

Whimple News



Christmas 2006

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Friday 8th December
Saturday 9th December
Thursday 14th December
Friday 15th December
Friday 22nd December
Christmas Eve
New Year's Eve

WHAT'S ON IN WHIMPLE

December

- 5th Whimble Pre-School Craft Evening
- 9th Impact Club Night Formal Christmas Dinner 6.00pm
- 9th Orchard Harmony, St Mary's Church, Whimble, 7.30pm
- 9th History Society Christmas Party, Cricket Club
- 10th S Club & Impact, Christmas Special, Scout Hut, 10.45am
- 10th Christingle Service, St Mary's Church, 3.00pm
- 12th Over 60's Christmas Lunch at the Mt Pleasant, Dawlish
- 16th Christmas Special Lunch by Soup & Sarnie Team, Victory Hall, noon-1.30pm
- 17th Celebration Service, Christmas Special. Whimble Church 11.00am
- 17th Christmas Carol Service, St Mary's Church, 6.30pm
- 17th Special Impact Club Night at 6.00pm
- 24th Christmas Carols either in the Square or in the Church (see article) 7.00pm
- 29th Blood Doning Feniton C of E Primary 9.30 -11.45am and 1.30 -3.15pm

January

- 17th Wassailing leaving from New Fountain Inn 7.00pm
- 27th Whimble Pre-School Quiz and Curry Night
- 14th Celebration Service, Whimble Church 11.00am
- 28th Celebration Service, Whimble Church 11.00am

February

- 2nd Angela Browning & Hugo Swire, Victory Hall, 7.00-9.00pm
- 22nd -24th Panto 'Sinbad the Sailor', Victory Hall

St Mary's Church

For Christmas services see page 17

Monthly Programme of Services

1st Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Celebration Service
2nd Sunday	11.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	S club11/Impact in the Scout Hut
3rd Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	11.00am	Morning Service
4th Sunday	11.00am	Holy Communion
	10.45am	S club11/Impact in the Scout Hut
5th Sunday	11.00am	Joint Benefice Communion

Please use the Whimble Diary held in the Post Office for checking availability of venues and booking events.

If your Association has an event which you would like listed above please contact **Nicky Hitchcock** on 823194 or e-mail nickyjhitch@tiscali.co.uk

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Ed the Ed

And suddenly it's December! The 'What's On In Whimple' is positively groaning under the weight of events that are planned for the next few weeks in the village – please support as many as you can. One of the events that is a personal favourite of the current Mrs H and myself, both highly trained operatic mumbler, is the Xmas Eve carols in the village. We have an article from Tom and Barbara Lambert who have organised this for more years than they care to remember, and done a fantastic job every year, collecting on behalf of the Devon air Ambulance. They are looking for some people to take over the organisation of the event for next year – so if you have enjoyed the carols over the years, and would like to get involved, please contact Barbara and Tom. It is so easy to assume that someone else will pick it up...and then next year, no carols which would be a great shame, I'm sure that you would agree. Thanks to Tom and Barbara for doing it this year.

This edition has some excellent contributions from the village – my own particular favourite is Julie Millward's 'The Visitor' - I know that when I first read it, I felt that I was there in the house with the story teller. Some wonderfully descriptive writing.

Talking of contributions...another seamless link, gentle reader...how does he do it....we are very grateful to the Thirsty Farmer for the donation after their Quiz Night recently. Please remember that it is a free magazine, and we try hard to balance the numbers of adverts against articles, as well as keeping the advert costs to a reasonable and attractive level. This still means that we value donations of any size, and most this year have been left at the PO by anonymous donors – so thank you for those.

We are also keen on contributions of the 'article' kind, so if there is something that you want to write about, put pen to paper and send it to us via the routes mentioned below. We are happy to include items for sale, and a voluntary donation would be welcomed.

Many thanks go to our resolute team of deliverers who struggle through heat, famine, fire and plague to get your magazines to you – thank you for all your help. We might have the bestest magazine in Devon, but that comes to nothing if we cannot get it to the readers! Mrs Carthew in Dince Hill Close has been delivering for many years, and has decided to hang up her News bag claiming that being in her 80s, it is a bit too much! I think she just wants a lie-in once every 2 months . Thank you for all your hard work Mrs C, we all appreciate your efforts.

Our cut off date for the next edition is Monday 15 January – either via Jim and Alison at the PO or direct to Santa's very own little Pixie helper, cherubic Bobbie Scanlan at bob.scanlan@eclipse.co.uk.

The Whimple News Team wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2007.

Ed H

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Whimpe Post Office News



The Christmas stamps are now in, as well as a large selection of 'From Whimpe' Christmas cards. These are very popular so to take advantage of the full range. We advise you to buy now to avoid disappointment. The message this year is certainly to post early, I know we are told that every year, but this year we feel that it is more important than usual.

To help Royal Mail to get your mail to its right destination in time for Christmas we would like to remind you of the following;

- ❖ Please use the correct post code (visit www.royalmail.com/postcodes); if you are not sure add a return address on the back of the envelope
- ❖ Make sure you pay the correct postage for international items
- ❖ To avoid recipients having to pay for insufficient postage –please ensure correct postage is attached – if you are not sure please ask us. Remember pricing in proportion.

Now those all-important last recommended posting dates.

International Air Mail

Fri 8th December	South and Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle east, Far East, (except Japan), Asia, New Zealand and Australia.
Mon 11th December	Japan, USA, Canada, and Eastern Europe.
Wed 13th December	Western Europe.

UK Last Posting Dates

Wed 13th December	Standard Parcels
Sat 16th December	Second Class
Tues 19th December	First Class.
Thurs 21st December	Special Delivery

Our Opening times will be as follows over the Christmas and New Year period.

Monday 25th December Closed.

Tuesday 26th December Closed.

Then normal opening times, until:

Monday 1st January Closed.

Benefits that are due on 25th December can be collected on 22nd December, and those due on 1st January collected 29th December.

Please remember that the private right of way that runs alongside the post office will be closed to the public on Monday 1st January, for 24 hours.

Wishing you and your families Peace and Fun this Christmas and Health and Happiness throughout the New Year.

Thanking you all for your continuing Support.

Jim & Alison

FROM MY WINDOW IN THE SQUARE

Edith Marie-Louise Grout

Bring in a tree, a young Norwegian spruce
Bring hyacinths that rooted in the cold
Bring Winter Jasmine as its buds unfold –
Bring the Christmas life into this house.
Bring red, green and gold, bring things that shine
Bring candlesticks and music, food and wine
Bring in your memories of Christmas past
Bring in your tears for all that you have lost.
Bring in the shepherd boy, the ox and the ass
Bring in the stillness of an icy night
Bring in the birth of hope and love and light
Bring in the Christmas life into this house.

