

Burrator Beacon

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Spring 2025



Cover photo by Damian Stacey

Editorial – Alice Neal

Happy new year everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. Pete and I spent time with our family, eating, drinking, and making merry. It was lovely. Even the dog got spoilt with presents. She is pictured here on a frosty morning walk.

This year is a very important one for me, as I will be getting married! The next time you hear from me I will officially be Mrs Alice Chesbrough. We will be having a small legal ceremony, followed later in the year by a larger celebration with all our friends and family.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone to shop local this year, as much as possible. It is so important to support our local small businesses, especially in the quiet periods after Christmas.

Happy spring!



Parish Clerks Report – Kathy Griffiths

I am very pleased to say that the council have co-opted two new councillors for Meavy Ward, Cllr Michael Rowe and Cllr Kevin Stribley. We welcome both of them to the council. This means that currently there is only one vacancy, and this is for Sheepstor Ward. If anyone would like to represent Sheepstor please get in touch.

The Planning Committee are consulted on local applications, all planning applications can be found on the DNPA website. <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/planning>

The council have had a talk from Devon Communities Together about emergency planning for the parish. A sub-committee has been formed to facilitate improvements to the Helen Rowett Memorial Garden in Dousland and will meet quarterly. Grants have been provided to a number of local organizations, these include Walkham Valley Scouts, Sheepstor Village Hall, Walkhampton Village Hall and The Bloomin Idiots Allotment Group.

Village Halls

Please support our local village halls by booking them for your meetings, parties and other activities. All the halls have disabled access, and vary in size and facilities, so one of them will suit your requirements. These halls are run by willing volunteers who work hard to keep them in good condition and provide vital facilities for our communities.

Meavy Parish Hall	Alison Stoker	853185
Sheepstor Village Hall	Patrick Drennan	853186
Walkhampton Memorial Hall	Sue Walsh	07767480807

They will be able to advise you on availability, hire charges and terms & conditions of hire.

11+ Coaching

We believe that children's education should be driven by merit, not parental wealth, background, or environment. Unfortunately, the 11+ curriculum is not taught in primary schools. Without expensive private tuition, it's very difficult for children to gain entry to Grammar schools.

We are considering setting up a weekly coaching session at one of the local village halls. This will be facilitated by qualified teachers for year 5 and 6 pupils, at a subsidised rate.

In order to move forward, we need to assess the potential demand for such a programme. If you or your child are interested, please write to the editor, and we'll get back to you shortly.

Walkhampton Memorial Hall commemorative trees

We at the Walkhampton Memorial Hall committee have decided to plant three new trees in the playing field. We would love to use these to celebrate some of the amazing people or events from the Walkhampton area.

To this end, we would like to ask you, our parishioners, if you have any suggestions! Examples raised by the committee include memorialising the 80th anniversary of the flower show, or people who have made a great impact on our local community.

If you have any suggestions, please send them in to the Beacon via our email, burratorbeacon@gmail.com.

Sheepstor Village Hall Bulletin Spring 2025

After a well attended and much appreciated talk by Corinna Legassick on her visit to the Faroe Islands in the Autumn, we had a pre-Christmas get together in the hall in the run up to Christmas. Thank you to those who donated refreshments, all who came, and their generosity with cash gifts to the hall coffers. Not only was there a good mix of villagers, friends and family, but there was clear evidence of the dramatic drop in Sheepstor Parish's residents average age over the last few years, as the hidden area beneath the refreshments tables was utilised as a "monster hunt".

We were fortunate to be chosen by WDBC as one of the villages to have access to a thermal imaging scanner. Kate Royston of Tamar Energy Community will be explaining its use at a talk on Thursday February 20th at 19.00hrs in the hall. It should help local residents identify heat loss areas in their homes and may aid our exploration of a Community Energy Hub project based in the village centre.

Friday March 14th is Quiz Night in the hall. Doors will open at 19.00 hours, with a choice of soups, accompanied by rolls and puddings in exchange for a donation, but please bring your own alcohol. Tickets are £3.00 per person/£12.00 per table and we aim to start the quiz at 19.30 hours. The prize will be 50% of the ticket takings. All profits will go to the village hall funds. There will be local as well as general knowledge questions, so choose your table members wisely!

Thanks to Charlotte Barriball the hall now has a Facebook page to publicise events, so please help to increase its footfall by liking/following its pages. Trevor Rookes has organised an e-mail address for SVH correspondence: sheepstorvillagehall@gmail.com, which should be used for all communications.

Sheepstor Open Gardens 2025 will take place on Saturday May 10th and Sunday May 11th, with at least 7 gardens participating, and 2 more possibles depending on their owner's availability at the time. The event will include a bluebell wood walk between Burrator House and Yeo House, which should prove a star attraction as Burrator House is a new venue for the scheme. Tickets and maps will be sold in the hall, with refreshments served there and at some other gardens. Further details will be publicised nearer the time.

Saturday 6th September has been pencilled in as a possible date for a late summer BBQ at the village hall and Bull Ring field. Mike Stebbings has finally decided to hang up his chef's hat and barbecue utensils after several decades of sweating behind the coals, so a very big thankyou from the rest of us who have enjoyed his offerings on many occasions. His shoes will be hard to fill but be filled they must,

so please step forward all sous chefs as now is your chance to wield those tongs in earnest!

Blooming Well CIC's therapeutic horticulture project, for people recovering from cancer, is holding regular courses and drop in sessions at the hall, and has created a community garden in the Bull Ring field. The participants are very appreciative of the intimate and peaceful space that the hall and surrounds provide. For further details of the sessions on offer contact annie@bloomingwell.org.uk.

