

Memories of the Second World War

NUMEROUS events took place in 2005 to mark sixty years elapsed since the end of the war. Wiveliscombe Historical Society rounded the year off with two of these.

Reg Herbert enthralled a large audience when he recounted his experiences in the Royal Air Force which culminated in piloting a Lancaster bomber on raids over Germany.

Reg enlisted early in the war as soon as he was old enough and went for basic training. Before he passed out, he was selected to join a detachment which was to form a British presence in South Africa, where the parliament had voted by only a narrow majority to join the war on the side of the Allies.

It was two years before he was back in Britain, having flown only old-fashioned aircraft and needing to get used to modern machines quickly.

The Lancaster bomber was an extremely good air-

craft. It carried a crew of seven and Reg's came from widely differing walks of life.

About 50% of the personnel of RAF bomber aircrews were killed in action, and 25% were either injured or became prisoners-of-war. The remaining 25% came through unscathed.

Very often the most difficult part of a mission was the return flight, especially if an aircraft had been damaged or was running low on fuel. There were occasions when Reg only just made it back to a safe landing, while others ran out of fuel and crashed.

Reg made particular reference to the infamous raid on Dresden, in which he took part. He said that it was not done as retaliation for German raids on the finer British cities, as has been claimed, but for hard strategic reasons.

The Soviet armies were being hard pressed by the Germans in the east, and Stalin asked the western allies to do something to

relieve the pressure.

Dresden was the only crossing point of the River Oder for a great distance. Blocking the crossing and ensuring it could not quickly be re-instated had a major impact on German communications and supplies.

The action is reckoned to have shortened the war considerably and saved many more lives than it caused.

A remarkable Wiveliscombe woman

At the Society's first meeting in 2006, Peter Langdon came to talk about his grandmother, Mrs Bessie Annie Langdon.

In 1897, aged 15, Bessie Hill as she then was looked to earn a little money by keeping hens on the family farm and selling the eggs to shops in Wiveliscombe. Many farmers' wives and daughters did this.

What Bessie Hill did differently at a time when trade was poor was to obtain a contract to supply her eggs to a Bristol dairy. This proved so successful that before long she was sending eggs from neigh-

bouring farms as well for a small charge.

What followed was a classic story of a thriving business being built up over many years by hard work and good management.

A collection round was started with a pony and trap (later a van) taking eggs from outlying farms. Eggs were sent to London as well as Bristol and then table poultry also, which meant a very busy time each year in the run-up to Christmas.

Later, other products were traded as opportunities arose - butter, cheese, and wild rabbits, which abounded in the Brendon Hills until myxomatosis wiped them out in 1954. There was even a market for rooks for a time after World War II.

Mrs Langdon's aim was always to supply top quality produce, but perishable goods such as table poultry that were in prime condition when dispatched were occasionally not so when they reached their destination.

To ensure the prompt delivery of her goods, Mrs Langdon took the plunge and purchased a lorry, which could make the trip to London and back in 15 hours, and was soon doing so regularly. That was in 1927, and thus was laid the foundation of the transport arm of the business, which also flourished and expanded over the years.

Mrs Langdon finally handed the business over to her sons in 1956, almost sixty years after making her first sale.

A fuller account of her business career appears in the Wiveliscombe book recently published. **JRB**

JOIN IN!

Runners

There would appear to be many runners in Wivey and in the 10 Parishes. They may consider coming together and forming a Wivey and District Running Club.

An organisation such as this would encourage existing runners to continue with their sport and help to introduce newcomers who may be hesitant about how to make a start in this activity. Joggers would also be welcome.

Those interested should please contact David Edwards on 01984 623188 or email david@lamp.eclipse.co.uk

Artists and Craftspeople

Would anyone interested in joining an informal painting and crafts group intending to meet on a regular basis please contact claire@rice3.co.uk or phone 01984 623806

Young Farmers

Wiveliscombe Young farmers have recently been carol singing around the area. The total raised was £550 for Musgrove Neonatal unit for premature babies.

This is a very worthy cause and we would like to thank every one who has supported the club and the charity.

We would also like to thank all the local businesses for their support for our

annual whist drive which was held on 7th December. Special thanks to the Rock Inn and Towergate Lloyd and Whyte for their support and sponsorship of the club shirts and also Exmoor Brewery for their sponsorship.

If any one is interested in our activities and joining Wiveliscombe Young Farmers and are between the ages of 10 to 26, then please have a look at our website www.wiveyyfc.com. It has all the latest and forthcoming

events. It also has all the contact details you need.

Wiveliscombe YFC is not just for farmers. We have a wide range of activities that all our members enjoy. At the moment we are practicing for a Pantomime, which is to be held on 25th February.

We also have sports teams and get involved with quizzes, bowling and much, much more. We are always looking for more members and new friends.

