



August 2020 Volume 35 (5)

Nature Notes - August

A cold, calm and cloudless early morning in mid-July as I walk the Seaton Valley. There is a welcome stillness and at this early hour scarcely a vehicle interrupts the tranquillity. Bird song has diminished but the reduced sound makes individual calls easier to distinguish. The loud repetitive song of a Song Thrush persists from a distant tree. Swallows twitter overhead. A Nuthatch and Great Spotted Woodpecker call from woodland across the valley and a young Buzzard mews nearby. I pause at a pond and witness a Moorhen tending to two youngsters. Further on at the bridge I look down into the river, a favoured spot for the Beautiful Demoiselle but it is a little early in the day for them. The alarm call of a Blackbird interrupts the stillness momentarily and the water mutters faintly.

A suitable time to reflect and my mind turns to the memory of Steve Madge, who died a few days ago. Renowned ornithologist, author, traveller, tour guide, and a bird recorder in Caradon. I met him once at a bird reserve in Norfolk where he was signing one of his books. I already owned a couple of his identification guides. Little did I imagine that our paths would cross more frequently when my wife and I moved to Dowederry eighteen years ago. Steve and his family had moved there from Shevioc. He edited the local report of natural history for a while and I quickly realised that this corner of Cornwall had built up a wealth of records from a very wide field, not just birds. As a result, I began to broaden my interests.

From his lofty perch in the village, Steve could scan the ocean. He would phone to inform me if he had seen something special, such as the Avocet that appeared on the shore at low tide. I rushed out to absorb that unique bird. Or the turtle swimming close inshore – I saw that as well. Other sightings I missed. Occasionally, he wrote for the Nut Tree and on one occasion he was kind enough to record that I had seen a rare Sabine's Gull at Seaton after

stormy weather, but he had missed it. He was the source of so much knowledge and as a newcomer I learnt a lot. In his home I would admire the variety of titles in his bookcase that appeared to encompass the whole world. More recently, after the move to Freathy, he was going through old records from his birding exploits in Afghanistan and I listened avidly knowing that it was impossible to replicate those experiences today. Despite his illness, he was still producing some enviable records, continuing his research and fulfilling daring goals, even abroad. One experience sums up his tenacity – the trip to Rwanda where, with the help of porters, he successfully encountered gorillas.

I retrace my steps and pause at the pond again. Suddenly a bird rises rapidly into the air from the edge of the water, calling excitedly. It's a Green Sandpiper, quickly followed by another. These are early autumn migrants, probably from their breeding grounds in Scandinavia. Further on an unfamiliar sound overhead makes me look up and I see a small flock of Crossbills. Rare encounters here, something Steve would have enjoyed.

Alan Payne

Deviocck Parish Council - Statement on public toilet provision (as at 15/7/2020)

We are continuing to work to open the toilets as soon as possible, whilst putting in measures to ensure the safety of our staff and vulnerable community. We have been let down by contract cleaners, that has sadly delayed reopening as we had hoped there would be a phased facility from last weekend. We have assessed and mitigated risk of legionnaires and have been actively ensuring signage, sanitiser and PPE plus appropriate training in place for our cleaning staff. We have been doing this at a time when many other parish and town councils are facing the same necessary provisions and therefore there has been further delay in terms of ensuring these are all in place. We will start our phased reopening as soon as we possibly can, as has been our intention since the Government started to ease lockdown restrictions.

There are many other places that are facing similar challenges. There are many parish run toilets in Cornwall that have remained closed, and indeed some that have reopened to then shut again. Clean Cornwall has been running a campaign to suggest visitors should ensure facilities are open before travelling too far from home. This campaign has NOT been based on experiences in our parish alone!

Your Parish Council are representatives of the parish, either elected or co opted, who are not paid for the work we do. We have been working hard to ensure the parish is as protected as possible during an unprecedented global pandemic. It really isn't helpful and indeed very hurtful when we receive so much criticism, some of which has been very personal, for delays that have been unavoidable. The suggestion that we have been choosing to keep the toilets shut is simply not true.

