

THE SEAVINGTONS' NEWS

January 2015



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The Seavingtons' News

As we start a new annual series of The Seavingtons' News may I start by offering all our readers my warmest best wishes for the year ahead?

After 12 years living in Seavington I guess that, in another 20 years I will no longer be regarded as an incomer! I can, however, look back dispassionately over the changes to our villages during our time here and score them in terms of their impact on our lives.

First, there are, I believe, some 22 new dwellings that have been built or created in that time, meaning that our housing stock and associated population have grown by 10%; I believe that this has had no negative impact on anyone. Reading the objections to planning applications in other villages suggests that a 10% increase should have been devastating to the community; I wonder why we are all naturally such NIMBYists.

Our village facilities have improved out of all recognition. The Millennium Hall was already built when we arrived but its role on the community was still being consolidated. Now, we wonder how the villages managed without it. Similarly, the Playing Field was basic, albeit well used, today it is a vastly superior facility with its plantings and other improvements.

Also, we have a Village Store owned and run by the community itself for its own benefit. You only have to have seen the turnout for last Saturday's Christmas event to see how central it has become in our lives.

The new homes came from outside initiatives but the remainder of the improvements came about through villagers' voluntary initiatives. Thank you.

David Froome

DON'T FORGET

The Newspaper Skip!

**pm Friday 9th January
until am Monday 12th January**

**The Latest Copy Date
for the next issue**

is the 15th January

Editorial content and diary entries to:

David Froome, Middlefield Barn, Church Lane, Seavington St Mary, Ilminster,
TA19 0QP Tel: 01460 249445; e-mail: news@theseavingtons.org

Village Diary—Forthcoming Events

All events, unless otherwise shown, are held in the Millennium Hall

For bookings call 07914 710926

For other Millennium Hall matters call Pauline Parsons on 01460 240193

27th December	10.30 am	Boxing Day Walkies—p 31
8th January	7.30 pm	Gardening Club talk—"The Nursery Year; behind the scenes". by Neil Lovesey—p 5
10th January	7.30 pm	Flix in the Sticks—"What we did on our Holidays"; Hinton St George Hall—p 7
12th January	Noon	Seniors' Lunch in Village Café—p 31
15th January	7.30 pm	RSPB Group talk "Wildlife on the Somerset Coast" by Nigel Phillips—p 30
26th January	7.30 pm	SPFA Committee Meeting—p 19
25/25th January	All day	Big Wetland Duck Watch—p 21

Regular Activities

2 nd Monday	Noon	Pensioners' Lunches in Village Café
1 st Saturday	9.00 am— 2.00 pm	St Michael's Church Seavington Trust Book Sale at 2, Winchester Cottages (opposite The Volunteer)
3 rd Wednesday	10.00am	"GET2GETHER" Group in Village Café
2 nd Thursday	7.30pm	Seavington Gardening Club

To keep up to date check out the village web-site which is updated regularly and brings you the latest information on village matters, the programmes of village organisations and much more. Pass the address to your friends and relatives and let them keep in touch as well.

www.theseavingtons.org

St Michael's Church, Seavington

25th December	11.00 am	Christmas Day Service
4th January	11.30 am	Holy Communion (CW)
11th January	8.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
11th January	11.30 am	Café Church at Seavington Café
18th January	11.30 am	Holy Communion— (BCP with Hymns)
25th January	11.30 am	Matins

NB No service in Seavington on the fifth Sunday of each month but you are welcome to join the services in St Peter & St Paul's, South Petherton.

Rev Tom Handy telephone: 01460 240377; revdtomhandy@hotmail.com

The Seavingtons' News Team

Editorial:	David Froome & Maria Potts
Advertising:	Tony Beresford
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Technical & web-site support:	Eugene Mulligan
Graphics & Visual Support:	George Brown

Village web-site: www.theseavingtons.org

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Please do not hesitate to telephone David Froome on 01460 249445 if you have any questions.

