



Schoolchildren planting oaks on the common

*Photo by Ian Loudon*

*We would love more occasional & regular contributions for OUR community magazine from parishioners.*

Please send articles/ photo's to  
[lbr.roundabout@gmail.com](mailto:lbr.roundabout@gmail.com)  
or simply scan the QR code.





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# Welcome

Thank you once again for all your contributions. Don't forget to check out the advertisers at the back—they do change and there are a few new ones, including info on a new transport service for medical appointments. Also, apart from our regular themes and reports, there is a long article from Lissie Fuller of Chipley about teaching at sea .....

*Tryphena Huntingford and the Round About team*

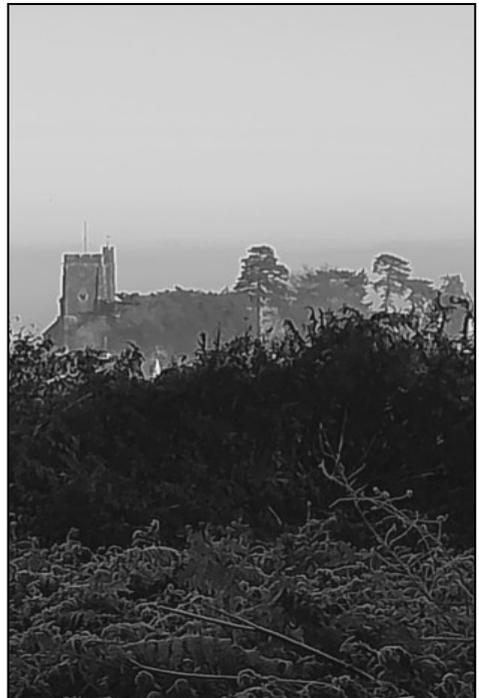
## Local history

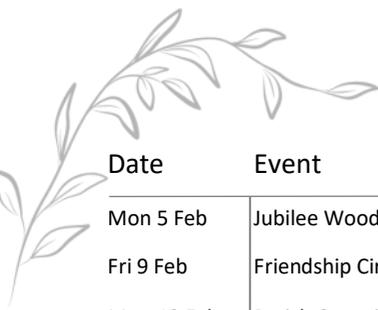
We have some wonderful childhood reminiscences to share from Valerie Pitman, who grew up in the centre of the village, and Jen Perry-Jones who grew up on Stancombe Farm. Their memories paint a picture of a busy village with multiple local businesses serving a population with limited access to motorised transport and electricity. We will include some of their stories in future editions about farming with horses, playing and social networks, the changing pattern of housing etc. If you too have stories to tell, please do share!

*Cover photo by Josh Wedderkopp, inside cover photos by Pam Farr and Jane Hancock, winter with St Peter's by Denise Hunt*

## LL LANGFORD LADIES

Langford Ladies celebrated Christmas in style at Laurian's house—thank you. The programme for 2024 was agreed this month around two tables at the Martlet and ranges from a wholesome walk to a not so wholesome gin making session with all sorts in between. On February 21, we meet the cartography artist, Victoria Ward.





# What's On

Date	Event	Venue	Time
Mon 5 Feb	Jubilee Wood Jobs	Meet at Jubilee seat	10am
Fri 9 Feb	Friendship Circle with speaker	Jubilee Hall	11-12.30am
Mon 12 Feb	Parish Council Meeting	Jubilee Hall	6.30-8pm
Wed 14 Feb	Jazz Night	Jubilee Hall	7 for 7.30pm
Sat 17 Feb	Café Plus - fun portraits	Jubilee Hall	10am-12.30am
Sat 17 Feb	Budview: A Haunting in Venice	Jubilee Hall	7 for 7.30pm
Mon 19 Feb	Jubilee Wood Footpath	Meet at Jubilee seat	10am
Tues 20 Feb	Free Tai Chi Qigong taster session	Jubilee Hall	1.30pm
Wed 21 Feb	Langford Ladies: meet the cartography artist Victoria Ward	Jubilee Hall	7pm
Fri 23 Feb	Friendship Circle: coffee and chat	Jubilee Hall	11am-12.30pm
	Police beat (unconfirmed)		
Fri 8 March	Friendship Circle—trip	tbc	tbc
	Blood Donation	Jubilee Hall	11am-8pm
Mon 11	Greener Gardening Group:	The Martlet	6.30pm
*Mon	Baby & Toddler Group -In termtime	Jubilee Hall	9.30-12.30pm
*Tues & Thurs	Yoga	Jubilee Hall	6pm-7.30pm & 10am-11.30am
*Tues	Fitness	Jubilee Hall	10-11am
*Tues	Pilates	Jubilee Hall	11.30-12.30pm
*Wed	Short Mat Bowls	Jubilee Hall	10-midday
*Wed	Bridge	Jubilee Hall	1-3.30pm
*Wed	Art Class	Jubilee Hall	10-12pm
*Fridays	Dance	Jubilee Hall	9.30-10.30am

