the task of going to see any bird within striking distance of London. He went on the back of a motor-cycle driven by one Bob Emmett, and they were accompanied by a husband and wife on another motor-cycle. It could be a cold business. This couple didn't get so cold because riding between them was their little dog - she kept his back warm and likewise his wife's tummy. When they got to their destination Medhurst was usually frozen stiff and shivering. Twitching, he called it, and the practice arose that they all shivered. Each

birding trip was therefor called "being on a twitch", and the term caught on.

Whether you believe this story or not is up to you. If it is true, what the rarities committee did in those early days must have been different to what happened more recently. When we reported rarities, which never did happen very often and which doesn't happen at all now, we had to send a form to the county recorder. Maybe we didn't have a form and had to ask for one. Also we had to wait until our photographs were processed. Then after we sent the form and the pictures to him he would mull about them for a bit and maybe ask some questions, after which he would send the form to the secretary of the rarities committee. Usually he waited until he had a batch to send. The secretary passed the forms to be members of the committee; they were sent by post and took some time to go round to all of them. By the time each member had seen the forms, any birds were likely to have flown away or been eaten by a predator.

Rare birds do sometimes stick around - the Lesser Yellowlegs (an American vagrant) we found on the Avon stayed from the end of November 1981 to the end of March 1982, and maybe after that for all I know. But usually a rare bird remains for a day or two only, often less than that. Once we met a very bitter twitcher near Soar Warren, close to Bolt Head. He had come from London to see a Bonelli's Warbler, a miserable-looking little thing from the Mediterranean. It had gone; I tried to console him - wasn't really worth looking at and there were other things in the area. For some reason that made him even more bitter.

The question arises - where do twitchers get their information? However good a birder you are, and some are very good indeed, if you want to see 400+ birds in Britain in a year, or have a British life list of 550 or thereabouts you are not going to find them all for yourself. You can start a year list on the 1st of January - Robin, Wren, Blackbird, the easy ones, plus any rare ones left over from last year - but to get to a big total you must include some rarities and not miss out on any that are found. If Joe Soap sees one that you have not got, he is going to get a bigger list than you, so a real twitcher has to see other people's birds.

Bill Oddie wrote about being on Portland Bill, a

hot spot for migrant birds. He was doing a film for the BBC - he insisted they chose the place, not him. When he wasn't wanted for a bit he wandered off and found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, an American vagrant. There was a bird observatory there then - maybe still is for all I know - you could stay overnight and be involved with netting and ringing migrants birds. There is a big hut at Slapton for such a purpose. He told a few of the people at the observatory about the Cuckoo but as it was on private land they agreed not to publicise it. None the less, in the next few days over a thousand twitchers turned up. When the bird disappeared so did they - instantly. Someone must have told someone else and the news spread over the grapevine.,

There were 'clearing houses' for information. A pub on St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly is one. Another notable one was Nancy's Café at Cley (pronounced Cle) on the north Norfolk coast.



This was conducted in the little dining room of a tiny house on the main street. There Nancy served good nourishing food at inordinately cheap prices to impecunious young birders. A favourite place to spend the night was the so-called 'Beach Hotel' at Cley - four benches, each

facing in a different direction, with a roof over - no walls and the sides were completely open (I wonder how much they slept?). No, we never patronised it, must have stopped the car outside it when watching Snow Buntings and Shore Larks amid the swirling snowflakes, but I don't recall it and we retreated to the comfort of the Maltings at Weybourne for hot baths and a comfortable bed.

Any news about birds on the north Norfolk coast and elsewhere was telephoned in to Nancy's. She kept a note of it; usually there were birders there and the nearest on to the telephone had to answer. In the late 80s the café closed and Nancy died. But by that time the premium phone lines

had come along and a couple of entrepreneurs started *Birdline*. When we had the Whiskered Tern in our valley in April 1987, a young friend asked if we would mind if he put it on *Birdline*. We said go ahead - the perfect place; the bird was in the valley (then flooded because they were rebuilding the bridge by the Golf Club); there was parking, loos, and the bird was quite close. They came in force, followed it when it commuted to the Avon, and gladdened the heart of the little man who ran the then filling station at Aveton Gifford. He sold more petrol than at any weekend before or since. If you want *Birdline*, the national one is on 09068-700222 and the South West one on 09068-700241. Either will set you back 60p per minute.

But it hasn't rested with *Birdline*. Pagers followed - you can carry those about, and mobile phones too so you can ring your friends. Now there is the Internet. No, not for me - Kendall McDonald says I am a Luddite, and so I am. But that will give you the latest information. You could have seen the South Huish Black-faced Watgail pictured on it. In fact, why go to see the bird at all? Like sport on television, you can see far better than if you were actually there!

I read that a couple of years ago the Internet carried photographs of a Little Egret. There is often one in Thurlstone valley. If you want really close views go to Kingsbridge at low tide and look in the stream just below the loos on the Quay. But this Egret was on the west coast of Scotland, off Argyll. You wouldn't expect a Little Egret there. It is a southern species, almost unheard of in Britain until about twenty years ago, since when it has been spreading in the south, and breeding. But this Scottish bird *wasn't* a Little Egret. It was a Snowy Egret from America. Snowy Egret doesn't appear in detail in any of my bird books. But some bright spark recognised it for what it was. *Bird Watching* magazine carried a photograph and you could see this bird's bill was just a little bit different from that of a Little Egret.

There is a moral in this. *Look hard at anything you see, especially at flocks of birds. Among those boring Herring Gulls there may well be one with yellow legs - now scheduled as a different species, so you get another tick!*

Harry Huggins

BOOKSHELF

The Conjuror's Bird

by Martin Davies

(Hodder & Stoughton £10.00)

I have recently read so many books that were utter rubbish I began to despair of finding one worthy of recommendation, but at last I have succeeded.

This is a gem of a book, beautifully written, every word counting, worthy of all the glowing adjectives one can ascribe to it; gripping, intriguing, erudite and poignant, with a captivating love story.

There are two, inter-related, narratives spanning 200 years, one the story of Joseph Banks, the naturalist and collector who accompanied Cook on his epic voyage, the other the tale of John Fitzgerald a taxidermist who became involved in the search for the remains of an extinct bird *Turdus ulientis*, the mysterious Bird of Ulieta, an island in the South Pacific, which had been collected on Cook's second voyage.

These two stories and the intrigue and machinations involved keep one spellbound from beginning to end. You will probably not read a better book this year - and it is worth buying if only for its beautiful cover!

GW

Labyrinth

by Kate Mosse

(Orion £9.99)

I see this book is now top of the paperback chart. There is no doubt that it is a very good book, and that Kate Mosse is a gifted writer, but I am sorry to say that although I liked the story - which deals with the search for the Holy Grail - and thought it rather better than Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, for me it

was far too long and convoluted. Its 517 pages were too much of a test for my stamina and concentration.

It is based on Carcassonne (where the author has a house) and the surrounding beautiful countryside, so for those of you who know that wonderful city and the region it will provide an added interest.

GW

The Alchemist's Daughter

by Katherine McMahon

(Orion £9.99)

Because they are not written to pander to the lowest common denominator, I like to find books which are not "chart-toppers", as they are often of a higher standard than many of the well publicised best-sellers. This is just such a book, and reveals an author of exceptional intellect and imagination.

Without going into detail - which would spoil the ultimate fascination of this novel - it is the story of the very chequered life of a girl who, from an early age, was brought up by her father in a cloistered life-style which consisted solely of inducting her into the science and mysteries of alchemy, in which she came to excel.

The first part of the book is enchanting, the middle part is poignant, disturbing, and at times sordid, but the end is so much more wonderful than one could ever have expected.

This is a truly high class novel with an excellent story, and a book that you should not miss. Moreover, at £9.99 for a hardback edition, it is remarkably good value!

GW

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(As featured in *The Times*, Monday to Saturday)

2	8						6	1
				6				
4			3		2			5
9	1		5		8		2	3
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No. 7

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Easy

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Medium

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9	3	5	6	7	2	1	4	8
1	8	4	5	9	3	7	2	6
7	2	6	4	8	1	5	3	9

Congratulations to **Lisa White**, 5 Mead Lane, who sent in the only all-correct answer to our prize competition in the last issue. The correct solutions are shown on the left, for those who may still be struggling. Lisa wins the prize of a Sudoku book.