Advertising Rates

	Annual	Monthly
Full Page	£ 100	£ 12
½ Page	£ 50	£ 6
¼ Page	£ 28	£ 4

Advertising enquiries to: adverts@theseavingtons.org

Celebrations in Seavington

Marion Bennett (01460 249522)

2015 will mark two important anniversaries in our villages - the 40th anniversary of the opening of the playing field and the fifth birthday of the opening of our shop and cafe. What a long way both have come since their inceptions!

The Store and Playing Field committees felt that these anniversaries should be commemorated and a small steering group has already met to set the wheels in motion.

An added treat will be the visit of The Caravan Club Concert Band for their national rally. And yes they will be performing their very popular Proms in the Car Park, just as they did at the opening of the shop and cafe.

Dates for your diary:

Monday 27 July - arrival of The Caravan Club Band

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 August - weekend of celebrations

Monday 3 August - departure of The Caravan Club Band

The Church Flower ladies are planning a Flower Festival based on the theme of anniversaries during the weekend of 25/26 July. The Caravan Club will hold a fun event during the week to which everyone will be invited. The Volunteer will be playing host to Morris Dancers.

On Saturday 1 August the field will be the setting for a fun sports event called "Have a Field Day", supported by Fields in Trust. There will be stalls and sideshows for everyone to enjoy. On Sunday 2 August there will be a community event and picnic.

Plans are at a very early stage but we do know it will be great fun! We hope that all the groups and clubs in our villages will take part and that you will all come to join in the festivities.

You can speak to any member of the steering group about the event - Ry Coffman, David Bennett, Dennis Smith, Ken Lake, Lis Tope and Marion Bennett. Contact telephone number - 01460 249522.

Seavington Gardening Club

Chris Ginger (01460 929357) or chris.ginger@talktalk.net

Yesterday, Thursday 11th December, approximately 30 members of the Club thoroughly enjoyed our Christmas Lunch at Perry's Cider Mills in Dowlish Wake. Many thanks to Charo Ritchie for organising the event. It was so nice to be able to welcome Julie Sibley back amongst us again and we would like to wish her continuing successful progress.

At our January meeting, (see below), we will be collecting the Club membership subscriptions and Karen Day, our membership secretary, will also be asking members for an e-mail address, (those of you who have one), to assist us to quickly pass on any information, invitations or offers that we receive between our monthly meetings. Our 2015 programme and Gold Club discount cards will be distributed to members before, or at our January meeting.

The Chair and committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members and gardening friends A Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Forthcoming events

Our first meeting of 2015 is Thursday 8th January 7.30pm

Talk: Neil Lovesey of Picket Lane Nursery. 'The Nursery Year. Behind the scenes in the nursery and garden' Plants for sale and also the Flower of the Month competition. We also have received the following invitation from Martock Gardening Club:

"The well known – some might say legendary - Somerset gardener and author Lady Christine Skelmersdale is giving a talk entitled 'The Year Round Bulb Garden' at 7.30, on Tuesday February 10th 2015, in our usual venue, Martock School.

We shall be serving tea, coffee and home made cake from 7.00 p.m. prior to the talk, all of which is included in our £2 pp visitors' charge, payable at the door on the evening."

I do hope you, or some of your members will come; it would be helpful to know how many we might expect -to ensure there is plenty of cake! If any members are interested in attending, please would you contact Karen Day 01460 249728.

A Farmer's Diary

Farm Boy

One of the joys of living in the countryside is those magic moments that can linger in the mind for years. I have enjoyed many and one in particular became etched into my memory bank. I may have mentioned this before.

It goes back to some time in the early 1970's, it was around Christmas time and I had spent the afternoon working on renovating a neglected hedge on land that I had recently taken over as a tenant. In those times the quad bike was a thing of the future, almost all farm hands carried their tools on their shoulder. This was tedious; chainsaws were much heavier than they are today, also added to the load would be a staff hook, a hessian sack for the hand hook, sturdy hedging gloves, plus a petrol can.

One characteristic of Ham Hill Farm that is unlikely to change is everything has to go up hill to get home. I was making my way in this direction as the late afternoon yellow sun, wearing a hazy veil, was sinking below a whitish grey sky, the air was turning cold, not that this registered other than short bursts of steam from my breath.