This lovely poem by Andy Cope was sent to me soon after Christmas last year to inspire me in the following Christmas message. I was so touched by his gesture that I put it in a safe place and – miracle, I found it! - so, thank you to Andy.

Two thousand and six years ago there was something unusual in the heaven, but it may not have been something immediately obvious at a glance. It required imaginative interpretation or the wisdom of the Magi in astrological knowledge. That star signalled to the Magi that an infant King was born which eventually led them to Bethlehem where they presented their symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They must have had a celestial wisdom to have deduced something so specific from a simple point of light. Apart from the shepherds, the three Kings were the first strangers to know of the birth of Christ in a stable. Christmas is the most inclusive of festivals and today after two thousand and six years it is still observed by countless millions all over the world. We may be our own magi following the star. The secret of survival of Christmas is that it is a wonderful story which appeals to our imagination, an infant King born in a stable with an ox and an ass to keep him warm. It appeals not only to an artistic imagination but also to the moral imagination. It is as though we were all kinder and better than we are.

There is no lovelier sound than to hear the sound of Christmas bells and this custom goes back as far as the 7th Century when the first bells were introduced to English churches from Campania in Italy.

Hence the name of campanology for the art and science of ringing. I remember so well our celebration of Christmas in the Swiss Alps. On hearing the bells on Christmas Eve the whole family would set out with father who was singing in the choir for midnight mass. Walking with our lanterns in the glistening snow of this frosty night was magic and being a musical family we sang the carols with all our heart. The memory of it is still so vivid that I can almost hear the sound of that wonderful French carol – “Il est ne le Divin Enfant, chantez hautbois, resonne musettes” - what a joyful occasion!

This year, I helped with the research for Ottery St. Mary Flower Festival which depicted the West Country Saints. It was certainly fascinating to find out more about their lives and how they came to England. As a child I so often heard my mother telling us about the life of Joseph of Arimathea. In all four Gospels it is related that Christ was buried in the tomb of his wealthiest disciple. According to a pious legend of the tin miners of Cornwall, Joseph was Christ's uncle, a tin merchant from Tyre in Lebanon buying tin from Cornwall and lead from Somerset. He also brought Christianity to the West Country establishing the first Christian church in Glastonbury. Most importantly, he brought with him the chalice from the last supper which is how the Holy Grail came to England. For over sixteen hundred and fifty years it was said that Joseph of Arimathea before leaving Palestine to travel to the West Country had cut a staff from the tree from which the Crown of Thorns had been made. When arriving in Glastonbury he planted the staff which centuries later still lives on. A few days before Christmas the hawthorn which grew from that staff enjoys its annual hour of glory where sprays are cut and sent to Her Majesty the Queen. The Mayor and vicar of St. John's Church in front of which the thorn grows take part in a simple ceremony in this modest and simple yet magical town of Somerset. The amazing thing is that the ancient thorn has already behaved like any other normal thorn by blossoming earlier in the year. It is only the famous Holy Thorn which blossoms at Christmas as well as in May.

Last but not least a poem to celebrate my robin.

I am the proper bird for this season
 Not blessed St. Turkey born to be eaten
 I am man's inedible permanent bird
 I dine in his garden, my spoon is his spade
 I'm the true token of Christ the Child King
 I nest in man's stable
 Throughout his dark winters
 I SING!



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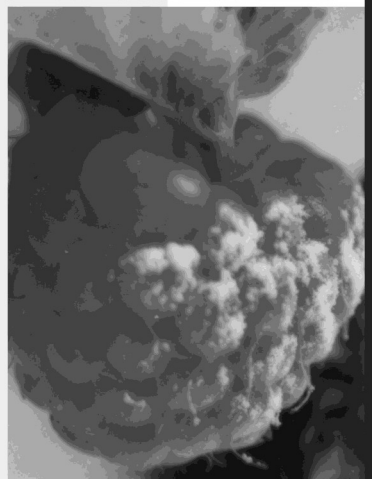
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Fun and Games?

Oddly this month, we have had three contributions which all reflect the same theme and unfortunately this theme is a less pleasant one, and one that contributors have not had to comment on before.

As we move toward Christmas, it is disappointing that there have been a number of incidents involving some of the younger residents of the village, which have resulted in both damage to property and, more disturbingly, concern and worry to others!

In November, a number of gardens in Slewton Crescent were vandalised, with little regard for those living there. At the same time, 'gangs' of youngsters were noisily congregating around the area and also around the Victory Hall. Whilst few people have a problem with youthful and innocent 'mucking around', a line is crossed when damage is done and when this takes place late at night. The worst of the problems took place after 10pm and involved under 16 year olds.

PC Jim Tyrrell, our local police officer, has been involved in investigating the incidents and is keen that these are dealt with seriously. He has reminded us all that if the need arises, he can be contacted directly:

Police Radio - 08456 568788 (if Jim is on duty, he will answer)

Force Central Switchboard - 08452 777444 (for messages, or when Jim is not on duty). As always, urgent and serious incidents should be dealt with on the 999 number.

As news of the problems has spread throughout the village, many comments have been passed as to whether the parents are aware of what is going on. This is a good point to raise and valid for all parents - Do you know where your children are in the evenings?

Let's all work together to help everyone in the village get along. As parents, we need to take responsibility for knowing where our children are and what they are doing. As people, we need to know that we are safe in our homes and that our safety and property are respected. Unfortunately, in the event that there are problems, we should also know how to contact help. It is clear that we have the support of the police to deal with any incidents, but let's hope that the problems seen of late are just unfortunate examples of youngsters overstepping the mark and now realising that what was done was wrong!

Feel free to tell us what you think.

Whimpe News Team

If you live in Dince Hill Close , we have an opportunity for you to deliver 32 magazines to your neighbours every 2 months. Exercise, a contribution to the community and a chance to look in everyone's front window with impunity - please contact Ed or Nicky on 823194.

WAC4Y Update

It is amazing to think that the “Whimble Action Committee 4 Youth” was set up almost a year ago now. Children/Teenagers may rightly wonder what has been achieved, but we want to reassure you that monthly meetings are still taking place, and the committee is still trying to improve facilities for you.

The Playground: has now been flattened and grassed and play equipment for young children has been painted (by youngsters). It is now awaiting a goal post, boards put in place for youngsters to decorate and a fence erected to protect pedestrians.