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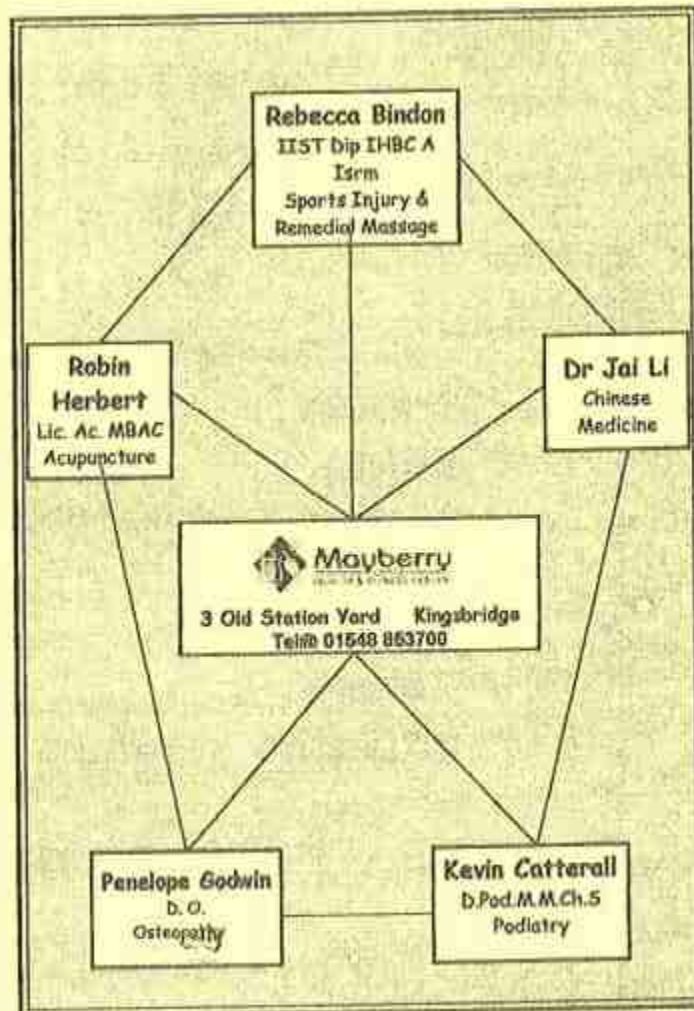
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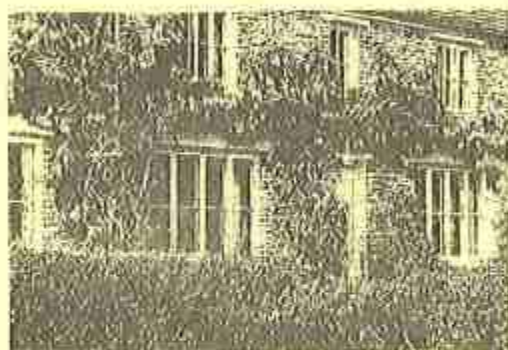
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HORSWELL DIARY

At last, here I am back in Africa, amidst all its diversity; immersed in the heat and the dust and the clamour and corruption of it. From the dark looks of an airport official seeking sly back-handers to the delighted grin of recognition from my driver Matthew, already it feels as if I am back where I belong. "Where is Bwana?" Matthew asks, surprised to see me travelling alone. "Bwana is very busy in England" I explain. "He cannot come with me this time." "Pole" he replies, looking genuinely sad. I picture 'Bwana' walking down the driveway at Horswell to feed the ducks by the pond. I see him surrounded by dogs, trailed by a retinue of peacocks and guinea fowl. I imagine him stopping to admire a favourite camellia or bending to pick up a daffodil snapped off by the wind and send him a mental hug of gratitude for understanding my desperate need to escape the grey English climate.

Matthew edges our vehicle through the city out onto the pot-holed main road for our two hour bone-shaking ride north to Watamu. Traffic swirls around us: The local mini-buses, garishly sign-written with slogans such as *Prisoner of Hope* or *Jesus is Bwana* race from one stop to the next, screeching to a halt in a cloud of roadside dust as they compete for passengers. Rusting, over-laden trucks hog the centre road pushing us to the very limit of the tarmac as we swerve to avoid them. Men on bicycles hold their line with barely a shudder... and admirable nerve.

Out in the country Police at road-blocks wave us by, supplementing their meagre and inconsistent wages with fines from easier prey than troublesome tourists. Progress is slow as we jostle behind a man pushing a crude wooden barrow laden with pineapples and another man struggling to balance a whole heap of bananas across the handlebars of his scooter. An elderly Masai, tall, elegant and upright walks beside us, one hand held high to use his wooden spear as a walking stick. The folds of his red cloak are thick with dust, his bare feet encased in shoes made from the rubber tread of a car tyre. To be here he will have walked many, many lonely miles from his native grasslands of the Mara. I look from him to the strings of 'Trainers' tied by their laces that hang from a nearby stall. He returns my sympathetic smile with a wide grin of brown stained teeth.

Clouds of brilliant bougainvillea, vermilion,

orange, purple and magenta, sprawl over tin roofs and garden walls, wreathed in a haze of smoke from the burning rubbish heaped on the roadside. At night, brown and white goats with black tufts on their ears and down the length of their spine, sleep on the warmth of the fires' dying embers, but now they pick over the smouldering heaps looking for food.

Our journey takes us through banana plantations and rolling fields of sisal, through impoverished townships and sleepy settlements, arriving at last in an oasis of civilization and beauty on the edge of the ocean. "Jambo! Karibu!" "Hello! Welcome!" call a continuous stream of familiar faces. In minutes, having exchanged clothes for a swimsuit, I am floating through warm turquoise waters, looking back at an expanse of pure white sand as wide as the sky. Mmmmm!.....Kenyaah!

On Sunday I accompanied my friend Elizabeth to church. Over the years that I have known her my admiration for Elizabeth continues to grow. She used to live with a lazy and abusive husband who cheated on her with other women. The fear of AIDS was a real concern. Gradually she realised she must leave him, but she could not because she was expecting her second child. After the birth of little Tina she plucked up courage, took her two children and left home. Now she lives with them and her younger sister in one small room of a rented house. While her sister Fomina looks after the children, Elizabeth tries to earn as much as she can by making and selling kikoi (sarongs) on the beach.

She has managed to lease or buy a small plot of land nearby. Now, every time that she has saved 1,000 shillings - £9 to us, but a small fortune to her - she buys a load of cement and a load of coral bricks. In two years she has managed to build two rooms of a tiny house. By my next visit she hopes to have built on a living room and maybe even a tin roof. Her excitement and optimism are contagious. I feel so proud of all that she has achieved. And of her courage. In native Kenya a woman without a man is deemed to have no status. She is extremely vulnerable to unwelcome attention, possibly even rape. For that reason Elizabeth insists that I carry her bible on our walk to church "So that they will respect you."

We walk along the beach then cut up through palm trees to the road. Her son Benson holds my hand as if he will never let it go, melting my heart as he gazes up at me with adoring eyes and the toothy-

est, gappy-est, gummy- est grin imaginable. A *matatu* or minibus swoops to a halt beside us. The words *God is Glorious* are sprayed like graffiti across its battered but colourful paintwork and the whole vehicle seems to vibrate with the volume of the pop-music blaring within.

A wave of heat escaped as the side door slid open. It was clear that every seat was occupied by at least one person but somehow I climbed in with Ben on my lap, Elizabeth, Formina and baby Tina squeezing in somewhere behind me. I counted 17 of us plus the driver all jammed in together. Someone's child climbed onto my lap beside Ben. The woman next to me stroked my blond hair, insisting that her husband combed his fingers through it too. The driver asked if I supported Manchester United.

A couple of miles up the road we parted from our fellow passengers like long lost friends, with handshakes (thumb, palm, thumb), high fives and exuberant smiles all round. We walked in the dust through a village of palm-thatched mud houses, their dark interiors revealing an almost total lack of possessions. Young mothers with blank faces sat outside nursing babies, with young children playing at their feet. Old men wandered about amiably, poking at this and that with their sticks, rather like old goats fossicking over the rubbish, while younger men were conspicuous by their absence.

The air was filled with a terrible noise. It sounded like the over-amplified commentary from a sports stadium or a race track. "What is that?" I asked Elizabeth. "We are a little late" she replied. "The preacher has already started."

I imagined a huge arena and a Billy Graham style rally, so was surprised to discover the church was one of the classrooms in the local school. A small whitewashed room with windowless windows and neat rows of small wooden desks and benches. It was already so full that we had to sit in the front row, just inches away from a wall of speakers more suited to the amplification of a Rolling Stones rock concert than a single man in a tiny room.

The first preacher was a jovial man with music in his soul and rhythm in every movement of his body. He side-stepped across the room loose-limbed and bendy, shifting his weight from back to front to lean into the crowd and reinforce his message. For an hour he jabbed the air and pranced around the room, floating like a butterfly and stinging like a bee, yelling God's

word (Swahili) into the microphone loud enough to awaken the dead. Then the choir sang and did a shy little dance after which the second preacher, whom I had already marked out by his over-enthusiastic reactions to all that was going on, worked himself up into a lather in no time at all.

