

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



# Drewsteignton Parish Post



ISSUE NO. 71

December 2011

## NOVEMBER NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

Looking at the Parish Post of December last year we were talking about snow and ice and as promised in last month's edition we can now update you on the Devon County Snow Warden scheme. Cllr Joy Walker agreed to attend the training on behalf of the parish and is now officially our "Snow Warden". You may have seen press reports on this subject, basically it is a self-help scheme whereby an additional supply of road salt is delivered to the parish to be distributed for use by nominated and trained volunteers when the conditions require. We have been told by Devon County Council this supply is over and above that which is normally placed around the parish in grey bags but it is noted that those bags have not to date been delivered. It should not affect the normal gritting process by DCC and the use of the grit bins. Councillors held an extra meeting this month where the initial distribution of the additional salt has been decided upon and in the first instance they are contacting local parishioners to be trained and nominated. The DCC advice is being reproduced and placed on the parish website. Having undertaken all this extra work it looks like we are going to have a pleasantly mild winter!!

Very little response from parishioners has been received regarding the development of a play area at Barn Close Whiddon Down and unless we are convinced of its need we will not proceed with this project. So if you do have an opinion either way please contact Cllrs Dyke, Hester or Hardie as soon as possible.

We have received a commercial estimate for dealing with the trees in Froggy Lane Drewsteignton and it is in the region of £1,500. We are still working to have this dealt with by Devon Rural Skills Trust or for Cllr Wayne Mudge to organise a supervised working party in an effort to keep costs down, but if not we will have to precept for the full amount.

Regarding highways matters, you will already be aware we are at the mercy of DCC. We are making representations to Devon County Cllr James McInnes to make some progress on the restricted parking outside Drewsteignton Post Office first reported in November last year, the closure of Turnpike Road Whiddon Down, which the Parish paid for six months ago, and to look forward to an already agreed crossing area at Whiddon Down.

*(Continued on page two)*



Happy Christmas  
From The Parish Post

## 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.



Nigel Campbell. Well, I thought you would all like to know just a little about your new editor:

Before moving here to Drewsteignton I lived just outside of Bath, working in the Jewellery industry, now self employed for the past seven years as a consultant gemmologist, valuing jewellery, purveying diamonds and coloured gems, giving talks to various bodies and teaching jewellery/gemmology. (Plug over).

Born in Manchester to parents who both worked for British Airways (In those days it was BEA and BOAC), I had the privilege of travelling the world extensively. My favourite destination is still, and will remain to be the U.S.A.

### *Favourite film?*

Has to be Brief Encounter, closely followed by Schindlers List.

The writing of Noel Coward is superb and in this film the clipped British accent of Celia Johnson is as wonderful as the story line. We visited Amsterdam many times and my parents were befriended by a Jewish couple

who successfully evaded the Nazi occupation there. Schindlers List, though not set in Holland, is a story well told.

### *Favourite meals*

I have eaten in in some of the finest restaurants in the world, but my favourite meals to date have been the ones I have shared with Fiona of the Drewe Arms at Gidleigh Park. We flew to Paris some time ago to have lunch at The George Fifth there, but Gidleigh surpassed it.

*Drewsteignton is a unique place to 'be', one is never alone, there is always a cheery hello from fellow villagers, Marg and Ian in the Post Office are wonderful, and of course, The Drewe is a great place to have a glass with residents of the Parish and visitors alike.*

### *The future?*

Having been selected as the Editor of the Parish Post I aim to inform and entertain to the best of my ability, This, of course, relies on you - the readers, for contributions. Please send in via e-mail, anything you think should be included (details on the back page).

### *Parish Council Continued*

Reports of fly tipping about the parish at Venton and Harepath Straight have been received and passed on to West Devon Borough Council. If you see any fly tipping please contact the Clerk or a Councillor so we can monitor the problem and have it dealt with.

Two items of planning involving PV panels at Ford House, Drewsteignton and Budbrook, Crockernwell were discussed at length. Concerns raised were of the likely increase of these applications and the possible detrimental effect on the Parish compared with the sustainability of such schemes. The Council voted 6 to 2 to support these applications

and decided to treat any further applications on an individual basis.

Dartmoor National Park have agreed to assist financially in the provision of "honesty boxes" at the car park and public toilets in Drewsteignton – any income is better than none!!

Our next meeting is earlier than normal on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 7.30pm in Drewsteignton.