The Parish Field: a very successful sponsored cycle ride took place on 1st October. The kids were brilliant and it was good to see so many making use of the field. It was suggested that perhaps this could become an annual event and that next time parents, grandparents and friends would participate!!!

The Youth Bus: Some youngsters (11-16 year olds) have benefited from the “East Devon Youth Bus” visiting the village on Monday evenings. Two qualified youth workers are on hand to organise sport, craft etc. for a couple of hours. Unfortunately it is not always possible to find an appropriate parking site, so although this facility has proved popular with youngsters, it is only a temporary arrangement.

However: A Youth Club?

Last but by no means least; Mino has very bravely decided to open a youth club for 11-16yr olds, hopefully to be held in the Scout Hut on Friday evenings, starting in February. This is a project that needs and deserves our support as we have a very high number of children and teenagers compared with other East Devon villages and there is virtually nothing for them to do.

In order for a youth club to become a reality again, Mino will need a lot of adult support. (Please adults keep reading!). A small committee would have to be formed and a team of helpers available for her to call on. PLEASE whatever age you are, if you can spare a few hours, a year, a month or a week, contact Mino on 823897. Perhaps you have, or know someone who has, a hobby, craft, skill that could be shared with teenagers.

If any potential youth club members are reading this, just keep nagging anyone you think would help! Also any comments you have on any of the above would be useful to read in the next magazine.

Good Luck Mino, and Happy Christmas and New Year to everyone.

Liz Silk - Chair of action committee.



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22nd, 23rd & 24th February

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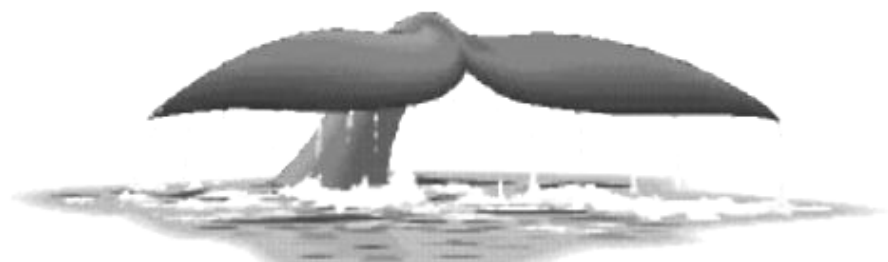
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WHIMPLE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CHRISTMAS SERVICES

St Mary's Church - Services to be held over the Christmas period

- Sunday 3rd December** 8.00am Holy Communion
6.30pm Advent Carol Service (at 8.00am)
- Sunday 10th December** 3.00pm Christingle Service
- Sunday 17th December** 8.00am Holy Communion
11.00am Celebration Service
6.30pm Carol Service
- Sunday 24th December** 11.00am Service of Holy Communion
11.30pm Midnight Holy Communion
- Christmas Day** 11.00am Family Service - followed by Holy Communion
- Sunday 31st December** There will be an 11.00am United Benefice Service with Talaton and Clyst St Lawrence at St Mary's.

The Advent Carol Service marks the start of the period of preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas. At the start of the service we are in darkness but as it progresses an ever increasing number of candles are lit, symbolising the moving from spiritual darkness into The Light.

We hope to welcome you to this and some of the other services being held over the Christmas period. Members of the PCC wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.



CONTACTING YOUR LOCAL POLICE OFFICER

PC JIM TYRRELL

There appears to have been some confusion in the past regarding telephoning me in the first instance, rather than the Force Central Switchboard Number.

If I am working I can be contacted directly on my Police Radio on 08456 568788. If I am working and you call me on this number I will speak to you albeit I must point out that the clarity of telephone calls I receive on this number are frequently of poor quality. If I am not working you will be directed to leave a message on voicemail.

Can I please ask you NOT to do this but to leave a message for me on the Force Central Switchboard on 08452 777444 if it is a matter which can wait until I am next on duty.

JIM



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Tim Wright



Children at Whimble School threw themselves into the spirit of 'Children in Need' last Wednesday when they were visited by Pudsey Bear and Radio Devon. The children and staff dressed in red and yellow for the day, and donated money to the charity.

Headteacher Di Brice said – "It was great to see everyone enter into the spirit of it, the excitement before Pudsey arrived was like waiting for Father Christmas." Pudsey joined the Key Stage 2 children in "Take 10" – exercises to wake up the brain, and Key Stage 1 children in a rousing rendition of The Grand Old Duke of York.

So far, the school has raised approx. £100 for the charity – as well as the non-uniform day, a group of Key Stage 2 children made and sold Pudsey biscuits and cakes, very enterprising – well done. **Emma Palmer**

S Club 11

&

IMPACT

**S Club 11 & Impact 10:45am in the Scout Hut
Dec 10th (Christmas Special), Jan 14th and Jan 28th**

'Celebration' services in Whimble Church: Dec 17th (Christmas Special)

Impact Club Night @ 6pm: Dec 9th Formal Christmas Dinner

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A Chance to say “Hello” and “Thank You”.

Angela Browning, who has been our MP for the last 14 years, has decided to retire. Also, from the 1st January the political boundaries are due to change such that Whimble will no longer be part of her existing Tiverton and Honiton constituency. We will instead become part of Hugo Swire’s East Devon constituency. Nevertheless, Angela will continue to represent us and will remain as our MP until she retires at the next General Election.

Therefore on February 2nd 2007 from 7.00pm to 9.00pm, you are invited to a very special evening reception in the Victory Hall where both Angela and Hugo will be present. There will be live music, a glass of sparkling wine, a licensed bar, the finest canapés the ladies of Whimble can provide and a chance to speak to both MPs and fellow guests in an informal atmosphere.

Angela has been the MP for Tiverton and Honiton since her election in 1992 and has held a number of posts in Government and in Opposition. Angela excelled as Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food from 1994 until 1997 and has since served as Shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, as Shadow Spokesman on Education and Disability and as Shadow Leader of the House. She is presently Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party where she is applying her business experience and acumen to the party organisation and campaign issues.

Angela is also well known for her work with the disabled and the National Autistic Society, wherein she is a specialist counsellor, and with the Alzheimer’s Disease Society.

However, we will always remember her unstinting work as a true ‘Constituency’ MP and her dedication to helping anyone who asks for assistance, regardless of their political affiliation. Angela and David have lived in the village for almost 30 years and they have given total support to local issues and campaigns. This reception will give you the opportunity to introduce yourself or just to say ‘Thanks’ – whoever you might be and whatever political views you may hold.