We, like you, really hope to see phased reopening very soon but the exact timescale is not just in our hands.

Deviocck Parish Council

Deviocck Parish Council

There will be no Full Council Meeting in August, but there will be a virtual Planning Committee Meeting on 20th August (if needed). See the parish website for details and Agenda prior to the meeting. As the Deviocck Parish Office is remaining closed until further notice, please contact the Clerk via email if you have an enquiry (clerk.deviocckpc@btinternet.com, Mon-Fri). See also the website at: www.deviocckparish.org.uk (where Agendas and Minutes are available).

Karen Pugh (Clerk)

Deviocck Parish Council Loan Fund

The Council provides interest-free loans (up to £1,000) to local organisations for specific projects (subject to terms and conditions). Please contact the Clerk or one of the Councillors if your organisation thinks it could benefit from this service.

St Germans Parish Council

As I write this, we are trying to understand the conflicting guidance on opening the playpark in St Germans. Hopefully it will be open before you read this. If we have opened it will, of course, have to remain under review.

As for Tideford, the situation is more complex as we need to renew the lease before we spend money on it as it is deteriorating to a high-risk level. This process is slow as the lease was not correctly registered.

Prior to Covid 19, the traffic speed in St Germans had been monitored. This should have helped in progress to a 20mph speed limit for all of the village however the traffic was in some cases exceeding 40mph by the Village Hall, therefore we need a different approach.

Traffic calming will probably need to be considered in some areas; this will need a feasibility study to include these ideas and parking rules to achieve the best traffic flow and safety for us all.

We have already put in a bid for finance to pay Cornwall Highways to find solutions then we can consult on this. I know that as traffic increases this will become a problem again as the peace and calm are replaced with the new normal. I am sorry that this is a slow process made even slower by the lockdown.

As we come out of this there may be local clubs that might be finding things tough at the moment. In some circumstances, your parish council may be able to assist. If you think you are going to be one of these [or 'in need of assistance or support'] please let us know how we can help. Write to or email the Clerk or use the website at www.stgermansparishcouncil.gov.uk. Keep Safe.

St Germans Parish Council

News from County Hall - Richard Pugh



South West Water have for the last six months been working on the sewerage system in Seaton. Covid 19 restrictions have slowed down the work but under the circumstances South West Water have done a great job. I thought I would give everybody a brief description of what has been achieved. A buried manhole in the car park next to the café was raised to the surface to enable proper cleansing where debris is dragged with the flow. SWW then completed extensive sewer cleansing in the area where copious amounts of silt/stone/sand and fat were removed from the network as part of the on-going issue with the spilling manhole next to the carpark. The cleansing costs were very expensive but in excess of 2 tonnes of debris were removed. This action should now allow free discharge to the surcharging section of the network as the build up of grit, sand and fat were likely to be the cause of the hydraulic restriction. To keep on top of any build up a 90 day planned cleansing program has been set up to keep the sewers free flowing.

The pumping station has received a cleanse along with a performance check. Further CCTV will be able to observe the condition of the lines and tests have been done in Donderry. I hope after all this work the drains will not spill over during the winter.

By the time you read this our libraries will have been open for about 3 weeks. Unfortunately, library users will not be able go in and browse the shelves but they can order books by browsing on line then go to their nominated library to collect their choices from the lobby or entrance. Books you may have been looking after for many weeks can also be returned. There will be no fines charged on late returns until 30th September 2020. Returned books will be quarantined for a period to ensure they are safe to touch and the borrowing and return protocols will mean safe hand contact between staff and customers.

If I can help anybody with Cornwall Council issues please contact me on 01503 220768 or richard.pugh@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk

News from the churches.

Our churches can now re-open for worship. Of course we have lots of regulations to go through to maintain the government's health and safety rules, like social distancing, hand hygiene, only using wipe clean laminated service sheets and leaving 72 hours in between visits or services in the buildings.

We have also changed the time and frequency of services so that the people taking the services do not have to move from one church to another therefore cutting down on cross contamination.

All Sunday morning services are at 10.00am.