I was fascinated as the sky had that look that tells the countryman it is going to snow, this seemed to coincide with a peaceful silence other than the rustle of my clothing, broken intermittently by a blackbird as it chattered noisily in the nearest hedge, and an occasional distant blare of a cow from a neighbours buildings. In the foreground was the homestead where I knew I would be greeted by my young family.

These thoughts still reflect contentment and always will. Experiences like this may be short lived and unplanned, but what a joy simple things can give in this ever increasing material World that we all seem to be continually building.

This brings me back to this evening Dec 2nd, I had decided rather late in the afternoon, to go out with my trimmer in an attempt to make a start on having one last cut on the embankment outside my home before the winter grips. It is amazing how the grass has remained so green and kept growing until December. I feel this will change dramatically for there was a completely different feel today and because of a chilly wind the grass was as dry as I have seen it for weeks, making it possible to produce a

reasonable job with the strimmer. Darkness soon started to creep at ground level as cars with their lights on sped by.

Across the road my neighbour was busy ploughing; I was intrigued because his field had been cropped this year with potatoes and soon after the crop had been harvested it was sown with a break crop that had really flourished. From the time I had left for the farm this morning and returned for a late lunch it had all been cut and chopped ready to be ploughed under. So being nosey I thought I will put my strimmer away then walk across the road for a closer inspection and may be a quick word.

It could be my neighbour had read my thoughts, by the time I went to cross the road the tractor, driver and plough were nowhere to be seen. Only the partly ploughed area was available for communication. It never ceases to amaze me - the difference in the soil type in this area compared to the eastern slopes of the Blackdown Hills. The open furrow was almost 12 inches deep; we are lucky if we can find a good six inches of top soil in most areas.

The unploughed headland though was rather stodgy and damp and tucked away under the blackthorn road hedge in the next plot of land was a certain amount of water logging. This should disappear quickly now the air has become crisper. It was as I turned to cross the road that I was taken once more by the wonder of the December setting sun, this time with a red glow along the horizon of the Blackdown Hills, telling me it is going to be a cold night and hopefully a fine day to follow. They say your home is where the heart is . Once more I had been looking across at it.

Flix in the Sticks

Rosemary Tout (01460 72906)

“What we did on our holiday (12A)”, on Saturday, January 10th in the Hinton St. George Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Tickets £5 in advance from the Village Shop and Dorothy’s Tea Room, or, £5.50p on the door. To reserve Tickets please contact 01460 72906.

David Tennant and Rosamund Pike are the parents, but the children are the real stars on their Scottish journey with Grandpa, Billy Connolly. A comedy-drama depicting the ups and downs of a disarming family holiday.

News from your Parish Council

Pauline Parsons (01460 240193)

It is at this time of the year that Parish Councillors have to think about setting the Village Precept – that part of your Council Tax that comes back to the Parish to be spent in the Parish. As you are all aware this has been increasing over the last few years as the Parish has to pay for many things that used to be provided by both the County and District Councils. As both County and District have been prevented from raising their portion of The Council Tax and consequently cutting back on services it has been left to Towns and Parishes to find the monies.

The Lengthsman Scheme [South Petherton area] that we bought into some years ago and which was initially financially supported by both County and District has now come to an end. As a Parish we made a decision to buy into the Ranger Scheme, operated by SSDC. This, of course, comes at a higher price than the subsidised Lengthsman Scheme.

Also Parish Councillors made a decision some years ago that the Parish Council pays for the grass cutting of the Playing Field. It was felt that this is an area that can be enjoyed by all and worthy of support. Also the Parish Council can claim back any VAT due which the Playing Field Association cannot. It does mean that a large portion of the Village Precept is spent on keeping the village looking tidy ie grass cutting and keeping drains free. At present no decision has been made as to what the increase will be, but if you have any points you would like to raise please contact us by e-mail – parishcouncil@theseavingtons.org.

If there are any organisations who would be looking for grant support from the Parish Council during the year 2015/16 this is the time to make an application.

