



**20th Birthday Edition**

**THORNCOMBE  
VILLAGE  
TRUST  
NEWS**

Spring 2006

Number 34

**Congratulations to members on our 20th anniversary!**

**20 Years old**

To our recent members it may seem that Thorncombe has always had a Village Trust – our more stalwart members will remember the Trust's early beginnings in 1986 in response to many people's concerns over the possible future of our immediate environment.

During the past 20 years the committee has gone through many changes but membership has remained strong and supportive. The village has grown: new houses and new members. We have planted a great number of trees, arranged scores of talks, walks and plant sales for our members as well as providing a forum for discussion, as, for example, with the Alternative Energy Forum. The committee always takes seriously its responsibility to the members and discusses any planning issues that could have an impact on Thorncombe, writing to relevant people, attending planning meetings at district level and responding to requests for information.

Would you like to have this newsletter emailed directly to you? It would be prompt, immediate, and save on paper!

Contact [Villagetrust@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Villagetrust@hotmail.co.uk)

**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

To mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary the committee has arranged a tea party to be held at Magdalen Farm on Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>. All members and their families are invited to attend. There will be a hearty organic spread, and a chance to explore the fascinating environment of Magdalen (see over for more details). There will be a Treasure Hunt and tour of Tony Smith's weaving workshop. Transport can be arranged if needed: please contact Rachael Whitbread on 01460 30525 or Terry Bennett on 01460 30213 to arrange this.

We are also compiling a set of Challenges – a sort of local quiz, questions that can be answered by a bit of crafty local research by adults and children. These will be available in the summer from the shop, just in time to entertain you through those lazy summer days.....

**DON'T FORGET THE TVT PLANT SALE ON MAY 20th AT 10 AM – DONATIONS OF PLANTS and CAKES VERY WELCOME – telephone Rachael on 01460 30525 for collection.**

## Fairtrade Coffee and Tea and Local Produce

In keeping with our environmental ethos we are now providing locally produced and purchased refreshments where possible – Dorset biscuits, ( village-made ones if available), bought in the local store. For coffee and tea we have changed to Fairtrade brands. The Fairtrade standard helps to ensure that independent small coffee farmers working their own land receive a fair price for their beans. Most tea, however, is grown on estates. The concern for workers employed on tea plantations is fair wages and decent working conditions. Fairtrade ensures that employers pay decent wages, guarantee the right to join trade unions and provide good housing when relevant. On plantations and in factories, minimum health and safety as well as environmental standards must be complied with, and no child or forced labour can occur. The response from members to this new venture has been heart-warmingly appreciative.



## The Magdalen Project

The Magdalen Project is a charity promoting sustainability, rural skills and environmental education to all age groups, based on an organic farm at Maudlin Cross near Winsham, just within the Thorncombe parish. Schoolchildren, Youth Groups and adults from near and far come to take part in courses ranging from making mud bricks to hedgerow walking sticks, from making clay bread ovens to making bread.

The centre tries to be as sustainable as possible, for example they have 5kW photo-voltaic panels that produce electricity directly from sunlight. On particularly sunny days they produce more electricity than they need, so they sell this back to the grid. In the winter they need to draw electricity from the grid to compensate for lower sunlight levels and a higher demand in the centre. They invest in 'green energy' by buying their electricity from 'Ecotricity' – a renewable electricity supplier. This is one the simplest and most effective ways of reducing CO2 emissions.

They also have built composting toilets on their eco-campsite, using environmentally-friendly materials such as cob and reclaimed timber in the build. They have a very active recycling and composting operation.

More information can be found on the website: [www.themagdalenproject.org.uk](http://www.themagdalenproject.org.uk). For example:

**"Organic small holding:** Part of our 132 acres has been designed to illustrate the principles of organic agriculture through the development of a demonstration small holding. We've constructed a circular wheel chair path helping to provide access for all visitors, interspersed with interpretation boards describing our withy beds, edible hedge, plants for natural dyeing and rotation of chickens, pigs and vegetables."

The TVT is grateful to Magdalen for hosting our celebratory Tea Party on June 4<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing members old and new there! Don't forget to RSVP so we have an idea of how many to cater for (see contact numbers overleaf)



## Verge Cutting

Several members have expressed concern and outrage at the seemingly haphazard and unfeeling way in which the local verges are trimmed by the council. Last year in particular, a lovely group of orchids in Holditch disappeared in full flower. We have been communicating with the council, requesting that the cutting be delayed so that we can enjoy the wide variety of wild flowers in bloom, especially in May and June, before the verges are cut back. It has been explained to us that with 13,000 miles of banks in Dorset and only 6 machines, planning cutting is very difficult! However, the council have now agreed to stagger cutting, rotating the date around villages, and should start around the end of June.

Meadow plants lost to intensive agriculture in neighbouring fields sometimes survive on the verge and in the hedgerows, attracting many butterflies and other insects. The Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset County Council have worked together for many years to make sure that important verges are managed carefully. These sites are now marked with posts to help prevent verge cutting taking place at the wrong time, and to protect plants and animals at key points in their annual cycle. The posts are colour-coded to indicate early, mid-season or late cutting. An example of this can be seen in Headstock Lane, where the old-style blue posts are soon to be replaced with red ones, to show early cutting is needed. If you have any concerns over verge trimming please contact any member of the committee.

More info: [www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset](http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset)