From all the team on the Parish Council we wish you a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year

## Fun On Our School Activity Week

On our first week back from the half term, the year 6 children of Chagford school went on a 5day residential course to Grenville House in Brixham. We did lots of activities: Raft building, Abseiling, Kayaking, Open canoeing, caving, Indoor climbing and a High ropes course. We did one activity in the morning and another in the afternoon. All of the girls slept in one dormitory and the boys were in two. The food was lovely; we had curry, a roast, spaghetti and ham ploughmans. In the evenings after all the activities, everyone did what they liked, had a shower if we needed one and did an evening activity. After this we had a drink, then went to bed.

We were put in 4 groups to do our daily activities and sometimes two of them were together, so we **were with friends, and it was also a chance to get to know people you didn't normally chat to. Each day we wrote diaries about what we'd got up to that day, and on the first night we wrote a post card home.** Raft building was our first activity and we had to do team work because there were lots of knots to tie, and logs and barrels to be tied on. Once we had made our 2 rafts (one for each set of groups) we kitted up in wet suits, buoyancy aids, helmets and a jacket to keep the wind off, we got our oars and we were off. We played lots of great games but then the other raft began to sink a bit which was funny, because it looked like they were sitting on the water.

**The High ropes course was my favourite activity, we did the "Leap of faith" and a crate stacking game.** You have to climb up a pole using metal pegs, then they turn into wooden ones as you get higher and **then heave yourself up onto a tiny platform. It wobbles when you're standing up but then you have to leap off it and grab a metal pole and you swing from it, then you get lowered down and that's the leap of faith.** The milk crate stacking game was really fun, there are four milk crates stacked on a board and four people are on them and they get passed up more crates to put on the pile while all four people are on it. **We got 13 crates high and when they say you have run out of time, the instructors say "hold hands and lean back" and they kick the pile over and you are left there suspended in the air. It was a good job we were all on harnesses!**

*Tilly Dixon.*

## Drewe Arms Staff Stop Smoking

As some of you may know, all the staff at the Drewe Arms have made a unanimous decision to quit **smoking! Instead of going cold turkey, we've been using Electronic Cigarettes, which is why you may have spotted us behind a cloud of smoke at the bar!** You can buy Electronic Cigarettes online and they are legal to smoke indoors. They range in price from around £30 - £60 and release a steam vapour when exhaling. The cigarettes contain nicotine only, cutting out tar, carbon monoxide and all the hundreds of other dangerous chemicals that are in tobacco. Paul has been using his for 2 and a half months now and feels healthier than ever, whilst Ana and Jan feel they are now saving around £180 each month, not to **mention Ana's broken sleep from Jan's coughing fits! I am now 2 weeks in and am amazed at how much more energy I have!** Lets hope we can keep it up.

*Sophie*

## Festive Fun At Okehampton Library

**There is lots of festive fun planned at Devon County Council's Library in Okehampton next month. The Friends of Okehampton Library are running a 'Family Quiz' from 1st December – 7th January.** Sheets are priced at just £1, and prizes include £5 and £10 book tokens. The annual Christmas draw takes place **on 22nd December. This year's prize is a fabulous hamper filled with lots of festive goodies. Tickets are £1 and are available from the library from 1st December.**

Residents are invited to the library on Saturday 17th December between 10am and 12noon to take part in a coffee morning and free drop-in family craft session to make Christmas decorations, including willow stars. Children under 11 years old can also wish upon a Christmas star from 1st – 22nd December. Pick up a star and post it in the special post-box in the library, and make a wish to be in with the chance for your lucky star to be picked and win a prize.

For more information please contact Okehampton Library on 01837 52805.

## Watching Birds

With the deadline for this article having passed three days ago, I was at a total loss as to what to write about and, it being a Saturday, I thought about going for a walk to see what birds were around and get the creative process going.

The weather was miserable, a light but cold wind, persistent drizzle and the type of day that does little to inspire or invite you outdoors. In this light, I started to wonder why I write these articles for the Parish Post on local birds, and if I could miss the odd month. The reason I originally started writing came from an initial short piece and plea for information on swifts nesting in the village, which went **into the "Parish Newsletter" in June 2002. At that time, I had just two nest boxes up on my house and knew of two other swift nest sites in the village. I now have eight boxes up under the eaves and think I have found all the swift nest sites in the village but am always looking for more, but I will get on to that in May when they return from Africa again.**

I get some really enjoyable feedback from people about the birds and topics I write about, which makes it all worthwhile, and it amazes me how many people want to tell me about their personal bird experiences. It may be seeing a new species locally, seeing birds in spectacular numbers or watching unfamiliar or unexpected behaviour, but whatever we see is memorable and is further enjoyed by sharing the information. I have been involved with birds and bird research, in both a professional and volunteer capacity since 1992, and have some truly amazing memories of different birds, places and the enthusiasts I have met and worked with during this time.