Hugo was elected to parliament in 2001 as MP for East Devon and with his wife and two children, lives in Sidbury. Hugo has served in the Grenadier Guards, worked in television, became the first Head of Development at the National Gallery and is a past Director of Sotheby’s London. Hugo is one of the country’s leading charity auctioneers and has been involved in raising millions of pounds for different charities over the years. His interest in the Arts has given rise to his appointment as Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport following a number of posts in Foreign Affairs and work with the Conservative Middle East Council, various select committees and other public bodies. The reception in February will give many of you an opportunity to meet Hugo for the first time.

The occasion will be all ticket, restricted to those who live in the parishes of Whimble, Talaton and Clyst St Lawrence and will be advertised in January 2007.

Peter Bowden



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Christmas Eve Carols

That time is almost upon us again, when we don our woollies, grab our instruments and sally forth for the annual musical extravaganza known as Christmas Eve Carols.

You may recall some negative feedback after last year's event, due to the fact that we held the Carols in the Church, even though it wasn't raining, (we also had some positive feedback because it was in the Church!). We responded to the comments by asking for volunteers to help run the event – we have received no offers of help following the correspondence, but need some now if the event is to continue.

There are extra issues to be considered if it to be held outside;

- The need for good lighting in order that the musicians can see the music;
- The need for extra vigilance by parents, with regard to the safety of their children – in the past, there have been drivers who have needed to drive through the Square during the carol singing;
- More volunteers to take round the collecting boxes.
- Someone with a loud voice to announce the carols, Julia Green who has been "Master (mistress) of Ceremonies" for the last few years is unavailable this year. We are very grateful for her input recently.

If it is held outside, it will not be possible to gather all the children at the front to perform, primarily because of the safety aspect.

Having run this event for the last 25 years – nearly the length of this tradition, we feel that the time has come for someone else to take over. During that time, we have arranged, copied and distributed music to the musicians, copied words, and liaised with the Devon Air Ambulance about the collecting boxes.

If we get no offers of help for this year, the carols will be in the Church. As we get older and less mobile, it is harder and less comfortable for us to play outside.

If we get no volunteers to take on the event for next year, we fear it will not happen. That would be a terrible shame - we have always felt that Christmas has really started when we go down to the Carols, the shopping is done, the visitors have arrived and we can all relax and enjoy the festive season.

Please help to keep the tradition going.

Barbara and Tom Lambert - 822344





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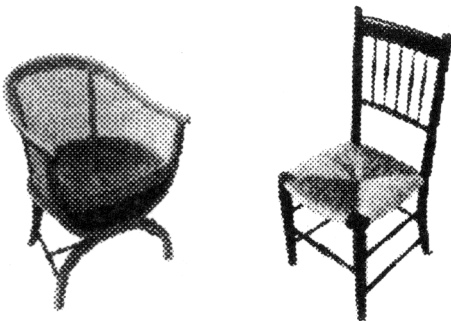
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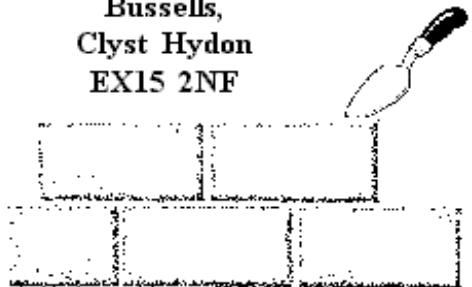
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THE HISTORY OF BUTCHERY IN WHIMPLE

In the past, there were many traditional trades carried out in Whimple, including bakery, saddlery, builders and butchery.

On 22 September, the History Society was treated to a fascinating evening, when Richard Webber and Margaret Bucknell, whose families had both been involved in the butchery trade in Whimple, delivered talks about different periods in the history of the butcher's business that used to stand at the end of the Square.

Margaret Bucknell was the first to take up the story. She explained that her grandfather, PJ Chard, who had previously been apprenticed in 1891 to F Clapp, a butcher in Exeter, bought the business at the turn of the Century. He rented the shop at that time from TC Turl.

Margaret still has some of the financial records from her grandfather's business and the books recorded that in 1900, in Christmas week, he spent £144 9s 1d on stock and doubled his money through selling the meat. His books also included records of who he bought the animals from for slaughter, and the records show that he bought pigs from the Mingo family, who also lived in Whimple. Apparently, PJ Chard obtained business not only from Whimple but also from further afield. The story goes that he even sent his children out to take orders for meat around Exeter before school!

PJ Chard was a well respected member of the community and he was a Parish Councillor. Amongst other things, he was responsible for the introduction of a sewerage system in Whimple.

There were a number of shire horses attached to the Butcher's business. Most of them were requisitioned during the First World War and never came back. However, one horse was retained.

Richard Webber then took over the story from Margaret Bucknell to explain that his father was apprenticed in 1908 to PJ Chard. Under the terms of his apprenticeship, he received no money at all in his first year! After that he did receive one shilling a month plus board and lodging.

In those days of the early 20th Century, people ate a lot more fat on their meat, and pigs were fattened up to about 300lbs. People didn't get heart attacks so much because although they ate fatter meat, they often had strenuous manual jobs and they worked it all off. Richard explained that nowadays, supermarkets will not take pigs that weigh over 100lbs.

In 1914, Richard's father went off to war – he was about 18 years old. He was awarded a military medal for his bravery during the First World War and was lucky enough to survive. When he returned from the War, he bought the butcher's business from PJ Chard in 1919. He married in April 1923 and shortly afterwards, his sister Bessie, who had hitherto looked after him, got married to Henry Lewis, the Builder.

The current Richard Webber was born in 1925. He told the story that when he was born, he only weighed 4lbs, so the doctor and the vicar were called, because they weren't sure if he would survive – well, he's still alive and well today to tell the story!

Richard Webber Senior was also to eventually buy the premises, which hitherto had been rented from TC Turl.

Richard Webber and his brother took over the business when his father died in the 1950's. They built up and extended the business over the years, and bought stock from farmers over a wide area – Richard particularly recalled the purchase of up to 400 fat cattle per year from a farmer at Powderham. The fat stock markets at Exeter, Taunton, Hatherleigh were places where animals were purchased, usually by Brian Turner, the Manager of Webbers. Up to 70 fat cattle per week were slaughtered at Whimple as well as pigs and lambs.

The butcher's and abattoir closed in the early 1990's shortly after Richard retired. There is now a small housing estate, Webber's Close, on the spot where the abattoir stood, and the butcher's shop now houses the vet's surgery.

