



Hello and goodbye

New to the Farmhouse is Jon – son of Stephen N, so welcome to him. It's the first time we have had two adult generations living here (John and Jamie don't quite count yet – though next year Jamie will be 18, so definitely will count then!) But this was to be short lived as the 'goodbye' is to Stephen, Penny and Elsa the dog, who have now moved to London (just a slight contrast to Dorset) to live in Penny's old family home.

Details of Oak Cottage, which is now on the market with vacant possession and no chain, will be featured elsewhere in the newsletter. Unfortunately Penny won't be able to join us for the May celebrations, but Stephen will be back here to lead the Maypole dancing. So, thanks to Penny for all the backroom work she has undertaken during her time here, the cookies and the cakes, and to Stephen for the Permaculture, and leading us in circle dancing and Celtic ceremonies.

Now Fox's Holt is under offer, we are hopefully going to welcome, very soon, Ella and her dog Morris. All fingers tightly crossed for negotiations at both ends to go smoothly and speedily.

Gay

May Fayre

Everyone enjoyed a delightful day of spring sunshine on Sunday when we celebrated 10 years at The Threshold Centre. All in all a superb family friendly day with the little ones and the not so little ones enthusiastically joining in all that was on offer. As always the tea and cakes were a real hit with Susannah's delicious raw food chocolate getting everyone buzzing - made in heaven! Finding Your Wild Animal proved to be so popular that a second session was requested and led by Muriel, then Bill skilfully and elegantly helped us all to find our 'ground' and calm with a Qigong session on the 'village green'. An unexpected hit was the recycled fashion with many guests departing looking even more elegant than when they arrived. Finally the grand finale was a toast to Threshold, more cake (!) and dancing round the May Pole guided by Stephen with both gentleness and humour. A big thank you to all who gave their time so generously and all who attended to make this day so memorable, here's to next year. Cheers!

Amanda



Garden news

The Village Green flower beds got a good tidy and mulch with compost on the gardening weekend, and Michael has just given the grass its first mow. Hopefully the severely pollarded willow will green up again soon, and we'll think of some way of hanging the hammock now that we've lost our old dead cherry tree (it fell over in the gales – the only damage we suffered, apart from losing all the roof ridge tiles on Timber Barn 3 (Amanda B's house)!).

Rozzie's house (The Byre) is now magically transformed into a beautiful light and airy space, and her garden is a work in progress, with a new path and a sweet little pond. Susannah's garden has also recently been transformed with a good tidy up and some new pots, and Michael (just back from India) is busily planting up for Spring colour. Gay's garden is already full of colour with bright yellow dwarf narcissi, and John's has been looking good all winter with his winter-flowering heathers, *Viburnum tinus* in its new pot, and prolific winter-flowering clematis ('Freckles') over his front door.

The vegetable garden is looking tidy with most of the beds prepared and ready for sowing, and it will be interesting to see how the beds with wooden edging removed (a la Charles Dowding!) resist the inevitable slug invasion compared with those still with wood. We have just dug up the last of our huge crop of parsnips, and the purple sprouting is finally beginning to sprout. Potatoes, onions and garlic are in and the perennial kale is coming along well (mostly!). The polytunnel survived the winter weather and provided us with plenty of fresh green salad leaves throughout. We now have peas and broad beans nearly ready to eat, and more peas and sweetcorn just starting to sprout.

The orchard is looking well established now and our new hedging is just coming into leaf. Sadly we are having to keep the chickens confined within their electric fence, as we recently lost one to the fox – in broad daylight! Unfortunately she was one of our new hens, and a good layer, so we're down on our egg production now, and the others really miss pottering and scratching about among the fruit trees. Well, we knew it was a risk, but it was so good to see them happily 'free ranging' and fertilizing the trees.

Unfortunately the yurt did not survive the winter weather. The wind got under the roof canvas and it all caved in, smashing the wheel on the stove below. However, Andrew was determined to fix it and get it back up in time for the summer, so we agreed to send the canvas off to a marine cleaning company and pay to get it cleaned (it was very green) and waterproofed, and in the meantime Andrew has spent hours and hours carefully glueing and screwing the wheel back together, and retying the trellis together, etc. etc.....and next year we'll take it down for the winter!!

Linda



Gardening/Work weekend March 2014

Our Gardening/Work weekends go from strength to strength! This was the first one of the year and we were booked up very early on (sadly I had to turn several people away). We had 9 guests in total, including two people who had been before (always a good indication that we are doing something right!), one of whom got her friend to come too, and Jonathan, a student who had lived with us briefly, came back for the weekend with 3 of his friends from Exeter University.

As ever, lots of hard work got done – and not just gardening! We cleared the brook all the way along from behind the neighbour's yard (of tyres and rubble and plastic) to our car park where it was dammed with fallen tree branches, and it was a joy to see it flow freely after watching the water rise alarmingly during the recent wet weather. But we did some gardening as well, including the major task of turning our 3 large compost bins, and sowing seeds and planting potatoes, weeding and composting flower beds, and generally tidying up after the winter rain and gales.

And the best part about the weekend was that it was sunny and warm all day long! Who could ask for more?

Many, many thanks to all those who came and mucked in with whatever we asked them to do – please do come again!



