



THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST NEWS

Autumn 2011

Number 45

THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

President Sheila Moreland

Chairperson Linda Timms

Secretary Terry Bennett

Treasurer Lynn Kinsey

Committee members John Dalziel, Ruth Jacobson

Contacts: Terry Bennett: 01460 30213, R & J Whitbread: 01460 30525

Email: villagetrust@hotmail.co.uk **Website:** www.thorncombe-village-trust.co.uk

Newsletter Lynn Kinsey & Charlotte Bradley

Membership John & Rachael Whitbread

MIGRATION OF BIRDS

We are very lucky to have so many feathered visitors during the summer and winter. Birds travel north in the spring, to take advantage of the seasonally abundant food and the longer days during the important breeding season. And then, as the days get shorter and colder, they travel south for the mild wintering grounds in the tropics of Africa, crossing the Mediterranean countries and Islands and then the inhospitable Sahara desert on their way. Although it is still not properly understood how they manage to navigate, there are many navigational clues we think they use. Some of which are: the direction of the setting sun, the stars in the night sky and even the earth's magnetic field. Particularly amazing are the young cuckoos that raised by adoptive parents and never knowing their own parents, arrive in their ancestral wintering grounds with no adult guidance.

The swallows are probably our best known migrants and in the autumn they gather en masse, usually on telegraph wires, to set off on one of the longest journeys undertaken by British visitors - traveling south for at least 9,500 kms to Southern Africa and then of course all the way back again in the spring! Unlike swallows, swifts, sand martins and house martins that fly by day, many migrating species prefer to travel by night and you will rarely see them leave. It is believed they do this to use navigational clues in the night sky and to reduce the risk of predators. However the main reason may be that the air is cooler and calmer at night, reducing the risk of dehydration and minimising energy loss. Most migrants undertake a feeding frenzy, often doubling their body weight, before they leave. Many of the small songbirds switch from their usual insect diet to autumn berries, building up fat reserves for the journey. This is why it is important for us to feed the birds in the autumn and not just during the cold winter months - especially if a wet summer has diminished the berry crop, although this year that certainly hasn't been a problem!

We shouldn't forget that many species arrive from here for the winter from Scandinavia, Russia and North East Europe these include fieldfares, redwings, bramblings and waxwings. They come south as our winters are milder. Others include European visitors of resident species. Robins are always traditionally seen as winter visitors, but did you know that the blackbird in your winter garden might not be the same bird you saw in the summer? Many British blackbirds spend the winter in Ireland, while birds from Eastern Europe arrive here. Starlings are another species whose numbers swell in the winter due to the mass arrival of birds from the East, and if you go to the Somerset Levels in late November through to January, you can see the fantastic sight of thousands of starlings gathering in the night sky before they go to roost for the night.

We would like to welcome the following new members for 2011

In Orchard Lane: Julie & Mark Shelley. **In Saddle St:** Julia & Brian Service

In Fore St: Mrs B. Harris and Brenda Woodman. **In Chard St:** John and Annie Turner

In High St: Pippa Moore, and The Eaves Family. **At Laymore:** J. Childs and Denise & Tim Bell

On Causeway: Mark & Helen Doble. **In Uplyme:** Prof. C.R.C Paul

Currently 126 households are members of the Thorncombe Village Trust and of these 97 represent couples/families.

LONG DISTANCE TRAILS IN THORNCOMBE PARISH

Long distance trails are long-distance tracks, paths, or footpaths where it takes the average user more than one day to travel from end to end. Typically, a "long distance" trail will be at least 50 km (31.1 mi) long, but some in Britain are hundreds of miles long.

We are lucky enough to have 4 long distance trails which criss cross the parish of Thorncombe, one of which even begins in the Parish. They are Liberty Trail, Wessex Ridgeway, Monarchs Way and Jubilee Trail.

The **Liberty Trail** is a 28 mile (45.1 km) trail that follows in the footsteps of the villagers that made their way to join the Protestant Monmouth Rebellion in 1685. The rebels wore green sprigs tucked into their hats to declare their support for Monmouth. Weapons that they carried included farm scythes and other suitable agricultural tools.

The route starts at Ham Hill Country Park where you will find splendid views of the Mendip Hills, Blackdown Hills, Quantock Hills and Dorset Downs. From here you head south through West Chinnock, Haselbury Plucknett, Misterton and Wayford before coming to Forde Abbey. The route continues towards Thorncombe and then onto Fishpond Bottom via Lambert's Castle Iron Age hill fort. The final stretch takes you past Wooton Fitzpaine to Lyme Regis on the coast.

The **Wessex Ridgeway** runs 136 miles (219 km) from Marlborough in Wiltshire to Lyme Regis in Dorset via the edge of Salisbury Plain and Cranborne Chase. The footpath was opened in 1994. It is one of four long distance footpaths which, when combined, run from Lyme Regis to Hunstanton and are referred to as the Greater Ridgeway. This is part of a prehistoric trade route which stretched right across England, linking the Norfolk coast to the Devon coast.

The **Monarch's Way** follows the 615 mile (990km) route taken by the future King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester in 1651, as he made his escape from Cromwell's Parliamentary forces via Shoreham to France. A reward of £1,000 was offered for the capture of the King, and it is likely that the King and anyone helping him would have been executed for treason, if caught. The King had a distinctive appearance: very swarthy and six foot two inches tall, at a time when most men were under 5'10. Furthermore there were cavalry patrols specifically tasked with finding the King. Fortunately for Charles, the Catholics had an organisation with 90 years of experience in keeping secrets and hiding people. The path passes northeast / southwest through the Parish.

The 90 mile (145km) Dorset **Jubilee Trail** was established to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Ramblers' and was opened in 1995. The route was compiled and surveyed by members of the Ramblers Dorset Area with the co-operation of the county and parish councils, landowners and farmers. The Jubilee Trail runs from Forde Abbey, across Dorset to Bokerley Dyke in the northeast on the Hampshire Border. The Trail winds through quiet villages, passing rural churches, and offers extensive views over the rolling downs and secret valleys that make Dorset so special.

MEMBERS MEETINGS

An important part of the Thorncombe Village Trust calendar is the bi-monthly members meeting. These normally take the form of a talk or presentation by a Speaker, usually illustrated by slides. This year we have had a talk on Butterflies, which inc. excellent slides and information on a survey at Chard Junction Nature Reserve, and Apple Growing at North Perrott Fruit Farm, which was particularly enjoyable as we were offered tastings of fresh Apple Juice. In September we had an interesting talk on the National Trust's West Dorset properties and landscapes. For the rest of the year our talks will vary from the history of Beaminster in pictures, West Dorset's Industrial Heritage, Marine Life in Lyme Bay and Adventurous Journeys. So there should be a subject to interest everyone.

Full details and times are included in the membership programme and on our website www.thorncombe-village-trust.co.uk They are also advertised on posters throughout the parish and in the Parish Magazine. We look forward to your support as these talks have been organised for you, our members. Visitors are always welcome.



Please also do not forget our Spring and Christmas Plant and Crafts Sales. The next Christmas Sale, held jointly with Dorset Wildlife Trust is on Saturday 19th November at Thorncombe Village Hall from 10am to noon. There should be cards and small gifts to buy as well as delicious cakes, bric-a-brac, plants and books. Or just come for a coffee and a chat. Donations for the stalls are always welcome.

A REQUEST PLEASE – Do we have your current email address? The Trust can save money and be more efficient by emailing updates and newsletters etc rather than sending them by post. This will also save on paper and waste.

Please send your email address to:- villagetrust@hotmail.co.uk

Thank you very much - any information given will be kept confidential.