



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

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THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

PRESIDENT	Peter Moreland	Chairperson	Linda Timms
Secretary	Terry Bennett	Vice Chairman & Newsletter editor	Rachael Whitbread,
Treasurer	Linda Timms (pro tem)	Committee	John Dalziel, Ruth Jacobson, Tony Smith .
Membership	John & Rachael Whitbread		

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of John Gordon, former Chairman and long-term supporter of the Trust. Our President Peter Moreland has written the following personal tribute:

CJD Gordon – 1925 – 2006

With the death of John Gordon in August, the Trust lost a very staunch supporter who had given much time and effort to its affairs almost since its creation.

John was a very private person, a Scot with a mischievous wit; he had strong and deeply held views on the countryside. As a small boy, he suffered an unfortunate setback when he lost his mother, and his subsequent upbringing must have had a considerable effect on his attitude to life. During the War, he joined the Seaforth Highlanders and with them served both in Europe and the Far East, his unit forming part of 6th Airborne Division. He was awarded the Military Cross.

With peace, he decided to farm in Kenya and there met his future wife Didi (who died in 2004). John greatly enjoyed the outdoor life and it was harsh indeed that, thanks to the Mau Mau, the family lost virtually all their possessions and had to return to the UK to make a fresh start.

The family lived in several areas from Scotland down to Sussex, while John pursued a mixture of jobs centred on land management and forestry. In this way he added to his knowledge of tree planting and maintenance, and also of the problems presented by the planning system. Ill-considered planning and development of many rural areas was rife in the '80's (and later), and moving to Holditch brought him face to face with proposals which he (and the Trust) considered totally unsuited to the very special environment and the changing pattern of work-a-day life.

His contributions to the Public Inquiries, which eventually led to the present more reasonable situation, were of the greatest value, and we are all indebted to him.

Peter Moreland.



Thorncombe Trees



One of the most visible roles of the trust is tree planting – and many hundreds of trees have been planted by us in the past 20 years. In this anniversary year, we are undertaking an audit of 'our' trees. Some of these are easily found (the blue marker on or by a tree shows it to be a Trust one), many we remember and pass regularly. However, others are less accessible, and over the years have quietly been growing in distant hedges. Committee members have compiled a map of tree sites, over 25 in all, in or adjoining the parish. Some sites may have 10, others 20 or 30 trees. Our tree officer has visited the sites and logged any work that needs to be done: clearing undergrowth, loosening or removing ties, cutting back unhealthy branches etc. We are now putting into action a maintenance schedule so that this work can be completed over the winter months.

This autumn, we are also planning to plant two oak trees (one for each decade of our existence) in the hedge opposite the school, by kind permission of Derek Bond.

Hedgehogs

With the increase in farm sizes over the last 50 years and the increase in urban building, the countryside hedgerows have decreased. With this decrease, the habitat and food supply of the hedgehog has been reduced. Tidy gardens and large areas of paving or decking are not tempting to these little creatures – they prefer damp, untidy and overgrown edges and corners.

As winter approaches, hedgehogs are looking for a cosy, safe place to hibernate. An untidy corner of the garden, a thick hedge-bottom, or space under a shed or a log pile are all possible nest sites.

As hedgehogs have a fairly large territory, they may want to wander across several gardens to search for food – if you want to encourage them into your garden make sure they can get in under solid fences or through wire ones.

Hedgehogs are known as the gardener's friend as they eat quantities of slugs and snails. However, the main food source for the hedgehog is beetles and caterpillars. They do sometimes kill small mammals, especially if other food sources are scarce, and can attack the chicks of ground nesting birds. This last fact makes the hedgehog a menace amongst colonies of some seabirds.

If you want to feed the hedgehogs in your garden, the best food to offer is dog or cat food. Bread and milk doesn't agree with them. Remember to provide water too in dry weather.

Hedgehog hazards

- Always check compost heaps and piles of firewood for hedgehogs before disturbing them, as they may well nest in these.
- Fruit nets and mesh can be dangerous for hedgehogs (and other animals) which may get caught in them.
- Lawn mowers and strimmers can be fatal. Be especially careful when cutting longer grass.
- Avoid using slug pellets and other garden chemicals. These can harm hedgehogs. It's better to encourage hedgehogs to keep these pests under control.
- Smooth-sided garden ponds can be fatal to hedgehogs – provide a sloping ramp for them to escape



New and renewing members this year:

Thorncombe High St:
Mr and Mrs Mitchell,
Nigel Higgins and Lynn Kinsey
The Smith Family

Thorncombe Chard St:
Lorraine Northover
David Owen-Burke and
Pauline Stanley

From Magdalen:
Gyles Morris and family

From Hawkchurch:
John and Heather Holland

From Schoohouse:
Mrs Sadie Coleman

From Sidmouth:
Mrs Liz Rodgers

Membership currently stands at 124 households

Questionnaire

Please can you take the time to complete **and return** the attached questionnaire – there should be one for each member of your household.

We need your opinions and ideas.

Don't forget, members can apply for small tree planting grants from the Trust. Contact Linda Timms on 01297 678355 for details.

Our anniversary tea party at Magdalen was a great success – many thanks to all who attended. We hope you enjoyed the Thorncombe Challenge quiz sheets, winners to be announced...

Switch off your paper bill

Paper-free billing from BT reduces the amount of paper you have to deal with - and the amount of paper we use - helping us all benefit the environment further. In addition BT has teamed up with the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity to help make your paper-free bill even greener.

If you have a BT residential account, when you upgrade or sign up for paper-free billing BT will purchase a native sapling on your behalf for the Woodland Trust to plant in one of their woodland creation sites across the UK.

Go to www.woodland-trust.org.uk for details.