*These are weekly events held at the Jubilee Hall. This list is not exhaustive so please check for further details at: [lbjubileehall.com](http://lbjubileehall.com)*

**WITH LB  
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GROUP**

**NO  
EXPERIENCE  
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**'JUST FOR FUN'**  
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# News from LB Parish Council

## **Quadbike Damage on The Triangle**

Firstly, it has been reported to the Parish Council that someone is riding a quad bike on the Triangle, and causing damage to the football pitch and grass area around Jubilee seat. Whoever is responsible can they please stop as you are spoiling a community facility unnecessarily, or if you know who it is, then please let a Council member know anonymously, and we will be happy to speak to the person concerned.

## **Consequences of Somerset County Council's Weak Finances**

Secondly, you may be aware Somerset Unitary Council is experiencing severe financial problems at the moment, which could mean they will be in debt to the tune of some £100m, a gap they have to fill by whatever means possible, or alternatively they could have to apply for bankruptcy. Both of which will have a devastating impact on the services the Council will be able to provide in their financial year 2024/25 and beyond.

Part of the Council's plan to cut their direct costs is to transfer many functions to Town and Parish Councils. The outcome of this is we could have to start paying for many services we do not have to at the moment, and it will increase our costs significantly. For the last 2 years we have made sure our budgeting has been as financially sound as possible, and as a consequence we have been able to maintain our precept at 2020/21 levels. Unfortunately, because of the problems now facing Somerset Council, and how they intend to resolve it as described above, we are going to have to increase the figure we need to ensure we can meet any future cost increases imposed on us. However, we have again managed our budget for the coming financial year as realistically as possible, which means we will only have to increase our portion of the council tax bill by, on average, £5 per household extra for the year. For any household who will incur severe financial hardship because of the increase in their overall council tax, it is possible to apply to Somerset Council for a reduction in your Council Tax to the value of up to 100%.

*Derek Sowden, Chairperson*

Langford Budville Parish Council

# Planning Applications

**21/23/0011/LEW. 11/12/2023** Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the existing non-compliance of the occupancy condition (Condition No. 11) of application 21/03/0019 at The Stables, Milverton Road, Langford Budville. A decision has yet to be made on this application.

**21/23/0012. 11/12/2023** Erection of a two storey extension to the rear of The Stables, Milverton Road, Langford Budville. A decision has yet to be made on this application.

**21/23/0009. 30/11/2023** Siting of static caravan for welfare purposes in connection with horticultural business at New Barn, Langford Budville Road, Runnington (retention of works already undertaken). A decision has yet to be made on this application

**21/23/0007/T. 27/09/2023** Notification to fell one Magnolia tree within Langford Budville Conservation Area at Coneybeare, Langford Budville. Decision of No Objection - Trees was made on 25/10/2023.

**21/23/0006. 14/08/2023** Erection of an open sided agricultural storage shed at Fouracres Farm, Harpford Farm Lane, Wellington as amended by agents email and Drawing Number. 230716 002 Revision A, confirming 'Anthracite Grey' roofing. Decision of Conditional Approval was made on 04/10/2023

## Volunteer for children in Somerset

**Route1** have two volunteering opportunities: Independent Visitor and Advocate.

Independent Visitors are volunteers who befriend and spend time with a child or young person who is in the care of the Local Authority. You and the young person have the freedom to decide what you do, how you do it, to build a meaningful friendship.

An Advocate is an independent person who can offer one-to-one support to children and young people to have their voice heard when meetings are taking place concerning their wellbeing. It's the role of the Advocate to speak up for the young person, make them aware of their rights, listen to them and represent their views, wishes and feelings.

