

*Crockernwell,
Drewsteignton,
Sandy Park,
Venton,
Whiddon Down.*

Drewsteignton Parish Post

NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

ISSUE NO. 125

SEPTEMBER 2016

Rubbish featured in our last meeting – that's the black bag rubbish which is collected by West Devon Borough Council every two weeks. We had a complaint from a parishioner about black bags being left out at the wrong times and because we live in the countryside these are often ripped apart by foxes, badgers and other wildlife we enjoy sharing our parish with. The problem then occurs that the rubbish is not picked up by WDBC contractors as it is not bagged. We thought it an opportune moment, just as a reminder, that the black bags are collected every two weeks alternating with garden refuse, recycling and food waste is every week. With the exception of Whiddon Down whose rubbish day is on Tuesdays, the rest of the parish is on a Monday.

We would like to hear from anyone who could recommend a "handyman" to do small odd jobs around the parish as and when required, if you can recommend anyone please contact the Clerk or councillor.

It has come to our attention Devon Air Ambulance are commencing night time operations this autumn and require community backed landing sites which have lighting and road access. The Drewsteignton playing field is an obvious candidate, but we would welcome suggestions for sites at Crockernwell & Whiddon Down. The site would be surveyed by DAAT staff and if it was found suitable an approved form of lighting would need to be installed. This lighting would be paid for by the community itself and installed by DAAT contractors. If you think there is a need for a night landing site, and have a suggestion where might be suitable and how the money can be raised to provide the lighting, please contact the Clerk or a councillor.

Two planning matters were discussed both con-

cerned listed buildings. Dartmoor National Park 0401 & 0402/16 was the conversion of a redundant outbuilding to a garden room at Hillside Drewsteignton which councillors unanimously supported. The second was DNP 0420 & 0421/16 for stabling and extensions to the domestic curtilage at Furlong House Sandy Park, following a site visit and a thorough explanation of their plans by the applicants, we unanimously agreed to support this application.

We welcomed another presentation by Peter Crawford from Wainhomes at present based at Owlsfoot South Zeal. He wanted to make a tentative enquiry to ascertain the Councils views should they make an application for a single storey office accommodation and possibly some houses next to the garage at Whiddon Down. We drew his attention to the fact the village already has a high level of "affordable" housing and some form of open market development might redress the imbalance. This was **NOT** a planning application purely a fact finding meeting. If they decide to progress the matter, then the formal planning procedure will need to be gone through with all the opportunity of consultation before anything is decided, in this case by WDBC planning committee as it is outside the National Park. From the Annual Parish Meeting, Paula Clarke from the National Trust at Drogo told the meeting they were now 3 years into the 5 year programme but had suffered delays with the severe winter weather. Community events were continuing. Ranger Tom Wood said the long term heath management on Piddledown Common has paid off with the return of the Brown Fritillary butterfly after 20 years absence.

Our next meeting is **Monday 19th September 2016 7.30pm at Whiddon Down.**



Bird Notes

September has arrived and brought an autumnal feel, despite the mild temperatures during the first week, and the twitter of swallows and house martins high over the rooftops. The swifts have long gone with my last sighting this year on the 2nd of August over Drewsteignton, but due to a holiday in Spain, I extended my swift watching season into the middle of the month. We flew to and stayed in Madrid, where I saw fewer than I expected but there were still a few groups over the city. I was surprised to see that the most numerous birds in the city, mainly seen in parks, and avenues with mature trees, were rose-ringed parakeets. Originally from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, they have now established huge feral populations in many European countries due to escapes from individuals and collections, or misguided introductions.

Whilst in Madrid, I met up with two Spanish contacts who took me on a 'Peregrine Falcon Tour' of the city. There are currently seven breeding pairs of peregrines in and around Madrid and we got to see six of the sites. Peregrines breed in many urban environments across the UK and the variety of sites in Madrid are very similar to those found here. I was shown nest sites on a bell tower of a museum, a telecommunication tower, quiet recesses on tall tower blocks and on the roof of a hospital. The one I found of most interest, was in a built-in window box of a top floor flat in a residential tower block that overlooked the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, home ground of Real Madrid football club.

