

# East Coker Society Newsletter



January 2009

Free Issue No 133

|                                   |        |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
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| Secretary: Sarah Owen             | 862218 |                                |
| Treasurer: Keith Helliard         | 863700 |                                |

## Happy New Year

### East Coker Society News

#### RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL

We greatly appreciate delivery by e-mail as it saves money on our printing costs so if in future you would like to help by receiving the Newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail L.Lindsay@eastcoker.com with your name and postal address so you can be removed from our delivery lists.

Your e-mail address will be kept entirely private, with no cross-referencing of other people's e-mails.

For those already receiving the Newsletter by e-mail, please e-mail L.Lindsay@eastcoker.com if you change your e-mail address.

**A REMINDER: BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS – 29 MARCH 2009 – clocks go FORWARD 1 hour**

#### A NEW 'MUST-HAVE' ITEM!

The new East Coker Bag is a **'must-have'** item if you live in East Coker! The cotton shopper is available with either long or short handles, and has the East Coker Cockerel on one side. Environmentally friendly, and good for the 'green' consumer! Available from The Store, East Coker, or Sarah Owen 862218

#### VILLAGE EVENTS DIARY 2009

The 2009 Diary is now at The Store, East Coker, and can be found at the back of the shop on the bottom shelf near the stationary. **Please could village organisations put their forthcoming events in the Diary to avoid the dates clashing.** Thank you.

#### WINTER FAYRE

The change of name from 'Christmas Bazaar' to 'Winter Fayre' seemed to encourage more stall holders and customers in supporting the Society's main fund-raising event of the year at the end of November. It was a resounding success, raising a profit of £750. This will help fund the future publication of Newsletters for distribution throughout the East Coker Parish.

A very special thank you to Carol Blackmore, who must take credit for organising all the stalls, which were particularly numerous and varied this time. Olivia and Gabriella Sugg did an excellent job in running the cake stall for the first time and together with Mike and Jane Sperring's raffle helped to boost the funds more than in previous years. We are also appreciative of the help given by Molly Betty and Ann Lewis serving teas and to Father Christmas for calling in on his way to the North Pole.

A big thank you to everyone who helped.

# Village Clubs and Organisations

## EAST COKER FLOWER SHOW & WINE FESTIVAL

Saturday 16 August 2008 was another superb day for the village. The Flower Show and Wine Festival took place at the East Coker Village Hall and was a great success. There were lots of 'new' names among the exhibitors and prize-winners, which we hope will bode well for many years to come. We raised £222. Very many thanks to all who helped, to all who exhibited, and to all who supported on the day. It is certainly one village tradition we would not like to see disappear.

|                               |                      |                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Maudsley Cup                  | Mike Bayliss         | Archie Neville Memorial Cup   | Mike Bayliss   |
| League of Friends Cup         | Sarah Rashley        | Ralph Eacott Plaque           | Don White      |
| Pittard Rose Cup              | D. Carter            | Mrs Newman Cup                | Sarah Rashley  |
| Jane Harvey Salver            | I. Anderson          | Molly Kettlewell Cup          | Christine Mead |
| Miss Keefe Cup                | Christine Mead       | Drake Memorial Silver Cup     | Eileen Horwood |
| Eileen Doye Memorial Cup      | Davina Knobb         | Christine Mead Cup            | Wendy Rashley  |
| Society Photographic Trophy   | Jim Le Feuvre        | John Whittock Memorial Cup    | David Pryor    |
| East Coker Garden Club Cup    | Adam Buttle          | Miss E.B. Drake Challenge Cup | Hector Coles   |
| Gloria Mead Cup – Sam Barnes  | Thorton & Arron Rees | Don White Challenge Cup       | S. Anderson    |
| <b>Wine Festival</b>          |                      |                               |                |
| East Coker Wine Circle Cup    | J Pryor              | Strandring Memorial Cup       | J Pryor        |
| East Coker Wine Circle Trophy | D Pryor              | Dick Rolph Cup                | D Pryor        |
| Dick Rolph Novice Rose Bowl   |                      |                               |                |

## EAST COKER WINE CIRCLE

East Coker Wine Circle offers both new members and guests a warm welcome and an interesting programme of speakers and events, both wine-related and non wine-related on the first Wednesday in the month at East Coker Village Hall, at 8.00pm. A Wine Forum is also arranged periodically during the year for all winemakers, when experienced winemakers willingly pass on their expertise to anyone interested. These Forums often produce interesting and enjoyable wine-tastings as does the Circle in its main programme. Details of both monthly and Forum meetings can be obtained from the Secretary, Joyce Pryor on 862816. Cheers!

