

CROCKERNWELL
DREWSTEIGNTON
SANDY PARK
VENTON
WHIDDON DOWN

Drewsteignton Parish Post

ISSUE NO. 52

MAY 2010

APRIL NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

This month's news features the report to the Annual Parish Meeting held at Drewsteignton on Monday 26th April 2010. The Council is very aware of the need to keep parishioners informed of their work on behalf of the community and the way it spends **your** money. The importance of the Parish website managed by Cllr Chris Gosney, and the Parish Post looked after by Michael Petrie-Ritchie and Pauline Rowe and delivered by volunteers and the post office, were recognised as an important way in getting this information to you, and our thanks go to them for their work throughout the year.

A number of achievements over the year were itemised and included permission for affordable housing in Drewsteignton, the change in policy at Dartmoor National Park to consult fully and allow representation at Park committee meetings, a safety survey at the A30 junction at Whiddon Down, maintenance work on the bus shelters with the help of partners, the provision of a new crossing in Whiddon Down to be completed within the next 12 months, rerouting of the early bus through Drewsteignton, draft minutes displayed on the notice boards, positive progress on the closure of Turnpike Road and Chapel Hill at Whiddon Down (thanks to Cllr Graham Hester), keeping pressure on South West Highways to keep

our roads in a useable condition and future planning to improve salting in the winter, encouraging the Police to keep up enforcement action to be taken against those anti-social drivers who choose to exceed the speed limits in Crockernwell and Whiddon Down and to improve their action on Venton and Harepath straights, monitoring the speed of vehicles entering Drewsteignton, progressing the improvement of signing to the car park in Drewsteignton, continuing to resolve the problem of the illegal occupation of land at Whiddon Down, and assisting parishioners in the Fingle Gorge with the problems of a commercial shoot.

And of course to recognise some failures: not being able to secure funding from DNP for the maintenance of the public toilets in Drewsteignton, clearing the scrub at Venton to help stop the fly-tipping and not satisfying all of the people all of the time!!

Next year will see the completion of our term of office and there may well be changes brought about by retirements or elections. It never harms an organisation to have new and fresh ideas, but until then you may be assured you have a dedicated team working for and on behalf of the Parish.

Our next meeting will be **7.30 pm Monday 17th May 2010 at Whiddon Down.**

Does voluntary activity in your village need support?

Community Contact Volunteers are ambassadors for rural communities. Supported by West Devon CVS Volunteer Services, they recruit volunteers and identify need within their Parish.

The Community Contact Project, which is funded by the BIG lottery, aims to encourage local volunteering for local need. It supports voluntary involvement in existing activities or the development of new activities that are needed within the community. Community Contact Volunteers receive out of pocket expenses and the time commitment is flexible.

If you would like further information, please call your local Volunteer Centre in Tavistock on 01822 618224 or Okehampton on 01837 55047, email volunteering@westdevoncvcs.org.uk or visit www.westdevoncvcs.org.uk

Parish Profile.....

The Parish Profile has been an occasional feature of the Parish Post for some time now, if you would like to be featured, or have any other ideas for articles, please get in touch.



Veronika Svejstilova, also known as Verca, moved to Drewsteignton from the Czech Republic three and a half years ago.

What were you like at school?
Really quiet, but quite clever.

What is your favourite book?
I've only just started to read books in English but the book I have really liked is The Art of Happiness, by the Dalai Lama.

What did you do in the Czech Republic?
I was a laboratory technician working in haematology.

What's your favourite song?
In the Arms of the Angels, by Sarah Maclachlan.

What do you do in Drewsteignton?
I am a painter and decorator, at the moment.

Favourite colour?
I have liked green and blue all my life.

Describe your perfect day.
Sunny, on the beach with my dog and people I love.

How do you relax?
Computer, telly, walks with Jesse, my dog.

If you could have a plane ticket to anywhere, where would you go?
I'd go to Tibet.

What's your motto?
Love and trust people, even if you get burned.

What is your favourite film?
City of Angels, with Meg Ryan.

What's the most important lesson that life has taught you?
Forgiveness.

Where was your last holiday?
In Czech, last summer, for my sister's wedding.

When you were in the Czech Republic, did you ever imagine you would live in a village in Devon?
I was happy in Czech but I have always been open to change and to go along with what comes along. I was thinking of going to the US because I have a cousin there, but it is too far from home. When the chance came to come to Devon, I was ready for it.

What's your favourite meal?
A Czech meal -- dumplings with beef in a sauce. It's called svickova.