1st and 3rd Sunday of month St Nicolas Downderry

2nd and 4th Sunday of month St Germans

Every Tuesday morning at St Lukes Tideford

Our online zoom services will continue. We have daily prayer services and a weekly Sunday evening get together at 7.00pm. If you are interested in joining in please let me know and I can put you on the list to receive the link (parker30@hotmail.com).

As a church we are always happy to prayer for needs within the community, and we are praying every day for the shops, businesses, pubs, halls, organisations and schools in the area. If you have a specific need please let us know and we will try to help.

Until we can meet again – may God’s blessing be with you.

Rev Canon Lynn Parker

Editorial

Uncertain circumstances, forcing extended restrictions of routines and lifestyle, test the nerves and patience and cause fractious spats within even the strongest communities and households. Small irritations can ignite disproportionate rifts between the best of friends. It is always worth reminding ourselves that those with responsibility for making decisions, whether they be family or elected representatives and officials, don’t usually set out intentionally to inconvenience. Decisions are made on the best information to hand at the time, limited by the available funds and resources and almost always taken with good intent. Policy and plans can be adjusted as new information becomes available. Relationships soured by acrimony, however, can take much longer to heal. As we adjust to ‘the new normal’, we should perhaps each strive hardest of all to repair the damage arising from those inevitable moments of our own intemperance which our collective incarceration may have fuelled and exaggerated. We’ll be taking a break next month so the next Nut Tree will be October’s.

Ed

Temporary Mobile Library Timetable.

You may return books borrowed from any Cornwall library to any other, including the Mobile Library. All subject to change/cancellation in line with government guidance. Call 07967 340910 for more information or email libraries@cornwall.gov.uk. Mobile Library dates are:

Aug 11th	St Germans (Alms Houses)	09:45 - 10:45	
	Downderry - Inn car park	13:55 - 14:55	(also 8th Sept)
Aug 25th	St Germans (Quay Road).	10:15 - 11:10	(Also 22nd Sept)
	Crafthole - Bus Stop.	12:10 - 12:50	
	Seaton - car park	14:40 - 15:20	

Downderry and Seaton Residents' Association - DaSRA.

There will be many residents for whom day-to-day living during the Coronavirus lockdown only became bearable because of the incredible service given by Downderry Stores. Kim, Richard and their team were determined from day one of the Stay at Home directive to look after residents in Downderry and Seaton and we remained their priority throughout. Not only did the Shop supply us with the essentials of life but they home delivered food and medical prescriptions to the most vulnerable in our community. DaSRA was delighted to be the messenger for appreciative residents wanting to publicly record thanks; we organised a Commemorative Plaque with the words *Thank You Downderry Stores, Kim, Richard and all your wonderful team. You are the Hub of our Community. Thank you for all your efforts in keeping us safe and supplied with the essentials of life during the Coronavirus lockdown of 2020. From the residents of Downderry and Seaton.* The Shop served us well and will continue to do so. From 17 July, Downderry Stores has adopted new government guidelines and now serve all customers who respect revised conditions; Wear a Face Mask: Respect social distancing of 2 metres: Only one adult household member at a time; No unaccompanied children. The shop opening hours are: Mon - Sat 8.00am - 6.00pm: Sunday - 9.00am - 1.00pm. A Home Delivery Service will remain available to those in need, so do speak to Kim if you need this service.

Many of you may have seen the lead story in Cornish Times on 17 July, about the Downderry Stores not serving non-locals. We were not going to take lightly such a one sided story from one visiting family, with no reference to the views of local people so DaSRA sent a response to the Cornish Times stressing the extent to which Downderry Stores have considered the safety of residents and staff throughout the pandemic. (full text of response on www.dasra.co.uk /News and facebook)

When we see increased traffic on the roads and more and more people visiting beautiful places like Downderry and Seaton, one could assume that life is getting back to how it was. But we know that we must remain cautious as the threat of Covid-19 has not gone away. We understand that the most vulnerable in our community may still need support if they have no family nearby. Our Good Neighbours' Group of befriending volunteers is still available if needed so if you, or someone you know of, would like some support, do phone DaSRA on 01503 250911 or 01503 250332.