### Diary Dates – East Coker Village Hall 8.00pm

Wednesday 4 February – A Red Night – making a love potion for your Valentine

Wednesday 4 March – Life in Japan by Gale Forest

Wednesday 1 April – Call My Bluff

Wednesday 6 May – My Glass is half full! By Dick Acworth

## EAST COKER W.I.

We hope everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. We start our New Year activities on Thursday 15 January with the open Whist Drive at the East Coker Village Hall at 7.30pm. Members and non-members are always welcome for this fun evening. Our first Institute meeting will be held on Thursday 29 January at 7.30pm, when Garfield Hunter-Macllveen will be talking about 'Food Energetics'. Probably something everyone needs to know after the excesses of our Christmas meals. The annual Jumble Sale will again be held on Saturday 21 February at 2.00pm. We welcome any good jumble (but no electrical goods) from 12 noon. Our second meeting of the year will be a very interesting talk about the Thames River Police. See the diary for dates and times.

### Diary dates

|                             |                     |                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Thursday 29 January 7.30pm  | Food Energetics     | East Coker Village Hall |
| Thursday 19 February 7.30pm | Whist Drive         | East Coker Village Hall |
| Saturday 21 February 2pm    | Jumble Sale         | East Coker Village Hall |
| Thursday 26 February 7.30pm | Thames River Police | East Coker Village Hall |
| Thursday 19 March 7.30pm    | Whist Drive         | East Coker Village Hall |
| Thursday 26 March 7.30pm    | Canapés             | East Coker Village Hall |
| Thursday 16 April at 7.30pm | Whist Drive         | East Coker Village Hall |

Joyce Pryor

## EAST COKER POETRY GROUP

The results of the poetry competition – 'Time' are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> 'Dandelions' – Anthony Watts; 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Forty Minutes' – Iona Lambe; 3<sup>rd</sup> 'War – 'Time' 24.11.1940' – by Jane Williams. Entries can be viewed on the website [www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](http://www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk)

**Tuesday 27 January** – Open Meeting. Bring a poem or two to read – a poetry happening.

**Tuesday 24 February** – Jo Waterworth. Jo will bring her enthusiasm for modern poetry to East Coker – an excellent poet who also runs workshops for poetry writers.

**Tuesday 24 March** – Paddy Hughes. A former fast jet pilot, Paddy Hughes will bring an audio-visual presentation in addition to a 'live' reading.

All meetings are at The Helyar Arms, East Coker, 7.30pm. No membership fee – open to anyone with an interest in poetry.

Contact details – David Cloke 862623 or our website [www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk](http://www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk)

## THE COKER 400 CLUB

The winners for August are: £100 Mrs J Ogilvie; £100 Bridget Mead-Sugg; £50 Mr D Pryor; £50 Mrs B Chatwin; £40 Mrs O Sharman; £30 Mrs E Horwood; £20 Mr & Mrs A Jullens; £15 Mr D Jenkins; £10 Mrs M B Dunster; £10 Mr P Pritchard

If anyone would like to join the 400 Club the annual subs are £20 (payable quarterly by Banker Order), please contact Mike Weston 862472, Gloria Mead 862384, Mary Ashley 862263 or Arthur Rees 862828

## THANK YOU

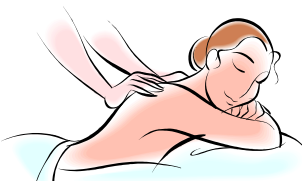
We would like to 'thank' everyone who attended the Christmas Bingo at East Coker Village Hall in aid of St Margaret's Hospice (Yeovil). We managed to raise £250, once again – thank you.

Easter Bingo – 28 March – doors open 6.45pm with eyes down 7.30pm

Christmas Bingo – 5 December – doors open 6.45pm with eyes down 7.30pm

If anyone has got any prizes that they would like to donate, please contact Nora White 477897.