Parish Councillors would like to wish all residents all good wishes for Christmas and The New Year.

Parish Bulb Planting - The selection of bulbs given to the Parish by SSDC have now been planted. Many thanks to those who helped with this.

Bulbs have been planted - on the roadside of the Notice Board at the top of Water Street, around the World War I plaque re-sited at the top of the playing field, near the bench at Ile Bridge, around the seat opposite the turning to Dark Lane, in the orchard behind St Mary's Close, beneath the Seavington St Mary sign at West Street and around the seat on the top of Easterdown.

Hopefully they will flourish and give a great display at the end of the winter months.



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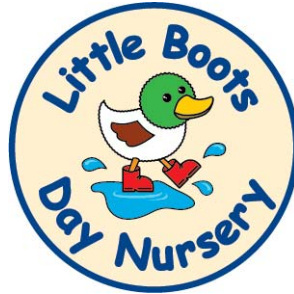
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£7 per hour

*This post could be combined with Seavington Hall Cleaner -
see separate advert*

*Please apply in writing to Mr Mark Ellis
c/o The Seavingtons' Village Store
Water St, Seavington St Mary TA19 0QH
or telephone 01460 241112 for more details*

CLEANER REQUIRED FOR SEAVINGTON MILLENNIUM HALL

to start at the beginning of January

**MINIMUM 3 HOURS PER WEEK Monday to Friday but more hours will
be needed for agreed Weekend work - £7 per hour**

*This post could be combined with Seavington Cafe Cleaner -
see separate advert*

*Please apply in writing to Mrs P Parsons
c/o Seavington Millennium Hall
Water St, Seavington St Mary TA19 0QH
or telephone 01460 240193 for more details*



St. Michael's Church Seavington
invites you to join us for

'Café Church'

to be held every Second Sunday of the month at 11.30pm.

The Café is situated in the Community Shop,
next to Seavington Millennium Hall.
Everybody Welcome—Come and join in!
N.B. there will be no service in the Church at 11.30



A Christmas Verse

Annie (01460 241762)

He had no royal palace
only a Stable bare,
He had no watchful servants,
An Ox and Ass stood there.
But light shone forth from where He lay;
The King of Love upon the Hay!

Anon

Happy Christmas—another unknown winter ahead, weatherwise at least. During harsh weather, birds are forced to rely on berries, such as hawthorn and holly, when their normal food supply is locked in the frozen ground. Well stocked bird-feeders are life-savers.

Small birds, like the Tit family, love to be acrobatic on the nut-feeder or half coconut.

Most birds will come to bird-tables for scraps such as cooked bacon rinds (cut-up small), shredded suet, bead crumbs and diced cheese.

Birds, such as the Chaffinch and Dunnock will feed on crumbs beneath the tables. Remember though, not to put out too much at any one time, it may go bad and spread disease amongst the birds, such as Greenfinches. The rule is “little and often” if you are able to manage it. Fallen fruit, rotting on the ground is welcomed by Blackbirds, Thrushes and wintering Fieldfares and Redwings.

During the freezing winter days it is important that bird-tables are kept free from ice. Birds always need drinking water but they also like to bathe during frosty weather to maintain their plumage in peak condition so as to stay warm.

Our village shop has a good supply of bird food: feed balls, sunflower and niger seed, mixed seed and nuts.

A happy and healthy New Year.

Broadband in Seavington

David Froome (01460 249445)

We all know of the bad performance of broadband Internet connections in the Seavingtons, derived from the South Petherton telephone exchange. You probably also know that the Somerset County Council teamed with Devon and obtained funds under the UK Government's "Broadband UK (BDUK)" programme which was meant to bring decent broadband speeds to areas, such as the Seavingtons, where it was not commercially viable for BT to fund this by itself.

The total funding for Devon and Somerset programme, known as "Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS)" is £94M comprising £32M from the Government, £10M each from Devon & Somerset County Councils, £1M from local authorities (eg SSDC) and a BT contribution of £41M. The programme started in January 2013 and the contract expires at the end of 2016. It was disappointing to find that South Petherton telephone exchange, which embraces the largest village in Somerset and a number of small communities which were the precise target of the BDUK programme, was not due to be surveyed until Autumn 2014. Subsequently, this has been delayed until some time between Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016.