We use our Facebook page (Downderry and Seaton Residents Association) and our website (www.dasra.co.uk) to keep residents aware of issues affecting us all, but there are occasions when it is appropriate to email residents. As you will be aware, emails can only be sent with the permission of recipients so if you are not on our email list, but would like to be, please email us at info@dasra.co.uk.

Laura Done, Chair DaSRA

Hessenford News

Hello all. Sad as it is to say I'm afraid we're going to have to postpone the Duck Race for the time being, but hopefully it'll take place later in the year. Will keep you informed of further developments re this and the Art & Craft Show/Event.

As some of you will be aware I've posted a picture, on the Hessenford Covid Facebook page, of the bench at the top of the church/graveyard. If anyone can do any sort of repair I am sure the Atkins family would be very grateful. Also the ironwork over the gate to the church/graveyard is in need of some TLC; rubbing down a bit and repainting with Rustoleum or such like. But you need a head for heights! Plus there's some stonework round the wall in the memorial garden that could do with a bit of lime plaster if you happen to be doing a similar project at home and have some to spare.

Sarah & Sarah from The Chapel have offered, with help from other villagers (you may remember when they organised the Children in Need Silent Disco with Tam & Dave) to show an open-air film on the Church/Village Hall grass (or we could maybe put the marquee up). If anyone's interested in attending such an event or helping out please get in touch.

Philip S-T has been very helpful again changing light bulbs in the church, no way am I getting up the ladder! And replacing the 'end' of a gutter on the church roof to stop rainwater cascading down the wall & causing damp. Thank you. In my Hello's & Goodbyes last month I forgot to include Ben, one of Helen & Ian's three sons, who is living in Church Hill Cottage before probably going to university in September. Please say hello. I'm glad to say that Stan & Brian are improving every day. Maybe Hessenford Honey has been a contributing factor!

Thanks to Mike, Di, Becki & Rachel and their extremely well prepared team, The Copley Arms opened as planned/promised and everyone was well impressed with all the preparations and attention to detail that had been put in place to keep us safe. Congratulations to them all. We also need to continue to thank all our frontline workers who are doing a grand job during this Covid 'crisis'. We certainly wish them well and hope they stay safe & well.

St Anne's is now open for private meditation, you may have heard the bell ringing. (And if things go to plan there may be two bells ringing again!) There's a book to sign for contact details, just in case, but any personal details will be destroyed after 21 days in line with current legislation. Plus there's Hand Gel too. Something to think about in these times and relating to the parable of the sower.....Do we take ourselves & our faith seriously? What kind of soil am I?

If there's anything you think I've left out, please let me know.

Fran Moore

Downderry and Seaton WI continue to meet using Zoom.



This month Chris Wiseman visited us to talk about Family History, sharing her forays into this subject and giving us useful research routes that we could use when compiling our own family tree.

The raffle was won by Julie Green and the flower picture competition was won by our Secretary, Martine Gibb.

Our Friday night, “Not in the pub drinks” continues to be popular and another quiz was enjoyed by all present.

As we come out of lockdown, we will continue with Zoom meetings to ensure that everyone feels safe and connected. There is no meeting this month (August) so we look forward to seeing members and potential members at our meeting on 8th September when “The Thrifty, Nifty Twosome” aka Michael Green and Don Pengelly regale us with money saving, simple DIY project we can undertake in the home.

The National Federation of WIs has just released a guidance document regarding resuming meetings in halls. They stress that going back to meetings in halls should not be rushed into and safety of members is paramount.

We welcomed two new potential members and we are hoping that others may find what we are doing interesting. If you want to know more about being a member of the WI in Downderry and Seaton do give me a call on 01503250322.

Maura Swabey

St Nicolas Church, Downderry - Thank you!

The folk at St Nicolas Church were delighted that so many members of our wider community joined the initiative to help support needs arising from Covid-19 in our local school. In all we provided food boxes to the school to the value of £1,120. This was made so much easier by our good friends Kim and Richard at Downderry Stores who made up the boxes and added a contribution to each and every box – one more big thank you to them – and to all who contributed so generously.

