

Update on Nepal

THE beginning of this month was marked by the summit talks between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists at the Prime Minister's residence.

So far four day-long summit talks have been held. Leaders say they are moving closer to successful agreements and outcomes of the peace talks.

The Maoists are also saying they will continue to be a part of the peace process and have no intention of returning to the jungle.

During the summit talks, on the surrounding roads civil society groups, special interest groups, Maoists and Nepali citizens thronged in huge numbers.

On the first day a congress leader Shailaja Acharya was turned away from the talk venue saying she had spoken for monarchy during the people's movement - 2.

On following days, rowdiness seemed to have increased on the streets with many different interest groups reacting sometimes to journalists, other party cadres in uncivil ways.

A confrontation between the demonstrators of the Association of the victims of the Maoists and the Maoists cadre and security made news on one day. On another day a human chain made by the Maoists prevented even political leaders from getting inside a certain area.

Following the peace talks, and during the two festival holidays, snippets of news from here and there have been of the Maoists patrolling the streets of Kathmandu, taking away those found to be "wrong-doing"; confrontations between the Maoist trade union and the UML-GFONT.

On the 25th of this month the Maoists went on strike protesting misconduct of a policeman somewhere and burnt tyres and stopped all transportations on the streets until 10 am. Abductions, attacks and breaking into private homes are also familiar news.

A team meeting at NA also revealed that although people did spend a more carefree festival time/s this year, the environment to return and live in their home villages is not yet conducive.

Fallen houses, abandoned fields, not knowing how the summit talks will go, and expressed feelings that even if the summit talks are successful local level animosity exists - all of these are significant deterrents to return.

Lights out!

THE Gadd family, of Spring Gardens, Northgate, Wiveliscombe, wish to announce that due to Hinkley Point B Reactor being closed and the media saying that there might be a shortage of power or power cuts, they have decided not to have their Christmas lights display this year.

It has been a hard decision but they thought it better for every household to have power during the winter months rather than they have their usual display which consumes a considerable amount of electricity.

They intend to be back next year if power is back to normal.

Free massage offered

KIM Mc Gavin is studying at the Complementary Health Centre, Exeter. He needs to undertake practical work to develop his skills as part of his course and so is offering free sessions of massage in Wiveliscombe. Wednesdays, evenings and weekends are possible.

For more information telephone 07709 429267 or 01984 624806.

Where in the World ... ?



Angela Lamplough of Whitefield sent this picture of her friend Sarah wearing a Where in the World is.....? T shirt in Cunderin, west of Perth, Australia.

Who S.A.W. the art?

Reflections on Somerset Art Weeks by a participating artist

IT was a sunny September morning when, after months of preparation, I hung out my 'Open Studio' sign on the opening day of Somerset Art Weeks.

I was hoping, rather than expecting, that I would have plenty of interested visitors. After all, Brompton Ralph where I live is a small village in a rural area off the main road - but in our favour we were hosting 2 of the 350-odd venues taking part.

I need not have worried; aided by the signs we placed at road junctions and the catalogues available at libraries and other public places, visitors did arrive. There was also a good deal of interest and support from people in the village which resulted in several sales.

I wanted to be present during all the time that my studio was open so that I could talk to people who were interested in how and why I made the work. Most visitors seemed to appreciate this and I hope it enhanced their experience.

The downside of this was the exhaustion that set in after several in-depth discussions in a row when I realised it



was late afternoon and I had had no break. Also there were limited opportunities for me to visit other venues.

On the practical side, all participating artists were warned to have a strong awareness of

health and safety issues when inviting the public into their workspaces.

I was concerned about a dodgy staircase in my studio, but several people marched straight up the stairs past my sign: 'Unsafe steps - do not climb!' Happily there were no accidents.

The weather was mostly fine and was probably an encouragement to people to set off around the countryside in search of venues.

Altogether it was a wearying but satisfying time during which I met many interesting people, had some great conversations, sold some work, had an unsettling quiet time in the middle followed by a busy flurry right at the end.

Peter Messa

What to get your computer for Christmas

CHRISTMAS is upon us once more and so it's traditionally time that I round up the list of all the lovely gadgets and toys that you can buy yourself.

Well, I thought I'd turn it around little bit this year and think of a few things your computer might like to be given for Christmas. And as with all the best gifts, sometimes it's the investment of a little personal time that makes it so special.

First thing is to give your computer the equivalent of a massage and spa treatment.

1. Time to remove all that junk you've collected over the year. Go to Control Panel, Internet Options, on the General page, click Settings. Under Amount of Disk Space to Use, set the value to 100MB maximum. Click OK, and then click Delete Files on the General page. Click OK, and you'll free up a load of disk space occupied by your previous internet browsing activities. Click OK again to exit.

2. Control Panel again, and then Add/Remove Programs. You'll need to be careful here, as you don't want to remove vital programs, but if you can identify any software in the list and you know what it does but don't use it any more, click the item, then choose the Change/Remove button and follow the instructions (if any) to confirm that you want to remove the product.

This frees up useful disk space, and may prevent software you don't use from pre-loading and slowing down the system. Don't remove items that you don't recognise, or you may remove something important!

3. Anti-Virus/Internet Security overhead. I read a very interesting report recently on how anti-virus programs affect system performance, and Norton Internet Security was by far the biggest culprit. Although this software is popular, it's also very cumbersome and slow. This can easily slow down your PC by 25%, both in terms of startup time and general operation.

If you're up for renewal soon of your subscription, I'd recommend looking at some alternatives, with Grisoft's AVG Free edition ideal for personal use (<http://free.grisoft.com>), and half the price of most Anti-Virus products. Anti-Virus is a must have for your PC,

but remember that you may be using anti-spam, anti-malware, or privacy controls provided by your existing package. Whilst all of these have their uses, they are not essential and can be replaced by a little common sense.

Remove the old Anti-Virus program, reboot, and then install the new one, as two AV programs at the same time will not play nicely together.

4. Disable Indexing Services. These are used to help you find documents on your PC faster, but it's not required for most people. If you use the Search or Find feature on My Computer often, leave this alone, otherwise follow the instructions. This will not prevent you finding things; the search will just take a little longer.

Go to Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, and then Add/Remove Windows Components (on the left). Scroll down to Indexing Services, and make sure the check box is clear (no tick), and then click Next and Finish.

5. Disable unused Browser Toolbars and Google Desktop. If you have extra toolbars showing in Internet Explorer, such as Google or Yahoo Toolbars, and you don't use them, then uninstall them. This is usually done in Add/Remove programs for each one.

Also, Google Desktop gets installed by many other products these days, and if you don't use it, it slows down your machine with its background indexing activities. Remove that if not needed.

6. Defragment your hard drive. This rearranges the way files are stored on your hard drive to make them more efficient. Make sure there is minimal risk of a power failure whilst you defrag, or there is a risk of data loss.

If you have not done this before or for a long time, the defrag may take several hours to complete, but if you perform it once a month in future, you'll help to keep the drive in better shape.

Go to My Computer, right click on the Hard Drive (C:) and choose Properties. Go to Tool, and then click Defragment Now. Click Analyse, and if it recommends defragmentation, choose the Defragment option.

Now you've given the computer a spring clean, install all those lovely gadgets you've been given for Christmas!

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