To find out more, contact us: 01749 822801 [www.route1advocacy.co.uk](http://www.route1advocacy.co.uk)



# Friendship Circle

Our first meeting in December was the Christmas party with nibbles, mince pies and drinks; Nigel Reader provided the entertainment, regaling us with Christmas songs and ballads. His impression of Elvis Presley was much enjoyed and a good time was had by all! The following meeting was a Christmas meal at Oake Manor, with good food, excellent service and jollity. After the Christmas break, we reconvened on January 12th, when forty-two members started the new year with coffee, biscuits and plenty of chat!



Please note that the Friendship Circle is open to all; you just have to pay at the door and find a seat...

The next meetings are :

- 9th Feb - Speaker (Pete Gill on Tom Lehrer)
- 23rd Feb - Coffee & Chat
- 8th Mar - Trip - hopefully Tyntesfield (details tba)
- 22nd Mar - Coffee & Chat
- 5th Apr - Speaker (John Burgess on Exmoor characters)
- 19th Apr - Ploughman's lunch

All the above meetings 11 - 12.30 in the Jubilee Hall (unless otherwise stated).  
The £2 entry includes one raffle ticket

*Pam Farr*

The **Art Group** meets every Wednesday in the village hall committee room; 10.00 - 12.00. We pay £4 which covers hire cost and tea/coffee/biscuits. If anyone would like to know more, please email Pam at [pjayfarr@gmail.com](mailto:pjayfarr@gmail.com)

## Farewell to ...

### Roger Marshall

It is with sadness that we report the death of Roger Marshall who with his wife Jean moved to Langford Budville in 2009 and lived at Courtlands for almost a decade before moving to Frome to be closer to family.

Roger and Jean were both very fully involved in the life of our community. Not long after arriving, Roger became a village hall Trustee, joining at a critical time when the Trustees were striving to overcome the various conditions which had to be met before building could commence. His professional expertise and experience were to prove invaluable as matters progressed. Roger later became vice chairman and was actively involved in fundraising, not least as a member of the committee which organised several very successful fetes at the hall, not to forget his memorable performances as Father Christmas at the tree lighting ceremonies at the church and his contributions to the Changing Faces performances at the Martlet and later in the Jubilee Hall.

Roger was generous with his time and energy for everyone, from individuals to his work as a volunteer driver for Wivey Link, a steward at World Cup games at Somerset County Ground and an official driver at the 2012 London Olympics. Most of all he will be remembered for his straightforward, pragmatic approach to life and his willingness to roll up his sleeves, often literally, and help out.

Roger was buried in a Somerset willow coffin at a private family ceremony at Bath Natural Burial Meadow. A celebration of his life took place at a golf club near Frome and was attended by a number of his Langford Budville friends with whom he had kept in touch and by whom he will be greatly missed.

He is survived by Jean and their children Lucy and Nicholas and two grandsons to whom condolences are extended.

*Keith Moore*

### Brenda Taylor

Brenda has moved to Sampford Peverell, so not so far away, and she has plans to come back regularly, which is great. She particularly wanted to thank everyone for supporting her yard sale which raised £550 for the Alzheimer's Society, in memory of her husband Roland who died of the disease in 2022.

*Tryphena Huntingford*



### Potential New Tai Chi Regular Class

Free Tai Chi QiGong Taster Class at the Jubilee Hall on Tuesday 20th February 1.30pm. Contact Rob 08583227536 or email [robwalsh55@btinternet.com](mailto:robwalsh55@btinternet.com) to book a place.

### New Secretary Wanted

Many thanks to Fiona for her stint as secretary for the Hall. Would you enjoy acting as Secretary for the Jubilee Hall? The committee is in need of someone to take minutes but the Secretary role could also be much wider.

### Community Fund

Café Plus has been diverting their profits to the Community Fund—£200 over the first year plus a £45 subsidy to the Barn Dance held in the Autumn. The fund is held by the hall.

*Michael Huntingford*

### Christmas Craft Fair Fund Raiser - £538

A brilliant Success! Langford Budville Cafe Plus alongside Louise Winborn joined forces to put on a Christmas craft fair in aid of a local charity Kierans Legacy. Kieran was a local postman, who sadly died from a rare form of Bone Cancer (Ewings Sarcoma). He was just 25 years old. His family set up Kierans Legacy to raise money for research into Ewings Sarcoma in his memory. The craft fair was a resounding success, the hall was filled with an array of different crafts and, delicious refreshments of hot and cold drinks, alongside outstanding cakes, were served. In total we raised an amazing £538! Oh behalf of everyone in team Kieran we would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and support. We are truly grateful.