Finally many thanks to Graham Palmer, our Sheepstor representative on Burrator Parish Council, who successfully pleaded our case to be given a grant of £1000 towards the cost of replacing the old, heavy and uncomfortable metal chairs that were probably a hand me down from WW11 days!

Patrick Drennan (Chairperson Sheepstor Village Hall committee)

Sheepstor Villages in Action - Spring 2025

Although we weren't able to fix up a concert for the autumn, I had encouraging responses from performers who had excellent reviews here in the past and who wished to return. Plans are proceeding for performances at St Leonard's Church for later on this year, and a full programme for 2026, including Ninebarrow, who are drawing up plans for a tour in the Spring of next year. They seem to have survived the trials and tribulations of fatherhood and are keen to return for hopefully another record breaking attendance in Spring 2026.

Iain Thomson, who played here under the VIA banner with Marc Duff of Capercaillie fame in 2017, is also keen to return. Having been a shepherd in Argyll he has now moved to Sweden and sent me the following info: "My Swedish partner and I do shows over here where she does explanations and shows pictures along with lyrics and videos that run along as I play. It covers a lot of aspects such as working in beautiful remote places and some of the challenges encountered along the way. It has been very well received in Sweden and could be a possibility to add something extra to the gig". As we are a Dartmoor sheep rearing community it might even persuade the busy local farmers to spare an evening of their precious time and come along to the performance!

I'm waiting to hear back from the Haldon Quartet for a definite date in the next few months, and we have a late Summer BBQ in the Bull ring field planned and would consider having accompanying music if we can find the funds! I would also love to get Wurlitza back here, if their heads are not too in the clouds after performances at Glastonbury! As I am refitting my head into my promoter's hat, I thought it wise to return to acts that had performed well for us in the past before

trying new artists. That is not to say that I wouldn't be very interested to hear from anybody with suggestions for future gigs.

For those of you who may wonder why I am still using the Villages in Action heading when I haven't actually staged a VIA event here for some years, herewith the explanation! I cut my teeth on their performance menu back along a couple of decades ago, with a concert to raise money for the refurbishment of the church bells. Unfortunately Arts Council funding stopped after a decade and VIA became subsumed into their Cornish equivalent Carn to Cove. The Devon based VIA has since arisen phoenix like from the ashes but unfortunately their remit from the Arts Council for funding hasn't yet produced a potential gig which would suit our particular venue. However I remain hopeful and a faithful supporter!

I am grateful to Kate Brooke, who is backing me up on the promoter front now. I am hoping she will take over the managing of the Facebook page for Sheepstor VIA, as my daughter, who has admirably fulfilled that role, is now a full time primary school teacher. Fortunately the Friends of St Leonard's Church Sheepstor, Sheepstor Village Hall Committee and St Leonard's PCC continue to have faith in our success and act as my financial fall back!

Patrick Drennan (Sheepstor VIA promoter) 01822 853186
drdartmoor@doctors.org.uk

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The Revival of Walkham Valley Scout Group

If you speak to a dozen people within our community, you will undoubtedly find someone who has been involved with Walkham Valley Scout Group. Based behind St Paul's Church Hall in Yelverton, the Scout Group has been enriching the lives of local young people, and adult volunteers, for over 50 years. Providing opportunities to learn new skills, build friendships, and have once in a lifetime experiences, this Scout Group is an invaluable asset for Yelverton and the surrounding area.

Unfortunately in early 2024, the Cub Pack (for 8-10 year olds) and Scout Troop (for 10-14 year olds) had to close due to a lack of volunteers. Some young people have continued with other nearby Groups, however others have had to pause their scouting journeys for the time being. Fortunately the Group has not closed completely, with the establishment of a new Squirrel Drey (for 4-6 year olds) and Beaver Colony (for 6-8 year olds) which opened in September.



Both Sections are thriving, with exciting and varied programmes of activities run by enthusiastic Leaders. The Squirrels have been cooking apples on the campfire, learning about leaves, hiking on the moor and learning to work together through team games. The Beavers have learnt about fire safety, worked towards their Camp Craft and Cook badges and joined other Beavers from across West Devon for a sleepover

with the sharks at the Plymouth Aquarium!

In order to provide these experiences to the young people in our community, it is not just down to the Leaders delivering the activities week-to-week. There are dedicated volunteers working behind the scenes, ensuring the governance of the Scout Group is all in order, maintaining the field, hut and equipment, looking out for fundraising opportunities and enabling the Leaders to focus on running the programmes. Our Treasurer, Bill Andrew, has recently been awarded the Bar to the Award for Merit to recognise his outstanding contribution to Scouting with over 25 years of service. In contrast, some of our Leaders are new to the Scout movement but are already bringing their own experiences to the Group whilst learning new skills themselves.

Walkham Valley are eager to grow their team of volunteers in order to reopen the Cub Pack and Scout Troops, and also build on the team behind the scenes to enable the Group to go from strength to strength. If you are considering giving some time back to our local community and would like to find out more about volunteering with Walkham Valley Scout Group, then please don't hesitate to get in touch. Email walkhamvalley@westdevonscouts.org.uk or call 01822 853 472 to start your scouting journey!