Darren & Anna Shutler



## Live comfortably in your body

**Receiving massage regularly will help to relax your whole body and can ease and/or heal certain ailments, such as joint and muscle stiffness/pain, frozen shoulder, backache & sciatica, posture & mobility issues, headaches & migraines, high blood pressure, poor circulation & fluid retention, insomnia/fatigue and other stress related problems. It will also contribute to your general sense of well being and aliveness and can help to release emotions held deeply in the body, relieving anxiety and depression.**

**I am a qualified massage practitioner trained at the Bristol College of Massage and Bodywork and a member of the Massage Training Institute. I live and work in East Coker. My treatments incorporate a wide range of techniques which will be adapted to your needs at the time. You can expect to be treated with sensitivity and respect at all times in a peaceful environment.**

**To have an informal chat and/or book an appointment call Rosie on 01935 862767 or 07733 121819. Local home visits can be arranged if necessary.**

## **EAST COKER PARISH COUNCIL PAVILION FUND**

The Auction of Promises in October was a great success. We had over fifty lots covering a wide price spectrum from fruit cakes to foreign holidays. This was ideal so everyone had a chance of bidding for a wide range of items. The night raised just under £5,000 and then thanks to a very generous donation, from a local Lady, the total reached over the £6,500 mark. When this is added to a grant we have received from Somerset County Council of £4,000 we will be well on the way to revamping the original Pavilion which will be used for a host of local sporting events.

We have received fantastic support from so many people, companies and organisations throughout this project without whom the village would not have a multi-use Pavilion and Sports Field, which will hopefully last for many years to come. We would like to take this opportunity in thanking everyone who has contributed in any way.

The fund is now closed, with the revamping and day to day running of the Pavilion left in the hands of the Parish Council. With many thanks, Bridget Sugg, Chair East Coker Pavilion Fund

## **EAST COKER GARDENING CLUB**

The Club started a varied autumn programme with a coach trip to the Malvern Autumn Festival on 27 September. In October, under the title 'Roses & Castles', Clem Pryor introduced members to a short history of canals and the boats which use them and described how they became homes for the families who worked them and were decorated by the women. He demonstrated the kinds of decoration and how they were painted and brought with him some miniature items of boat-ware similarly decorated. Then on 13 November the Club held its AGM at the Quicksilver Mail Inn. The officers from the current year were re-elected: Chair, Helen Styles; Hon. Secretary Catherine Denney; Hon. Treasurer Stan Shaylor; Programme Secretary Don White; Press Secretary Sally Jackson. Olga Clifford joined Mike Bayliss, Sue Pain and Stephanie Talbot on the Committee. On 11 December Jane from Brimsmore Garden Centre brought a selection of 'Plants for Christmas' and gave advice on their care and propagation. The meeting ended seasonally with mulled wine and mince pies. The Club starts the New Year on 8 January 2009 with an illustrated talk on 'Butterflies and Flowers of Europe' by Alison and Nigel Charles.

### **The Spring Programme**

Thursday 12 February 'Spring Colour and Interest in the Garden' by Brimsmore Garden Centre

Thursday 12 March 'Strawbale Buildings' by Paul Wells

Thursday 19 April 'Victorian Garden Design' by Marion Emery

### **Advance Notice**

The guest speaker at the Open Meeting on 14 May will be Anne Swithenbank, well-known on BBC gardening programmes. Look out for Posters.

Bookings are now being received for the four-day holiday in West Sussex, 5-8 May 2009, based on a Best Western Hotel, in Hove. Details from Stan Shaylor as below.

Meetings are usually held in the East Coker Hall on the second Thursday in the month at 7.30pm unless otherwise announced. Visitors and new members are always welcome. For further information contact the Hon-Secretary, Catherine Denney on 862294, or the Hon-Treasurer, Stan Shaylor on 420291.

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## EAST COKER TIME TO SHARE

To celebrate the long awaited return to our village hall, members enjoyed adding their voices to the musical accompaniment of the 'Misty Trio' for a sing-a-long of 'Golden Oldies'. Those who could remember the words assisted those humming and la-la-ing. Audrey Bartlett spoke to us on a photographic tour of her travels in Canada at the next meeting, followed by a competition of members' own happy holiday snaps.