He had a face like a hyena and eyes black with fire. Sweat drenched his purple shirt as he ran back and forth across the room, darting down the aisles to sneer and rant like a mad man, snorting and spitting in what looked to be a torrent of anger. Momentarily he would retreat, then with renewed vigour, sidestep across the room and jab, jab at us like a fencer lunging towards us, as if to pierce our hearts with the tip of his foil. It was horrendous! I thought my ears would never recover from the decibels of his oration, let alone the invective. Even the ants in the spine of Elizabeth's bible scurried away in fright. Elizabeth pointed to the passage in the Book of Isaiah that we were meant to be studying, but even with that as guidance it was hard to find any correlation between Isaiah's quiet words and the passionate display that I was witnessing.

The best bit was worth waiting for. For his finale, on a high of euphoria, he exhorted the congregation to shout to heaven the loudest Alleluya that they possibly could, just in case God had not heard us. (Huh! Some chance of that!) "Alleluya!" he shouted, winding us up. "Alleluyaaa!" we shouted back. "Louder!" he said. "God cannot hear you." "Alleluyaaaaaaa!" we replied, nearly lifting the roof off with the noise. "Still not loud enough!" he said. "One last time! Are you ready? Three, two, one...." Everyone jumped for joy, leaping into the air higher and higher, again and again, feet thundering on the floor, hands waving above our heads. "ALLELUYAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" we yelled back, so loudly that we drowned out the ear-shattering feed-back from the microphone. After which, with our eardrums winnowing with pain it seemed an opportune moment to escape before the laying-on of hands and the convulsive faints got too out of hand.

For lunch we dined on mangoes, soda-pop and a small iced cake cut into five. Formina plaited my hair while Benson and Tina, who have never seen a toy, played quietly beside us: Benson using the hairbrush as an imaginary mobile phone and Tina playing with the 'tea-set' she had made from the two caps from our soda bottles. Elizabeth walked me 'home' along the beach.

We both agreed it had been a perfect African Sunday.

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KATES KITCHEN



SPRING CHICKEN! (Serves 4)

A straightforward, one-dish main course using tender chicken and seasonal vegetables. Serve simply with warm fresh, bread.

Ingredients:

4 uncooked chicken breasts cut into thick slices

Stock for poaching:

1 pint chicken stock (may be made with good quality chicken stock cubes)

1 finely chopped small onion

Small bunch of fresh thyme tied together (or a good pinch of dried thyme)

Vegetables: (can be substituted when seasonal - e.g., garden peas, runner beans, courgettes, etc.)

2 medium leeks cut in half lengthways, cleaned and thinly sliced

3 celery stalks trimmed and sliced thinly

1 red or orange pepper cut in half lengthways, seeds removed and sliced thinly

200g (½ lb) shelled broad beans (may be frozen)

200g (½ lb) fine green beans cut into small pieces

200g (½ lb) broccoli cut into small florets

½ bunch spring onions, trimmed and cut into small pieces

Sauce:

50g (2oz) butter 25g (1oz) plain flour

½ pt crème fraîche

approx ½ pt stock used for poaching chicken

rounded teaspoon Dijonnaise mustard

zest and juice of ½ a lemon or lime

freshly ground salt and pepper

Preparation:

Bring chicken stock to simmer in a wide, shallow pan.

Put in chicken slices, chopped onion and bunch of thyme.

Continue to simmer for about 5 minutes until the chicken is just cooked and remains moist.

Remove chicken and place in casserole dish. Reserve the stock.

Bring large pan of salted water to the boil. Add all vegetables except broccoli and spring onions.

Bring back to the boil and cook for 4-5 minutes. Add broccoli florets for the last minute.

Strain through a colander, add to casserole and mix with the chicken pieces and spring onions

Melt butter in pan, add flour and mix well off the heat.

Return to low heat and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring all the time.

Add the stock a little at a time to begin with and stir on a low/medium heat until the sauce thickens and coats the back of the spoon.

Add mustard, seasoning (you will not need a lot of salt if you have used a stock cube), juice and zest of lemon or lime.

Stir in the crème fraîche.

Pour over the chicken and vegetables.

Cover and cook in the middle of a moderate oven for about 30 minutes.

Serve sprinkled with parsley - and enjoy!



At the Bridge Table



How often do we arrive in a contract, view the dummy - and see that we appear to have one more loser than we can afford? Not infrequently, in my case, but here is an example of how two apparent losers can be reduced to one. The bidding was as follows:

W	N	E	S
2 Spades	Double	Pass	3 Hearts
Pass	3 Spades	Pass	5 Hearts
Pass	6 Hearts	All Pass	

The 2 Spades was weak, showing six cards in the suit, and the 3 Spades from North showed a big hand with at least three card Heart support.

From the bidding declarer knew that East could only have a singleton Spade and most likely four trumps. His plan was to trump two Clubs and one Diamond in hand and hence arrive at twelve tricks via AKQ of both red suits, AK of Clubs, the Ace of Spades and three ruffs. A neat play considering that there appears to be a certain Spade loser, and most likely a trump loser.

The best play is to start by winning the Ace of Spades, cash the AK of Hearts, then come over to the AK of Clubs, ruff a Club, and then back to the Ace of Diamonds to ruff dummy's last Club. Finally, return to dummy with a Diamond, cash a third Diamond, then trump dummy's last Diamond to leave yourself with the Queen of Hearts as the 12th trick. This works well when East's shape is 1-4-4-4 and also works when East is 1-3 in the majors and 5-4 or 4-5 in the minors. The idea is to arrange for two of the defenders' winners to collide. Here it happens at trick twelve, when you concede a Spade to West but East has to trump it and give the last trick to dummy's Queen of Hearts.

Here is a reminder about using **McKinney** type signals when defending. You will remember that the basic idea is that a discard says "Don't lead this suit. If my discard is a low card, lead the lower ranking of the other two suits - and vice versa". The same principle applies when you lead a card expecting partner to take the trick by trumping or otherwise.

The contract is 1 No Trump by South. West starts with the 8 of Hearts. Declarer realises that West would have led the King from KQJ so he rises with the Ace in the hope that this will either drop an honour from East or block the suit. East cannot afford to unblock the Jack and so plays the six.

Declarer then set about Diamonds by running the nine to West's Jack. The play to trick one indicated that East now held the bare Jack of Hearts, because otherwise South would not have played the Ace. So West must continue with a low Heart - but which one? West should select the nine as a clear suit preference for East to return the high suit, Spades. If East shifts to the Jack of Spades after taking Jack of Hearts, declarer will lose two Spades, Four Hearts, and a Diamond. The tip here is that when setting up a long suit you can often give partner a suit preference signal to show where your outside entry lies.

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A PASSION FOR WEAVING

by Sue Dwyer

The Devon Weavers' Workshop is about to have its First Birthday party, and the six weavers who started the group are wondering where the past year has gone!

The group started at Dartington in the mid 1980s as a craft class and when the tutor died in 1990 the weavers stayed together as a self-help group. In 2000 the trustees at Dartington decided that they wanted the weaving space for the print maker and, despite a fight, the weavers were displaced. Due to the generosity of one member and her husband - **Erdmunda and Eric Symon** - the group were allowed to move into their unoccupied granny flat. Buying their own premises in such a high-price area was out of the question for the weavers, who also needed adequate parking as heavy looms were often brought from home which made walking for any distance impossible.

Although the flat was small it did allow them to continue meeting weekly but after four years of procrastination the remaining five younger members decided to try and find somewhere. It was at this stage I was asked to join them. I had been a member for a short time in 1997 but needed tuition, so I had decided to work for the *Certificate of Achievement* organised by the *Association of Guilds of Weavers Spinners & Dyers*. I went weekly to Taunton to further this aim, but began to find the trip arduous. I attained a Distinction in my exam but, if you are not careful, weaving can become a very isolating hobby. I also wanted somewhere to put my larger floor looms!