Happy New Year from the Rotary Club of Yelverton

December was a busy month for us, with our annual visits around the villages alongside Santa and his sleigh. This Christmas, we introduced a new approach with designated "Santa Stops". Instead of continuously driving around the village roads, Santa parked at pre-advertised spots where children could come to meet him. This change worked well, allowing each child to enjoy a personal chat with Santa—a joy for all involved. The updated schedule also enabled us to visit Walkhampton for the first time in many years, which was particularly pleasing. Although these visits aren't primarily focused on fundraising, we were humbled by the generous donations we received. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

We were also out collecting donations at Yelverton Parade, Tesco Tavistock, and Tesco Roborough, with the kind permission of the stores' management teams and West Devon Borough Council. It was wonderful to see so many cheerful shoppers (and a few understandably stressed ones!) busy with their Christmas preparations. Your incredible generosity helped our Christmas collections raise close to £1,600 for local and Rotary charities—thank you!



Looking back to November, we were proud to assist with the launch of Dartmoor Interiors, lay remembrance wreaths at the Crapstone and Princetown war memorials, and host our District Governor, Tony Williams. We also welcomed Emma and Catherine from the charity *Devon Freewheelers*, who delivered a fascinating talk about the vital voluntary service they provide as "Blood Bikes." Their support of the NHS includes transporting essential items such as blood for transfusions, test results, emergency medication, and screened breast milk for premature babies. The service operates with both motorbikes and cars (yes, not all "bikers" ride motorbikes!). It's an incredibly well-organised and worthwhile charity.

We will be meeting this month to plan our future fundraising and community service events for 2025. You are warmly invited to join us—whether as an observer, a "friend" who helps out occasionally, or a full member. We meet at various venues in the Yelverton area or via Zoom.

Please feel free to contact us at secretary@yelverton.rotary1175.org if you're interested in getting involved.

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MEAVY GARDEN SOCIETY

Monday 17th March 2025

Spring Flower Show

Exhibits from 7pm. Show starts being judged at 7.30 pm.

Refreshments, quiz and prizes.

Meavy Parish Hall

Monday 14th April 2025

“Camassia, Chris, Chelsea and Chaos”

Stella Exley (from Hare Spring Cottage Plants)

Monday 19th May 2025

“St Luke's Hospice Open Gardens scheme”

A talk by Wayne Marshall

All meetings normally start at 7.30pm in Meavy Parish Hall.

Refreshments, time to chat and often plants for sale from 7pm.

Visitors (£3) and new members always welcome. All Enquiries 01822 852672
and 01822 854595

Visit www.meavy.org.uk/mgs

Celtic Harpist Fionnuala Kirby at St. Peter's Church

Local Celtic Harpist Fionnuala Kirby will be playing a solo concert in St. Peter's Church, Meavy at 5pm on Sunday 16th March, 2025 for St. Patrick's Day. Fionnuala plays a 36-string lever harp made in 2018 by harpmaker Tim Hampson from Bere Ferrers out of a fallen Yew tree from the woods above Maristow House. She will be performing a variety of classical, traditional and contemporary popular music and there will be interval refreshments. All proceeds will go to the upkeep of the church. Tickets are £10, Under 12s £5.

Booking is advisable from elainneknight@yahoo.co.uk,
sbgordon48@hotmail.com, or inman.anne@gmail.com 01822 852672.



The Black Cat Speaks

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to the weird and wondrous world of “The Black Cat Presents”, a company of thespians hailing from Burrator, Tavistock, Mannamead, Plymouth, and the exotic foreign lands of Eworthy and Foghanger. Our passion lies in developing original drama and creative performances in unconventional spaces, for the delectation of both local and not so local audiences.

Allow me to introduce myself, as one of the two remarkable felines who inspired this group to step out of the shadows and onto the stage. Our theatrical name was born on an ordinary evening; my brother and I returning from a nocturnal prowl about Meavy Woods and proudly presenting our human with a single oak leaf. A satisfyingly random and mystifying gift, and the beginnings of something very special...

Since then, we have directed Black Cat’s cast and crew as if puppets on invisible strings, to bring you stories that are quirky, curious, contrary, unpredictable - and often a bit naughty, totally on purpose and just for the fun of it. We are in attendance at each meeting and every rehearsal, to ensure our productions are suitably spellbinding.

We celebrated our launch last year with two different but equally sell-out productions. In March, we spooked audiences at The Slaughterhouse in Royal William Yard for five nights with an original gothic ghost story entitled *Be Careful What You Wish For*, written by Samantha Regan de Bere. And by December, our cast and crew were delighting our local community with a three-night stretch of *A Very Village Christmas Carol*, a Black Cat take on the festive Dickens classic by Alice Neal & Samantha Regan de Bere, performed in The Walkhampton Inn.

As humans say (and we concur), variety is the spice of life. And what better inspiration for diverse and far flung tales than the nine-dimensional world of a black cat?

We are crepuscular creatures and our darkest ideas emerge from the night, conjuring stories from magical places. Twilight heralds the coming of mysteries and dark deeds, mists convey gothic melodrama from the ivy-covered corners of local churchyards, and centuries of folklore weave ephemeral paths across the velvety moonlit floor of our ancient oak woods.

But daytime offers light to balance our shade. This is when we play, imagining comedies and satires as we chase butterflies and crickets from their meadow hideyholes, or creating fantasy worlds as we dance with dragons and damselflies at the edges of glittering green pools and river banks. Beautiful half-dreams come easily when one is lazing beneath a languorous Dartmoor sunset.

For glorious aesthetics are everything to a feline. In this, as in everything, we will never compromise. On purchase of your tickets, you should expect immersive experiences in atmospheric settings, sumptuous costumes, intriguing props and

technical effects. And history. For the past is always about us, if one cares to notice...