At the next meeting in an endeavour to sharpen the minds' a quiz was devised for the club with a competition of holiday souvenirs. In August, a Tea Dance was held to celebrate our 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Yes – 33 years have passed since Flora Duley founded the group, little realising that it would last well into the next century.

There was a good attendance at the AGM on 1 September with the added attraction of a Bring & Buy Sale. An enjoyable day's outing to Weymouth and the local garden centre followed later in the month. Larry Skeats and friends gave us an entertaining session entitled 'Call My Bluff' when he showed many farm and household gadgets from the past.

Stan Law gave a fascinating talk on the history of the Swan Theatre, adding personal recollections of his connection and endeavours to convert what was once a derelict public house due for demolition to the thriving local theatre it is today.

The Annual Craft exhibition was held at the end of October with a variety of talent being judged by local resident Gill Holt. The overall winner gaining most points was Lois Crisp, who had entered items in many categories – a very art and crafty lady!

Sheila Humphreys gave an unusual and interesting talk on what takes place in India at Christmas-time and the New Year, and then it was all hands from the committee to make the Christmas Bazaar such an enjoyable afternoon, boosting funds by over £180. Twelve members were later to take up most of the front row to see the production of Alan Ayckbourn's very amusing play 'Season's Greetings' at the Swan Theatre

The Christmas Party at the village hall proved once again to be a joy to behold, the visual splendour, cheering party-goers as they entered. If that wasn't warming enough, David and Joyce Pryor were there at the door offering one and all a glass of their home-made mulled wine. The main meal was followed by home-made mince-pies, supplied by Dorothy's Tea Rooms at Hinton St George. Those who could manage it danced 'constrictly' to the Misty Duet, the music being as enjoyable as ever. Tea and coffee was brought to the table by friends of Alison Charles from the WI who also did the clearing of the tables, washing up etc. A merry afternoon saw off our year in celebration of Christmas.

Those wishing to join or visit any of the fortnightly meetings of the Time to Share group should contact the Chairman, Alison Charles 863137

### Programme for January – March 2009

Monday 26 January – Steam Around Yeovil – John Day  
Monday 9 February – Beetle Drive – Dorrie & Andy Adams  
Monday 23 February – Building Houses in Cambodia – John & Wendy Burgess  
Monday 9 March – Some Memories of an Army Chaplain – Rev Roger Burt  
Monday 23 March – Hidden Somerset Revisited – Mike Bolton

## Young People

### EAST COKER SCOUT GROUP

**Waste Paper Collections:** The collection point is opposite the School on the last Saturday of each month from 8.30am to 10.30am.

If possible please flat pack your newspapers and tie into bundles. We are now only able to collect newsprint – sorry no magazines. Arrangements for Nash Lane and Helena Road are co-ordinated separately by Ray Smith.

Thank You for your continued support. Jackie Glover.

**Newspaper Collections:**            Sat 31 January            Sat 28 February            Sat 28 March

## **EAST COKER SCHOOL**

### **Abba**

Well done to the choir who gave a superb performance at their Abba evening. They sang and performed brilliantly and had the audience dancing in the aisles by the encore.

Many thanks to Miss Champion and her band and to Mr Rohde for preparing the children so well. Another memorable event!

### **Meals**

We received a very enthusiastic response to the possibility of having hot meals provided by Camelot Catering next term. Parents of just under 100 children expressed a wish to join the scheme and this gives us enough interest to go ahead and make arrangements. I hope to be able to begin the system in late January next year. Menus and other details should be ready to go out at the start of next term.

### **Class Two**

I am pleased to tell you that we have a new member of staff appointed as Class 2 teacher from January to the end of the school year. Miss Emma Crabb from Beaminster is joining us and has already met with Miss Champion to start the transfer of responsibilities. I am sure that Emma will enjoy her time with us at East Coker.

### **Mornings**

It is important that the children arrive at school by our start time of 8.55 in the mornings. The school day begins with registration, as well as **Wake and Shake**, and children who come in after this time are marked as late on our system as well as having to join in after all the others are settled. I know that circumstances will sometimes mean that there are occasional late arrivals but this should not be on a regular basis. We appreciate your co-operation.