*Debbi Mackenzie*

**The Jubilee Hall is an ideal venue for a wide variety of events including wedding receptions, parties, shows and concerts, club and society meetings, conferences & training days, with state of the art sound and projection, and High speed broadband. For more information and booking availability go to [www.lbjubileehall.com](http://www.lbjubileehall.com)**

## February 17

A Haunting in Venice with Kenneth Branagh. As Poirot

In post-World War II Venice, Hercule Poirot now retired and living in self-imposed exile, reluctantly attends a séance. But when one of the guests is murdered, the former detective must put his little grey cells to work one more time to uncover the killer. We have shown both of the previous two in the series and they proved to be popular.



## March 16 The Great Escaper

The Winter season continues with The Great Escaper on 16th March which was Glenda Jackson's last film and maybe Michael Caine's as well. In 1944, Bernie Jordan (Michael Caine) is sad to miss out on an official group outing to the D-Day anniversary in France. Encouraged by wife Rene (Glenda Jackson), he sneaks out from his care home and goes on one last big adventure to cross the Channel, while reminiscing about his wartime experiences.

## April 20 Napoleon

To complete the season on 20th April we will be showing Ridley Scott's Napoleon. This is a spectacle-filled action epic that details the checkered rise and fall of the iconic French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, played by Joaquin Phoenix.

*Tim Wyatt*

**Budvue tickets are still only £5 and doors open at 7pm with the main film at 7.30pm, the bar is open and ice-creams are available during the interval.**

**We have the opportunity to change film night to Fridays later this year. Please let us know your views either in person or via [budvillevue@gmail.com](mailto:budvillevue@gmail.com)**

# Community and the School



*Happy New Year to you all. We have been lucky to have received a wonderful gift over the Winter holiday...*

*Langford Budville CoE Primary School has introduced a new mural in its playground. Donated by local artist Christine Sowden, it symbolises the school's Christian vision 'Roots to Grow, Wings to Fly'. The ethos was brought in by head of school Jonathan Moise-Souch in September 2023. The new mural features the Swift, a bird that is featured on the school's logo, often remarked as a poignant demonstration of resilience. Drawing inspiration from Psalm 1 and Isaiah 40:30-31, the mural showcases six Christian values - curiosity, respect, creativity, forgiveness, perseverance and trust.*

*Calling all hands!*

*As a school, we have set up 'Loving Langford Budville CoE Primary School.' This is a group of kind-hearted people who are passionate about bringing our school back to its best. Already we have had support from different people with various different tasks. These have included trimming of hedges, painting of fences and planting of our raised beds. As we move forward into hopefully some better weather, I would like to lift the outside area and the face of the school more. If you would like to offer your support in any way, then do please contact our school office on 01823 400483 or [langfordbudville@moorlandfed.co.uk](mailto:langfordbudville@moorlandfed.co.uk).*

*Jonathon Moise-Souch Head of School*

# Advanced Notice-April Café Plus



LANGFORD BUDVILLE  
**CAFÉ PLUS**



## POP-UP REPAIR CAFÉ

SATURDAY 13TH APRIL 10AM-12.30PM  
AT THE JUBILEE HALL

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO BE HOSTING WELLINGTON  
REPAIR CAFÉ AGAIN!



Wellington

**REPAIR CAFÉ**

*Bin it? No way!*

THEY HAVE A RANGE OF EXPERTS JOINING US  
COVERING ELECTRICS, SHARPENING, SEWING, CLOCKS,  
COMPUTERS & JEWELLERY.

HOT & COLD DRINKS AND PLENTY OF FRESHLY BAKED CAKES WILL BE AVAILABLE.  
WE'LL HAVE OUR REGULAR HOME GROWN PRODUCE SWAP OR DONATE TABLE TOO.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!**

For more info please contact [lbcafeplus@gmail.com](mailto:lbcafeplus@gmail.com)

## CHURCH NEWS *Change of Vicars and Church Groupings*

Some of our churches are moving from Wellington to Milverton at the beginning of March! Langford and Runnington will become part of the Milverton group under Reverend Helene Stainer which includes Fitzhead, Halse and Ash Priors. Thorne will remain part of an enlarged Ashbrittle group which also includes Rockwell Green as well as Bathleton, Stawley, Greenham, Kittesford and Sampford Arundel. We will continue to provide information on services for Thorne and in the months to come will introduce Helene properly.