Using information on the duration of surveys and implementation obtained from Somerset County Council under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) this means that South Petherton is perilously close to falling out of the back of the programme at the end of 2016.

Because of this fear our Parish Council has taken up the cudgels with the County Council through out local County Councillor, Mr le Hardy, and on Tuesday 25th November a delegation from County Hall came to a Parish Council meeting in the Seavington Millennium Hall.

Councillor David Hall, the lead councillor for CDS, supported by Nathaniel Lucas from the County's Economics Department addressed the Parish Council and some 25 interested villagers, seeking to reassure them on the broadband programme for South Petherton telephone exchange.

Cllr Hall explained that although the work for South Petherton telephone exchange, and thus the Seavingtons, had been delayed by a year or so we had no cause to be concerned. Cllr Hall stated that both the survey and installation work for South Petherton exchange was firmly written into the County Council's contract with BT and would be completed by the end of the contract in December 2016. Mr Lucas stated that the answers to the FOIA given by County Hall officials were , somewhat surprisingly, incorrect.

The two County Council representatives maintained this position in the face of other FOI replies which made it quite clear that the CDS project team had no real grip on the programme eg a statement that they did not know why there was 12 –18 months delay on the survey of this area!

Since the meeting both the Parish Council and the Seavingtons' News have attempted to obtain clear written, as opposed to verbal, statements confirming the claims made at the meeting but these requests have fallen upon deaf ears and, apparently, been ignored.

It is clearly up to residents to draw their own conclusions but I should draw your attention to the situation in our near neighbours at Upottery. After the BT survey of the Upottery area the residents there, and in a large area of the Blackdowns, have been told that they will not now be receiving broadband enhancement under the CDS programme.

It is clear that we must ensure that pressure is maintained on the County Council; that both elected councillors and salaried officials have their feet held to the fire to ensure that the CDS element of the Government's BDUK programme gives the intended result - bringing high speed broadband to the smaller communities such as the Seavingtons. Over to you!

Neighbourhood Watch

Carolyn Farler (01460 249192)

Please be aware of the following scam which has been reported to us:

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0906 661 1911 (a premium rate number).

If you call the number and you start to hear a recorded message you will have already have been billed £315 for the phone call. If you do receive a card with these details, then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 020 7239 6655.

For more information, please visit the CrimeStoppers website at:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/crime-prevention/helping-prevent-crime/scams/postal-delivery-scam>

Please be aware that the premium rate number may change but nevertheless, please do not call any number stated on a card from PDS. Please can you make all your family, friends, neighbours etc, aware of this scam.

Christmas. Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all Seavington residents as well as all our customers.

Opening Times Opening times for the shop and café over the holiday period are:

	Shop	Café
Wed 24 th December	0830 – 1400	0930 – 1300
Thur 25 th December	Closed	Closed
Fri 26 th December	Closed	Closed
Sat 27 th December	0900 – 1500	0930 – 1400
Sun 28 th December	Closed	Closed
Mon 29 th December	0830 - 1800	0930 - 1600
Tue 30 th December	0830 - 1800	0930 - 1600
Wed 31 st December	0830 - 1400	0930 - 1300
Thur 1 st January	Closed	Closed
Fri 2 nd January	Normal service	Normal service

New for the New Year.

Once the festive season is over we will be left with a much larger shop space than before the partitions were removed in November. Particularly when the Christmas stock is cleared and the Craft Fayre ends. It is planned to make use of this extra space by increasing our grocery levels slightly but in the main by introducing a regularly changing craft display. Here, local craftspeople will be able to sell their wares without the need to hire space. If you have locally produced goods you would like to sell then please let Jo or Thandi know at the shop.

Parcel Delivery.

Wow, what a surprise in take up from residents of the parcel delivery service we introduced last month. The Parcel Postal Service provided through the

delivery company MyHermes has been non stop both for goods received and posted. If you haven't used it yet then look at www.myhermes.co.uk/parcelshop or pick up a brochure in the shop.