We left Madrid after a few days exploring the city, including a tour of the Bernabeu stadium, which was really amazing, and travelled to Granada by car. During the four-hour journey, we saw almost no birds at all due to the daytime temperatures, but Granada had considerably more swifts than Madrid, and with no parakeets seen during our four day stay. We then travelled up into the high Sierra Nevada and stayed in a small village near the mountain tops. I spent an afternoon looking for eagles and other birds of prey further up the mountains but although I spotted quite a few, they were at such a distance that even with my binoculars, they were difficult to identify. What was easy to see was hundreds of swifts heading continuously over the high peaks and feeding on flies as they headed south on their migration. As well as the (Common) swifts that we have in England, there were many Alpine swifts too; easily identified due to the white throat, dark necklace and white belly. Seeing so many fly overhead during a two-hour period was a joy, especially considering that these birds are in serious decline in Europe. It was also great to see up to twenty bee-eaters flying around whilst calling. Bee-eaters are really exotically rich and colourful birds of open country found mainly in southern Europe, and it was only the second time I have ever seen them.

The final phase of our trip involved driving to the southern tip of Andalucia, near Almeria where we stayed near the coast and spent a few days on the beach. On a walk from a car park to a beach, I spotted a hoopoe, another really exotic looking bird found on farmland across the whole of mainland Europe. They do occasionally land up in England as rarities, and seeing it reminded me of the only one I have ever seen here, which was on moorland near Dunster, on Exmoor in 1997.

We discovered there were a number of salt lakes not far from the camp site where we stayed, which had breeding flamingos which were still present, and so we went to see if we could find them. We were successful as they had not yet departed for their winter grounds, and it was wonderful to see these really striking looking birds not only standing in the salt lakes, but also flying as the flock moved across the lagoon. To see them in the wild was wonderful despite having seen them much closer, albeit captive at Slimbridge, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve in Gloucestershire many years ago, and also in television documentaries with thousands of them often filmed from the air as they create such a vivid spectacle when seen in vast numbers.

So holidays over, and back to work, where the sound and sights of the summer are slowly diminishing. Enjoy the swallows and house martins while they are still here. Last year, I last saw swallows over the village on the 12th of September, and house martins on the 8th of October. **Nick**

Drewsteignton Gardeners' Club

The gardening club meets on the 2nd Monday of the month, Village Hall, 7:30 pm

Forthcoming Dates:

September 12th. Pine Cottage Plants

October 10th Penny Townsend Strawberries and other garden fruits

November 14th Lisette Grandos Compost

Members free and visitors £1.00 including coffee and tea.

A Harvest Celebration In Flowers and Crafts

Holy Trinity Church, Drewsteignton

Friday 30th September Saturday 1st October 10.30am to 5.00pm

Sunday 2nd October 10.30am to 4pm

Followed by

Harvest Songs Of Praise at 5.00pm

and

Ploughman's and Puddings in the church at 6.15pm

Tea, Coffee and cakes served all day. Home made soups and rolls 12.00 to 2.00

Entry to the festival is by programme £1 in aid of the Church Restoration Fund. The Ploughman's and Puddings will be a buffet to which everyone is very welcome, donations please which, together with the proceeds from the Songs of Praise and the Auction of Produce, will go to Water Aid

Summer Holidays

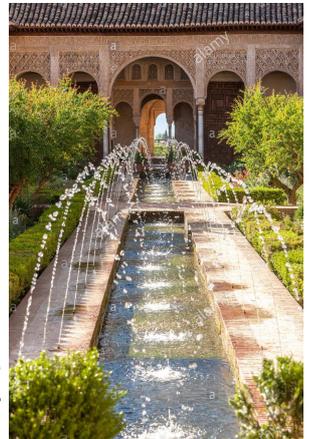
During the lovely summer holidays, I was fortunate to visit Spain with my family. During our stay we visited various parts of the country and were incredibly grateful for the air conditioning (when available) with the temperature rarely dropping below 25 degrees and often high into the 40s. A particularly beautiful area was Granada, home to the famous Alhambra; a palace fortress built on a hill overlooking the city, by the Moors.