The Reverend Alan Ellacott is retiring after 12 years as parish priest in our area and we are hugely grateful for his inspiration, good humour and pragmatism over that time and wish him and Katrina a happy retirement in the Crewkerne area. Alan's last services are at Langford on 4 February, at Thorne on 18 February and at Runnington on 25 February and we hope that as many of you will attend as possible.

*Michael Huntingford*

## Notes from St Peters

Under the new arrangement, our Service on the first Sunday of the month will continue as usual but at 11.15 instead of 11.00. We also will have a non-communion service on 17th March taken by Sandra Lee at 11.15. Our Easter Sunday service will be at 11.15 and Palm Sunday will be celebrated at Runnington at 9.30. Our Annual meeting will be at the end of March or beginning of April (exact time and



## Notes from St Peter's (cont.)

date to be arranged) when we appoint the Church Warden and other committee positions for the coming year. Please get in touch with either Lyn Wyatt or myself if you would like to volunteer to help run our Church either as a committee member, treasurer or Church Warden.

*Sarah Nutt*

## Lighting of the Christmas Tree

With an enthusiastic 3,2,1 countdown from the crowd, two excited children, winners of the Christmas Tree Decoration Competition, switched on the Christmas tree lights. The tree had been put up two days earlier in the grounds of St Peter's Church in preparation. Many families came out to celebrate the lighting of the tree. Carols were sung inside the church before the competition winners, with the help of Father Christmas, pulled the switch and lit up the tree. All the children then gathered inside to receive a gift from Father Christmas.

The evening finished off with a warming cup of mulled wine or hot chocolate and mince pies. The competition decorations made by all the children are currently displayed on the school notice board inside the church.

Grateful thanks to the Community Fund and church, Waitrose for mince pies and Langford Lakes Christmas Tree Farm for the generous donation of the tree.

*Lynne Moore*

## CHURCH SERVICES    Revd Alan Ellacott    01823 669824

Date	Langford Budville	Runnington	Thorne St Margaret
4 February	<b>*11am Holy Communion service</b>	Join Langford	4pm Evensong
11 February	No service	No service	No service
18 February	Join Thorne or Runnington	10.30am Lay-led service	<b>*9am Holy Communion service</b>
25 February	Join Runnington	<b>*10am Holy Communion service</b>	Join Runnington



## BEETROOT RISOTTO

*In these grey months it is good to have something colourful and tasty to lift your spirits when the evenings are dark and this recipe fits the bill completely! Furthermore, it is cheap, nutritious, seasonal and quick to cook. Serves 2*

### Ingredients

- 2tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 300g raw beetroot grated (approx. 1 bunch of raw beetroot from the supermarket)
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 parmesan rind (optional)
- 175g risotto rice
- 100ml white wine
- 600ml hot vegetable stock
- 50g grated parmesan
- ½ lemon zested and juiced
- A knob of butter
- 40g feta crumbled
- A small handful of dill to serve (optional)



### Sourdough Workshops

A fun and informative day was had at Fiona Barber's house for her first Sourdough Mini Workshop. She managed to demonstrate every stage of the process in one morning before serving up the

### *(Beetroot risotto cont.) Method*

Heat the oil in a large saucepan or lidded deep frying pan. Add the onion and beetroot and cook over a low-medium heat for about 10 mins.

Add the garlic and cook for a further minute before adding the rice. Cook for a few mins, stirring to make sure each grain is coated with oil.

Add the wine and stir until absorbed. Keep the pan at a medium heat

Add half the stock and the parmesan rind if you have one, and stir until the liquid has been absorbed

Add the remaining stock, a ladle at a time, stirring until the stock has been absorbed before adding some more.

Once all the stock has been absorbed, taste the rice. It should be cooked and not chalky. If it is, add a bit more water stirring until the rice is cooked.

Stir through the parmesan and lemon juice, adding a splash more water if the risotto is a little too thick. Season to taste and stir through. Add the knob of butter, take off the heat and clamp a lid on and leave to one side to rest for 5 mins.

Stir through the feta and dill if using and serve.