The variety of places has ranged from some of the tallest buildings in New York, Melbourne, London, Manchester and Belfast working on peregrine research, to landfill sites counting seagulls from dawn until dusk, collecting road kills along the A303 by motorcycle in Somerset for three winters (Barn owl research), chasing egg thieves in cars over the Welsh hills while protecting red kite, goshawk and peregrine nests and visiting tiny islands off the Pembroke coast to count puffin nests while being peppered with bird poo from thousands of circling seabirds just above.

In the Lake district, I watched a Golden Eagle chase, **catch, kill and eat a buzzard, I've watched a female peregrine on the wing for three and a half hours hunting pigeons (she caught 6) in the Forest of Dean and I have seen a female Goshawk being chased by a grey wagtail.**

All treasured memories and unexpected at the

time, despite putting myself in those places where I could expect to see those birds.

And of these observations; many get written into reports, others I pass on to friends with relevant interests and occasionally I try and get something published in bird journals. Each county has its own ornithological society or bird club that will monitor their bird species, and welcome sightings and records from members and the public.

In Devon, we have the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society, and if I see something of interest in Devon, I will pass it on to the Devon "bird recorder", an officer of the society.

Each year, I pass on various records and on occasion, will call to report some specific sighting.

One such occasion was on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May in 2007, just as I was taking my girls in to Chagford school. As we were about to go in the school gates, I spotted a pair of Red Kites flying together over the field opposite, heading south west over Chagford. I knew exactly what they were, and so did the crows that started to mob them, and they carried on over Chagford and towards the moor.

It was my first sighting of red kites in Devon, and to see a pair together was even better. One bird was visibly moulting (growing new wing feathers) and the timing (during the breeding season) indicated these birds were non breeders and moving through. That evening, I called the bird recorder expecting to add my sighting to a series of others tracking them across the moor, to be told that mine was the only record of them but it would be accepted. Considering the amount of people who are walking, working or travelling across the moor on any day, I was

**amazed that others hadn't reported them too. I expect many people saw them though and enjoyed the sighting.** We have had passing red kites around the village about four times over the last ten years, and each time I have managed to miss them completely but do see these spectacular birds more frequently in the county. Red kites are recorded in the most recent 'Devon Bird Report 2009' as a scarce passage visitor with 107 sightings over the year, mostly in May. This number increases each year.

More about red kites next month but if you care about birds in Devon or want to get more involved, do consider sending interesting records to DBWPS or joining the society.

If you want to get in touch for more information, or see anything really exciting in the parish, call me on 281681.

Nick Dixon



## Mid Devon Hunt From Lofty Heights 29th November

The hunt met in The Square, Drewsteignton at 11am. A very wet and windy morning. I was privileged to be allowed to climb to the top of the Church tower to enable me to take photographs.

All present, mounted and un-mounted enjoyed stirrup cups, courtesy of the Drewe Arms, and went on with a tally-ho to pursue their quarry.

Climbing the steps of the Church Tower, guided by the true gentleman Tom Martineau, who ascended the ever narrowing ancient, spiral stone steps and the final enormous step to the open roof with more agility than I.

In spite of the inclement weather conditions it was a truly great experience and one I will never forget. Cold, very windy and wet I managed to get the shots I wanted, thank you Tom.



Master of the Hunt Charlie Shirley-Bevan



Given the new desire to climb to the rooftops of various locations within our Parish to photograph the **panorama I am now on a mission.....Castle Drogo is my next ascent, any suggestions for future heights** are most welcome. *Nigel C.*

## An Enchanting Early Evening Event; Evensong & Entertainment

Sunday 22 January, Holy Trinity Church, Drewsteignton

**3pm Evensong**, 4pm High Tea: sandwiches, pizza, quiche and cakes.

5pm Film Show: an opportunity to watch 'Howell's School, Denbigh 1859 to 2009' (by kind permission of Miss Catherine Martineau) a fascinating social history film about the school at which Catherine was both a student and a teacher, featuring amazing footage (some in colour!) from the 1930's.