Easter Retreat

One of the aspects that drew many of us to the Threshold Centre was for support on our spiritual paths. Having attended retreats for the last twenty five years, I have often felt a bit apologetic for not being a Buddhist, Christian, Sufi or dedicated student of Krishnamurti, so it was a great joy to me that some of us were interested in offering a retreat not aligned to a single path, and that our first retreat was fully subscribed. We had eight people from outside Threshold and three of our members attended, and four of us (Jane, Rossi, Linda and Michael) held the space.

We have had very positive feedback from people who attended, who enjoyed sharing:

- sitting meditation
- walking meditation
- walks
- good conversation
- and egg decorating, to create a beautiful Easter table.

We are very grateful to our guests, who shared their paths with us for a short time, and helped with the washing up! Comments included “the level of support, kindness and understanding from other people on the retreat and from the facilitators was a surprise and a delight” “The space was warm, physically and spiritually, safe and held” We intend to offer similar events in the future

Jane



Oak Cottage – 3 bed property for sale - £198,000

Completed in 2010 it is in excellent decorative order and very well insulated with energy and water saving features. This is a rare chance to buy a 3 bed cottage at the Threshold Centre.

If you are interested in taking this further or want to view, please contact:

Michael Giddings, 07810 366860,
or Jane Stott, 01747 821906,



UPCOMING EVENTS

The courses and work weekends prove very popular, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Cohousing Workshops

The workshop provides an opportunity for individuals or groups to experience life in a cohousing community for a weekend, at the same time learning how to go about setting up a project. The cost of a weekend is £150 including lunch, tea/coffee; evening meals. Accommodation at the Threshold Centre/local B & B is £25/35 per night.

June. 20-22 Nov. 14-16

Gardening/Work Weekends

A great opportunity to experience the cohousing lifestyle and to work with us and get to know us. You'll meet interesting like-minded people and have a fun weekend - it's not all work! Arrive in time for Friday supper if you can, otherwise early on Saturday.

Jul. 18-20

Friend's Weekend

An opportunity to experience cohousing with emphasis on relaxing and having fun, hosted and enjoyed by the Threshold Team.

Sept. 19-21

Afternoon teas for Visitors and Enquirers

These take place on the first Saturday of each month from 3.00 to 4.30 pm. An informal gathering with a chance to look round and meet the residents. Please let us know if you would like to come, and bring cakes to share.

Open Meditation

The first Tuesday of each month at 7.30. We offer meditation and visualisation techniques suitable for all levels of experience. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.

Threshold is 'Highly commended' by Naturesave.

We were delighted to be chosen by Naturesave to complete an Environmental Performance Review at Threshold and as a result we have recently received a Certificate of Excellence. Naturesave have developed 10 'One Planet Living' principles under the headings of; Zero carbon, Zero waste, Sustainable transport, Sustainable materials, Local and sustainable food, Sustainable water, Land use and wildlife, Cultural and heritage, Equality and local economy and Health and happiness.

Here is what Naturesave had to say about us;

'As a co-op, the centre excels in terms of social sustainability, community ownership and in it's commitment to making a low impact philosophy central to it's operational vision. There is a raft of exemplary policies which has achieved this. Consequently, there are very few recommendations to be made. One Planet Living principles are already embedded in the day-to-day activities of co-op members and visitors.....The Centre is to be highly commended on how it conducts it's trading activities and should pride itself on it's progressive approach to co-housing and sustainable food production.'

We are indeed all very proud to be living our lives, sharing our experiences and developing our skills here at Threshold for ourselves, our guests and generations to come.

Amanda B x

THANK YOU!
To Amanda and Peter
for all your efforts and input
into the community - good luck
for the next chapter of
your lives.



Keep in touch

To sign up to our mailing list, please email the office at:

info@thresholdcentre.org.uk

To avoid disappointment, please phone before visiting.

We welcome visitors to our monthly

- Afternoon Tea
- Open Meditations
- Work and Gardening Weekends

and the various courses that are run here.

Please remember that this is also our home and we have busy lives, so turning up hoping to be hosted and shown round could end in disappointment - Thank you.

With best wishes from us all, Jane, Amanda, Peter, Susannah, Bill, Michael, Gay, Andrew, Linda, Ceri, Tina, Amanda B, John, Jamie, Rozzie, Stephen, Penny, Charles, Muriel, Jon, Stephen G and not forgetting Monty the dog & Flash & Eddy the cats.

Wildlife around Threshold (March)

Most of you know that this winter has been difficult for all, wildlife has had a really hard time as natural food sources such as worms / beetles have been drowned in floods. Birds such as yellow and grey wagtails, partridges, pheasants etc. need a helping hand this spring with additional seed food in bird feeders and scattered seed in safe places at ground level.

Well, our woodpeckers are back with their early morning drilling at 5.00am! The blackbird comes in about the same time reminding us of the on-coming spring with its wonderful song - well worth the early morning listen! Then the dawn chorus begins in earnest with a cacophony of song from every direction filling the air. What I have noticed too are more blue tits and a young family near the bike shed. A garden warbler has been seen with its olive and brown shades. The swallows and house martins are on their long flight back from South Africa, due here during mid May (May 6th – they've arrived – Ed.) Other visitors are our resident fox (Basil) who is not very popular with the at present after killing one of our chickens. Rodents have been hit hard by the flooding with a sharp decline in mice / voles / shrews which will be a tough challenge for our family of tawny owls which will be back from their vacation somewhere in Dorset. The flooding also has affected our local buzzards looking for scraps in the field opposite.

Charles