Lorna Thorne,
Chairperson

NYNEHEAD COURT

Gracious Retirement Living with Professional Care

Few grand country settings can compare with this magnificent 17th century Grade II* listed manor house.

Set in 13 acres of parkland and formal gardens, and adjacent to the 13th century church, Nynehead Court has a friendly and experienced caring team and close links with the local community.

For further information please contact Diana Hathaway, The Manager, Nynehead Court, Nynehead, Wellington, Somerset TA21 0BN

Telephone: 01823 662481
E-mail: nyneheadcourt@aol.com

Part of the Stepping Stone Group from January 2004

Updates from Nepal

SOME readers may be a little confused by this column and wonder what news like this is doing in our part of rural West Somerset? To explain...

Nepal has been an absolute monarchy for ten generations - a romantically beautiful but savagely poor country where the King was treated as an incarnation of the God Vishnu and revered by all.

However, the Crown Prince Dipendra - a king in waiting, but possibly too much in waiting - in a drug and drink crazed frenzy shot the King, Queen and almost all of his family in 2001.

This horrific tragedy led to the late King's brother, Gyanendra, being crowned King but since then increased instability and poverty plus insurrection by Maoist guerrillas has created an almost civil war-like state of affairs.

The King has clamped down on commu-

nications - last year for a time he cut all telephone and email communication with the outside world and closed newspapers - and there is now a much greater army presence in towns and villages right across the country. Dissent has now reached the capital, Kathmandu, and the general atmosphere is one of fear and uncertainty.

Rita Thapa, who sends the updates to us here in Wiveliscombe, lives in Kathmandu and works to create jobs and a sense of achievement for poor women by raising funds for numerous weaving and other community projects. She remains remarkably buoyant about life even though the future does not look bright.

I hope that readers will find her updates interesting and give a wider view of a world we know little about and whose fate does not really interest the world's press. **PH**

Latest Update December 2005

Despite the professed unilateral ceasefire by the Maoists, this month has been full of instances of killings, abductions and extortions by the Maoists. Our newspaper cuttings report of 5 killings, 13 abductions, 5 households were locked-up and people put to the street, over 300 households terrorized owing to their repeated threats, and schools were also locked-up and 100s of students have been affected.

Likewise the security forces in response have also hurt one youth by a bullet shot.

On the night of the 14th a gruesome event took place in a religious site in the touristy Nagarkot. Following a brawl over local young women, an army man in civilian clothes came back with a gun and randomly shot 11 people, wounded 12 oth-

ers participating in the religious festival and finally shot himself.

Political parties have politicised the event and the government responded promptly by providing relief support and medication - Kathmandu mourned and suffered another gruesome event. Lesson was: what armed men/women can do!!

We are now wondering how the municipal elections are going to end up with the government hell bent on carrying it out "peacefully and fairly", the 7 political parties saying they will boycott and encourage the Nepalis to not vote, and the Maoists saying they will do all in their power to stop it. Their recent announcement says "climb on the back of the enemy to hit its head". People are saying stock-up what you need and prepare for what ever may be.

THE BEAR INN

10 North Street, Wiveliscombe
Tel 01984 623537

Andy, Heather and staff welcome you to the Bear Inn

Specialising in Cask Conditioned Ales and good quality home-made Food with a friendly family atmosphere

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, 3rd FEBRUARY
JAMMING NIGHT
in the Skittle Alley

FRIDAY, 17th FEBRUARY
CELTIC NIGHT
in the Bar

FRIDAY, 24th FEBRUARY
JLF AUCTION OF PROMISES
see poster for details

FRIDAY, 17th MARCH
ST PATRICK'S DAY
see poster for offers

6 NATIONS RUGBY
will be screened in the bar

SENIOR CITIZENS MENU AVAILABLE
Monday to Friday 12 noon - 2.30 pm
Take Away pizzas, burgers, curries available evenings: from 5pm - 9pm; Sunday 6 pm - 9 pm

DOGS ON LEADS WELCOME IN PUB AND ON PATIO AREAS

Little Acorns

2 High Street, Wiveliscombe, Somerset

NEW RANGES NOW IN!

MADE IN ENGLAND & THE WEST COUNTRY

FARM ANIMAL TEAPOTS ONLY £9.99

RUGBY SCENE & STEAM TRAIN 6 INCH TILES ONLY £4.99

LANDROVER AND TRACTOR MUGS "NEW STYLES" £4.99 EA

Visit our 19th Century Cellar and see our OAK furniture, Handmade in Somerset. Bespoke service available at very reasonable prices

Coffee tables from £145!

HOUSE SIGNS AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM £6.50

FUNNY AND INFORMATION SIGNS £8

HAVE YOUR OWN SAYING, **FREE QUOTATION!**

Come and have a browse