We hope you will allow us to entice you with the sights, sounds, textures, scents and flavours of Black Cat worlds past and present, to excite your minds and arouse your senses. These are the embodied essence of our narratives, and are as central to our story-telling as the stories themselves.

All this aside, no feline will ever share your ravenous appetites for the unedifying appearance of men strutting the stage in ill-fitting female garments - nor the jollity and general carousing that pantomime provokes in you. This peculiarity of the human condition is quite inexplicable to us, and to our minds should be kept to a minimum. Fortunately, I am assured that such things are not the ordinary business of The Black Cat Presents, but are reserved strictly for neighbours high on mulled wine at Christmas. So that is that, for another twelve months, and I for one am glad of it.

Moving on then, I am delighted to announce that The Black Cat will be presenting a new extravaganza for your pleasure and delight. With performances in preparation for 2025, yours truly has travelled back in time to the late Middle Ages to bring to you an audacious entertainment event: a banquet-based medieval murder mystery entitled "Mayhem, Moonsickness and a Very Grete Pye!"

And if that doesn't have your whiskers twitching with anticipation, I will eat my very own top hat. Watch this space for more details...

Yours in eager anticipation,
The Black Cat

Review of 'A Very Village Christmas Carol – an adaptation of the Charles Dickens, performed by Black Cat Presents.

Written, directed, and produced by Alice Neal and Samantha Regan de Bere.

Due to popularity and high demand for tickets, the previously billed two-night performance had to be extended to three to allow more excited Black Cat fans to attend the much promised "A very village Christmas Carol."

"We were overrun with demands for more tickets, but only being a small venue, we could not seat everyone on just the two nights," Fraser Reed, proprietor and Landlord of the exclusive theatre venue, The Walkhampton Inn.

So instead of a dress rehearsal on Monday 2nd December, the cast gathered for the newly appointed opening night. And what a night it was. The pub was packed to the gills, one count revealed 41 Dickens fans in the audience.

The program for the night consisted of a gathering of audience members prior to 7 O'clock. Complimentary glasses of delicious and warming mulled wine were handed out on arrival to be supped while assembling in their seats. Dinner was served (un)promptly at a half past seven or thereabouts; a fine feast of roasted

turkey and all the trimmings followed by a generous portion of bread-and-butter pudding with lashings of rich and creamy custard. Vegetarians experienced a delicious nut roast and anyone with a dislike for B&B pud were offered a delectable pineapple sorbet.

“The food was excellent, I used to be a chef, and it was one of the best turkey dinners I’ve had,” stated one audience member. She especially like the fact that it was still hot when it was served. Quite a feat considering the entire room was served their food at the same time. Full credit to the kitchen and bar staff behind the scenes.

After dinner was cleared away, a hush fell over the eagerly awaiting audience as the performance was announced by Samatha, one of the directors. A warm welcome to the audience and an explanation of the evening to come.



The performance was narrated by Sally, who took centre stage at a lectern among the audience. Ebenezer Scrooge led the cast with his subtle dry wit and ironic lines using the bar as his bedroom.

With the lack of a real stage in the Walkhampton Inn, the production team made full use of the various doors of the 17th century building to create the most effective entrances and exits for all the characters. The technical team led by local tech guru, Joe Cornish, were tucked away in the back dining room where an array of computers and switchboards were laid out providing sound, lighting and superb atmospheric effects such as smoke.

The main part of the ‘stage’ was the area just in front of the bar where the actors had to perform without infringing on the audience. This was obviously well thought out and choreographed to create a realistic rendition of Dickens’s masterpiece.

Audience members remarked that the pub was the “Perfect location” for the play, and they felt the atmosphere was spot on.

For those who did not see the performance it must be noted that the script was an adaptation of the great Dickens work and should not be taken too seriously. The premise was that of a group of actors gathered in a small Devon village to do a costume reading of the story to an audience of local drinkers.

The narrator found herself having a few problems with rebellious cast members who could not stick to their lines, and it soon became apparent that some members of the cast were missing, allegedly abducted by another member in order to secure more parts for himself in the play. This meant that during the show the director was called upon to recruit members from the audience.

One such character was Fraser Reed, landlord of the Walkhampton Inn who unsuspectingly appeared from the pub kitchen to check his bookings, found himself squeezed into a woman’s dress and made to play the role of “Melinda”

Cratchit. At first Fraser was unsure of his role and his acting skills left much to be desired but by the third night he was far more comfortable in his female attire and one might believe he was actually relishing the part.

Another “unsuspecting” character was that of Tiny Tim. In the scene depicting the poor family who work for Scrooge having their meagre Christmas dinner of pie and a half a potato between ten, Stewart “the Bear” Stirling, local bar proper-upper who must weigh at least two hundred pounds and is built like the proverbial brick outhouse was dragged in front of the audience, given a crutch and forced to sit upon the lap of Bob Cratchit. Tiny Tim made a good job of stuffing his face with as much food and wine as he could find to the detriment of his poor starving family. One might think Stewart had never had any acting experience but when later interviewed it turns out he once played an extra alongside Morgan Freeman in a film that has never seen the light of day. Upon reflection at the end of the night, the audience felt that the casting had been “highly appropriate.”

It would be erroneous of me not to comment on the fine performance given by Fred in the role of Mrs Fezziwig. Also coerced into a dress, even producing some “stuffing” for his unremarkable cleavage. During one scene, Fred danced with such aplomb that it was hard to believe he kept his pomegranates.