*Hot tip:* always save your parmesan rinds! It adds a lovely savoury, cheesy taste to all dishes and can be fished out at the end before serving.

### *Fermented Green Tomatoes - report back*

They are brilliant! They have really mellowed and I add them to soups and casseroles and pasta sauces. I also chop them finely and scatter them over a salad. Anything basically where you need a touch of piquant or where you would add capers.

### *Sourdough Workshops (cont.)*

freshly baked loaves with pumpkin soup and cheese. Good company, lovely setting and delicious food. A great way to spend a dreary January morning, plus we left with our own starter culture, instructions and bread to take home. We all had a go with her culture over the next few days with great success. The hardest bit was waiting for it to cool before tucking in. If you would be interested in partaking in the next workshop contact Fiona at [fionabarber40@hotmail.com](mailto:fionabarber40@hotmail.com).

*Jane Hancock*

## Conservation Group

The next two activities are both in the Jubilee Wood  
**Monday 5 February and Monday 19 February**  
Meet at the Jubilee Seat at 10am

### ACORNS TO OAKS

At the end of November, every child in the Primary School planted a small oak tree on the Common, grown from acorns collect two or three years ago. Somerset Wildlife Trust had encouraged this originally and supervised it on site - one of several recent activities of the Forest School run by Josh Wedderkopp.

### THE STATE OF NATURE REPORT 2023

This report which came out in September makes many claims but one stands out as a warning: “almost 1,500 species are at risk of UK extinction.” Just another doom-laden prophecy? Any local relevance?

It was only when looking at end of season counts for the Butterfly Conservation that this claim struck home on a local level. On the Common, where the numbers are logged each week on a set track of over a mile, the yearly totals have declined from 2046 in 2006 to only 875 in 2023. And a fritillary which used to emerge every May has not been seen since about 2012.

On a village scale how else is this affecting us? When did you last see a yellowhammer? Flocks of these used to roost in hedges near the village. We have recorded hedgehogs in the village recently but were there not many more in the past? And when did you last have to scrape flies from your windscreen and headlights? What about Song Thrushes cracking snail shells on your patio? The Big Garden Birdwatch says: Since 1979 Song Thrush sightings have dropped by more than 80%. First ranked at number 10, in 2023 they came in at number 20.

But there may be at least one way we can help locally. From Devon Wildlife Trust: “Some wildlife – including thrushes, hedgehogs and frogs - are now much more common in gardens than in the wider countryside.” This is certainly now true of goldfinches, formerly mainly a farmland bird. Another report shows how butterflies are benefiting from wildlife friendly gardens: “Half of the butterfly species investigated increased significantly in abundance in gardens between 2007 and 2020.” Advice from the National Trust: Create more, bigger and messier places for wildlife. Our wildlife needs more space, and we know that many species can benefit from habitats that are quick to create such as ponds, scrubby habitats and un-trimmed hedgerows.

*Ian Loudon ifloudon@googlemail.com*

Yellowhammer  
by Chris Chappell



Forest school by  
Josh Wedderkopp



## Green fingers WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDENING

Every TV programme, magazine or radio show about gardening is talking about wildlife friendly gardening. But what does it actually mean? I think the answer is different things to different people. To some it conjures up visions of insect filled meadows, a haven of peace and tranquillity, to others unkempt weed patches, their worst gardening nightmare. I'm worried we're in danger of becoming divided into camps of wildlife-friendly versus non-wildlife-friendly, which is nonsense: there is no black and white, as always there are different ways of doing things, something to suit everyone. If for you tightly mowed lawns and neatly trimmed edges and hedges, with lots of colourful bedding plants give you a sense of joy in your garden then, perhaps, your bit could be to look at choosing the non-double varieties of flowering plants which are much more of a food source for the insects? Possibly leaving the hedge cutting until after the birds have nested in August and making a few log and stick piles around the back of the greenhouse out of sight. For the non-mown meadow lovers, your garden would be more of a haven if you could introduce a longer season of flowering plants with some carefully chosen flowering shrubs and herbaceous perennials native or otherwise. A wall or shed covered in ivy is an insect Mecca on warm sunny days late into the autumn and winter.

A study of three garden types, the extremely tidy, through the pretty normal flower beds, shrubs and slightly untidy areas, to the completely overgrown untended garden, showed the normal mixed garden to be by far the best for wildlife. So perhaps we should forget the terminology, garden for our joy, which if it could include something in flower for twelve months of the year would be a benefit to insects and humans alike.