Summer Concert at Castle Drogo Saturday 19th June 6.30-9.30pm

Drewsteignton Village Hall Committee and Holy Trinity Church PCC have been pleased to accept the kind invitation of the National Trust to hold a fundraising event in the gardens of Castle Drogo on Saturday 19th June. Come and enjoy a summer evening's walk through the beautiful gardens and listen to a Brass Band concert given by Crediton Town Band who will be entertaining us with a programme of music to suit all tastes.

Admission is free, and you are invited to bring your own picnic.

Light refreshments and a Bar will be available.

There will be a collection & raffle in aid of Drewsteignton Village Hall & Church restoration funds.

View from the Farm



This month as well as trying to do the end of year accounts, I have been trying to get to grips with what is happening with new entrants to farming in the UK. To make things more complicated, different approaches have been taken in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which reflect the different subsidy systems in each area. The one thing they are all agreed on is that farming needs new entrants and that they need some support to succeed.

I had the opportunity to talk to the national coordinator of Fresh Start, an organisation that was launched in December 2004 by Sir Donald Curry and aims to secure the future for farming in England by a whole raft of measures.

These include:

- Promoting an entrepreneurial culture amongst the next generation of farm business owners
- Promoting the use of generic business planning and management techniques
- Promotion of farming as an attractive career option for new entrants
- Development of a 'matching service' that will link potential new entrants to those wishing to reduce their involvement or wishing to retire
- Development of a national mentoring capability for all new/growing farm enterprises
- Practical support for a continued professional development culture to be adopted by everybody working in the industry.

A year after the initiative began the concept of Fresh Start Academies was launched. These academies run across the country and typically involve training in business skills, mentoring and then identifying opportunities through a matchmaking network.

To date around 30 academies have been running at different times and a number of graduates had managed to secure tenancies. But all these academies are run on a shoestring with some areas managing to secure some funding from local sources and most of the professional time being given for free. These professionals include land agents, solicitors, accountants, consultants and land managers. DEFRA have backed the initiative, however currently it only has provided funding for the next three months, even though the development of new entrants was part of the food strategy announced by Hilary Benn back in January. This funding is enough for administration and employment of a national coordinator for 20 hours a week -- not many hours to cover the whole of England.

So is it working? Well I believe the academies are working but they are not yet making a big difference to the number of new farmers. So far the matching of opportunities seems to be treated with suspicion in the UK, although it has had some success in the US and France. Activity to inspire new entrants doesn't seem to have started yet, but in the coming year there is to be some work with careers advisors and teachers. Then there is the money. In my experience, this is the biggest hurdle and nobody seems to be even talking about the low interest loans and loan guarantees that are available in France.

So where do the farmers come in? Well there are farmer stakeholders involved with the academies but they are outnumbered by those professionals, and farming as an industry is not contributing anything in the way of money. I believe that unless farmers themselves get involved in the initiative then it will not succeed. Who better to mentor a young farmer than a local neighbour and what a difference lending a piece of equipment or helping out when things are going wrong makes when you are struggling to get a business off the ground. Thinking up a way of organising that kind of help could take some time!

Drewsteignton Gardeners Club

Chairman—Phillip Evans —01647 281285
Hon. Sec: Bunny Johnstone 01647 432068
and Carol Mason 01647 281185

The first of two trips to the RHS Gardens at Rosemoor will be on 30th June, which will coincide with an exhibition on William Morris. We will be travelling by car and will share rides as much as possible, leaving Drewsteignton Square at 9.30am. The trip is open to all members and their guests, but anyone else interested in going is welcome to join us if there is room.

Please sign up with Jacqueline Page on 01647 432068.



Sam Peirce resides in Exeter and has been a regular columnist in a number of regional newspapers. Never shy of expressing an opinion, she writes about all manner of things but is happiest when ranting about the things that impinge on her otherwise harmonious existence. Every month, she will share her thoughts with us in The Parish Post.

Easy, Tiger...

According to various press sources, Tiger Woods has confessed to wife Elin that he has had 121 affairs during their five-year marriage. Well, it's no wonder they call him Tiger.

Seriously though, that's a lot of clandestine meetings, late nights at the office and text deleting, whichever way you look at it. And if you look at it from a statistics point of view, that's 24 a year, which is one every two weeks. No wonder he always looked so tired.

Tiger blames sex addiction, a typical celebrity-male response and a way of absolving himself of any responsibility for the whole sorry business. But I shouldn't judge, really, because such is the severity of his awful condition that he has undergone 'therapy' at a sex addiction centre in Mississippi.

I wonder what goes on in there? I should imagine men outnumber women by about four to one, and at a cost of \$37,000 for six weeks' treatment, I should also imagine that the percentage of those with more money than sense is about one hundred. Surely a padlock on your trouser zip would be quicker, cheaper and probably more effective?