**The Spooky Disco.** Another successful term of events and fund-raising by the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association.

### **Breakfast/After-School Club**

Information was sent out about a breakfast club and after-school club which was being set up by Kay Strode and her team at East Coker Playgroup. This is a facility open to all school parents with children aged 8 and under and is currently running on a trial basis.

The take-up has been disappointing so far so it has been decided to suspend the after-school facility until next term. This is a service which families may find useful in juggling work and other commitments and is very reasonably priced at only £3 per hour.

Richard Powell, Head Teacher

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## EAST COKER PLAYGROUP

Happy New Year to you all! The Playgroup is looking forward to the Spring Term 2009, although as I type this, the weather is hovering around freezing and spring seems a long way off. Still, the child in me loves to see the natural world around us waken from its winter slumber and this is true for the children at the playgroup. It is a delight to share with them the wonder of the end of winter and coming of spring. The changes in the trees from bare branches to buds to the leaves, tips of emerging bulbs and later the delicate flowers, the hard frozen ground (very noticeable this year) turning soft once more and probably muddy with the rain. Our children at East Coker Playgroup are so fortunate with the countryside location; immediate access onto the playing fields enables the group to witness at first hand to changes in season and to experience the weather. Kay, her staff and the children make the most of the setting by getting outside daily (even the rain will not put them off – wellies and waterproofs are fully used). It is fitting perhaps that the topics this term are Weather and Seasons, followed by Transport later in the term. These topics are simply a base to start from; the children tend to take the theme where they want to go, the idea being that the children learn from what interests them individually and as group. During the term, the group will also celebrate the Chinese New Year. Take Art are also visiting the group, doing a creative project using clay. There will be some interesting sculptures produced, I am sure.

The Craft Fair held in November raised over £900, a massive thank you to everyone. Please contact the group if you are interested in having a stall at our next Craft Fair in November 2009.

The wealth of experience of our fully qualified staff offers quality childcare and education through play, exploring the wider environment and local community with project-based activities. Ofsted have consistently given the group excellent reports and commended us for the interaction and encouragements between staff and children, partnership with parents, teaching, management and the emphasis on fun.

Children can join us from the age of 2½, and Nursery Education Funding is available from the term after the third birthday. We are open during term time every weekday morning, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and offer optional lunch cover for children who like to bring a packed lunch. The playgroup offer extended opening hours, subject to demand (a breakfast club and 'afterschool' club) – please contact Kay Strode if you would like more information on this exciting opportunity on your doorstep.

For more information and to put your child/children on the waiting list please contact Kay Strode on 07798 812540 or after 6.00pm on 872126.

## The Churches

### ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

#### Services

|                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Ash Wednesday 24 February | 7.30am Holy Communion  | 6.30pm Holy Communion  |
| Mothering Sunday 22 March | 8.00am Holy Communion  | 10.00am Family Service – procession with flowers for mothers                       |
| Palm Sunday 5 April       | 8.00am Holy Communion<br>10.00am Sung Eucharist              | 9.50am meet at the Vicarage to process to the church with Palms<br>6.00pm Evensong |
| Maundy Thursday 9 April   | 6.30pm The Last Supper – The Watch                           |  |
| Good Friday 10 April      | 10.00am Stations of the Cross – procession around the church |  |
| Easter Day 12 April       | 8.00am Holy Communion<br>Evensong 6.00pm                     | 10.00am Easter Communion   |

#### Fairtrade Fortnight

Sunday 1 March – a Fairtrade Stall will be in the Church following the 10.00am service. Please support your Fairtrade Church – there will be food items and gifts for sale.

#### Easter Craft Activity for Children for ages 5 years+

Saturday 10 April at St Michael's 10.00am – 12.30pm. Free entry with soft drinks and biscuit refreshments. All welcome – with or without parents! Contact 850256

## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH CLOSWORTH

### Closworth Family Services

We hold these on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month at 10.00am. They take the form of a short informal service with the children, but there are a number of changes this Spring.

15 February – I hope to talk about one of the parables Christ told

Mothering Sunday 22 March – We shall hopefully have bunches of flowers for the children to give to their mothers.