We still hold a balance and we propose to support the school with around half of that to enable magical and educational books to be purchased to assist children whose educational needs fell behind while the school was closed. The remainder we will hold, earmarked for any second wave of Covid-19 and emerging needs identified by the school community. The school deserves appreciation from us all for their dedication and commitment during the pandemic – in addition to meeting all the ever-changing requirements placed upon them, they have looked at the needs of each individual child and put strategies in place to ‘close the gap’.

The willing support of so many people in the community was greatly appreciated by the Head of School – Jake Imrie – and his staff, as well as the St Nics community and the wider Parish of St Germans. Once again, our community has seen a need and responded to it.

David Watters

Public Transport for a Cleaner Healthier Environment

The latest government advice on travelling safely during the corona virus outbreak emphasizes that social distancing should be maintained, and that face covering must be used on public transport. People should travel off-peak where possible. Always check on bus and train times before travelling.

You will have noticed that over the last few months, especially in April and May, there was less traffic on roads - which was a lot better for the environment. However now that the lockdown has eased, we need to ensure that people don't go back to using their own cars to travel in the way we've been used to up to now. When we decide how to travel we need to recognise that in south-east Cornwall buses and trains are not, so far, busy enough to threaten social distancing. ALSO buses and trains locally have been very reliable, running to time, and with greatly improved timetables.

How about a text for the day? - We "are not the owners of the globe..... are only its possessors, and must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition." Remember that in the UK we have committed ourselves to the Paris Agreement on climate change, and we have passed a Climate Change Act aiming at major reductions in emissions. In the British economy, transport is the sector with the worst record as a source of greenhouse gas emissions, and is the only main sector not to have reduced emissions over the last 30 years. Transport makes up over a quarter of UK emissions. 55% of these transport emissions are from cars - while only 5% of the total is from public transport. To meet government targets on emissions, we need to reduce car mileage dramatically; this is best done by our using public transport much more (or by walking and cycling). We have campaigned for our trains and buses - let's use them. Travelling by public transport rather than in cars would mean: clear climate change improvements globally, better quality of air locally, safer roads, quieter neighbourhoods and a healthier population. It would also mean a fairer transport system, as about a quarter of households do not have access to cars.

Bus timetables are posted at bus stops, and Transport for Cornwall Bus Service guides are available in your local Downterry and St Germans shops (or you could phone 0808 196 2632 - or go online). For trains you could phone GWR at 03457 000125, or go online - but you'll also find the current timetables available at St Germans station.

You might also consider the National Express buses which began again at the start of July - to Victoria via Heathrow Airport. At the time of writing they call at Tideford bus shelter at 0907, 1415 and 2323. Return from Victoria Coach Station at 0830, 1330 and 2330. But they are changing services from time to time. For local bus or train information phone 01503 230106.

Alan Cousins, St Germans & Area Public Transport Group

St Germans Thursday Club

"Keep in touch!" we all write or say to our friends near and far, and to our neighbours, and we assume our family will regularly be in touch. When was the last time you actually touched someone not in your household or your close circle? We are all cautious, rightly so, and thus each contact means a lot.

How precious and reassuring are phone calls and brief times together here and there around the village, on the way to and from the surgery, in the shop queue, at the Quay, while on a walk. We drop something off and chat at the door or briefly sit together in the garden. I had to shake myself with realizing how much our behaviour to someone at the door has changed in the last few long months. Instead of inviting them in, we chat a bit and then have our morning coffee or afternoon tea on our own. Last year, when I was expecting friends for coffee, I'd dusted off the piano and one of them played a bit for us. I asked her to come again and play anytime. What a joy it would be for us all to sit together and enjoy tea and chat or music. But now, being at social distances and with masks on, we'd probably not be able to hold much of a clear conversation, would we? We are all doing well by being cautious and sensible, but it can be lonesome for those on their own.