I don't want to belittle the concept of rehabilitation, as it can be a very effective way of dealing with the underlying issues in many an addict's life. Some

people have awful, troubled lives and it is understandable that they become reliant on various mind-altering substances to block out the pain. But Tiger Woods with his beautiful wife, gorgeous kids and – oh, I appear to have forgotten something - his billion-dollar fortune, never really struck me as someone who led an awful, troubled life.

Call me unimaginative but I don't actually think it's possible to have 121 affairs in five years. 121 one night stands would be pushing it, but an affair constitutes some sort of a relationship, no matter how short.

I think he has taken the 'might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb' approach. Poor old betrayed Elin was going to get upset with just the one, after all. Why not exaggerate a bit to give himself a bit of an edge. It certainly isn't going to do his remaining macho sponsorship deals any harm. You can just imagine some gawky, halitosis-ridden dimwit with the appeal and social graces of a demented skunk thinking that just a tiny fraction of 121 might be possible if he invested in the Tiger-endorsed Gillette Fusion revolutionary shaving system.

But, unless the aforementioned dimwit is a celebrity in possession of a large fortune, the best he is going to get is a clean shave.

Independence Day -- Poetry and Music Festival

Saturday May 22nd, 12.30pm till late

Wilf Merittens of Drewsteignton, who won last year's National Young Story-Teller of the Year award, and his brother, Mon, are organising a repeat of last year's "Independence Day" with poets and live music bands from Bristol and Manchester from 5pm until late. Beforehand there will be story-telling, award-winning African dance and activities for kids.

Welcome to all. Admission and parking free. Refreshments and food for sale throughout and licensed bar from 6pm

Venue: Upperton Farm, half way between Fingle Bridge and Clifford Bridge.

Thinking about Swifts again

After a cold winter period, we have recently been enjoying a settled and sunny April, which has been good for the spring arrivals of our resident summer migrants, the swallows and house martins.

I first recorded both of them in the village this year on 6th April, with numbers steadily building up towards the month's end.

These arrival dates were slightly later compared to 2009 (swallows on 1st April, house martins on 4th April) but earlier than the previous seven years by up to a couple of weeks.

It is wonderful to hear their excited "twitter" as they pair up over the village and begin nest-building, and I first saw the swallows flying in and out of the church porch on 27th April.

However, it is the return of the swifts that really indicate we are on the way to summer and they should be back in the village by the time this issue of The Parish Post comes out.

I heard that some were seen flying in over the sea at Berry Head at Brixham on Saturday 24th April, but these phenomenal birds can travel hundreds of miles in a day so those seen in South Devon could well be in Scotland by now.

I first saw swifts over the village on 4th May last year, and over the past eight years they have always arrived between 25th April and 5th of May.

My interest in swifts is due to a number of reasons. Their "screaming" calls made as groups and family parties chase high overhead were the daytime soundtrack of my childhood, especially in the summer terms at school and the long holidays that followed. I gave them little thought then but it is an evocative sound that can still take me back to those days. My real interest in swifts now is that I have six pairs nesting in swift boxes on our row at Churchgate Cottages, and another pair in a natural cavity between the thatch and the render.

I am aware of about four other properties in the village where swifts nest but I am still trying to find other pairs in Drewsteignton and would be delighted to hear from anyone who thinks they may have them nesting in cavities in their walls on their property.

As a reminder, swallows build small cup nests on beams in barns (hence their proper name, Barn Swallow!), out-buildings, garages and sheds.

House martins also construct mud nests but these are stuck with a mixture of their saliva underneath the eaves of houses, and occasionally where bends in drain pipes curve below the guttering and provide a secure ledge against a wall.

Swifts only nest in small cavities in buildings, in gaps in brickwork or between roof tiles or inside the eaves of roofs where there is access. They also take readily to nest boxes if in proximity to existing sites, but will often prospect for them one year to then nest in them the following year, providing house sparrows have not got in there first.

Swifts are currently in a serious decline with the latest figures indicating that the UK population has fallen by more than 47% during the last 10 years. With any migratory species, it is difficult to determine the exact reasons for this but what is known is that their nest sites in buildings are at risk.

When we renovate and improve our properties, the logic indicates we seal the roof space and block any gaps in brick or stonework and some buildings with swift nest sites are demolished completely.

In this area, with many traditional buildings having a thatched roof, gaps available to swifts are often lost during re-thatching. It was this factor that prompted me to put up nest boxes about 10 years ago and we now have each one occupied every year.