Having booked tickets online (a must for anyone planning on going), we walked up the hill for our 08:30 entry. Upon entering the Nasrid Palaces, we saw beautifully carved walls and ceilings with ornate tiles and smooth pillars, it was an almost overwhelming amount of detail with every inch of the walls inscribed with crafted Arabic writing carved into the stone. In addition to the palaces, there was also the huge gardens (known as the Generalife), where arrays of flowers and fountains were set out. A particular favourite of mine was the water stairway where water streamed down a channel where a handrail would normally lie through open 'pipes' in the walls.

Granada is a really beautiful city and during our short stay there, we probably saw very little of what was on offer, although it did boast a startlingly large and impressive postcard selection. However, many street stalls speciality seemed to be various varieties of loose-leaf tea which was presented in an assortment of flavours and colours in various different sacks; a really picturesque scene if there ever was one.

I really enjoyed my visit to Spain and hope everyone had enjoyable holidays, although by now I expect most people are back to work and at school.

Tilly



Drewsteignton Village Show

The show was very well attended this year with more entries than last year and an excellent display was mounted in spite of a difficult growing year. Congratulations to ALL the many prize winners and to everyone who entered. At the top of the list is Mike Rowe who won THREE cups, the Paul Greener Memorial Plate for vegetables and fruit, the Westaway Cup for most points in the show, and the Clerks Cup for an exhibitor who has never won before. Other cup winners were Angela Thomas, the Chairman's Cup (flowers), Lorna Young, the President's Cup (flower arrangements), Joy Taylor, the Manley Cup (art) and Rosemary Payne, the Wood and Rush Cup (domestic).

Thanks to all who came and supported the raffle and Teas. See you again next year!

Everyone Loves Alliums

It's true - I've never heard anyone say a negative thing about alliums. Borders in May and June seem incomplete without a sprinkling of these splendid spheres. You may not realise that the humble chive is in fact an allium, so too are leeks and onions; this summer I saw a truly impressive stand of leeks that had gone to flower, maybe 20 or 30 pale mauve spheres each one bigger than a tennis ball, standing roughly 5' tall.

There are more than 700 species of allium and 150 from Turkey alone; the following are three of my favourites.

Allium 'Purple Sensation' - grows about 1m tall and looks wonderful poking through the pale pink flowers heads and lacy green foliage of *Chaerophyllum hirsute* 'Roseum' or through a medium sized geranium like 'Orion' or 'Rozanne'.

Allium 'Christophii' has a flower head about the size of a cauliflower and a stem roughly 30cms high which also looks great threading its way through the front tier of the border.

The show stopper though is *Allium Schubertii* - with a head of at least 30 cms but it is much less dense looking than the others as the individual flowers are held on pedicels of different lengths. These last two varieties leave very attractive seed heads that can be enjoyed right into the winter.

Now is the time to buy and plant these bulbs - plant at a depth of 4 x the height of the bulb and they can be relied upon to come up year after year. In a heavy soil add grit to the planting hole to improve drainage under the bulb.

One of my favourite genus of plants is *Euphorbia* - there is something in this diverse family to suit every soil and situation from the statuesque and majestic *Euphorbia mellifera* and *E. characais* to the wonderful and colorful foliage ground cover of *E. griffithii* 'Dixter' and *E. amygdaloides* var. *Robbiae*. The most well know *Euphorbia* is the ubiquitous *Poinsettia* - *Euphorbia pulcherrima* - not hardy and notoriously difficult to keep beyond the 12 days of

Christmas.