Good Friday 10 April 10.00am – A short Service with Hymns, readings and talk suitable for all ages. This is followed by coffee and 'Cold Cross Buns'.

Easter Sunday 12 April – Our usual Ester Day Service with the children taking part. This will be followed by coffee and an Easter egg Hunt. For further details, please contact me. Monica 862834

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## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH SUTTON BINGHAM

Over 80 people attended the Candlelit Carol Service at Sutton Bingham and enjoyed seasonal fare after the service.

### Church Roof

A scheme for sponsoring a tile, or any quantity, at £20 each, as special tiles are needed, is proving helpful. Forms for this exercise are obtainable from the Churchwardens (details below), or at the church.

### Services

Sunday 18 January – 11.30am

Sunday 15 February – 11.30am

Sunday 15 March – 11.30am

Good Friday 10 April – Litany

Sunday 19 April – **NO SERVICE**

Sunday 1 February – 9.00am

Sunday 1 March – 9.00am

Sunday 5 April – **NO SERVICE**

Easter Sunday 12 April – 11.30am

### Churchwardens

Mrs Carol Blackmore 862192

Mr Antony Denning 474294

## BIBLE MID-WEEK MEETINGS 2009

### A series in the Book of Ruth – 'The Wings of Refuge'

Wednesday 21 January

Wednesday 18 February

Wednesday 18 March

Wednesday 15 April

Ruth 1 – James Dudley-Smith, St John's, Yeovil

Ruth 2 – Brian Ruff

Ruth 3 – Peter Bannister – Formerly Vicar of St James', Taunton

Ruth 4 – Edward Armistead

These meetings take place in the East Coker Village Hall at 7.00pm. Do join us and bring your friends. Refreshments are served after each meeting.

For further details, contact Roy Hodder 862519 or Edward Armistead 862785



## EAST COKER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, BURTON LANE

**Coffee Stop** The Hall is open every Wednesday from 11.00am until 1.00pm for coffee and tea. All are welcome to come along and it is simply meant to be a place where friends can get together for a chat. There is no charge for the refreshments.

**Bible Discussion** We hold a Bible Discussion group in the Chapel on alternate Wednesday evenings. This is a joint meeting with the Mill Church, and this term we are looking at the BBC DVD 'The Passion' which was shown on BBC1 last Easter. If anyone would like to join us or form another study or discussion group, please contact Kevin Chapman for details of dates and times.

**Weekly Meetings** 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays 11.00am – Worship Service (incorporating Communion).  
2nd Sunday 11.00am – Family Service

**Alpha** We are planning to commence an Alpha Course in the Spring. Alpha is an introduction to the Christian faith and comprises a meal, a DVD of 30 minutes or so and a discussion time. Anyone interested please contact Kevin or other members of the fellowship for more details. Other services as announced. **All** are welcome to **all** of our services.

'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.' John's Gospel, chapter 3, verse 16 – The Gospel in a nutshell. Kevin Chapman is available in the village each Tuesday and Wednesday. He can be contacted on 0781 2726853 or 422594 or email ec.cf@hotmail.co.uk Please do feel free to contact him if you have any queries about the Christian faith or if you would like someone to pray with you or simply to talk to.

## Village News

### WESTLAKE SURGERY

As in previous years, the surgery will be closed for part of one morning each month for staff training. On these mornings, there are none of the usual surgeries but a locum doctor is available to see anyone needing an appointment.

The surgery is open from 8.30am – 11 00am as usual and then closes completely until 1.30pm. If a medical emergency occurs during that time then patients can either dial 999 or the surgery can be contacted on 07875750811. The surgery opens again as usual from 1.30pm.

### The dates of the training days in 2009 are

Friday 16 January      Friday 27 February      Friday 20 March      Friday 24 April      Friday 15 May  
Friday 26 June      Friday 17 July      Friday 18 September      Friday 23 October      Friday 27 November

### WEA – EAST COKER BRANCH – T S Eliot – Tutor Dr Henry Merritt

T S Eliot (1914 – 1965), poet and Nobel Prize winner, was profoundly influential on modern poetry. This course will look at some of his contributions to poetry, exploring some of the main themes of his work. Six meetings on Tuesdays 2.30pm – 4.00pm starting 10 February at East Coker Village Hall. Fee £28.