Naome Glanville



Picture: Staff at PJ Chard Butchers c 1910

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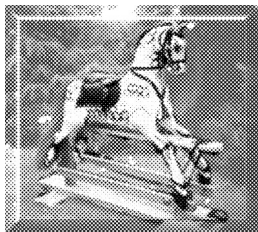
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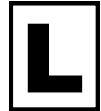
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The Visitor

I was enjoying a soporific moment in front of the fire that had completed its task for the evening. You know the sort.... chin touching your chest, dreaming of every satisfying mouthful of the meal you'd eaten earlier. All was quiet and at peace when a strange noise that seemed to come from up the chimney gave me a 'start'. I sat quietly, listening harder, still drowsy from the withering glow of the embers. Nothing changed, nothing moved, even the dog wasn't barking – must have been hearing things! *Don't trouble yourself, it's just your imagination.*

The hypnotic colours of the fire lulled me away for the second time. Then, I heard it again, an odd mix of footsteps, jingling and rumbling and most definitely coming from the roof? Wary of what was going to happen next, I forced myself away from the fire and crouched behind the settee – was it a burglar? Suddenly, along with the smell of soot there followed a smattering of fine glittery dust, settling on the hearth like someone had gone crazy with a can of decorative spray. I could feel my eyes swelling to the size of saucers with fright; every single hair on the back of my neck prickling up like a scrubbing brush, all in grim anticipation of what might come next. I barely took notice of St Mary's bells in The Square announcing the arrival of midnight. Now, a commotion of huffing and puffing was clearly audible from the chimney. *Be still, DON'T MOVE!*

It stopped, all quiet again, nothing moved; when without warning, a quiet thud announced the arrival of one pair of hefty black boots whose owner deftly straddled either side of the dwindling fire. Every bone in my body wanted to turn and run, get help, alert the dog – anything but get caught. But it was too late; my only escape route was now blocked. *Don't panic no-one can see you!*

By virtue that he had come down the chimney backwards, his ample backside entered the room first followed by his arms still above his head. This whole event gave rise to someone who was perfectly at ease with sliding down strangers' chimneys. (Though I suspected that the whole experience was proving a little tight of late)! He wasn't very tall, quite rotund wearing a knee length, hooded cloak made of the most luxuriously quilted crimson velvet trimmed with long white fur. At first, he concentrated on dusting off the soot with his smart, white gloves. Satisfied he'd done a good job he took them off and undid the cloak throwing it on the chair. His suit was of the same fabric, the jacket skimming his backside, trousers tucked neatly into the top of his black, calve length boots. A wide, black belt circumvented his middle. I was surprised by the amount of hair falling down his back in long, luminous white ringlets. Whilst I was observing him from a safe distance he stretched both arms to what was left of the fire and savoured the warmth to his hands and feet. Obviously enjoying the thawing out process, he then turned to appreciate the full benefit of the heat on his rear end. In doing so, the gold buttons of his jacket glinted in the fire glow, along with the huge buckles on his belt and tops of boots. Despite the long hair, I could make out his face though I had absolutely no way of telling how old he was; Two dark, twinkly eyes set beneath white, large, bushy eyebrows; Dimples crinkling into round and ruddy cheeks either side of his bulbous but only slightly red nose. A neatly clipped white moustache atop his mouth, finished with an equally well trimmed beard. Curiosity had really got the better of me now. *I know I have seen his face before, but where?*



He bent to pick up a folded letter I had noticed earlier on the hearth. He smiled as he read it, and then bent towards the fireplace letting the small remains of the fire catch the paper. He let go as the corner turned black and to my disbelief – the whole letter floated up the chimney! He then startled me by clapping his hands and rubbing them together in a ‘let’s get things done’ fashion. To my utmost astonishment, there fell from the chimney a large sack spattering yet more soot and gold dust around the room! The contents turned out to be brightly coloured packages all painstakingly finished with green, red and gold ribbons tied in bows. With great care and attention he placed each package carefully under the Christmas tree; it was as if he was giving each parcel his blessing as he positioned them. He stood back at the fireplace appreciating the scene, then without having to look, his hand went up to the mantelpiece where unbeknown to me he found a mince pie. He popped it into his mouth in one, but chewed slowly, savouring the fruity mix of mince and sweet pastry. Then followed what I presumed to be an alcoholic beverage – ‘just cleanse the pallet’. He wiped his mouth with the seasonal serviette, at the same time stifling a small burp of appreciation. *Who is he and why does he look so familiar to me?*

The hurried sound of bells jingling from up the chimney attracted his attention. Having finished the task he put back on his cloak, wrapped up the sack and tucked it under his arm. Smiling to himself, he pulled up the hood and busied himself putting the pristine gloves back on. I was so transfixed watching, that I totally forgot I was supposed to be in hiding. He was so intent on pulling his gloves on properly that I never dreamt that he would notice me. But, I was so wrong, his eyes cast about the room as if he had forgotten something when it happened, he fixed on me! I was rooted to the spot with fear. Our eyes locked for what seemed hours but in reality was just seconds. *Don’t be afraid he isn’t going to hurt you, he’s got kind eyes remember!*

He grinned broadly, then with a conspiratorial wink, turned and slowly disappeared back up the chimney; his exit sounding far less strenuous than his entry (was he being winched)? As his boots ceased to be visible a small current of cold air whisked around the room seemingly collecting up every speck of soot and every fall of gold dust. Even the footprints that his boots had made on the rug disappeared too! As all this was going on, one of the cards that had been pinned up high on the beams fluttered to the floor. Large, red words that I didn’t understand were set above a bright green and red border of holly. While the main picture depicted a cheerful, chappy – flowing beard, red suit; the likes of which had been stood in this room not two moments ago. Realisation hit me like a fast train running. Without thinking of the consequences I ran ‘like the clappers’ to the back door, I wanted desperately to know what all that noise was, where was he going next, who else had seen him, how many of them were there? – so many questions! I could still make out the sound of jingling bells above the roof but in my haste to reach the outside – BANG – I ran headlong into the cat flap. I’d forgotten that it would be closed by now. Then strained my neck to try and see through the Perspex of the small door. *No good, try upstairs*

I dashed up to the landing window where I could just make out his silhouette against the night sky, the sound of jingling bells waning away on the air. Too late. St Mary’s peeled again, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve! It was as if nothing had happened, but I know it did, and I know he will return. Until then I shall sit on this very window sill and remain sentinel of this patch, watching, waiting, still.