5.45pm Q&A with Catherine Martineau, who created the Howell School Museum, was content editor and narrator for the DVD. Do feel free to come along for all events or for just Evensong or the film or just the tea & cake!

### THE POST INN CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Christmas Prize Draw (Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 8.30pm)

Tickets on sale now

Christmas Eve - Posh Fish and Chips Supper

(Please order by Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec)

Christmas Day Open Sun 25<sup>th</sup>

(for drinks only 12 -2.30 pm)

*Happy Christmas*

Boxing Day Carvery Mon 26<sup>th</sup> (12.30 - 3.30 pm)

New Years Eve Party Sat 31<sup>st</sup> (Ticket only)

**60's and 70's Fancy Dress, Buffet**

Tickets on sale now

We would like to take this opportunity in thanking you for your support in our new adventure,

Wishing you a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year.

Mandy, Bob, Cliff & Maggie

### Village Retro Christmas Party

The Long Room at The Drewe Arms

Saturday 17th December

6.30 for 7.00 pm

(must be over 18)

Prawn Cocktail or Chicken Liver and Brandy Pâté

or Tomato and Basil Soup

All served with bread and butter

\*\*

Roast Turkey and Gammon with all the trimmings,

Seasonal vegetables and roasted potatoes

or Vegetable Lasagne with seasonal vegetables

\*\*

Sherry Trifle or Treacle Sponge and Custard

£19.95 per person

Babycham and Snowballs will be available at the Bar

## Cook Book Launch



WOW! What a wonderful night, thank you all for coming and making it so special and huge THANKS to everyone who cooked their dish for the Gourmet Grazing (DELICIOUS!). Too many to name but if you want to know who, look them up in your copy of the Drewsteignton Village Cook Book! Big thanks to Jessie Loram, Ruth Merttens, The Sunday Club and all the contributors to the Drewsteignton Village Cook Book.



The 100 copies sold out in under 24hrs, and with the raffle, made a profit of £591.50!!!

NB. the Easy Mini Pizza Faces have been incorrectly ascribed to Catherine Martineau, apologies to whoever's recipe it is.

Thanks to Waitrose and all the lovely people who gave us their green tokens, we've received a cheque for £284! *Jennifer Mullins*

## D.R.E.G.S.

Acronyms are part of everyday life for us all. Many in our parish who are involved with agriculture are familiar with DEFRA which is of course the Department of the Environment Fisheries and Rural Affairs. Others with a military background will have come across many acronyms from the MOD, Ministry of Defence and many more. Followers of football and other sports with celebrity stars will understand the term WAGS.

However I would like to bring to your attention an acronym which you may not be familiar with but it is **unique to our parish. DREGS which stands for Drewsteignton Retired and Elderly Gentlemen's Society.** (Some may substitute Educated for Elderly but I know the members)!

DREGS have only been in existence for the past year. It started as an idea which I proposed to the late Barry Colton whilst we were both putting the world to right over a beer at Fingle Bridge. Although I have lived in Devon for over 16 years I am very unfamiliar with our county as a result of my working life taking me travelling all over the world but this had the effect of ensuring that once home I was reluctant to travel much at all. Barry of course was quite the opposite as he travelled widely in Devon and the South West. He had decided to become semi-retired a few months prior to me making the same decision.

**Our discussion that day led to the formation of DREGS which was about my making use of Barry's local knowledge to make me more familiar with Devon whilst at the same time enjoying the social occasion.** We decided to spend every third Thursday of the month in the company of similar minded chaps who have a good sense of humour and could endure the ribbing and mickey taking we all have to suffer, whilst enjoying lunch in a different hostelry each month.

Our group remains small and friendly, we cannot all make every visit but we do take it in turn to drive and book the location of our next trip. We have only six regular members which we have drawn from the retired or semi-retired gentlemen who live in or have connections with the Drewsteignton parish. The smallest group has been only three of us but there have been other occasions where all six have been in attendance.

If you wish to enjoy good food, a few beers and an opportunity to discuss current issues with other retired gents, whilst at the same time visiting beautiful parts of our county or you are just interested in learning more about this group then give me a call on 01647 281232. *Alan Brooks*

### The Johnny Fuller Band

**New Year's Eve in The Long Room,**

Tickets available at The Drewe Arms £5.00 in advance or £10.00 on the door on the night.