Courses are free to anyone in receipt of means tested benefit. To pre-enrol, please contact Sarah Smith 862466

### SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY

The mobile Library visits on a Thursday – the times and dates for the stops in 2008/09 are:

#### East Coker

|                 |                   |                         |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| The Helyar Arms | 11.45am – 12 noon | North Coker Bus Shelter | 12.05pm – 12.25pm |
| Meadow View     | 12.30pm – 12.50pm | Maudesley Fields        | 12.55pm – 13.15pm |

#### Sutton Bingham

|            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Bower Farm | 13.25pm – 13.45pm |
|------------|-------------------|

|               |            |             |          |         |          |
|---------------|------------|-------------|----------|---------|----------|
| <b>Dates:</b> | 5 February | 26 February | 19 March | 8 April | 21 April |
|---------------|------------|-------------|----------|---------|----------|

## NOTES FROM THE OBSERVATORY

### New Year's Day, 2009.

Although winter officially begins on the Winter Solstice, which, last year was on 21 December, winter began early. The first weeks of December were the coldest for over thirty years and a desperately cold spell continued over Christmas and into the New Year. The weather pattern today is similar to that of the long freeze of 1962/3 when a blocking high to the north with a low over France pulled in icy winds from a very cold Europe. But it is January, when cold days are the norm, but perhaps not as cold as the winter days that prompted Shakespeare to write in his poem Winter

'When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the parson's saw;  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marion's nose looks red and raw'

Even Byron had a poor opinion of the British winter:

'The English winter--- ending in July,  
To recommence in August'

Prophetic words perhaps for 2008, which was not a good year for balmy weather. Apart from a few mild and dry spells, the year was a gloomy one, lacking in sunshine for much of the summer.

Measurable rain fell on 159 days giving a total for the year of 914mm (36.01ins). The wettest spell was the evening of 12/13 December when 38mm fell (1.5 ins). The year had a few warm spells with a maximum temperature of 26.2C (79.2F) on 28 July the lowest temperature occurred on the night of 16/17 February when the mercury fell to minus 5.6C (22F). Frost occurred on 28 days the last day of the old year being a very cold day when the temperature remained below freezing for the whole day.

Wildlife suffered from a generally damp and sunless summer. Very few butterflies were about. Even common species such as Small Tortoiseshells were noticeably absent. But a few Large Whites flew as late as 19 October when the temperature was 10C (50F) and a solitary Comma fed from late ivy flowers. Other occasional sightings included few Brimstones and Speckled Woods.

Autumn leaf colours were exceptionally good. The poor summer was probably just what the leaves required to enhance their dying shades.

Perhaps the most exciting report was the sighting of a rare visitor from the U.S.A., the Dark-eyed Junco which appeared in the village in late November. Reports of this small sparrow-like bird in East Coker appeared in the national press and even on the Internet. Quite a few bird-watchers from far away turned up to see the stranger. Other sightings reported to me included a Firecrest on 17 November, Little Owls at Darvole and a Little Egret seen at Sutton Bingham. It is thought that the Egret may have come from a colony established on wetlands north of Weymouth. A Redwing appeared in the garden on 18 November, perhaps a sign of the later hard winter. A decided lack of robins was noticed in our gardens by some correspondents.

Venus has been a prominent sight in the evening sky, low down in the west just after sunset. In November Venus and Jupiter came together in the western evening sky giving a splendid rare sight of both planets close together. An annular eclipse of the sun on 26 January will not be visible from the village.

Francis Cloke 862496

## THE HELYAR ARMS

A reminder that the Charity Coffee Mornings will be held on the last Friday of every month. Please make notes in your diaries and come and have coffee, scrummy cakes and a good chat while raising money for Charities. We have filled this year already but if you would like your favourite Charity to benefit, give us a ring and we can book you in for the next available month! Offers of raffle prizes and cakes are always welcome, as some Charities may be unable to produce them. Should you require further information please ring Cherry 863313 or Penny 863055. We look forward to seeing you all!