The tone became more serious after the interval with some frightening home truths delivered to Scrooge as to what the future may look like. It certainly looked bleak for the Cratchits and for Scrooge himself.

Alice made an excellent heartbroken girlfriend of young Ebenezer in the scene where she casts him aside because of his love for money and material goods.

A rather ghoulish and creepy ghost of Christmases to come appears among the gravestones to forewarn Scrooge of the disaster that will fall upon the Cratchits if he does not change his ways.

After a dramatically sad scene with the Cratchits mourning poor “little” Tiny Tim one could hear a pin drop in the pub and Scrooge delivered his final speech showing his remorse and regret for the wrong doings of his past.

After the final bell clanged and morning dawned, Scrooge awoke relieved to find it had all been a dream. He immediately set about rectifying his ways and visiting the Cratchits with gifts of feasts and a pay rise for Bob. Much merriment ensued and the performance came to a jolly and happy ending.

As the cast took their final bows there was roaring and cheering and much appreciation from the Walkhampton Inn audience. May there be many more theatrical performances held there in the years to come!

Well done to Alice and Samantha for directing and producing such a marvellous play (and for their cat herding skills!)



Featured Creature

This edition's featured creature is the gorgeous Bramble! If you'd like to see your pet in these pages, contact us at burratorbeacon@gmail.com.



Bramble is a rescue terrier cross from Wales. Most people guess that she is a Lakeland border mix, but I'm open to opinions if anyone has any. She is 8 years old (we think).

When we first brought Bramble home, she was very frightened of other dogs and people she didn't know. She also didn't have much in the way of training. The rescue centre believed that she was used for badger baiting, as she has a lot of scarring across her face and legs.

A few years on, she is a very well-rounded

dog with lots of doggy friends, including the editors dog, Figgy. Bramble and Fig are best friends and love to roll around on the floor together and make some noise. Bramble also loves people and has found a passion for relaxing in the pub next to the open fire. She goes on a long walk every Wednesday with her family and always enjoys being outside. Her training is coming on very well and she has a few tricks up her fuzzy sleeve, including sit, spin, and knowing when dinner time is.

She loves helping her humans out at the allotment, her favourite task is digging, at which she excels. Her favourite treat is a rabbit ear, but she is also partial to a chicken foot or two.

Bramble's greatest enemies are cats and rustling plastic bags. When she rids the world of these her quest for total domination will be complete.

She looks forward to seeing her fans in the pub over a nice cold pint. A larger shandy is her favourite.



Tavistock Country Bus

Tavistock Country Bus is a local charity run by volunteers. Full details of routes and timetables can be found at www.tavistockcountrybus.co.uk

From March 2025 the bus will route via Walkhampton on the trips outlined below:



1. Wednesday trips to Newton Abbot and Trago Mills every 1st and 3rd Wednesday in the month. Pick up time in Walkhampton is 0955, drop off back at the village at 1500.
2. Saturday trips to Exeter – First Saturday in the month, March to December via Princetown and Two Bridges. Pick up time in Walkhampton is 0930, drop off back at the village at 1700.
3. Saturday trip to Dawlish – Fifth Saturday in the month April to September via Princetown, Ashburton and Newton Abbot. Pick up time in Walkhampton is 0930, drop off back at the village at 1655. (May 31st, Aug 30th)

Concessionary bus passes are accepted and stop over is about 3 hours before returning via the same route but in reverse.

To confirm/book a seat please call 07580 260683

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Could you help with your Churchyard Upkeep?

St Peter's Churchyard is a quiet and peaceful area that surrounds St Peter's Church in Meavy. The churchyard is open to all, to sit or wander and enjoy the wildlife.

Did you know that any resident in Meavy parish may be buried here if there's room?

The churchyard is maintained with grass cutting and volunteer working parties and is a haven for wildflowers, trees, insects, lichens, and birds. Our newest part of the churchyard, which was taken into use in 2000, has a wildlife area behind the beech hedge which is only cut once a year. We receive some financial upkeep support from Burrator Parish Council for which we are very grateful.



Existing bench



Proposed New bench

We have received permission from our Archdeacon to replace one of our oldest benches situated on the Eastern boundary in the raised area for Cremated remains. We plan to lay a concrete and slate base and a teak 4ft bench has been selected. The total cost for this will be about £600.

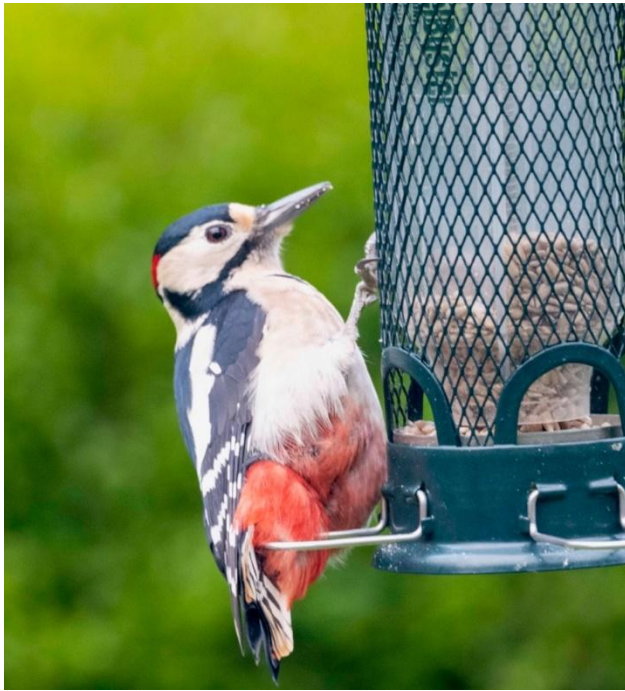
We would welcome donations towards this new bench and the continuing care of the churchyard so that future generations may come and enjoy this peaceful place.