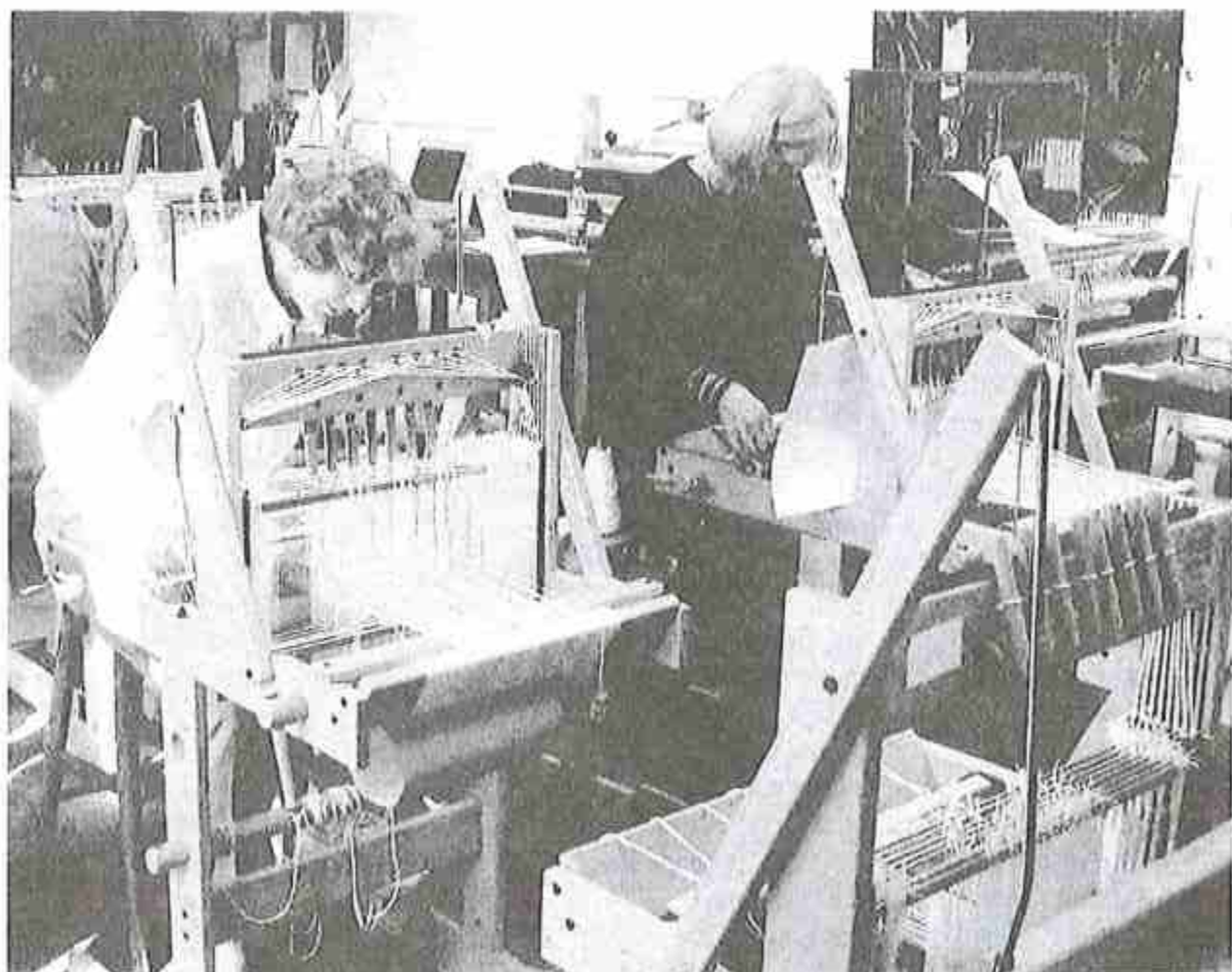
Erdmunda told us of some workshops that were being built near **Ashprington**, which seemed just what we needed. Rent and rates were quite high, so we had to decide how to finance the operation. I had taught medical students and trainee general practitioners in

my past life and, with my weaving exams now over, felt I could teach weaving at the new premises to help financially. We were fortunate, and overjoyed, to obtain Lottery funding and could then buy **eight state-of-the-art modern looms** - our old looms were not up to the job of teaching students. Our next step was to become a charity so that we were eligible for some benefits, such as rate rebates.

In May 2005 I had my first class of five students, none of whom had woven before. They signed up for six Saturday whole-day sessions. I strongly believe that if students are going to continue with any craft they should feel their first product is a success and be proud of it and that they should use lovely yarns. As I travel a lot I have some wonderful alpaca from Peru, wool/silk mixtures and cottons from the USA and I was amazed at the quality of the weaving that was achieved.

Several times a year we have two and three day **specialist courses** for intermediate weavers. I have also run two more **beginner courses** and as I go to Ashprington on Tuesdays those who are able to come then can complete their course in three weeks. Most have stayed on and bought a loom for themselves. We now have 22 members, the originators have become trustees of the charity, and our monthly payments, high at the start, have come down - not as low as we would like though. We also have outside tutors coming in - in September an American to teach Navajo rug weaving and in October an excellent weaver to teach us how to make silk braids on a loom (for edging lampshades and making curtain tie-backs) and for this we have about 60 warp ends per inch.

I now look at fabrics in a new way. I see something I like and write down how it is



Weavers at work at in the Devon Weavers Workshop at Ashprington

made, or take photographs to analyse later. I find this happens to the students too, as they come in and say "I have seen something I want to weave" and then I help them draft the fabric. I have two computer-driven looms that allow many possibilities in fabric design.

In the future we may have trial weaving days so anyone can come and weave for a day as a 'taster'.

My beginners classes are different. Students learn from the start how to make a warp, dress the loom, thread the loom, tie on and then weave. This is the part I really enjoy. It is so orderly and precise as well as being mathematical. I am helped in teaching by a computer programme in which it is possible

to get a good idea of what the end product will look like.

On 8th April there is an Open Day at the workshop, from 10 am to 4 pm, and anyone is welcome to come along and visit us. A couple of looms will be threaded up so visitors can have a try.

To find us, take the Ashprington turning to the right which is sign-posted at the top of the hill going down towards Totnes on the Kingsbridge/Totnes road. Follow this road for about 1.4 miles when you will see a sign saying "Caution Workshops Entrance" and the entrance is about 100 yards further on. Our workshop is straight ahead. I do hope some of you will come. I can be contacted on 01548-560648 or sue@ddwyer.f2s.com

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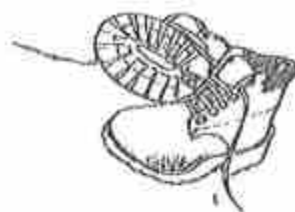
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TRAMP



1 Our first walk for 2006 took place on 11th January. What a fantastic start to the year! Only eight very fortunate adults with two black labs met on a wonderful January day for an excursion into that foreign country known as Cornwall.

Getting to the start of the walk involved a drive to Cremyll, a foot-ferry boat crossing of the Tamar and a double-decker bus journey from Mount Edgumbe to the village of Rame. All went well with the connections, so there we were, after a very few minutes, walking and gazing westwards along the beautiful Whitsand Bay on a peerless winter's day. A brisk one-and-a-half hours later we were in the Cawsand Bay Hotel restaurant, overlooking the sea and having a wonderful "senior citizen's" lunch.

There was only one blemish - although the food was wonderful, it took an awfully long time to reach us! Thus, as we returned through Edgumbe Park the ferry's timetable constraints struck home and the last half-mile became a slightly undignified rush for some of the party to ensure they made the 4.00 pm ferry.

But everyone really enjoyed the day - one person saying that it was the best walk she had ever been on. Praise indeed.

RH

2 There was a good turnout of fifteen walkers and four dogs on 23rd January for the first short walk of the year in the Bigbury area.

One new walker and one visitor joined the regulars on a dry but chilly day. A traffic blockage in the lane into Thurlestone resulted in the four cars setting off from Court Park in various directions, according to each driver's idea of the best way round the obstacle. However, all arrived at the Royal Oak within minutes of each other and, having given our lunch numbers to the

landlord, we set off along lanes and across fields to Bigbury-on-Sea and then to Challaborough, where the dogs all made the most of the beach and the sea.

After a short refreshment break on the cliffs above Black Stone we progressed inland through Ringmore and Houghton to a path across fields back to the pub. A large muddy pool in the last field proved irresistible to one of the dogs, who launched himself full length on his tummy into it. He did not go into the pub! Nine of us tucked into the pub's excellent value 'Winter Warmers' menu, the rest having had to miss out this time because of prior appointments.

The introduction of a January short walk this year had proved most successful.

TW

3 Ten walkers and two dogs squeezed into two cars on Wednesday 8th February for the drive to Shadycombe car park at Salcombe to economise on the £5 all-day parking charge. After a week of freezing weather we were lucky to pick on a mild day with only a few spots of rain.

This walk was a new variation for most of the group, starting with a walk through the town and estuary-side to North Sands, where the dogs again made the most of beach and sea. We then followed paths through woods and fields to Combe, and through Portlemore Barton to the New Inn at Marlborough for lunch.

The landlords had put on a home-made crab soup for those who wished to try it. It was delicious. After lunch, we followed lanes and fields through Collaton, Maryknowle Farm and parallel to Bonfire Hill, returning to the cars by 2.30 pm.

This long walk was a shorter one than usual, but not without its incidents, including an encounter with a spotted frog by a stream

and having to retrace our steps slightly when our senior dog refused the final eight-foot drop down a wall with protruding stepping-stones. Admittedly this was a bit daunting for the two-legged walkers too, most of whom opted to accompany the dogs on an easier route!