*Jackie Milsom*



The advertisement features a dark green background. On the left is a circular logo with a dotted border containing three Christmas trees and the text 'Langford Lakes CHRISTMAS TREE FARM'. To the right of the logo is a photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees. The text 'LANGFORD LAKES' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the top. Below the photo, the text 'Local Family Run Christmas Tree Farm set in the heart of rural Somerset' is written in a white serif font. At the bottom, a white banner contains the text 'Call us on 01823 400476 or visit [www.langfordlakes.co.uk](http://www.langfordlakes.co.uk)' in a dark green serif font.

**LANGFORD LAKES**

Local Family Run  
**Christmas Tree Farm**  
set in the heart of rural  
Somerset

Call us on 01823 400476 or visit [www.langfordlakes.co.uk](http://www.langfordlakes.co.uk)

## "No-dig" vegetables?



We had just about a full house in the Martlet function room for our January meeting. Even as it froze outside, we started with Jackie's small vase of plants in flower now, and helping insect survival. An informal quiz of their names was easier for some than others!

Our main speaker was Helen Gillingham. A lot of her time these days must go into her work to make the Transition Town Wellington the great success that it is. But it was her fame as an allotment holder that led us to ask her to talk about no-dig gardening. She admitted that the name was slightly misleading; sometimes you have to dig a bit. If Helen can't get all of a potato crop out without a bit of digging, there's no hope for the rest of us! But her exposition of the interconnected world of fungi, bacteria, organic debris and inorganic particles that make up the intricate world of soil was an insight. Rather than disrupting it by digging, we should use these connections to help us grow better food, or grow food better. It wasn't all theory, there were a lot of practical answers about mulching, compost and different crops.

Find out more at <https://ttw.org.uk>

**Our next meeting will be on March 11th, when our speaker will be Tom Neilson from [biocentric.org.uk](http://biocentric.org.uk) who is a designer and has a plant nursery near Wivey.**

As ever, new members and new ideas for speakers or visits are always welcome.

*Christine Loudon*

## Weeds, wild flowers or people on the Triangle?

It's difficult to say exactly what a weed is. Most people have some idea. The definition I go for is "Any plant that interferes with my plans". And there are plenty of both plants and plans on the Triangle.

So, how to encourage wild flowers?

Sowing seeds and planting seedlings are just the start for wild flowers. Unlike in a garden the idea is to provide the sort of conditions that they've survived in up to now, so that they just keep going. And it will be better if we can get seeds from plants nearby because they like the Langford Budville climate. Sorry, but it's true, seed-bombers! So brambles, long grass and other plants count as weeds and have to be controlled. Grass has to be cut in the right way at the right time\*. Our aim is a range of wild plants in flower from January to December, and with any luck they will produce enough seeds to keep themselves going and with some to use elsewhere.

But what about managing for people?

We are so lucky in Langford Budville to have a Triangle big enough for a children's play area, another for ball games and a more unstructured area for wild flowers with seats and mown paths\*. We have one of Somerset Wildlife Trust's largest reserves over the road from the Triangle where longer, wilder walks can be taken by those able to do so. And we are saving your money and mine now that the Parish doesn't have to pay for mowing the wild flower part!

More wild flowers from January to December mean more bees and other invertebrates which mean more birds....and so on.

*Christine Loudon*

\*thank you, volunteers!



# Dwarf Adventures on the High Seas

Hi, my name is Lissie Fuller. I am a Civil Servant first and foremost but in a previous life I was also a Biology teacher in a boarding school in the Midlands. I have been a keen sailor all my life and in January did my first ever transatlantic sail on TS Tenacious from Gran Canaria to Antigua, during a career break from the Cabinet Office. I was due to return to Westminster in March this year but when I got home from Antigua I couldn't imagine not going back to sea in the near future. I have my own boat down in Dartmouth but I knew that wasn't enough. I spent many hours online trying to work out how I could make money from being at sea. I had the added complication of having dwarfism. This comes with the bonus of osteoarthritis and a frustrating skin condition that leaves me with open wounds, particularly when it's hot and humid. All of this means I would never pass the required medical examination to be a professional seafarer so I had to find another route. I stumbled across 2 schools on sailing ships and after a few video interviews and emails I was offered jobs on both ships. Despite A Plus World Academy offering me the job of English Literature Academic Crew and the other school offering me a Biology position I decided to go with A Plus.