Departure.

In early January we say goodbye to our cleaner Kath who is relocating to pastures new. Thank you Kath from all of us for all your hard work and best wishes to you for the future.

Diary.

We maintain a diary of events on the shop pages of the village website outlining what is happening in the shop and café. We try and coordinate this with all the other village events so that we do not have any clashes. A coordinated village diary of major village events is also maintained on the village website at <http://www.theseavingtons.org/index.php>

Community Shop Contact No: 01460 249730

SPFA News

Pauline Parsons (01460 240193)

Lottery Winners for December 2014

1 st – No: 13	Tony Tolman
2 nd – No: 106	Judith Bonning
3 rd – No: 202	Mr & Mrs B Cowan
4 th – No: 14	Mary Wyatt
5 th – No: 23	Kate Brook

Committee Members of the SPFA would like to thank all those who have supported us during the past year to maintain both the Hall and Field. As previously said the Association are still confident that by the time the villages celebrate the 40th anniversary of the field being opened (July 1975-2015) that the new tarmac path will be in situ.

Details of how the SPFA and The Community Shop (which will have been opened for 5 years in July 2015) are going to celebrate these anniversaries will be given in Newsletters throughout 2015.

The Playing Field Association would like to wish all residents best wishes for the Festive Season and 2015.

If there is anyone who would like to join the SPFA Committee please contact any Committee Member. Our next meeting is due to be held on Monday 26th January 2015 – so you could just come along.

SSAFA

(The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)

Trudy Smith (01460 249138)

SSAFA provides lifelong support to those who are serving or who have ever served in the British Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, and their families.

Nearly five million people living in the United Kingdom today are estimated to have served in the Armed Forces at some point in their lives. Every year, around 20,000 servicemen and women leave the Services and return to civilian life.

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As the UK's oldest national tri-service military charity, we understand the unique demands of service life.

We believe that those who have done important and dangerous things for their country should get the best possible support when they need it. We also believe the hardships experienced by their families should be recognised.

Established in 1885 when the 2nd Expeditionary Force set sail for Egypt, SSAFA assisted the wives and families who had been left behind. We still fulfil that role today. We also provide advice and support for servicemen and women and veterans of all ages.

SSAFA's vital work is made possible by our team of trained volunteers and professional staff. Our network of thousands of volunteers plays a crucial role in delivering services and raising funds. Our charitable work is financed partly by generous donations from the public and other charities.

We are proud to provide lifelong support to the Armed Forces and their families.

If you know someone who would benefit from our help, or feel that we could help you, don't hesitate to contact SSAFA, South Somerset branch on 01458 224145, or Trudy Smith your local representative on 249138.

RSPB News

Becky Hughes (01458 252820)

It's 2015 and we have lots of new ideas to help you get closer to nature! With the colder weather here, winter birds have travelled here from eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and Russia on the north easterly winds to enjoy our milder winters. Find out more at our Big Wetland Duck Watch. Join in with the Big Garden Bird Watch on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th January. Go to the link below to take part in this great survey:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch>

Or get your school to take part in the Big Schools Bird Watch from 5th January to 13th February by following this link:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/discoverandenjoynature/discoverandlearn/schoolswatch/>

Big wetland duck watch—Saturday 24 January, 10 am-12 pm, price: £5 per person. Join us for a winter walk and discover thousands of ducks at West Sedgemoor. Binoculars and telescopes available. Be sure to wear warm clothing and stout footwear (walking boots or Wellingtons). Booking essential. Directions will be provided when booking. Telephone 01458 252805 or e-mail west.sedgemoor@rspb.org.uk

Animal tracks @ Greylake—Wednesday 18 February, 10.00am -12.00pm, £3 per person. Be an animal detective, learn how to search for tracks and signs of wild animals in wetlands. Booking essential. Telephone 01458 252805 or e-mail greylake@rspb.org.uk