TW

4 Tuesday 21st February dawned a sunny but bitterly cold day. Despite the cold, sixteen walkers and three dogs gathered at Bolberry Down to walk the four miles to Hope Cove, along the ridgeway towards Malborough and back to Bolberry Down. We were very pleased to include walkers from Malborough and Kingsbridge among our numbers - proof, if any were needed, that TRAMP is really establishing a reputation for providing a good day out.

Our leader set out at a fast pace in order to keep warm and soon realised the error of her ways when her comment on the beauty of the view met with no response. On turning round, she discovered that everybody was at least 100 metres behind, as they had the sense to reserve some of their energies for the walk into the wind that was to come as we rounded Bolt Head.

The walk went as planned, with nothing to comment upon except our good fortune at being out on such a lovely clear day, until we left the ridgeway and started to cross the fields towards Bolberry.

Despite having checked the route only ten days previously, things had changed. A dog-friendly stile had been nailed up to make it impassable to our four-footed friends. Now TRAMP dogs are not easily deterred, especially when being loudly encouraged by sixteen fellow-walkers, but however much they squeezed, pushed and jumped they could not get through. In the end they, with their owners, were forced to leave the footpath and find another way through the fields before joining the official path further down.

The rest of the walk passed without incident, and we were all looking forward to getting our teeth into the famous triple-decker sandwiches at The Port Light as we climbed the last hill and the said establishment came into view. After a very nice lunch we made our way back into Thurstlestone just as the rain started to fall, making the prospect of hot baths and cups of tea seem all the more enticing!

LM

Two On The Trot

Mike Yeoman's 16-year old son, Ross, as many of you will know, suffers from cystic fibrosis - the UK's most common life-threatening disease. At present there is no cure but the faulty gene responsible has been identified and doctors and scientists are working hard to find ways of repairing or replacing it. People with the disease are now living longer than ever before. Mike is running in the **Tresco Marathon** on the Isles of Scilly at the end of April, with the aim of raising several thousand pounds to go to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, which funds research aimed at understanding, treating, and curing this disease.

He writes *"I know that I can count on support from the people of Thurstlestone and there are sponsorship forms being passed round at local events and activities. Please give generously. If you would like to make a separate donation, then either call me and I can come and collect it, or put it through the letter-box at Clarence Court (flat next door to the old Post Office at South Milton) or 8 Parkfield (Jean and Derrick Yeoman's home)"*

West Buckland's Kathy Norris will also be running in the **London Marathon** on 23rd April. Read all about her on the All Saints School News page. Village Voice hope that both these runners receive lots of generous support and sends them good wishes for a successful outcome.

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THURLESTONE GOLF CLUB



CAPTAIN'S NEWSLETTER

I am delighted to be in a position to write this article as the new Captain of Thurlestone Golf Club. Having lived in South Milton for over twenty years and been a member of the Club for at least fifteen years, it is with great pride that I have accepted the honour of Captaincy.

My role will be made easier now that the new management structure is properly in place, and our new Chairman has taken office. Rod Moore is twice a past-Captain and I am sure his experience will be invaluable to the committee and the Club as a whole.

My chosen charity is CLIC Sargent. This has the added benefit of also being the charity chosen by Tish, our Lady Captain and will enable us to combine our efforts for a very worthy cause. Our first event will be a Captains' Drive-In. This will be held on Easter Bank Holiday Monday, and it is the first mixed event of the year. I am sure that both of us will have trembling knees as we drive off in front of a gallery!

In the golf calendar we have the Devon Amateur Championship to look forward to. This will be held over three days, during the weekend 12th to 14th May. This is a prestigious event involving the 'cream' of Devon's amateur golfers. Thurlestone's single-figure handicappers will be strongly represented and hopefully one of our own will be crowned champion. The last time the championship was held at Thurlestone, Steve Pike was proclaimed Devon Champion on his home course.

Our junior sections continue to thrive and we have now obtained the Junior Golf Mark Accreditation, which is a testament to all the hard work carried out over the past couple of years - and it is nice to see special attention being paid to the girls. Liz Line has organised

several competitions over the past few months, encouraging them to participate under the umbrella of the Junior Section. I thank her for her efforts and enthusiasm.

Our new caterers, Duncan and Sarah Prowse, have already shown that our social events should prove to be very successful occasions. Their standard of food and service is of the highest order, and I am sure will enhance our reputation as a golf course not to be missed. I wish them every success in their first year with us.

I look forward to reporting to you the progress of golfing events in future editions.

Alec Esplin

LADY CAPTAIN'S NEWSLETTER

One of the first important things that the Lady Captain has to organise is the Ladies' Luncheon which takes place each February. This year's proved to be a great success - much to my relief!

In spite of a heavy snowstorm, it was attended by more than forty ladies who enjoyed a delicious lunch cooked by our new chef, Duncan Prowse, and followed by enthralling stories about life on the ex-Royal Yacht Britannia. Our speaker, Commander John Pritchard, served on the Royal Yacht for two years and was therefore able to give first hand information on what life with the Queen on board was really like. He also described his involvement with the plans to replace Britannia before they were scrapped by the incoming Labour government.

The snowstorm failed to spoil the day and indeed, in spite of seemingly dreadful weather, a 'wet day' quiz for Wednesday club competition days, prepared this time last year, amazingly has not yet had to be used.

Haven't we been lucky? Indeed the winter competitions have been well supported, even producing a Hole-in-One at the 6th in January from Pat Cope, who scooped the Hole-in-One prize fund which had not been used for over two years. A Hole-in-One is very rare but surprisingly there were four in 2002 with the last ace being Jackie Tillott's in August 2003.

It is not just the young who are prepared to play in colder weather. Our Lady Vets (a Lady Vet in golf terms is anyone over the age of 60), have had two events specifically for them since Christmas. These were organised by our Vets' Captain, Liz Evans, and took the form of a 9-hole competition followed by a Ploughmans Lunch.

The second one was rained off, but Liz provided a Mensa-type IQ quiz to keep us occupied. The clubhouse has seldom been so quiet as people tried to work out her fiendish problems. Two Vets matches have been arranged in March against Yelverton and Churston. Things are never dull at the Golf Club!

As the County Championship is at Churston in April this year, a number of our ladies are entering and we wish them well. The main match season is fast approaching with our first county inter-club match on Friday 21st April versus Yelverton. To help the teams prepare, weekly team practices are gathering momentum, concentrating on the short game where so many matches are won or lost. "Get down in two" is still the watchword.

An innovation this year (not of my choosing - I am still quaking at the thought) is a drive-in for both Captains to raise money for the Captains' charity, CLIC (Cancer & Leukemia in Children).

The date is Easter Monday, 17th April, and the hole the first. A map has been prepared of the 1st hole, divided into 700 squares, each 5 yards x 5 yards, and each square can be 'bought' for £1.00. So, all you Golf Club members, if you can predict where I am going to put my tee shot, buy a square for £1.00 and win a bottle of bubbly - or just come and enjoy the fun!

Tish Mawhood

JUNIOR GIRLS SECTION

At Thurlestone Golf Club we are trying to encourage more girls to take up golf. Some of the things we are doing to get more girls to compete are :

- Each month we hold a 6 hole Stableford and a 9 hole putting competition for the girls. There are cups for the best scratch score, the best stableford score, the putting cup, and the best score for under 8 years old golfer. There is also a prize for the most improved golfer of the month.
- In between competitions, a number of ladies take the girls out for practice on the course, to build confidence and appreciate the etiquette of golf..
- We plan to hold practice sessions when the weather is warmer for putting, chipping, and bunker play led by Liz Line and Jenny Underhill.
- Starting in April, each week there will be Monday evening competitions for the Junior Girls and Boys together
- We plan inter-club competitions with both Bigbury and Teignmouth Clubs. This already happens for the Junior boys but we hope to have a Junior girls team also this year.
- I have applied to the English Golf Union and been awarded money for junior boys and girls golf lessons. These will take place at Thurlestone Golf club with Peter Laughier, the Club professional, when the weather is warmer after Easter.
- The response has been most encouraging and each month for the girls competition we have 12 girls taking part, and 3 more girls are on the list to join Thurlestone.

Liz Line

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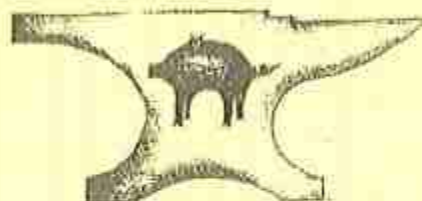


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Thurlestone Golf Club

TENNIS SECTION



Our Tuesday social tennis sessions have continued throughout the winter months. The members are looking forward to some sunny, dry weather when play can start on our grass courts. The Tuesday event continues, while the Wednesday Club Evening starts on 5th April, at 5.30 pm. To kick off the grass court season, a tournament will be run on Saturday 20th May, at 2.30 pm.