A situation that I am often asked for is advice on low maintenance (bane of my life) ground cover in shade. Two dependable plants both thriving in less than ideal conditions are *Geranium phaeum* and *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* who mingle together beautifully. In the background the dusky, dark flowers of the geranium turn to face the light and just top the evergreen euphorbia with similarly rounded flowers in a shade of cool chartreuse. Earlier in the season, the low domes of the sharply cut geranium foliage make an attractive contrast with the slightly leathery leaves of the euphorbia. The geranium makes slowly expanding clumps that die down in winter, while the euphorbia is a well clothed evergreen which steadily spreads at the root. Both plants are equally happy with a shady location but the euphorbia will withstand more drought than the geranium. (having said that my *G. phaeum* put up with all kinds of appalling conditions - a very tough plant)

During July and August I did a butterfly count every day for Butterfly Conservation. Apart from there not being so many butterflies this year I found it very difficult to tell apart the small white and the large white - they don't hang around to be measured! However, now as I view the lacerated foliage of my 'Nero di Toscana' Kale (the lovely black one) and in some cases the bare ribs of the leaves, I can see that my garden was graced by both butterflies. The caterpillar of the Large White is black, yellow and white and of the Small White is pale green - I have quantities of both.

My task for this afternoon is to dig up some horseradish root and make my own horseradish cream. I have never done this before so would be interested to know how other people make theirs. Do contact me if you would like to on face book. Philippa Allom - plantswoman - Doves Garden Design.

Happy gardening - Philippa.

WHIDDON DOWN METHODIST CHURCH

HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICES

SUNDAY 18th SEPTEMBER at 6.30pm

Preacher — Mr J Powell

and

MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER at 7.15pm

Led by Rev. Bruce Sawyer

Followed by the sale of produce, Proceeds are for Church Funds



Local Talent on Show at Stone Lane Gardens

Stone Lane Gardens is delighted to welcome back the Stallcombe House Weavery to exhibit their beautiful textile and ceramic work in The Barn Gallery. From now until the end of September you can admire and buy pieces from this exciting new exhibition of work designed and made by residents and day placement guests in the Weavery.

Stallcombe House is a residential community for adults with learning disabilities, based in Woodbury near Exeter. Residents are provided with a home for life and a happy and safe work place, with a holistic and organic approach to personal health and the living environment. As part of this many of the residents and day placement guests choose to develop their creative talents in the Weavery.

Guided by Weavery Co-ordinator Sam Smith and her team, they produce a beautiful variety of pieces using the tactile mediums of felt and clay. Residents and day guests are involved in all aspects of the work; contributing to the design as well as the creation of finished items ready for sale.

“We are all immensely proud of this achievement, and have enjoyed planning and producing these original works of art” said Sam. “Even the frames are made by our residents and day placement guests during their woodwork sessions. Seeing their work on display and being enjoyed by others gives a huge boost to our team.”

Many of the felt items include wool from the Stallcombe alpacas and angora goats, so the residents who work mainly in the animal centre contribute to the work of the Weavery as well.

The Barn Gallery exhibitions are a relatively new addition to the artistic side of Stone Lane Gardens, running alongside the annual ‘Mythic Garden’ sculpture exhibition of over 100 sculptures sited in the wonderful 5 acre woodland garden until the end of October. The exhibitions and gardens are open every day from 10am to 6pm and visitors can purchase and take home their own Stallcombe creation or sculpture. I do hope you are able to visit.

Paul Bartlett

Garden Manager

Charity Event at Teignroyd, Near Preston, Drewsteignton.

Sunday 2nd October

12.00 to 5.00pm

In aid of

The Brooke Charity

(Action for Working Horses and Donkeys)

And

SHWA (Siberian Husky Welfare Association)

Rides for children on Emma's Donkeys

Logging Horse

Miniature Donkeys

Cart Horse

Music

Raffle

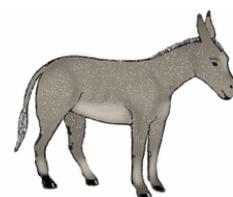
Stalls

Coconut Shy

Welly Throwing

BBQ

Florence Pepper Caravan - Coffee and Cakes



Wooston Castle

Wooston Castle is an Iron Age hill fort currently hidden amongst the trees within Fingle Wood. The deep ditches and high earth ramparts are all that remain of what would have been much more impressive structure, with its snaking entrance trackway through impressive lines of deep ditch and ramparts likely topped by wooden palisades enclosing an area likely holding roundhouses that would have been settled for at least some of the year. The earthworks now defining Wooston Castle in its dramatic position in the valley are now hidden by trees some 2000 years on. Over the years the native trees have naturally regenerated or conifers have been planted making it difficult to see, but maps of these mounds indicate the large size of this hill fort which is in close proximity of those found at a mile or so along the Teign Valley (Prestonbury Castle and Cranbrook Castle).