World Wetlands Day Photo Competition—From 2 February to 2 March, take a photo of your nearest RSPB wetland at Greylake, Ham Wall or West Sedgemoor and upload it to the World Wetlands Day website. <http://www.worldwetlandsday.org/>

Love being outdoors, enjoy chatting, and know a bit about the wildlife here in Somerset, in particular Ham Wall? Ever thought about volunteering on our reserves? We need volunteers to help as Visitor Events Assistants, Marketing Assistants, and Visitor Information Assistants. Give us a ring on 01458 860494 and ask to speak to a member of the Visitor Experience Team or drop us an e-mail ham.wall@rspb.org.uk

‘The Swift Emergencies of the Sea’

David Eliot (01460 240758)

4 – Russian Roulette

From 1986 until retirement in 1995 I was HM Coastguard (HMCG)’s Regional Controller for the South West, at UK’s International Maritime Rescue & Coordination Centre (MRCC), Falmouth, with responsibility for Search & Rescue (SAR) on the coast from Beachy Head to Bude and in UK’s area of responsibility in the eastern North Atlantic. The MRCC was also unofficially responsible for the entire South Atlantic, from the Equator to Antarctica, apart from the 200 mile wide littoral zones of Brazil, Argentina and South Africa.

On 17 September 1993 the Russian Merchant Marine HQ in St. Petersburg told the Russian Embassy in London that one of their ships, the MV POLESSK, was in distress in the South Atlantic and might have sunk; and asked if UK could help. MRCC Falmouth was alerted via the Foreign Office and Coastguard HQ.

The reported position was half way between River Plate and Capetown, absolutely in the desolate middle of nowhere. The nearest inhabited place, to the east, was Tristan da Cunha (Lat. 30S Long. 12W), the most remote peopled island in the Southern ocean. Neither Argentina nor Brazil could help, but the South African Air Force (SAAF) offered to fly a Maritime Patrol Aircraft sortie next day, in daylight; but said that as the position was at their aircraft’s extreme range, it would only have about 20 minutes search time.

Any floating object eg. a liferaft, lifeboat, lifebuoy or person, will be acted upon over time by wind, wave, tide or ocean current; but where will it drift? The MRCC ‘s Search Planning Computer, if fed with all these parameters plus elapsed time, would instantly produce an ever-expanding search area and a recommended start point. It had been designed for the North Atlantic and we had no idea if it would work south of the Equator, but gave it a go. Thankfully, it worked perfectly, so we could give the SAAF a search area.

Next day, unbelievably, the SAAF struck gold: no ship, but liferafts with survivors and wreckage. The aircraft dropped more liferafts & provisions

and reported an accurate position for our computer. Meanwhile, we had asked the Ministry of Defence if the Falkland Islands garrison could send a sortie next day. They sent a Hercules, again operated at extreme range. Again the aircraft hit the jackpot thanks to our re-computed search area. Aircraft on top duty were obviously very encouraging for the survivors; but they needed a ship to rescue them.

The MRCC's international distress broadcasts were finally answered by a Malaysian container ship with the wonderful name BUNGEH SELASSIE, on passage from River Plate to Penang. Her Master, Captain Yoh, said he would alter course to pass through the wreckage position about 48 hours later. This tense and difficult rescue was now nail-bitingly so. Would the RAF and SAAF be able to fly more sorties in worsening weather? If they did, would they re-locate the survivors? Would there still be any survivors when the SELASSIE arrived? Would she be able to rescue them?

The two Air Forces excelled themselves, each flying another daylight sortie. Both sorties found the wreckage, and reported survivors. The SELASSIE arrived during the night and had to wait till morning before attempting rescue. We held our breath. Eventually Captain Yoh reported he had rescued two men, the Chief Motorman, who survived the ordeal, and another man who sadly died onboard.

I sent Captain Yoh a personal signal, copied to his Owners, lavishing praise on him for his determination and seamanship; but received a sad and rather shocking reply: 'Due to the very bad weather, the size of my ship and the inexperience of my crew, I could not recover any more survivors'. He had been forced to abandon an unknown number, all of whom perished because no other ship came to their aid.