The tennis committee have planned new senior and junior events this season. They involve coaching-tournaments and social events. The club would like to generate more interest in junior tennis and competitive session tennis.

Coaching

Francisca Spiering will be running mini-tennis sessions on our courts, starting at the end of this month on Thursday 27th April. For the very young players, mini-tennis sessions will be held at the Parish Hall at the same time. **Janet Richardson** will be running Beginner (moving up from mini-tennis) and Improver coaching courses in the Easter and the May Bank school holidays. She will continue with the popular Ladies daytime coaching throughout the summer. Notices and application forms are on the pavilion board.

Tournaments - Matches

Tuesday 18 th April, 9.30 am	Round Robin Junior Tournament 10-16 years
Tuesday 30 th May, 9.30 am	-ditto-
Saturday 27 th May, 2.30 pm	Round Robin Senior Doubles Tournament
Saturday 15 th July & Sunday 16 th July	Thurlestone Open Doubles Tournament

Friendly matches will be played throughout the summer season.

Social

Wednesday 19 th April	Tennis Supper at the club
Saturday 15 th July	Tournament Barbecue at the club
Tuesday 25 th July	Family Barbecue at Leasfoot
Friday 5 th August	Charity Tournament Lunch & Teas
Saturday 12 th August	Tennis Dance at the Parish Hall

The regular summer holiday programme will run - details in the next Village Voice. Supporters are welcome to come down and watch the tennis and have tea with the members and we would welcome new members, both junior and senior.

Contacts:

Membership	Lindsey Fletcher	01548-560157
Coaching	Janet Richardson	01548-856007 or 07950-002265
Mini-Tennis	Francisca Spiering	01548-511191
Open Tournament	Declan Dwyer	01548-560648
Committee	Linda Cant	01548-560896
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Weather Wag

By Jan Turner

Winter seems to be hanging around this year doesn't it? We seem to have had quite a variety of situations but nothing too severe really! February was an interesting month. I was hoping for a nice fall of snow to make everything look fabulous, but no such luck, just a few grainy bits that lasted a very short time. The family next door did have just enough time to build a lovely snowman on the lawn, only to be knocked down and allowed to melt into the ground. It was rather like building a lovely sandcastle, knocking it down, and letting the sea flatten the pile and returning it to normal.

The east winds have been quite vicious at times and the temperature has fallen low enough for some frost damage to tender plants. Rainfall has not been outstanding - not very much of it really. February is not a notoriously wet month, just mainly dull and miserable. We certainly learned all about "blocking high pressure areas" and the snow in the north of the country in recent days (12th - 14th March) has been a good example of two air masses meeting and the resultant clash giving heavy snowfall along its front. Glasgow rarely has snow, but up to 4 inches fell a couple of days ago.

One thing about some of the clearer days is that the sunsets are pretty good. When it is a dark night (i.e., no moon to speak of) the display of stars is superb. We are very lucky to be able to see the night sky so well because there is virtually no light pollution here.....well, at Beach Cottage anyway. So good star-gazing while the dark nights are here! By the time you read this the clocks will have gone forward an hour so it will not get dark so early.

I have been browsing through my weather books and have come across an interesting article that has answered a question in my mind more thoroughly than it had before. The book is *Weird Weather*, compiled by

Paul Simons, a favourite of mine. One section is entitled *Freak Phenomena*, and I'd like to tell you about "Cities in the sky"

Basically Paul is describing the reason for a *mirage*, which I didn't realise could be seen in very cold climes as well as in the more popular hot desert areas, or off the surface of hot tarmac. The first example he cites took place in the Orkney Islands. Now there are no mountains in Orkney so when the people of Sandy woke up one day to find that snow-capped peaks and a village with a train had appeared at the north end of their tiny island, they were dumbfounded. It hadn't been there the day before. Yet suddenly, there was a large white building with several smaller houses grouped around it. The phantom village remained on view for several hours before vanishing at sunset. The islanders were convinced that a trick of light had brought them a glimpse of Norway, 500 miles away. Experts agreed that it had been a mirage.

Others include some from historical records of observations (e.g., Hastings in July 1797), when the coast of France appeared clear as daylight as if it was just across the bay. With telescopes some of the fishermen could see the harbours that they had visited and the boats at anchor. More recently in 1987 and 1992 the same view was seen. This time the weather was cold and clear even though it was August and 07.00 hrs!

Other events that he mentions are: Dover, where tourists were admiring the French coast at close quarters, not realising that it was in fact a mirage. Sailors in Dublin Bay claimed to have seen Mt. Snowdon, 100 miles away. Again, it was a mirage.

The explanation is all to do with the weather conditions at the time. When it is calm and warm air sits on top of cool air, it creates what is called a temperature inversion.

Simply put, this is where two air masses meet and behave like a mirror, bending the light and creating amazing images and revealing places hidden under the curve of the earth. Sometimes the temperature inversions actually invert the images as well. This was experienced in 1957 when passengers on the cruiser Edinburgh Castle, sailing up the English Channel, suddenly saw a line of ships on the horizon, upside down, some on top of each other, funnel to funnel and weirdly elongated. What they really saw were the images of ships projected from below the skyline. Paul goes on to say that images are particularly common in the cold northern latitudes.

Could these images have fooled some of the early explorers? For example, did the Celts set off from the Faroes to Iceland because they saw the land clearly on the horizon? Did Erik the Red sail straight for Greenland from Iceland about 980 AD across 200 miles of difficult waters and winds because he was chasing a mirage? Certainly the North West Passage explorer, John Ross, declared in 1818 that there was a range of mountains blocking the way around the north coast of Canada. He plotted them on his map, called them the Croker Mountains, and returned home. Later (in 1819) Parry, his second in command, tried again. This time he sailed right through the Croker Mts, and the North West passage became a reality.

Mirages can also appear hugely magnified and elongated. A layer of cold air which is sandwiched between layers of hot air causes

images to reflect, build upon one another, multiply and tower, growing into immense and spectacular mirages hanging in the distance. Very complicated!

Paul suggests, quoting Dr Lehn at the University of Manitoba 1979, that mirages can sometimes suddenly distort quite trivial objects into monster-like figures. Perhaps this could explain strange sightings, always in calm weather conditions, like the Loch Ness Monster. Out of 249 cases of the monster's "appearances", 84% occurred during calm conditions. Mirages can make objects stretch, suddenly appear and disappear, and bend.

Well, what do you make of this information? Rather spoils the romance of the Scottish legend, but if I were to go again I would try to hit a period of calm weather and keep a keen eye on the surface of the lake.

The easterlies have struck again with a vengeance this afternoon, Force 6/7 or gusting to about 45 mph at times. Wind chill is about 9°C. I am going to walk the dogs now, so wish me luck. I hope that by the time you read this, things will have become a little more like the spring we used to have. Enjoy the daffodils, rhododendrons, camellias, etc., to say nothing of our lovely primroses struggling in sheltered corners.

And remember that Horticultural Show preparations should be started now!

Jan Turner

A Special Front Cover Opportunity

As readers may have noticed, we are now introducing a little **colour** into each edition of Village Voice. It is obviously more expensive than monochrome but, with the *Teamakers* colour laser printer facility now available, there is an opportunity to include some colour on at least one page. This month Len Hubbard has kindly allowed us to use one of his delightful watercolours for our front page, which now provides everyone with the chance to frame and hang a *genuine Len Hubbard print* in their home. We understand that Len would also be happy to provide a suitable mount and frame (at a suitable price, of course!) for those keen to take advantage of this special Easter offering.

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NEW HEAD TEACHER APPOINTED

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Phillip Medway as our new Head Teacher.

Mr Medway has an excellent reputation, having previous success with Dartmouth and West Alvington Primary Schools. He is well known and liked by many of our parents and teachers and we are delighted to have secured his services at a time when one in every five primary schools is actively looking for a head teacher.

Mr Medway will take up his new post at the beginning of the Autumn Term in September.



Local Mum to Run in London Marathon

West Buckland Mum, Kathy Norris (Mother to Holly in Class 1A and Gemma in Pearson's Pre-School) will be running in the London Marathon on April 23rd. She has been lucky enough to get a 'ballot' place, which enables her to choose the charities to support.

Kathy will be running for 3 charities – Friends of Thurlestone School, Pearson's Pre-School and Wessex Heartbeat, with which Kathy has a very personal attachment; Her son David, Holly's twin, was born with a heart problem and, sadly, did not survive his first year.

You can sponsor Kathy by pledging money by email at: kathy@springhill.eclipse.co.uk or by phoning her on 01548 560767. Please give generously to this very worthwhile cause!

Dates For Your Diary

8th June Mr Williams and Mr Durden will be in Concert at the Village Hall. Anybody who has seen them before will know that this is an event that should not be missed – especially as it will be Mr William's "Swann" Song.

