

## READERS' LETTERS

# This discourse is healthy

Dear Messenger — I have to tell you I really do not like olives. I have tried them now and again because I know tastes can change as you get older but I cannot eat them; they taste disgusting. An olive-free Britain can't come soon enough for me!

Marion Mann's letter (Messenger 50) has prompted me to consider the issues surrounding preference, prejudice and political correctness. In my view it is enforced political correctness which has fired prejudice rather than assuaged it.

Everyone has likes and dislikes. My likes and dislikes define me and differentiate me from you.

I hate olives with a passion whereas Mike loves them with an equal passion but it has never lead to blows.

However, if someone had decreed it politically incorrect for me to express such a view about olives there would undoubtedly be friction. If I wasn't allowed to say that I disliked olives there would be growing resentment.

If then it should be decided by "Liberty for Olives" that preferences in the matter were at best to be discouraged and at worst forbidden, there would eventually be big trouble.

The trouble with political correctness is that someone somewhere has decided what is correct and what is not correct without taking into account the individual's right to preference. Such people have confused preference with prejudice.

Thus, this someone, supported by the law in many cases, now tells me I am not allowed to express my preference in relation to certain very contentious issues, indeed even to hold such a preference is now considered somehow obscene.

They go so far as to try to convince me that that which has been deemed to be politically correct is, in fact, the correct and only view.

Your correspondent who took exception to Simon Turnbull's article has a right to her view but she has absolutely no right at all to ask the Messenger to suppress the views of others.

Simon's piece prompted her response; excellent. Her response has prompted mine; splendid. Discourse such as this is healthy and the Messenger provides a forum for local people to express their views.

If it didn't it would become a boring, middle-ground, tediously "nice" paper.

Claire Wren

# We hope to be back - licence laws allowing

Dear Messenger — £560.28 was raised by our Christmas Lights display this year.

The money will be going towards a defibrillator for one of the local Emergency Ambulance teams.

We would like to thank everyone for their support, especially our local firefighters who put the decorations on the roof and then took them down again.

Also, thank you to Dad, Ron Searle for all his hard work.

We hope and pray to be back in Christmas 2006 if the licence laws don't stop us. If this does happen we will be very sad as the display brings great joy to all who come to see it.

This is the world we live in now, the minority spoil the pleasure for the majority and charities will miss out.

There are many people all over the country who work hard for a few weeks a year to raise funds for charities; it seems that there are some people who do not understand or appreciate these things.

The Gadd Family

## PROPERTY MATTERS

### 2005

I am sure that everyone would agree locally, regionally and nationally, that the property market 'slowed down' during 2005, that 'slow down' refers to the inexorable price rises in the preceding four years.

In Wiveliscombe and the surrounding area, the rise in prices seemed to come to an abrupt halt in 2005. However, the number of transactions completed maintained the same level as the preceding four years. That is good news for the local housing market.

One's view of the property market depends upon one's perception, are you more interested in how much the value has risen, or are you more interested in how likely it is your house should sell.

In my opinion, the second factor is the most important one. In many ways, Wiveliscombe bucks trends, and this is true of our local property market. When prices were rising rapidly in previous years, I spoke with many agents about the record number of sales they were agreeing in

more urban areas.

At that time, my office in Wiveliscombe trundled on with consistent sales figures, never hitting the higher sales figures of Wellington or Taunton.

However during 2005, those same agents saw a considerable reduction in their number of sales, but I'm delighted to report that Wiveliscombe continued to trundle on, proving its consistency.

I know which market I would prefer to work in, and indeed live in, as I too am hoping to move house this year, within Wiveliscombe.

### 2006

One always expects a seasonal increase in applicant activity straight after the Christmas and New Year holiday break. The phones have certainly started ringing again with requests for valuations, registration of applicants and arrangement of viewing appointments.

With these key performance indicators up, it's no coincidence that more sales have been agreed so far in 2006, than I initially anticipated. Whether this heralds another steel rise on the

Dear Messenger — I have the greatest respect for Marian Mann's depth of concern for the appalling inequalities which afflict mankind.

The two young men described in the offending Murrum (Messenger 49), one black and one white, who stood together in friendship, as equals, would have joined with my elderly self in affirming the above sentiment.

Simon Turnbull

# Parking solution

Dear Messenger — I have been associated with the village of Begur in Gerona, Spain for some years now. It is a hill-top village not unlike Wiveliscombe with a similar population.

The village square is on top and in the centre and like Wiveliscombe, but it is a little larger. The approach roads in and out are exactly like Wiveliscombe including 'Town Hill' into and 3 others out at the top.

When we left there last year they were excavating the square to some depth. When we returned last month, December 2005, the village and the square was almost 100% pedestrianised and one-way traffic. On days of fiestas and markets it can be closed off and so serve a dual purpose.

However, the main difference was that they had constructed a large underground parking with access into it from half way up 'town hill' and exit onto 'North Street' and replaced the old square with a new pedestrian square beautifully planted with mature (15/20 yrs old) trees. Evidently E.U. money.