## News from the Castle

Traditionally National Trust houses used to close, to the public, at the end of October and, except for a few special events, would not re-open until Easter. As you may be aware we are, this year, opening some areas of the castle every week-end until Christmas and our visitor figures are showing that this has been a popular decision. However, we still need to carry out annual, routine cleaning and maintenance and, as you will see in this picture of the Scullery, it is still business as usual, behind closed doors; with tower scaffolding in position, to clean in all those high-level nooks and crannies, and the contents of the room cleaned and covered in preparation for the new season. In my last piece I mentioned three special events that would be taking place in November; so now seems like a good time to give you an update on these:



- \* Drogo 10 Run (20<sup>th</sup> November) – This event, organised by South West Runners, keeps going from strength to strength. This year more than 500 runners took part, on an unseasonably warm day, with the winner crossing the finishing post in just 1 hour 1 minute.
- \* Festive Food Fair (26<sup>th</sup> November) - Once again this was well attended and with 12 stalls selling produce from local traders, together with a couple of craft stalls, there was plenty for shoppers to choose from.
- \* Riding for the Disabled Coffee Morning (30<sup>th</sup> November) – With a number of stalls selling everything from books to cakes and bottles to bric-a-brac and the chance to have a sit-down in the Entrance Hall, with a cup of coffee; this annual event continues to draw in many people from the local community, who we are always pleased to see visit the castle, and provides a welcome income for this wonderful organisation.

**It won't be long until Christmas and many of the show rooms will be decorated to reflect Christmas as it would have been in the 1930s.** Once again, Mr Claus has made time in his busy schedule to come and see us in order to talk to our younger visitors and offer them a special gift. We had hoped to see Mrs Claus but, with so many elves to feed on Christmas Day, she is already hard at work stuffing turkeys, decorating cakes, flaming puddings, etc. so it seems unlikely that we will see her. This event will run over the week-end of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December and then from 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December and we hope to see you there. **However, if you can't make it I'd like to finish by wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at Castle Drogo.**

Andy Dawson  
 Compliance & Environmental Practices Co-ordinator  
 Dartmoor Properties  
 Telephone: 01647 434117  
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## Drewsteignton Gardeners' Club

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

Our talk from Alan French in October was enjoyed by more than 40 people who mostly went away with **one of his plants. The whole evening was a great success. Don't forget if you would like to join us for our Christmas supper at Fingle Bridge on Monday December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 for 7.30pm do phone Carole as soon as possible.** On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2012 we begin the year with a talk from Paul Bartlett from Stone Lane garden. He has just returned from a Plant Hunting expedition in the Himalayas where he found some unusual and **rare trees. Don't forget all meetings start at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. As usual everyone is most welcome to join us and a reminder to all members: Cheriton Bishop is holding their annual Gardening Quiz on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January at 8pm.**

## View From The Farm

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is changing again and at the beginning of November the European agricultural commissioner, Dacian Cioloș, announced the framework so that after 2013, CAP will be simple both for administrations and farmers while being efficient in ensuring food security, a sustainable use of natural resources and a balanced development of all our rural areas.

Now the process of negotiating between member states has begun and it looks like no agreement -- about how much and to whom -- will be made until the beginning of 2014.

Producing food takes a while but yet again the whole agricultural industry is left unable to be certain where the support payments will go. In England we have been moving from direct payments to area payments since 2005, which is particularly painful here in the South West with smaller livestock and mixed farms. We have suffered a commercial disadvantage when Wales and Scotland have continued to receive large historical payments. A level playing field will be long overdue.

As Europe has no cash the one certainty is that the amount of money will be cut and the days of supported agriculture are coming to an end. That is great while the world market price is so high but the last few years have been characterised by vola-

tility and there is a whole raft of proposed measures that make our production uneconomic. A 7% greening of CAP will ensure that arable farms will need to put in non productive areas to receive 30% of their support. More targeted Pillar 2 (rural development) money will be available and there is a promise of supporting traditional practices which means the upland areas of Britain.

In the last reform of CAP in 2005 England decided not to support new entrants and young farmers. The good news is this time it will be a compulsory element that member states can not opt out of. So 2012 will be an interesting year with farming pressure groups trying to shout louder than the environmental groups. Lots of talk of 'sustainable intensification' which seems to be a keyword — I have yet to work out what it means — and a drive for farms to get bigger and more efficient. Meanwhile, down on the farms across Devon, farmers will continue to do what they are best at, producing good safe food, minimising their costs and caring for the land and environment. Support them by buying British, buying local and paying a fair price, then maybe we can look forward to a future with minimal European support.

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Drewsteignton

Parish Post

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