14th July Grand Farewell evening for Mr Williams at the Thurlestone Hotel.

More details of both events to follow.....

COLLECTING: We are collecting: *Persil Stars, Nestle Box Tops, Sainsbury's and Tesco's vouchers*. Vouchers can be left at the Post Office, Thurlestone Hotel, or at the School office. Please help by saving yours for us. *Every donation helps!!*

Children's voice



Hello again! We hope you all had a good half term. With Easter on its way here are some news and pictures to get you in the mood:

New head

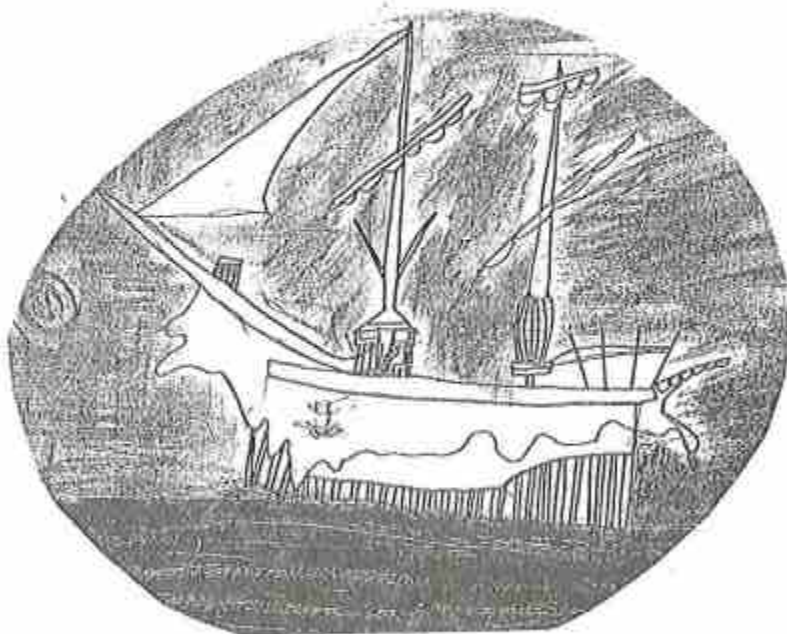
The school has appointed a new head teacher, Mr Medway to replace Mr Williams in September. We think that the new head will be great and we would like to welcome him.

Oliver

Just to let you know that on March 22nd the school choir will be performing Oliver in the new parish hall along with some wonderful gym performed by Mrs Carpenters gym group!

Children's work

The children have done some excellent work this term and we would like to share some with you.



JUST CHILDREN CHARITIES

A Report on Events in Zimbabwe from the Committee

Since the last report on our Charity, much has changed in Zimbabwe as you will all know. In particular, the Hatcliffe Extension (squatter camp) outside Harare was demolished by bulldozers and over 20,000 people became homeless at the coldest time of the year, left huddled in a few blankets with no water, no food, and only one hope - charity.

Our monetary support, given so generously by you through our fund-raising, has been sent directly to the Dominican Sisters and the Presentation Sisters, whom we know, and who give directly to the needy - food, clothing, drugs and school fees.

In a letter from the Dominican Convent they said that they would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank *"...all who so generously supported us in every way during the past terrible months when we had to stand by and watch the homes of people destroyed over their heads in a most cruel and barbaric way. Our presence and the support, material and otherwise that we could offer from you was a ray of hope in an otherwise hopeless situation."*

They go on to say, *"Now, some months later, it is a time to look back and to look forward."*

At the time of the destruction of Hatcliffe Extension, which included the creche, the clinic, and the homes of thousands of people, I remember feeling disappointed that people did not make more of an effort to defend their property. Looking back this was an unrealistic expectation. As an elderly lady later said, *"How can you defend your property when there is a bulldozer knocking it down and you have people standing behind your back with machine guns and batons?"*

This statement helped to bring me back to reality. I thought of the 8-year-old girl who was left at home to take care of her younger brothers and sister while her parents visited a sick relative nearby. While her parents were away the police came and started destroying their home. The child pleaded, and asked them to

wait until her parents returned, but they did not listen. When the parents came back two hours later they found the child crying uncontrollably with the smaller children next to a burning home. She could not be consoled. The parents tried to explain that it was not her fault, but she felt guilty that this should happen while she was taking care of their home. This little girl had to be taken away from the area for some days and had to be sedated.

The letter ends with this paragraph.

"There are little signs of HOPE rising up out of the ashes again. We have managed to trace most of the people who were receiving anti-retroviral drugs and put them on to treatment again, and we have found hundreds of the orphans. We're supporting them in whatever way we can, we are trying to provide basic shelter until something more permanent can be done."

On a personal note, they write *"Many thanks for all your support and encouragement."*

From the Presentation Sisters, their letter said :

"Many thanks for all your support. Life is very difficult here - thousands have left the country and the Government sent in an army of men to Hatcliffe. They tore down the lovely Clinic we had for sick children and completely demolished the school for special needs pupils. It was a dreadful blow - but we keep feeding and helping to clothe the children in the other two schools. Life is very difficult and the poor suffer most. However we keep the soup kitchen running and help with uniforms and shoes. Again many thanks - the Lord will reward you for your wonderful generosity."

The third project that we have supported - through you - has been hit hard too. But at Mabvuku, they have fought back and are actually increasing their successes. The 2005 report from Shingirirai starts off saying :

"The Shingirirai Women had small

business projects going on with some notable successes and, yes, these were razed to the ground - and they had to do it themselves for fear that if they left it to the bulldozers they would have incurred extra fines that they would have found impossible to pay. Every house is now tightly packed with people. Despite the gross overcrowding and frequent water shortages the project has managed not only to keep going, but to move forward."

The long report ends with these words :
"Your group came to the aid of these women at a critical time in their development. We still desperately need your encouragement and support. The JCC donation in 2005 came at a time when there was no money for food for the two early learning centres and was very thankfully received."

You can imagine, therefore, how delighted our Committee was with the support for our fun

evening on February 4th, the Hopscotch Hooley. We all happily had a go at some Scottish Country dancing, some ballroom, jiving and rock 'n roll - with many creaking knees and cobwebs blown away!

Please put in your diary now our forthcoming **Coffee Morning at Seahorses, Links Road**, the home of **David and Angela Ford**, on **May 27th** at 10.30 a.m. Lots of space to park at the cliff-top car park nearby. All donations towards the cake and deli stall and the plant stall would be gratefully received.

Please do continue to support the *Just Children Charities*. Thank you.

The Committee

(Gill Durden, Angela Ford, Sue Girling,
Midge Henderson, Shirley Tull.)

The Stanborough Chorus Comes of Age

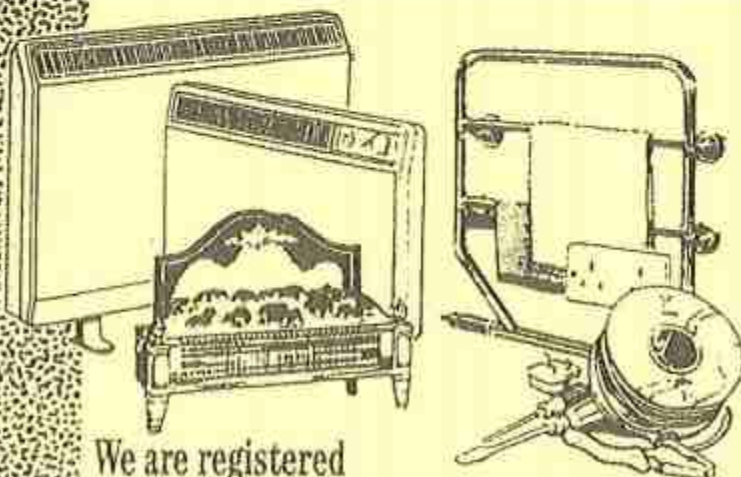
This Kingsbridge-based mixed-voice choir, which was founded in 1985 by its director of music, Rosemary Cole, is celebrating its 21st birthday this year. Drawing its members from the South Hams, its repertoire covers a wide range from small items to large works, from light to serious, from unaccompanied to accompaniment by keyboard, organ or orchestra. The choir has received prestigious national awards for its scholarship scheme and its regular performances of contemporary music. It undertakes concerts for charitable causes in the South Hams and Devon, including Exeter Cathedral, and an annual concert at Buckfast Abbey.

On **Saturday 8th April**, 7.30 pm at St Edmunds Church, Kingsbridge, (with the Festival Orchestra) there will be the first performance west of Bristol of Karl Jenkins' *"Requiem"* and his *"Suite from Adiemus II: Cantata Mundi"*, at which the composer hopes to be present. Tickets bought in advance are £10; from the door £12.50; and under 16 yrs £8.00.