Please contact our treasurer Mrs Mary Helby, 7 Willowby Park, Yelverton, PL20 6AN; leave a donation in church marked bench; or scan the QR code below.

St Peter's Church Meavy.



Musings from Nick Shutt



In the depth of winter, I get a real lift looking at the numerous birds flocking to be fed from our bird feeders. When the skies are grey, the temperature is rather chilly, and the incessant rain we enjoy living in our temperate rainforest continues to fall, it warms my heart to sit and watch the birds compete for sunflower seeds, peanuts and fat balls! In one sense it seems like a waste of my time, but in another sense, it is time well spent.

A quick online search tells me that the Great Spotted Woodpecker is “a common visitor to gardens.”

Apparently, their numbers have increased by 300% since the 1970’s. It’s not “common” in my book. The woodpecker who has started visiting our feeders is a newcomer. I’ve not seen one so close before – which begs the question: what makes something “common”. I think the poem “Bright Field” by R S Thomas captures the sense of that fleeting moment that transforms the dullness of a winter’s day in the same way as watching a woodpecker does for me:

*I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the
pearl of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.*

Maybe, it’s about living in the moment and recognising that as a treasure worth claiming.

The Helen Rowett Memorial Garden – A Garden for All

Team Helen update February 2025

As avid readers of the Beacon will be aware, the late Helen Rowett left an area of land in Manor Park to Burrator Parish Council.

Two years ago, some local residents brought an idea to the Parish Council – why not let more people know about this underused community asset, and make the area more attractive to both people and wildlife?

Ideas were proposed, community consultation went ahead, volunteers came forward, and ‘Team Helen’ was born.

The Parish Council reviewed all the feedback they received and put in a process to enable activities to take place in the garden.

As a result, ‘Team Helen’ put forward a number of activity requests for the timeframe February-April 2025.

Most of them were agreed by the Parish Council, others have gone back for further discussion and consultation with residents.

Activities planned

1. Repair and cleaning of the existing benches (wire brushes and elbow grease required)
2. Putting up bug boxes and the creation of a bug hotel (any donations of bug boxes and help to put them up very welcome)
3. Creation of a dead hedge using found natural materials
4. Remounting of existing Helen Rowett plaque onto a more prominent stand, to be purchased with a PC grant
5. Planting spring bulbs in the green
6. Monthly wildlife surveys
7. Begin creation of beds for plants for pollinators and wildflower border

Volunteer sessions

Interested in finding out more or getting involved? Come along to one of our regular sessions in the garden on Saturdays from 3-4pm. Weather permitting!

If gardening/DIY isn't your thing, then just drop in for a chat and a nosy.

If gardening/DIY really isn't your thing, but you have experience in event organisation, social media, website management or fundraising - those skills are also needed.

‘Team Helen’ monthly meetings are held in the Burrator Inn on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

If you have been following the story of the garden and have had concerns about what’s being planned, our regular sessions will give you a chance to ask questions and find out what’s really going on.

Volunteering in your local community can be very rewarding for all ages, giving a break from work for some, a reason to get out of the house for others, as well as building a social network that is hard to come by in today’s society. Please do think about joining us.

Plant Swap

On Sunday April 27th we will be holding our second annual Plant Swap from 11am to noon in the memorial garden.

Last year all sort of plants were exchanged, from small shrubs and perennials, to houseplants and vegetable plants.

We also have a number of free flower and vegetable seeds on offer, including some for the annual ‘Great Dousland Sunflower Competition’ (sadly last year the entrants were mostly destroyed by a combination of slugs and gales).

If you grow seedlings for your garden, and you have some left over, please bring them along, as well as any perennials you might have divided in the spring.

If you don’t have anything to swap, but you think there might be something you’d like to take then that’s also fine.

We hope that over the next couple of years, the positive changes that are made in the garden will bring joy to local residents and encourage wildlife.

We have a great asset here, to be used by everyone, let’s make the most of it.

Carolyn Tiley, on behalf of ‘Team Helen’

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Dartmoor Border Morris



Meavy based Dartmoor Border Morris will be beavering away in the Parish Hall from now until May with gusto. Now we have finished with the Mummings play, four Wassails, letting the lord of misrule misbehave on Boxing Day, and raising over £3000 for the BBC Children in Need, we are concentrating on this coming season.

We are still open to new Musicians who can join us on any Wednesday night in the parish hall, though at this late stage, we cannot accept any new dancers till September.

Normally during the season, we collect for Charity, and last year our nominated charity was BASICS DEVON, a group of volunteer doctors who help paramedics deal with emergency situations on the roadside. For them we successfully raised £867. This coming year are nominated charity is split between Trevi House and Wingletang Animal rescue.

During the months of February, March, and April, we will be in Meavy Parish hall checking our bells and sorting out our sticks, checking Chatterley has his oats and teaching old dances to new members like 'Muffin Man', 'Brimfield', and 'Quebec'. Although you may not be able to see us outperforming till the end of April, you can still hear us whilst we do our 'Après Morris' on a Wednesday night in the Royal Oak Inn from 10 pm when the musicians come together and play the latest folk tune. Feel free to walk the dog down and join in! If you can sing, more the merrier.