I now live on board the 97 year old sailing ship, Sørlandet. She is a Norwegian training ship and I share the 65 metres of ship with 19 other crew and 66 15-18 year old boys and girls. They are the most incredible teenagers I've ever met. We have 6 teachers, a doctor, a Dean (essentially the Deputy Head of the School), a Captain, Chief Mate, Second Mate, Chief Engineer, Bosun, Cook, Chief Steward and 5 Able Seamen.

I'm the only member of Academic Crew that had ever been sailing or on a boat of any kind before we joined the ship at the beginning of August, so it's been quite the culture shock for the others. We live in 2 bed cabins and the students live in one large mess deck called the Banjer. They hang hammocks to sleep in at night in there, eat all their meals and have all their lessons in there. It's also where they relax and socialise. It's quite the hubbub down there when it's bad weather on deck!

We started our adventure by teaching the students how to live on board a sailing ship and how to sail it by going out to the North Sea for 3 weeks. It was a baptism of fire for the teachers as well as the students. I was frequently the last teacher standing whilst all the others were vomiting into the scuppers with crippling seasickness. Our doctor, who is Venezuelan, has a stomach of steel and was always nearby with salted crackers and water, picking up students and teachers alike.

During this period the students were trained to climb the rigging so that they are now able to stow and let out all of our sails aloft by themselves. We have 3 masts

and each mast has 5 square sails. In addition we also have fore and aft triangular sails called staysails that fly between our masts and off the bowsprit. Now we are in our full academic routine all of our sails are set and taken in by the students alone aloft, none of the professional maritime crew climb for that because they have to stay on deck to have a good view of the safety of everyone in the rig. It's also relevant to mention that these brilliant teenagers climb without safety lines clipped on. They clip on to the yards when they are stopped to do work but when they are actively climbing they are not secured. It tends to keep their mind on the job!

After the first 3 weeks of training we left our home port of Kristiansand, Norway and set sail south through the North Sea and into the English Channel for St Malo. This was also when we started the Academic term. It was my first foray into teaching English Literature, and indeed the first time I'd thought about it in anyway since my A Levels at Wellington School! I was quite nervous but willing to give it my best shot. I was definitely a step ahead of the other teachers who were still struggling with life at sea, let alone teaching lessons at sea, and this helped my confidence a little. I found that, aside from being exhausted because of having to stand 2 hourly night watches through the night, the students were remarkably engaged and enthusiastic in lessons. After 3 weeks of fairly bad weather we'd also started to bond. My experience as an Assistant Boarding Housemistress was really useful and I found that I was really starting to care about these fantastic teenagers that I was living with. They shared my excitement at seeing England and the entrance to the River Dart as we sailed through the English Channel. I have always loved arriving by sea into a new place and this was no less exciting when we came upon St Malo. We were berthed right next to the historic city walls and there were plenty of idyllic cafes and patisseries to while away our limited time off in. Our shore team had also organised 2 field trip days to a World War Two cemetery and one of the D Day landing beaches. My grandfather had been in the COPP team that surveyed this beach before D Day so it was great for me to be able to share his experiences with the students. I was also incredibly proud of their behaviour and sombreness at the cemetery. The gravity of what we were experiencing really moved them and several of them were still talking about it several days later when we set sail for Portugal.

Once back at sea we were back to our usual Academic routine. We don't have weekends at sea so every day really is a school day, even the second day of this sail when we hit a hurricane. We had battened down for strong winds but I never thought I'd be teaching the finer points of Macbeth through 68knot winds. It was quite the experience. Somehow I came out of it uninjured, despite having dislocated my incredibly loose shoulder joint changing my bed sheet a few weeks before that. Our doctor is tearing her hair out at me but we're still speaking...just!

I look forward to sharing a few more of our adventures with you in the next issue.

*Lissie Fuller*

## Magazine Information

**Editorial team:** Tryphena  
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Jane Hancock; Alison Eland; Fiona  
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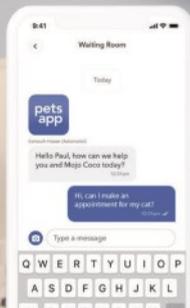
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