Swifts share our towns and villages, and while their nest sites may be unobtrusive and easily missed, their aerial acrobatics and screaming parties are unmistakable.

If you believe you have swifts nesting in your property or anywhere else within the village, please contact me on 01647 281681, or if you are interested in putting up nest boxes for swifts and want to see mine "in action", please get in touch.

I saw the first swift in the village on Friday 30th April, but the cooler northerly winds have kept them away in the main, feeding elsewhere.

Nick Dixon





News From Castle Drogo

I have just started in my exciting new role as Head Gardener at Castle Drogo and would like to take this opportunity to say hello and introduce myself.

I have moved from Hidcote Manor Garden, a National Trust garden in the Cotswolds where I spent nearly three years as the Deputy Head Gardener. One of Hidcote's claims to fame is that at over 600 feet above sea level it is the Trust's second highest significant garden. I am therefore greatly privileged to find I have been promoted to the highest significant garden at nearly 1,000 feet! I hope I am tough enough to cope with the extreme weather and challenging gardening conditions that Drogo has to offer!

Having spent two glorious sun-drenched weeks now at Drogo I am able to say with conviction that I feel very privileged to work in such an incredibly beautiful place. As a result of the very late spring, all the magnolias, cherries and rhododendrons seem to be flowering simultaneously, each competing for centre stage. The formal garden is just stirring from its long dormancy and beds full of herbaceous perennials and roses are sending up fresh growth that will carry on the drama into the summer season.

One of the projects I have inherited from my predecessor is the creation of an orchard on the northern end of the garden, below the overflow car park. We are hoping to battle against prevailing weather, soil and altitude limitations to create an informal area for fruit production and an atmospheric haven for our visitors to enjoy. This south-facing slope will be perfect for picnics among the wild flowers as well as providing a great location for all kinds of outdoor workshops and children's activities. I will be on the lookout for anybody with local knowledge of growing fruit in these difficult conditions as well as for volunteers who may be interested in helping out with the project. I will keep you posted.

I am really looking forward to working with the talented and dedicated team of gardeners and volunteers here at Castle Drogo to really bring the garden alive for our visitors. I am also hoping for plenty of opportunities to develop links with local schools, gardening clubs and community groups and to offer Castle Drogo Gardens as a local resource for learning, creativity and enjoyment.

As I reflect on my new job, gazing from my office window to the Teign Valley below, I feel incredibly blessed as well as excited about the future. The garden, however, is where my heart is, so I will say goodbye for now and get back to my borders and the sun-drenched terraces!

John Rippin, Head Gardener, Castle Drogo

Following John's lovely introduction, I will keep my bit short and sweet this month. The good weather over the last few weeks has certainly got people out and about and after a good Easter we are gearing up for yet another action packed year. The visitor centre is busy and we had a good turn out for our Quiz Night back on 21st April, so thank you to those of you who came to make the evening such a success.

As John says, there is a lot going on in the garden at the moment and we have just begun some investigative work on the castle walls and roof in preparation for the big restoration project we are in the early stages of developing. We have called this project A Design for Life? and there will be plenty of opportunities for you all to get involved in this over the next few years.

That's all for now until next month....

Tamsyn Butler

Property Manager

Castle Drogo

Telephone: 01647 434130 Email: Tamsyn.butler@nationaltrust.org.uk

Castle Drogo Events: May to June 2010

Tuesday 18 May, 11am-4pm

Celtic Illumination Workshop with Judith Richardson-Dawes

A Celtic Feast of Praise! How did Brother Eadfrith set about creating the Lindisfarne Gospels? Find out more in this magnificent Celtic Illumination Workshop and then create and illuminate a Celtic capital letter of your own name in fine gold. For all abilities. Includes coffee and lunch as well as tuition. £30 per person including light lunch, £25 without. Booking essential on (01647) 434144.

Saturday 22 May, 10am-12pm & 2-4pm

Boilers Ain't Boring

Find out why on this quirky tour of Castle Drogo's heating system! Descend into the bowels of the Castle with a visit to the now obsolete oil-fired boilers. Then climb onto the roof to see the magnificent view of the Teign Valley that will soon be providing our heating fuel. You will also take a trip to our new environmentally friendly biomass boiler where you can discover what biomass is and see the boiler in action. A unique opportunity to take a peek at the inner workings of Castle Drogo! Please note this tour includes many stairs over many levels. Not suitable for children under 12. £5 per person and £2.50 for children under 16. Booking essential on (01647) 433306.

Saturday 29 May – Sunday 6 June, 11am-4pm

Food Glorious Food: Grow your Own Food Trail

Follow the clues around the garden and grounds and learn about food that you can easily grow yourself. £1.50 per child including prize. Normal admission prices apply.