We are still taking bookings throughout the year, and although our diary is filling up fast, we might be able to find room for your wedding, birthday party, Bar Mitzvah so drop us a line at www.dartmoorbordermorris.com or like our Facebook and Instagram page.

April 26th, we kick things off with a trip to Bovey Tracey to meet up with some twenty Morris sides for the annual Green Man Festival, where we will be Morris dancing our socks off all day!

From there, we kick the season off with dancing in the sunrise on Mayday morning, being Thursday 1st May, where we will meet in the car park below Leeden Tor on the B3212 and Morris dance (regardless of the weather) from 05.15AM as the sun rises on a new summer! After that, we will head straight to the Fox Tor Café in Princetown for breakfast at 6 AM before heading off to work.



As May unfolds, so does our busy schedule, so here is our diary of events for May; -

Bank Holiday Monday 5th May 10.30 AM: Black Prince Flower boat festival, A day of dance with several local Morris sides in Kingsands & Cawsands till around 5 pm (or the beer runs out).

Wed 7th May 7.45PM: Dancing at the Royal Oak Inn with guests Lodestone Border Morris. Pub music session to follow from 9 pm.

Sat 10th May 12 PM: Tamerton Foliot May fair, held on the village green.

Thur 15th May 8 PM: Cornwood Inn as guests of Beltane Border Morris

Sat 17th May All Day: Winkleigh Day of Dance, with around 20 Morris teams dancing around the town of Winkleigh. How much fun can we have?

Wed 21st May 8 PM: Treeby Arms (Sparkwell) with guests Green Willow Clog Morris

Sat 24th May 6 PM: White Thorn Hotel, Shaugh Prior

Please check our Facebook/ Instagram /website diary for any changes due to weather etc.

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Spring, a time to make your Lasting Powers of Attorney

With Spring on the doorstep, it is a time when many of us look to have a tidy up and spring clean our homes, but have you considered whether all of your personal affairs are in order? With new life emerging, there is a real sense of optimism for what lies ahead, but if only we had a crystal ball...we never know when illness or accident will occur and at that time, will you be well enough to make your wishes known? If this were not the case, it really is crucial to know who will be able to act on your behalf – who we choose to deal with our affairs and who will be responsible for ensuring our health and financial security.

The importance of preparation and appointing your Attorneys (those persons you trust to act in the event you are unable to do so either in health or financial decision making) is critical to ensure your wishes and decisions during your lifetime are honoured. We never know when a crisis will occur so seeking our advice and guidance in advance can make the difference between a smooth transition or even more stress and distress trying to pick up the pieces.

Lasting Powers of Attorney are documents created to appoint Attorneys of your choice. We at Paladin Advocates & Attorneys can also act as your Attorney for both health and financial affairs in the event you do not have family, or family and friends who may live some distance away. We act for clients all over the UK and currently those in Australia, Argentina, Tanzania and Florida. The advances in technology mean we can link up and maintain effective communications whilst ensuring your safety and wellbeing.

In the event you should lose your capacity to create your Lasting Powers of Attorneys, we would need to apply to the Court for a Deputyship Order. This can take well in excess of 9-12 months during which time no one will have authority to manage your affairs.

We know that every client has their own preferences and cultural differences. To be sure those are captured, we support all our clients to create a resume of their likes and dislikes so that as Attorneys, either ourselves or those appointed, we can fulfil your wishes and optimise your quality of life.

It is not often that we get time to think about ourselves and what makes us individual – but perhaps the longer Spring days that lie ahead are a real opportunity to spend some time, to put your affairs in order and ensure your future is secure in the knowledge such documents are prepared, registered and safely stored, ‘just in case’.

Please do give us a call on **01822 610303** or email us at **info@paladinadvocates.com** and one of our experienced team members will help and guide you with the services we offer.

Update from South West Lakes Trust

Encouraging rare temperate rainforests

Burrator Reservoir is home to an area of potential temperate rainforest. Temperate rainforests are very rare habitats, perfect for scarce plants, lichens and fungi, as well as special birds and mammals.

We've been working on removing taller tree species such as beech and conifer trees from this area, to allow



in more light and encourage other species such as oaks and important mosses and lichens to grow. Mosses and lichens also thrive better in moist environments, so leaky dams have been created to hold water back and improve moisture retention within the woodland.

Lots of new wetland plants are also now growing in the arboretum after we completed some forestry work there last year. Do come and have a look!

Burrator Discovery Centre

We said a sad farewell to our Dartmoor ranger Tim Burton at the end of last year. While we're awaiting the arrival of a new ranger, the volunteers at Burrator have mainly been focused on repairs and maintenance with Burrator Discovery Centre open only at weekends and closed during December.

We aim to start full-time opening again from 17 February – hopefully seven days a week, subject to enough volunteers. If you love Burrator and want to share your passion and knowledge with others, the best way to do this is to volunteer with us as a Discovery Centre guide! When you sign up, you'll receive full training with ongoing support from the Discovery Centre team. Pop in for more information and an informal discussion.

For our next exhibition, we are researching the old farms in the Burrator area. This will go on display until the end of the year.

The impacts of Storm Darragh

Strong winds that arrived with Storm Darragh back in December unfortunately took their toll on some of the trees at Burrator. The 30m beech tree came down, taking out a fence and blocking the road by Sheepstor dam entrance. Also, a large Douglas fir blew down in Yenadon plantation blocking a track, a fallen sycamore blocked the inner footpath near Headweir, and the old railway line was also partially blocked by a fallen willow.