On **Saturday 3rd June**, 7.30 pm at Malborough Village Hall, a Summer Supper Concert *"21 Years of Song"* will take place, comprising music performed in concert from 1985 to 2006.

Tickets and details are available from the Halifax Building Society and the TIC, Kingsbridge, as well as May Crimp (01548-842361) and Chorus members.

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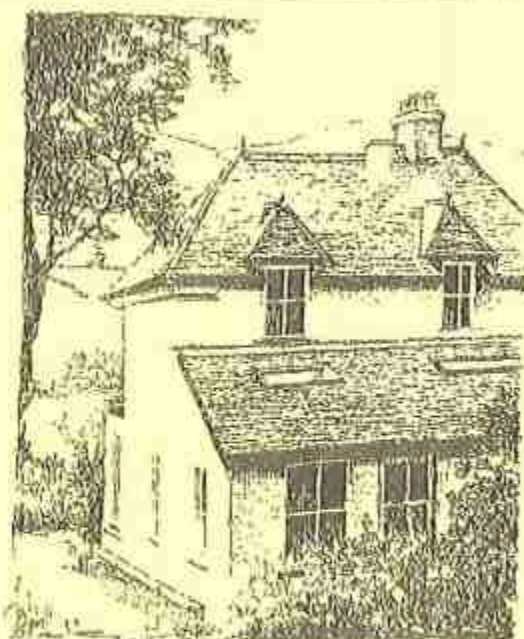
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DIARY DATES

APRIL

Mon	3 rd	TRAMP, short walk, Mount Edgcombe
Mon	3 rd	Annual Parish Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
Sat	8 th	Weavers Open Day, Ashprington, 10 am - 4 pm
Tues	11 th	Hand-bell ringing tuition, Parish Hall
Wed	12 th	Hand-bell ringing tuition, Parish Hall
Wed	12 th	TRAMP, long walk, Start Point
Thurs	13 th	WI, Parish Hall, 2.30 pm (Devon Trading Standards)
Tues	18 th	TRAMP, short walk, Dartington riverside
Wed	26 th	TRAMP, long walk, Cornworthy

MAY

Thurs	4 th	TRAMP, Stover Country Park
Mon	8 th	Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
Wed	10 th	TRAMP, Coletton Fishacre
Thurs	11 th	WI, Parish Hall, 2.30 pm (Resolutions)
Fri	19 th	TRAMP, Loddiswell
Wed	24 th	TRAMP, Merrivale
Sat	27 th	Coffee Morning, Zimbabwe Children, Sea Horses, 10.30 am

JUNE

Mon	5 th	TRAMP, Ayrmer Cove
Mon	5 th	Parish Council Meeting, Parish Hall, 7.30 pm
Thurs	8 th	WI, Parish Hall, 2.30 pm (Bill Simpson, Antiques & Fine Art)
Thurs	8 th	Alun & Alastair In Concert, Parish Hall (see School for details)
Tues	20 th	TRAMP, Banham + cakes
Fri	23 rd	FLOWER FESTIVAL, All Saints
Sun	25 th	FESTIVAL CONCERT
Wed	28 th	TRAMP, Avon Valley

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 £10.00. Please apply to:

Judith Reynolds, Pilgrim Cottage, Post Office Lane, Thurlstone
Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3ND Telephone : 01548-560912

The magazine is entirely self-supporting and is not a charge on the parish rate. It was founded on behalf of Thurlstone 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 Thurlstone, Village Voice is delivered by a team of volunteer helpers organised by Ian Fraser
In Banham and Buckland it is delivered by Peter Hurrell and Linda Chilcott.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE : 5th MAY 2006

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

PARISH

PARISH COUNCIL Meetings take place on Mondays. See dates on Diary page overleaf

Chairman	Kit Marshall	560214
Vice-Chairman	Peter Hurrell	560496
Parish Clerk	Cathy Traveller	(Evening) 852119
District Councillor	Shonagh Bickin	561183
County Councillor	Sir Simon Day	01731 - 691212
Members	Neil Gilling	560448
	David Grose	560375
	Andrew Byrnes	560564
	Geoffrey Shotton	560695
	Charles Mitchellmore	560602

Tree Warden	Ron Purkin	561213
	Pat Crawford	560688

PARISH HALL	Chairman	Chris White	560505
	Bookings		

PARISH OF THURLESTONE SOCIETY (P.O.T.S.)	Chairman	Chris White	560505
RECTOR	Rev. Andrew Gilling	562219	
CHURCH MEETING ROOM	Office	561346	
CHURCHWARDENS	Graham Worral (562016)	560290	
PLANTING LUNCH (1 st Friday)	LUNCH CLUB (Other Fridays)	560290	
SEARCHLIGHT (Tuesdays fortnightly)	UNDER 5s (Wednesdays)	560290	
COFFEE TIME (See All Saints Diary for details)	ROCK CLUB (Thursdays)	560290	

FRIENDS OF THURLESTONE CHURCH	Contact	Kit Marshall	560214
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BOWLS CLUB	Contact	Eileen Dayman	560051
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ALNE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION	Contact	John Crawford	560688
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BANTHAM SAILING CLUB	Contact	Hugh Caut	560593
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BANTHAM SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB	Clubhouse		560447
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BRIDGE CLUB 7 pm Wednesdays and Fridays	Contact	Dorothy Stone	560708
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THURLESTONE GOLF CLUB	Secretary / Manager	Terry Gibbons	560405
TENNIS SECTION	Contact	Lindsay Fletcher	560157

KEEP FIT	Contact	Brenda Murch	560487
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TAI CHI	Contact	Vida Alexander	561182
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HORTICULTURAL SHOW (annual)	Contact	John Lonsdale	560742
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PROBLS	Contact	Tom Trender	560893
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SOUTH HAMPS SPINNERS, WEAVERS, & DYERS	Contact	Pat Crawford	560688
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TRAMP (Thurstone Ramblers)	Contact	Lina White	560505
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DIRECTORY

W. L.	2.30 pm Parish Hall	Contact	Judith Le Grice	561135
Second Thursday monthly (except August)				

TEAMMAKERS (Computer Club)	INTERNET CAFE	Saturdays	10.00 am - 1.00 pm	
From 4 th January 2006	TUTORIAL CLASSES	Saturdays	10.00 am - 1.00 pm	
	(Bookable)	Wednesdays	2.00 pm - 5.00 pm	
Contact: Robin MacDonald	560436	Michael Barnes	562112	560505
Dennis Cordes	562270	Graham Durran	560007	561398

HEALTH CENTRES	Kingbridge	833551
	Salcombe	842284

MILK DELIVERY	R. Brindley & Son	01503 - 833801
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NEWSPAPER DELIVERY	Dave & Sandra Edmonds	01548 - 851132
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VILLAGE SHOP	Thurstone Village Shop	561917
(Bank Holidays open from 8.00 am - 4.00 pm)		
	Ms. T. Th. F.	8.00 am - 5.30 pm
	Wednesday	8.00 am - 1.00 pm
	Saturday	8.00 am - 1.00 pm
	Sunday	8.30 am - 1.00 pm

(NB. The 1.00 pm closing times may sometimes be extended during school holidays and at weekends)

THURLESTONE POST OFFICE	Open: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri	9.00 am - 5.30 pm	Wed, Sat	9.00 am - 1.00 pm	561917
	Postal collections: 4.15 pm Monday - Friday; 10.30 am Saturday; 11.00 am Sunday				

POLICE	Emergency	999	Non-emergency calls	08705-775444
	Maritime helpline	01392 - 452935	Confidential information	0800-335-111

RUBBISH COLLECTION	Thursdays (but Fridays in Bank Holiday Monday weeks)	Brown Wheelies - alternate Thursdays from 13 th April
Coloured (White, Blue) Sack collections (recyclables) and		Grey Wheelies - alternate Thursdays from 6 th April

RECYCLING CENTRE (Tort Quarry Site, Totton Road)	Opening Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00 am - 4.30 pm	Saturday & Sunday	10.00 am - 4.30 pm
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PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION LINE	For ALL bus, rail, or National Express Coach timetables information call TRA-VILLAGE	0870 605 2 608
Open EVERY day (except Christmas Day)		
Devonbus publications may be obtained by phoning 01392 352800 or by e-mail to devonbus@devon.gov.uk		

GARAGE (Bligh Engineering)	Maurice Bligh	560020
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KINGSBRIDGE LIBRARY (Mobile Library calls alternate Wednesdays from 5 th April)		852315
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11.35 - 11.45am	Backland Old Chapel	11.50 - 12.15pm	Thurlestone Primary School
12.20 - 12.30pm	Thurlestone Church	12.35 - 12.45pm	Thurlestone Sands

MOBILE BUS & CHURCH VAN Alternate Wednesdays from 5th April 2006, from 5.00 to 6.30 pm, outside school

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