### Quiz Night

Held on the last Sunday of every month. Four persons per team at £5 per team. Good fun for everyone

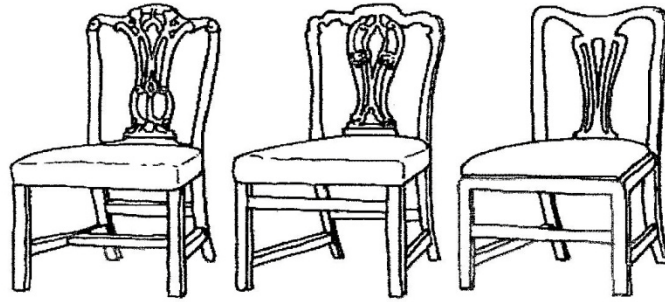
## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in April 2009. Copy, please, to Lesley Lindsay, Little Meadow, Coker Marsh, East Coker or e-mail L.Lindsay@eastcoker.com or to The Store, East Coker by **Wednesday 25 March 2009**.

## VILLAGE DIARY January 2009 - May 2009

|                   |  |                 |                  |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Mon 26 Jan        | Time To Share – Steam Around Yeovil              | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm           |
| Tues 27 Jan       | Poetry Group – Open Meeting                      | The Helyar Arms | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 29 Jan      | W I – 'Food Energetics'                          | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Fri 30 Jan        | Charity Coffee Morning                           | Helyar Arms     |                  |
| Sat 31 Jan        | Scouts Newspaper Collection                      | Near the School | 9.00am - 10.30am |
| Wed 4 Feb         | Wine Circle – A Red Night                        | East Coker Hall | 8.00pm           |
| Thurs 5 Feb       | Library  |                 |                  |
| Mon 9 Feb         | Time To Share – Beetle Drive                     | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm           |
| Tues 10 Feb       | WEA – 1st of 6 lectures on T S Eliot             | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm – 4.00pm  |
| Thurs 12 Feb      | Gardening Club – Spring Colour                   | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 19 Feb      | W I – Whist Drive                                | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Sat 21 Feb        | Jumble Sale                                      | East Coker Hall | 2.00pm           |
| Mon 23 Feb        | Time To Share – Houses in Cambodia               | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm           |
| Tues 24 Feb       | Poetry Group – Jo Waterworth                     | The Helyar Arms | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 26 Feb      | W I – Thames River Police                        | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 26 Feb      | Library  |                 |                  |
| Fri 27 Feb        | Charity Coffee Morning                           | The Helyar Arms |                  |
| Sat 28 Feb        | Scouts Newspaper Collection                      | Near the School | 9.00am - 10.30am |
| Wed 4 Mar         | Wine Circle – Life in Japan                      | East Coker Hall | 8.00pm           |
| Mon 9 Mar         | Time To Share – Rev Roger Burt                   | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm           |
| Thurs 12 Mar      | Strawbale Buildings                              | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 19 Mar      | W I – Whist Drive                                | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 19 Mar      | Library  |                 |                  |
| Mon 23 Mar        | Time to Share hidden Somerset Revisited          | East Coker Hall | 2.30pm           |
| Tues 24 Mar       | Poetry Group – Paddy Hughes                      | The Helyar Arms | 7.30pm           |
| <b>Wed 25 Mar</b> | <b>Last Date for Copy for April's Newsletter</b> |                 |                  |
| Thurs 26 Mar      | W I – Canapés                                    | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Fri 27 Mar        | Charity Coffee Morning                           | East Coker Hall |                  |
| Sat 28 Mar        | Scouts Newspaper Collection                      | Near the School | 9.00am - 10.30am |
| Sun 29 March      | BST – Clocks go forward 1 hour                   |                 |                  |
| Wed 1 April       | Wine Circle – Call My Bluff                      | East Coker Hall | 8.00pm           |
| Wed 8 April       | Library  |                 |                  |
| Thurs 9 April     | Gardening Club – Victorian Garden Design         | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Thurs 16 April    | W I – Whist Drive                                | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |
| Tues 21 April     | Library  |                 |                  |
| 5 – 8 May         | Gardening Club – Holiday in West Sussex          |                 |                  |
| Wed 6 May         | Wine Club – My Glass is Half Full                | East Coker Hall | 8.00pm           |
| Thurs 14 May      | Gardening Club – Anne Swithenbank                | East Coker Hall | 7.30pm           |

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