Sunday 30 May, 12-3pm

Early Summer Tipple and Taste

Come sample some glorious local produce in our shop and kick-start the summer.

Wednesday 2 June, 2-4pm

Food Glorious Food: Planting Thyme!

Leave your mark at Drogo with this fun family event. Help us plant our new herb garden with a wide variety of herbs to use in cooking in our cafe. Learn what herbs will be used with what food. Normal admission prices apply.

Wednesday 9 June, 2-4pm

Planting the Fragrant Garden with the Head Gardener

A unique opportunity to help our Head Gardener plant out the two borders in our fragrant garden. Learn why particular plants are chosen and how to plant out correctly. £5 per person. Booking essential on (01647) 433306.

Sunday 20 June, 11am-5pm

Father's Day Weekend Classic Car Event

Why not bring your Dad along and celebrate Fathers Day at Castle Drogo? There is plenty to enjoy from displays of classic cars, tours from the gardener or why not make your Dad a unique Father's Day gift? (£1.50 per child). Once you have worked up a thirst, sample the range of beers from Redrock Brewery in our Beer Tent and then round your visit off by treating your Father to a delicious lunch of hearty bangers and mash and a bottle of beer. Lunch £10 per person, booking advisable.

Saturday Market

The Saturday Produce Markets at Whiddon Down Village Hall are going well, but more local people are needed to come and buy! We offer "Bacon Rolls" for those that need a late breakfast!

The fourth Produce Market will be held on Saturday 22nd May from 10.00-12.00.

Details on stalls and more info from: Michael Hall, home: 01647 231 634; mob: 07720 157251

Drewsteignton Playing Field AGM

7.30pm, Friday 21st May, Drewsteignton Village Hall

Please come along and support the Playing Field Committee. We've had a lot of fun over the last year and raised a whole lot of money. Time to think about spending some of it -- got any ideas? Then why not come and see what we're up to and tell us what you want...

The Perfect Time to Sow *Peter Clements runs a business from home in Drewsteignton, all about helping people to grow their own veg.*

It finally feels like spring. In the last couple of weeks the trees have burst out with a dazzling display of fresh bright green growth. And on the veg plot, all that overwintered veg like purple sprouting broccoli, kale, rocket and radicchio are producing in abundance.

It's all down to the weather of course, and the conditions we're experiencing right now – showers combined with sunny spells couldn't be better for sowing veg seeds. It ensures the soil is warm, and that those recently sown seeds, sitting close to the surface where they can easily dry out, are receiving a regular supply of moisture to coax them into life. There's a whole raft of seeds that can be sown straight into the soil. The easiest and tastiest are: lettuce, radishes, spring onions, beetroot, peas, parsley, carrots.

Beans – Choose Climbing over Dwarf

May is also the ideal time to sow beans. You've got two options - dwarf or climbing varieties. Whilst dwarf varieties are lower maintenance, climbers make for best use of space. You get a bigger harvest for the ground they take up, plus you get a

longer harvest. You will need to construct a tepee of canes, or an inverted V frame for them to scramble up, but it's well worth the effort. The beans at the bottom will ripen first, then you can gradually work your way up, harvesting higher up as the season progresses.

To sow, create your structure, and push a couple of beans about 2 inches deep into the soil at the bottom of each cane.

French beans are my favourites – try Blue Lake Climbing, or Cobra. Then of course there are runner beans. Only sow a few of these because they are prolific producers. Painted Lady and Enorma are both excellent varieties. And if you're feeling enthusiastic, why not grow borlotti beans too.

They're relatively light croppers compared with french and runner beans but the maroon flecked pods and beans look stunning.

Seeds, growing equipment and advice are available on our website seedtoplate.co.uk.

Seeds are also for sale in Drewsteignton Post Office Stores.

Allo 'Allo Being Staged by DADS from June 3rd to 5th

Allo 'Allo, the hilarious stage version of the long-running television series set in René's café in France during the Second World War, is coming to Dunsford. Directed by Jeff Hocking, it will be staged by the Dunsford Amateur Dramatic Society (DADS) in the Dunsford Village Hall nightly from Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th June at 7.30pm. Tickets, price £5, are available from the Dunsford Post Office (01647 252330). René is inviting anyone coming to the show in 1940s style dress to a seat in his café from where they can enjoy the show. Space in the café is limited, so first come, first seated.

Drewsteignton

Parish Post

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Contributions for the next edition by
1st June — thank you

If you have trouble reading this publication please let me know and I will arrange for a large format version to be sent to you