If we were to translate this idea to Croft Car Park we could build a vast amount of semi underground parking behind the Community Centre and at the same time provide a huge plinth to rebuild a Community Centre and its own parking. Secondly if we built a 2/3 tier car park underground at the car park at Stockers Close - it would provide a plinth for another large 1/2 storey building and parking - perhaps a new medical centre?

The site currently proposed for a medical centre on the south side of the main road is absolutely crazy when perhaps 1/2 of the Wiveliscombe population lives on the other side.

The new medical centre approach for vehicles will be on and off the bypass. Three quarters of the traffic visiting the surgery will need to pass through the town. Furthermore 'we' as in Taunton Deane, already own the car park sites.

Keith Brooker

# 30 for a reason

Dear Messenger — The recent experiment to reduce speeding in Langley Marsh was a complete success. No vehicle exceeded the limit of 30mph. Indeed many chose not to travel above 20mph despite there being no police, speed-watch guns or safety cameras.

Five inches of snow was laid very quietly in the early hours of Friday 25 November and lasted on the road for most of the weekend.

A spokesman said: "It is amazing how, if their own safety and that of their vehicle is at obvious risk, any driver is capable of reducing their speed and driving within the specified limit. It's a pity snow is so expensive, especially if we have to import it from Dubai in the summer months."

Talks are now in progress to see if painting the road white will have a similar effect.

30 FOR A REASON  
30 THROUGH LANGLEY, PLEASE  
Claire (slightly tongue in cheek) Wren,  
Langley Marsh

'value' graph during 2006 remains to be seen.

However, it does mean that we can be more optimistic in our market forecasts and the probability of selling is certainly higher.

One question I have been asked several times lately is "do you do free valuations?" and I think this needs clarifying.

Valuations are carried out for several reasons by different people and for different purposes. As agents our 'free valuation' is an estimate of what a property is likely to achieve, at that point in time, if it came onto the open market.

We are happy to visit property owners and provide our opinion, at no charge. We can then, of course discuss marketing strategies and suggested asking prices, if indeed the vendor is considering moving and it's appropriate to do so. But that advice is only pertinent if a home owner is thinking about selling. The valuation remains free, whether you are moving or not.

If you have any questions relating to the local property market, please feel free to call me on 01984 623023, or call into our office in Wiveliscombe.

Bruce Keay,  
Proprietor,  
Wilkie May & Tuckwood.



Possible parking solution?

## Welcome to the Web - Version 2.0!

ONCE upon a time there were books and other sorts of printed materials. It took a long time to find things out because you had to read all the pages.

And then along came the Internet and the World Wide Web. Web Version 1.0 was great. It allowed us to find things we couldn't before.

Checking details and prices on things we wanted to buy became a lot easier, although of course we could find ourselves browsing all day long, and no coffee and cake shop midway to provide a treat.

And sometimes it was just slow, or tedious, or we couldn't quite work out where the information was, because the site we were viewing was difficult to use. And the pages loaded slowly, which made the whole checkout process a bore.

And then someone decided that there was a better way of browsing the web. You still use the same old web browser, but somehow web sites just got better.

Take finding a map, or getting directions. In the Web Version 1.0, you typed in the postcode and up came a map. Wow! But if you wanted to zoom in or out or move the map around, you would click a button, and the whole page would reload in the new position (and sometimes not).

In Web 2.0, you now click on the map and drag! Just like a piece of paper. And you can zoom in and out, and drag some more, and go down to almost infinite detail, and even overlay the thing with satellite images (which probably has little purpose, but does make you go 'wow, how'd they do that!').

I'm talking about Google Maps (<http://maps.google.co.uk>) - they weren't the first to show you Web 2.0 in action but are perhaps one of the most notable. And now everyone's doing it.

Notably, web companies are starting to provide access to their information through a programmatic interface, or web-service. What this means to the user is that you'll see new types of website, where different types of information are aggregated together.

People call these 'mashups', where information from service 'a' is mixed with service 'b' to provide a new way of understanding or visualising the information.

For example, with Google Maps, you can now plot houses for sale, pubs and restaurants, traffic conditions and the like, all on a very usable and clear map. It's like the first time someone put jam on a piece of bread and made a sandwich. 1+1 sometimes equals more than 2.

Does it make it better? That's a tough question and I'm inclined to think of it as evolution rather than revolution. The techniques used to make this particular bit of magic are nothing new, but its taken time for the web wizards to put it into something that makes sense.

You'll see lots more Web 2.0 techniques appearing on your favourite websites, and sometimes you won't notice they are there, but you'll notice that there are less complete page loads to complete an action, things will perhaps change subtly before your eyes, and you'll find the web a better, easier place to use.

The 20th century has been relatively few true inventions, just continual refinements of already understood techniques.

What the Web is doing today is encouraging collaboration and innovation on a global scale, with few physical or political boundaries to limit people's imagination. That will help accelerate the pace of change, and the usefulness of all sorts of things around us.

How long till Web 3.0 arrives I wonder, and what will it do? DM

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