Merry Christmas everybody!

Dimpsy Doodle Guest Correspondent

Merry C

Christmas & New Year

(as normal i

		St Mary's Church Special Services (see page 17)	Post Office	Whimble Stores
Saturday	December 23, 2006			
Sunday	December 24, 2006	11.30 pm Midnight Communion		8.00am-1100am
Monday	December 25, 2006	11.00am Family Service and Holy Communion	closed	closed
Tuesday	December 26, 2006		closed	closed
Wednesday	December 27, 2006			
Thursday	December 28, 2006			
Friday	December 29, 2006			
Saturday	December 30, 2006			
Sunday	December 31, 2006			8.00am-1100am
Monday	January 1, 2007	11.00am United Benefice Holy Communion	closed	9.00am-11am
Tuesday	January 2, 2007			

Christmas



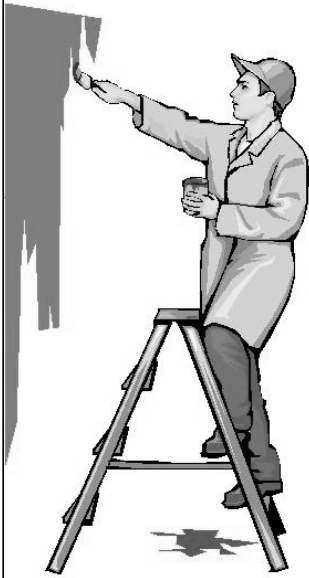
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				8.00am-8.00pm	Noon-12.00am
	closed	closed	Noon-2.00pm	closed	Noon-2.00pm
	closed	closed		8.00am-8.00pm	
Surgery as normal					
		11.00am-12.00pm			Noon-11.00pm
			Noon-2.30pm 6.30pm-12.30am	8.00am-8.00pm	Noon-1.00am
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On Course for a Skate Park in Ottery

The Ottery and District Skate & BMX Club were recently delighted to receive confirmation from Devon County Council that a site for a skate/ BMX etc park is to be made available in Ottery. This was also reported to the Ottery Town Council Meeting by Councillor Roger Giles.

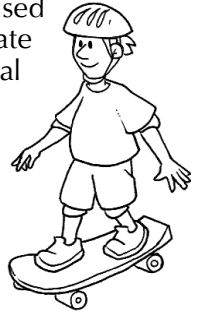
The Ottery and District Skate & BMX Club, a community group, which started about 18 months ago, received support from Devon County Council Community Officer, The King's School, the Ottery Youth Club and Devon Youth Network, Ottery Town Council, Councillor Roger Giles and various other groups, who all recognised the need for safe facilities for skaters, BMX and other bike riders, roller bladers etc. It is hoped that the facility will serve young people in the area, starting with tricycles and scooters, beginners on skates and bikes, right through to those of highest level competition status. Of course, once open, it will be a facility that Whimble residents can use.

The Ottery and District Skate & BMX Club consists of young people supported by an adult committee, both fully constituted, have not only worked towards this long overdue facility but also in the meantime have arranged trips for skaters to other facilities as far away as South Wales, Cornwall and London.

Much preparatory work for a skate/BMX park has already been done by the adult committee, including a fundraising draw which raised £1,500. Ottery Town Council has set aside £10,000 for the skate park, and much more work now awaits this small band of local people to get it all off the ground.

This is an ambitious project which needs physical and financial help from as many individuals and groups as possible to help achieve its aim.

If you are interested in becoming involved, or helping the Group financially to make the Skate Park happen, please contact Elli on 01404 812268, or email elli@ellipang.wanadoo.co.uk



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HOLES IN THE GROUND

or GOINGS ON AT THE STATION HOUSE, PART 2

There's an old nautical description of a boat as a hole in the water into which you pour lots of money. Replace "water" with "ground" and you get a good definition of an old railway station.....

It all began last year while we were writing Part 1 of the saga. We decided that the garden needed a small workover, basically to remove gravel and widen the flower beds. This turned out to be an inspired idea as the Monkey Puzzle tree, which had been heavily pregnant for over a year, decided her time was come to go forth and multiply, and the entire neighbourhood was showered daily with seeds. I shudder to think how we would have kept them swept up if they had fallen into the gravel.

So far so good BUT the area around the house itself had a Tarmac surface, which had been generously refurbished each time Railtrack had resurfaced the platform, with cheerful disregard to damp courses and air bricks. And so our first hole in the ground came about as the Wheatons ripped up layer upon layer of Tarmac until they found the (broken) drains in the clay subsoil and we found the back doorstep a foot above the intended ground level. Several weeks and a lot of money later we had a handsome garden and fewer worries about damp in the house.

Meanwhile, we had begun working on the interior. We particularly wanted to restore the main bedroom to its former glory, with an elegant window and beautiful cast iron fireplace. Many years ago it had been clumsily divided into two very pokey rooms, so the dividing wall had to go. After lots of fun with rotting windows and getting rubble down our 21 stairs, a really lovely room emerged. However, one big bedroom left us with only a small spare room, clearly inadequate when the family call. The solution seemed obvious: make a room in the loft over the dining and sitting rooms. The "only" problem would be getting into it. Once again, our guardian angel was on hand and pointed out a card in Homebase, leading us to a brilliant architect who enjoys a challenge (so he said at the time and I dare not ask him now!) Mike prowled around the house, measuring every millimeter and pronounced the house the most "unforgiving" he had ever seen. Finally he cracked it: pull out the dead straight staircase and replace it with a very complicated one in an entirely different place. Deep breaths were taken and we made the plunge.

The builders sharpened their teeth on the project by giving me a "dream" kitchen first (the only true dream kitchen would be entirely self-cleaning) and then turned their attentions to the dining room where a supporting wall for the new staircase was to be built.



And this is how our second hole in the ground was born. Inspection under the floorboards revealed a void about 4 feet deep under the entire house, presumably to allow for the raised platforms at rail-side. All very interesting and with great potential for mushroom farming maybe, but the second revelation was far less cheering. "An example of Bad Practice" remarked the builder cheerfully, as he balanced precariously on a joist nailed to an unsupported joist and leaned across to pick out a piece of rotten timber which should have been holding up the floorboards. So now we have a large rectangular pit where the dining room used to be, and will soon have a large pit of unspecified shape in our bank balance!

We took a week's holiday while the house was without a staircase at all, and gratefully thank John and Jan for giving us a bed for the eighth night..... The new room will be taking shape over the next few weeks. Cue to take a holiday as far away as possible, and here's hoping we come home to a wonderful home in December.