A huge thank you to the volunteer team for removing all the fallen trees and clearing up after the storm. All the wood will be put to good use, with larger sections being milled into planks at Burrator Discovery Centre for future projects across the Trust.

Extraordinary image wins photo competition

This stunning photograph of autumnal woodland reflected in the water at Burrator was crowned overall winner in South West Lakes Trust's 2024 Love Your Lakes photo and video competition. With over 210 excellent entries, the judges had a very difficult task on their hands! Huge congratulations to Anna Curnow who captured the scene while out walking her dogs.



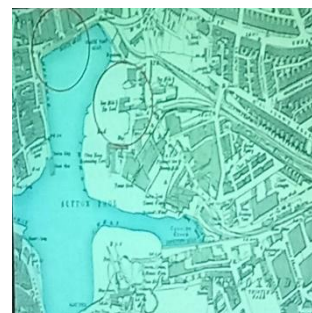
The 2025 competition will open for entries in April.

February Moors Edge u3a News Report

Are you retired or semi-retired and wondering what to do? Don't sit at home feeling lonely, come and join us at the Woolwell Centre. We are a friendly group and meet on the second Friday of the month at 2.30pm (except August for our summer break). There are volunteers to welcome you, offer a friendly face, explain how the club functions, and answer any questions you may have.

We have a guest speaker at each meeting, and you are invited to attend two meetings before deciding if you wish to join us.

Christopher Turner gave a very interesting virtual tour of the Barbican, starting at Exeter Street and finishing at the Duke of Cornwall hotel. He described how places had changed with a potted history of each area. The mayflower steps apparently are not the original steps the Pilgrim fathers used to leave for America as the sea and land has changed over time. The original steps are buried under The Admiral McBride pub.



40 members enjoyed lunch at Elizabeth House in January, and there are various events being arranged during the year such as the round robin tour.

There are approximately 20 groups that can be joined once a member, some of these are Tai chi, scrabble, arty crafty group, walking groups, garden visit groups, coffee and chat, and a skittles group is hopefully going to start up.

The short walking group walked from Yelverton to Tavistock in January going across gem bridge and through the old railway tunnel.

Please look at our web page for further information, <https://u3asites.org.uk/moorsedge>

We also have a Facebook page with photos and further information.

Diary dates:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| March 14th | Professor John Spicer 'Wonders of the shore' |
| April 11th | Tricis Moore and John Connor 'Song in every window' |
| May 9th | Silvertime Legal 'Information on wills, trusts, and inheritance tax' |

Parish Council Meetings

Full Council Meetings are usually held at 7:30pm on the last Thursday of the month (but not always!). For the dates of the next few meetings, please visit the Parish website: www.burrator.gov.uk The Planning, Finance and Royal Oak Inn Committees meet on other dates throughout the year – please contact the Clerk: theclerk@burrator.gov.uk for more details.

How to advertise in the Burrator Beacon

The Beacon is published quarterly at the end of February, May, August and November, and delivered to all homes in Burrator Parish which covers Walkhampton, Dousland, Meavy, Sheepstor, Hoo Meavy and Lovaton. Businesses are able to advertise in the Beacon at the following rates:

	Single Issue	Four issues	Sizes in mm (approx.) when printed*	Size of advert to be submitted (mm)
1/6 page	£12.00	£30.00	30 × 130	42 × 180
1/3 page	£20.00	£60.00	60 × 130	85 × 180
half page	£30.00	£90.00	90 × 130	130 × 180
full page	£48.00	£144.00	180 × 130	260 × 180

*The Beacon is printed A5 size i.e. 210mm high by 148mm wide. However, adverts should be submitted A4 size. All prices are subject to VAT. Invoices will be raised by the Parish Clerk upon receipt of your booking and will be payable upon receipt. Adverts should be submitted to the Editor (details on the back page) electronically, i.e. as an attached Word document.



BURRATOR GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

List of members and telephone numbers (area code 01822)

Meavy Dousland

Lee Armon
Richard Radmore 854388
Tracy Rowe
Christian Carson

Meavy Village

Brian Wills 853901
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Kevin Stribley

Walkhampton Village

Frederick Glanville 07876610177
Andrew Paskins 853377
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Graham Palmer 852524
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The Burrator Beacon is published and issued quarterly, free of charge by Burrator Parish Council. The next edition will be published beginning of June. **Copy deadline Tuesday 1st May 2025.** Copy to be sent to the Editor, Alice Neal, Tel: 07778 088803 email: burratorbeacon@gmail.com as a Word attachment.

If you require this publication in large text please contact the editor.

Burrator Parish Council is a body which complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Contact the Clerk, Mrs Katharine Griffiths, for specific details about parish business.

Advertising: Local events are publicised free of charge. Businesses and clubs and societies (which have membership fees) can advertise in the Beacon and should contact the Editor for advertising rates. **A note to advertisers:** Every effort is made to include the correct information at the time of going to press, but omissions can result where adverts are sometimes moved around in order to fit new articles in.

Burrator Web Site: The Burrator Parish Website is <http://burrator.gov.uk/> You can find details of meetings plus other information. The opinions expressed in the Burrator Beacon are not necessarily those held by Burrator Parish Council. Every effort is made to ensure that information in these pages is accurate. However, the Council cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions. Including information does not imply recommendation and any subsequent contact is made at readers' own risk.