How will our Thursday Club have changed when we get back together again? I hope we can have our regular Eliot Hall meetings on Thursdays, but I always think of us as the Friendship Club, so we may organise other outings and activities on other days. Does anyone remember our brief flurry of exercises to music; we'll certainly all remember truffles, cheese, the sharing of old photos and golden memories.

These past months, have been particularly difficult for several members, with health problems for themselves or family members. Hospital visits, operations and tests have been postponed or cancelled; and others are in hospital or in homes at present. Our thoughts are with them, as we share news and enquire how people are day to day. That's the lovely talent and joy of our membership - to be interested in each other. How are you recuperating? How's your garden? How is your grandson? How was your birthday? and so on...

The news of all our members is very up-to-date...what they would in the past call "bush telegraph" - gossip of the best and kindest sort. I'm unable to mention particular individuals; by the time this is printed (within a week or two), the news will have changed.

The Committee, our chair Jean Mills, and this reporter send best wishes to all for a good summer, and strength and good heart for the season ahead. Do keep in touch as the days continue - phone our Chairperson, Jean Mills (01503-230324) or leave me a note at Merryweather Cottage (just along from St Germans shop).

Sue Cousins 230106

St Germans Priory Christmas Market



We are planning to go ahead with our Christmas Market. We know we may have to think on our feet in the pandemic, but want to be positive and hopeful.

The dates are the evening of Friday November 20th and all day Saturday November 21st 2020. If all is well, we hope to bring some cheer to our Christmas preparations and look forward to a time when we can come together again.

Downderry Community Bus 300 Club

AGAIN! well done everybody-all paid to date. Winners for the month of July: 1st, No. 96 Alan Rogers, 2nd. No. 48 Tim Jefferis and 3rd. No. 45 Ronnie Capaldi.

Thanks everyone.

Jo Woodley

News from Downderry & District Community Bus.

When and how should we re-start operations? That is the question. Your answers will help.



We are wrestling with the challenge of how to operate the community bus in a “Covid-safe” way, and we would really appreciate any responses from our wonderful existing passengers and from prospective passengers concerning the timing of beginning operations again, as well as to how we should operate. By this we mean the type of services, the regular Liskeard/Plymouth/Seaton runs, as well as the excursion trips and hirings by community groups.

In recent days the government has removed its advice against using public transport, but as so often it was a rather mixed message. We want to re-start operations, but only when it is safe to do so, and of course when there is the demand. That is why we need your responses please.

We will of course have to try to observe social distancing, one metre plus as 2 metres would make it virtually impossible to operate in the confines of our 15-seat minibus. This will also mean that passengers and driver will have to wear face masks. Gloves or use of hand sanitiser will be necessary. The seating capacity of the bus will have to be reduced from 15 to seven. After each use of the bus, the driver will have to clean down all common use surfaces such as the grab rails and seat handles and seat belts. We are also mindful of taking care of the safety of our volunteer drivers and duty officers, as well as you, our passengers. Just to say too, the bus is being well maintained in the absence of services and it is being regularly exercised.

So, please, do tell us what you think (Tel: 01503 250911 or by email to kevindone@hotmail.com), and we will apply ourselves to developing a workable regime to re-start services, possibly as soon as September. Thanks for reading this.

Stay well, stay safe.

*Kevin Done, Chairman,
Downderry & District Community Bus Association.*

Rita's Rota – Things may change further so please check before making plans.

Deviock Parish

2 10.00 Service SNCh; 7.00 Zoom service

9 10.00 Service SGPC; 7.00 Zoom service

11 09:45 Mobile Library St Germans (Alms houses), 1.55 Downderry IOS

16 10.00 Service SNCh; 7.00 Zoom service

20 6.30 Deviock PC Planning Zoom

23 10.00 Service SGPC; 7.00 Zoom service

25 10.15 Mobile Library St Germans (Quay Road). 12.10 Crafhole Bus stop, 2.40 Seaton Car Park

30 10.00 Service TC ; 7.00 Zoom service

SGPC St G Priory Church; SNCh St Nicolas' Church; TC Tideford Church;

Copy for October Rita's Rota should be sent to ritasrota@yahoo.co.uk by 15th September

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