Wooston Castle is a Schedule Ancient Monument. The structure is extremely unusual because it has a complex array of outworks. It contains important archaeological and environmental evidence which we hope to study over the next few years as part of the Heritage Lottery Funding. However it is at risk. The roots from the trees and bracken that grow here are slowly destroying the archaeology beneath the soil. Therefore, we need to intervene to preserve the archaeology found here. Over the summer we have had the working horses out rolling the bracken to weaken this plant and in the autumn a large area of conifer trees in the Wooston Castle area will be felled.

We will be carrying this work out as sympathetically as possible and we will be bringing back working horses to move the felled trees rather than heavy machinery

To find out more about what is happening come along to the **Revealing Wooston Castle** walk on 1st Sept (woodlandtrust.org.uk/events). See the working horses in action during Oct half term (22-29th October) and follow our work on our blog – www.finglewoods.org.uk

Dartmoor Community Farm Goes Green And Clean



Affordable organic and high welfare produce now powered by renewable energy.

This autumn, the off-grid, Chagford-based Chagfarm will be powered by solar energy thanks to partial funding from the Big Lottery's "Awards for All" Fund.

With sixteen 280w REC solar panels and a 10kw Aquion salt water battery bank, the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprise's raw milk dairy products, free-range chicken, as well as woodland-reared pork and goat meat, will be fuelled by renewable electricity only.

Previously reliant on petrol and diesel generated power to milk its 14 nanny goats, the new installation will provide 100 per cent of the farm's electricity and perfectly complements its already established sustainable and low-impact farming methods.

Davon Friend, Co-Founder and Director of Chagfarm, said: "We're excited to be able to replace our noisy generator with a clean and silent form of energy. Not only will it reduce our carbon footprint and that of our members, but it will also help facilitate our growth in the short and long term. The timing couldn't have been more ideal, as this year we're installing further facilities on the farm, including a butchery, poultry processing unit and cheese cave.

All these facilities will have their own unique power demands and we are so grateful to the Big Lottery Fund for recognising the crucial role renewable energy will play in our mission to make Chagford's, and indeed, its neighbouring parishes' food supply more resilient."

The solar panels will generate a maximum of 4kw of power during sunlight hours and an additional 4kw will be available from the fully charged battery bank day or night - enough to fuel the farm's future artisan cheese-making operation.

With this new infrastructure in place, 2016 is set to be a landmark year for the not-for-profit enterprise as it strides towards self-sufficiency, welcomes more members and champions rural living.

To become a Chagfarm member and revolutionise the way you shop for food in your area, please visit www.chagfarm.org, call on 0777 9652 333 or email membership@chagfarm.org.

News from the Castle



Hello all Autumn is here! I'm not sure how that happened. It only seems five minutes since spring.

We have had a fabulous summer holiday at Castle Drogo with lots of lovely visitors. It has been great to see the place so busy. We are now getting set for our autumn/winter activities; early morning deer walks, art workshops, Edwardian Country Fairs and spooky Halloween trails. Please give us a call or have a look at our website for dates and times.

We are also looking forward to our Festival of Craft, where we will be celebrating all the highly skilled craftsmanship that went in to building this wonderful castle. We will be looking at skills such as stonemasonry, carpentry and metalwork next to some beautiful examples throughout the castle. Also, we will have some local Dartmoor crafts people with pop-up exhibitions in the Activity Hut showcasing their work.

The building conservation project is taking a little breather at the moment. As I mentioned last month, the central scaffolding is now down and the building team are finishing off areas such as the chapel steps. Hopefully it won't be long before the final scaffolding section goes up over the north end of the building. Watch this space.

Best wishes everyone and thanks, as always, for your support.