Martin and Marion Gammell

By the way, Martin has succeeded in rearing a handful of baby monkey puzzle trees. If anyone is interested in growing another type of Whimble Wonder, please let us know.

I write this just before the computer gets switched off as its location is at the bottom of the new staircase and we cannot work out where else to put it until the dust has literally settled. So, Farewell dear readers until the next report in 2007.

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WHIMPLE FAIRTRADE



A huge "THANK YOU" to everyone who recently supported the very successful TRADCRAFT evening in the Church.

What a great way to spend a November evening! –a glass of wine followed by some chocolate and coffee – or a cup of tea and a nice bit of fruit cake- not forgetting a little bit of shopping! PERFECT!

There's still time to place orders for Christmas Cards and Gifts – there are catalogues in the Church, Post Office, Vets and Hairdressers – or contact Maggie Spicer 823640, Dy Beedell 823675, Aubrey Curry 822295 or Sarah Smith 822123.

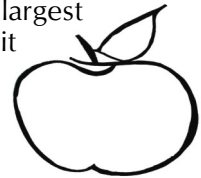
We will also have a supply of tea, coffee, dried fruit, sugar etc. at the Cotley Farm Christmas Shop from the beginning of December.

Thank you very much!

We are delighted to report that the annual wassailing, conducted for many years past, actually works!

From the Bramley in Town Orchard (a tree believed to be some 60 or more years vintage) a recent faller weighed in at 1 lb 4oz with a girth of 15 inches.

We would be delighted if this begins the search for the largest apple to fall from a tree in the Parish of Whimple (picking it would be deemed to prevent actual maturity) and trust that wassailing will continue to appease the evil spirits and lead our parish to ever fruitful harvests.



Peter and Ann Bowden

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WHIMPLE AND DISTRICT VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

Now we have all had time to recover from the heady excitement of the flower show and another excellent year of gardening, no doubt you are all eagerly planning for next year! This is a good time of year just to sit back and reflect on the gardening successes of the year and still hopefully enjoy the excellent crops everyone has grown.

Back in September you may have noticed some strange goings on at various locations around the village. Well, as a result of the success of the VPA, we have funded a large quantity of spring bulbs which we hope will bring a little more colour to the village early next year. Some ten sites have been worked on so we shall just have to see how well they all survive the winter.

We are planning to hold our AGM sometime in January when we also be planning our events for the year ahead. So if anyone, particularly newcomers to the village, feel they want to make a contribution feel free to come along. We would certainly welcome any helpful suggestions you may have regarding the Flower Show.



Paul Wilson

Hon. Secretary.



Coffee, Cakes & Cards



The coffee morning on 4th November was again a great success and we owe a great debt of gratitude to all supporters and our regular band of tireless and hard working helpers. There appeared to be rather fewer people than last year, but that could have been imagination as the total raised was £706. It was a superb result and I can only say "thank you all so much".

It was pointed out recently by Hospiscare's Chairman that, whereas ten years ago Hospiscare cared for 400 patients and their families in one year, this year the figure will be in excess of 1200. Thank you for helping this wonderful service to continue.

Rosemarie Burrows

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WHIMPLE FIREWORKS 2006

Thanks to Graham and his team for all the hard work that they put into the Firework display this year. It was a superb display with many enormous fireworks lighting up the sky above the Cricket Pitch, with sonic booms to match!!! There was an excellent turnout from the village this year, and the weather stayed dry for us. There was so little wind that at one stage it looked as if we were on the set of a horror movie, as all the smoke from the fireworks stayed close to the ground and failed to disperse upwards - some very spooky smoke was slowly rolling across the pitch towards us!!!

Thanks also to all the local businesses that sponsored the event - I know that many villagers wanted to contribute something on the night - so whenever Graham starts up the donations for fireworks in 2007 (and that is me assuming that he is happy to continue) please be generous if you were unable to contribute on the night. Thanks.

Well done Graham, and not forgetting young Karen on the raffle prizes (no,no no, Karen was not a prize, but was 'her in charge' of said prizes)

Ed H

Whimple Victory Hall

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REMEMBERING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

**On Saturday 9th December,
Ottery St Mary and District Later Life Forum
will be holding a one-day event about the 1939 – 45 War
at the Institute, Yonder St, Ottery St Mary,
between 10.30 am – 4.30 pm.**

There will be displays from the South West Airfield Association, Ottery and Whimple History Societies and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, covering subjects such as the Home Front, Devon and it's people during the War, bombs, casualties and damage.

A film will be shown 'We Were There', Ottery Silver Band will play songs and marches from the War period, there will be a sing-along session with John Eborn, where you will have a chance to sing along to well-remembered tunes of the time.

Most importantly, you are invited to come and recall your (and your family's) experiences during the War, providing a snapshot of living in war time. and for younger people to hear about these

Admission is Free, with free cups of coffee and tea for all

A light buffet lunch will be put on for £3.00 per person – you can purchase a lunch ticket on arrival.

For further information and lunch reservation call:

David: 01404 811228 or Elli: 01404 812268

Whimple History Society – Auction of Pledges and Promises

The Committee of the History Society is pleased to report that the auction of pledges and promises, held on 20 October, was a resounding success! Due to the generous bids made by those attending, we raised about £1,500 which will be ploughed back into the upkeep of the Heritage Centre and the cost of staging events and exhibitions for all to enjoy.

A big thank you goes to those who contributed to the 57 lots, to those who bid so generously for the items, and also to Mr David Williams of Oaks and Partners, the auctioneer on the night, who gave his services for free and made the evening highly entertaining with his brilliant sense of humour.

Naome Glanville

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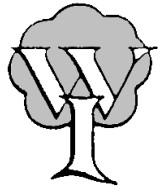
Whimpe Women's Institute

A variety of activities have kept members busy over the past two months. Our October speaker/singer entertained us with a variety of sea shanties and then persuaded members to join in the singing of a number of well-known folk songs. November brought the Annual Meeting when Ann Bowden was unanimously re-elected as President. Delia Myers was elected Secretary.

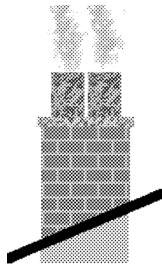
There have been several day classes, including 'How to make decorative bears', 'Getting to know your sewing machine' and 'Making a patchwork bag'.

We are always pleased to welcome guests and potential new members so, if you are interested, why not come along to our Christmas meeting on 12th December at 7.30pm. For further information contact Ann Bowden (823450) or Rosemary Horrell 822013).