The SELASSIE landed the one survivor on Tristan da Cunha. Getting him from Tristan to Russia must have been an interesting exercise for the Foreign Office. The Russians were as astonished as they were grateful that *anyone* had been saved, but were otherwise very reticent. This rescue was certainly an impressive demonstration of the power of modern satellite communications and allied computery in the MRCC to influence the outcome; but all credit must go to the aircrews and the SELASSIE for their skill and persistence. Ten years earlier the POLESSK would have foundered without trace.



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Details of future productions can be found in the local press or on our website: **www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk** (plus details of audition nights, youth theatre, IES Membership and more) or call **01460 62739** or email: **info@thewarehousetheatre.org.uk**

Your theatre needs you! *The Warehouse is run entirely by volunteers and we would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved by helping backstage or front of house during show weeks, or simply by becoming a member of IES. Can you help?*

St Michael's Church Seavington Trust

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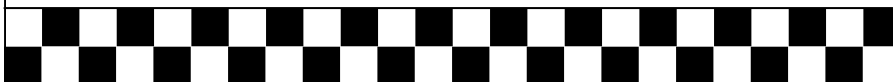
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SOUTH SOMERSET RSPB LOCAL GROUP

‘Wildlife on Somerset’s Coast’

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Thursday 15th January – 7.30pm – The Millennium Hall, Seavington St. Mary

Entry: group members £2.50, non-group members £3.50, under 18’s free.
(tea/coffee & biscuits included) Wheelchair access.

NON-MEMBERS VERY WELCOME

For further details contact: Denise Chamings (Group Leader) on 01460 240740
www.rspb.org.uk/groups/southsomerset

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THE SEAVINGTONS' CALENDAR 2015

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Our unique calendar will delight you throughout the coming year. Each month you can admire the beautiful collage of photos, all taken by residents of The Seavingtons. Plenty of room on each page to write your engagements and notes.

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Monday 12 January - book to avoid disappointment

Seavingtons' Village Store & Cafe, Water St, Seavington St Mary. 01460 249730

Boxing Day Walkies

Saturday 27th December

After the “Indulgence” of Christmas and before the “Over-Imbibing” of New Year’s Eve why not enjoy a stroll around the fields and lanes of The Seavingtons, ending-up at The Volunteer for Brunch-Sausage and bean feast, pasta dish and a vegetarian dish to choose from at “High Noon!”

Please met at the Millennium Hall at 10.30 a.m. Dogs are welcome. If you don’t fancy the walk, join us for brunch!

Tickets £7, Children £3.50p To help with the catering please purchase tickets in advance from:

The Volunteer—01460 240126 or Annie Prichard—01460 241762

In aid of St. Michael’s Church Seavington Trust

Village Voice—letters to the editor

The Seavingtons' News wants to hear and publish your views on both the "News" itself and topics of importance or interest to our community. Please send your letters to the address on page 1. All opinions and views expressed are the sole responsibility of the writer and do not reflect the views of The Seavingtons' News. For legal reasons we must have the name and address of the writer but can normally publish over a pseudonym on request.

Dear All

Well we are safely here surrounded by packing boxes and let my experience be a warning to other hoarders! Keeping 'it' just in case its needed never comes.

However, we have managed to get to the local Nursery and have purchased two trees, a Prunus Royal Burgundy and a Prunus Autumnalis Rosea and two climbing roses, a Schoolgirl and Etoile D'Hollande plus numerous bulbs and Violas making a very good start in using the Vouchers we were given by the Seavington Villagers.

With sincere thanks to all concerned.

May we also wish everyone 'A Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year'?

With Kindest Regards
Carol and Peter (Ashley)

The Seavingtons' Weather in November 2014

	<i>This year—2014</i>	<i>Previous year—2013</i>
Temperature		
Average Minimum	5.63°C	4.78°C
Average Maximum	12.14°C	10.73°C
Mean	8.88°C	7.76°C
Rainfall		
Monthly Total	107.0mm (4.28")	45.4mm (1.82")
Total for the year	1038.2mm (41.53")	660.4mm (26.4"0)

Another warm, wet, month



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