Paula

Community Engagement Officer, Castle Drogo

01647 434130, paula.clarke@nationaltrust.org.uk

Wildlife Returns

One of the things I love about living on the edge of Dartmoor is the profusion of wildlife. It's not uncommon to bump into deer as you drive around the lanes, particularly in the early evening at this time of year. Buzzards abound, and sometimes a sparrow hawk will race ahead of you, flying low just above the tarmac, before acrobatically tumbling over the hedge. Ravens fly overhead, easily identified by their croaking, and we've been visited by otters in the recent past. Redstarts raised a family in a hole in our barn this year, although there's been no sign of the spotted flycatchers who were with us last year.

However, this year has been notable for wildlife I never expected to see. Driving back from Dunsford in May I surprised a red kite which was feeding on a dead pheasant in the road. Until a few years ago kites only survived in the UK in central Wales after years of persecution, but were reintroduced in the Chiltern Hills in Buckinghamshire in 1989. As you pass High Wycombe on the M40 you can always see loads of them soaring over the motorway, looking for carrion, but they're not yet recorded as being present in Devon.

Earlier this month (August) a goshawk flew over our fields. I thought I had seen one previously at a distance, but this time I had my binoculars and was right underneath it as it flew over. I've never (knowingly) seen one before but it fitted the description in my bird book perfectly, and knowing that they are around in the area I have no doubt that it was, indeed, a goshawk.

Walking back from the pub at about 9.30 pm in the first week of August we were thrilled to see a barn owl starting its evening hunt. We saw them quite often a couple of years ago, but they suffer terribly in wet weather as their feathers aren't waterproof, so they can't hunt when it rains. We're pretty sure not many have survived the last two winters with prolonged periods of incessant rain.

However, what prompted me to write this piece was the animal behind the beady eyes that shone back at me last night as I approached the top of our drive. I saw its face first - was it a cat, maybe a baby badger, but it was too long and thin for either, too big and wrong colour for a stoat, although the end of its tail was darker than the rest of it. Maybe a mink, but it had a white outline to its ears and patches on its face, and its fur seemed to be two tone - dark ends overlying a lighter undercoat which was easy to see in the headlights.

Polecats survived in the same area of Wales as the red kite, but have never been reintroduced. However, a quick Google search revealed that they are making increasing inroads into Devon, and a dead one was found near Bowbeer farm last year. So polecat it was - like the goshawk, my first.

Hugh Clench

October Events at Okehampton Library

The Big Draw runs throughout October and we are inviting you to come in and 'Have a Doodle', all ages welcome during library opening hours. Free activity

Book launch – 'Okehampton & District's Great War – a pictorial & documentary history,' by The Okehampton & District Local History Society, Saturday 15th October 11.00- 12.00.

Join us in Okehampton Library for this local book launch. Books will be available to purchase.

Free refreshments provided.

Let's Go Fly a Kite -Tuesday 25th October 2.30-4.30pm. Free craft activity for children and their carers.

Please contact **Okehampton Library 01837 52805** for further details

Drewsteignton Playing Field

You may be aware that the new climbing frame is now up and running. The Committee would like to thank our main funders, being Dartmoor Communities Fund, Teignton Fayre Committee, Gidleigh Park Hotel, West Devon Borough Council, Lions Club of Okehampton and District, Chagford Show Committee and Waitrose. Many thanks also to the community who have given us such great support and made all the difference to our events and our funds.

Our next big event is the Bonfire Night on 5th November. Hope to see you there.

Alison Chapman

The Parish Post

The Post is designed to keep everyone in touch with life in the Parish. We'd love to hear about your forthcoming events, hair-raising experiences, fundraising efforts, funny stories, memories, recipes.

Your thoughts, opinions, comments, views and concerns are important too.

Please tell us. You don't have to be a great writer, just email or phone John Shiell or Pauline Rowe, details below.

If you don't tell us we can't print it

John and Pauline

Drewsteignton Parish Post

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The Parish Post reserves the right to edit contributions and wishes to state that views expressed are not necessarily those of the Parish Post.

Contributions for the next edition by
1st October - Thank You