Rosemarie Burrows



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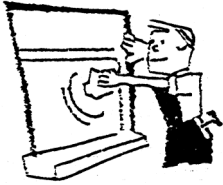
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2007 Resolutions

Recently there have been a number of incidents of vandalism, some of which villagers have thought **not significant** and have not made a report to the police. These incidents when brought together give the police the "BIG PICTURE" which is important for them to take any appropriate action.

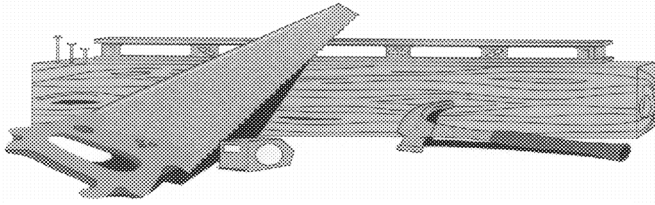
The advice is to report any such incidents to the police control room on **08452 777 444** as quickly as possible. *Every little helps as the saying goes.*

Over the past few years, we have covered a number of practical neighbourhood watch advice/recommendation in 'Whimble News', some of these are briefly noted below. In no particular order, my top ten would be:-

1. Shredding of all personal information before disposal.
2. Marking/serial numbers -Property marking kits are available FREE from the police. Don't forget postcode and house number.
3. Going away - don't make it obvious that the house is empty, so lights and radio on time switches - radio 4 playing. If you normally leave valuable pedal cycles or similar items in your shed, consider putting them in the house. *Are they security marked?*
4. Close curtains at night/door chain on doors. All doors locked.
5. Over night visitors/guests, - informed them where a door key is at night in case there is a fire or emergency.
6. Alarm zones - if you have an alarm system that can isolate unused zones at night, then set those zones.
7. Smoke alarm check/vacuum them monthly and change batteries each year. Most alarms need replacing after a few years.
8. Telephone preference service. Ring 0845 07 007 07 to register.
9. No Christmas gifts left on show/No valuables visible in your car.
10. Update your insurance inventory, lock valuables in a safe place.

Wishing you all a very happy festive season and safe 2007.

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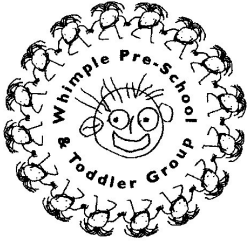
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WHIMPLE PRE-SCHOOL & TODDLER GROUP NEWS FROM WHIMPLE PRE-SCHOOL

We thought we would give you an update on what is going on in Pre-school, I would like to thank everyone who supported the Willow chair course. It was a really good day and we raised lots of money which is great.

We had a donation from Geoff Delves from the Charity cricket match for which we would like to thank him, and to the Thirsty Farmer for the donation from the Quiz night. Both lots of donations went towards buying a new cooker which cooked our Christmas cakes beautifully. So thank you for your support.

We are at present looking for some one to take over being our Treasurer, I would like to appeal to anyone in the village who has a bit of spare time which they would like to give to pre-school. It involves about ½ hour a day logging receipts, writing cheques, preparing a report and attending meetings about once termly. So if there is anyone out there who would like to donate their time please ring me. (Sally 823228).

Don't forget the Christmas craft evening on 5th December. Tickets are on sale in the Post Office and Village shop. Please join us for a really fun evening and learn how to make your own Christmas decorations from fabulous mantle pieces to gorgeous door wreaths.

Look out for the Quiz and Curry on the 27th January, tickets will be on sale in the usual places at the beginning of January. Get them quick as they always sell fast!!

Sally Young Chairperson.

Blood Donor Sessions

The next blood donor sessions will be held at
Feniton C of E Primary School,
Station Road, Feniton
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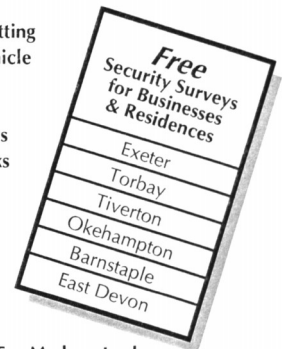
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<i>Contact:</i> Rev. Rob Wilkinson	822521
Devon County Councillor	
Mr. D.Button,	
East Devon Councillor	
Andrew Dinnis	850363
Whimble County Primary School	
<i>Headteacher:</i> Mrs. D. Brice	822584
<i>P.T.F.A. Chair:</i> Mr R.Camp	823392
Whimble History Society	
<i>Chairman:</i> Richard Webber	822038
<i>Secretary:</i> Roger Smith	822244
Whimble Mothers Union	
Margaret Burrough Gateshayes Farm	822257
Whimble Pre-School & Toddler Group	
<i>Chair:</i> Sally Young 11 Chard Ave	823228
<i>Playleader:</i> Jo Westney Glencroft, Church Road	822168
<i>Toddlers:</i> Karen Bell 5 Lower Woodhayes Court	823443
Whimble Womens Institute	
Mrs. Ann Bowden, Bradcott House, The Green	823450
Whimble Over Sixties Club	
Mrs B. Iball, 11 Rectory Close	822905
Whimble Recreation Trust	
<i>Knowle Cross Sports Ground.</i> Mr P. Garraff, Luppit	891206
Whimble Village Produce Association.	
<i>Chairman:</i> Adrian Williams, 47 Slewton Crescent	822430
Whimble and Broadclyst Young Farmers' Club	
Mr. R. J. Burrough, Gateshayes Farm	822257
Whimble Football Club	
<i>Chairman:</i> Ben Silk	822389
Whimble Tennis Club	
<i>Secretary:</i> Judith Imbo	823240
<i>Treasurer:</i> J. Hughes	822659
Whimble Cricket Club	
Mr. R.J.Smith	822244
Whimble Victory Hall Management Committee	
<i>Secretary:</i> Pam Scanlan, Albecq, The Green	822262
<i>Booking Sec:</i> Fiona Randall	822793
Whimble Post Office	
Alison and Jim Creasy	822359
Whimbletons	
Emma Palmer	823083
Neighbourhood Watch	
John Munslow, 44 Slewton Crescent	823456
St. Mary's Bellringers	
<i>Captain:</i> Liz Silk	
Whimble Scout Group	
<i>Group Scout Leader (and Marquee Booking):</i> Alex Spry	822844
Otter Rotters	
Hugh Roberts	822651
Whimble Book Group	
Katy Howard, 9 Whiteways Close	823038

The Whimble News Team

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