

AUTUMN 2024

COUNTRYMEN CHATTER

Keeping in touch on a regular basis

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER!

Dear Friends and Countrymen,

I can't believe it's now October! Where has the time gone? Autumn is a time of change, reflection, and letting go, but it can also be a time of harvest and celebration. As Keats said 'Autumn is a time of warmth and plenty'. With us it has been an especially good year for cucumbers!

We will be having our own salute to harvest. Although too early to sample our cider by then we very much look forward to seeing new and old faces.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past months. We are getting evermore busy and it is lovely to see new gentlemen enjoying themselves in our groups. We have had great fun in the barn and especially outside with both the animals or in the polytunnel.

*Best wishes
Liz and the team*

THANK YOU!

We are indebted to all us those who contribute so generously with their time, money and expertise. A special thanks this month to:

- Jonathon Herbert for a great session basket making
- Chris Gooding for instructing us in active chair based exercises
- Phill Bennett for organising a fund-raising tractor run
- The team who brought their vintage cars to the farm for the afternoon.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

You can keep in touch by email, telephone or post

For anything related to the newsletter, or general enquiries

Email:
liz@countrymenuk.org

Phone the Countrymen's office:
01963 210789 (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
or contact the main office:
01963 210703

Post will reach us at:
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Rylands Farm, Boys Hill, Holnest
Sherborne DT9 5PS



[www.facebook.com/
countrymenuk](https://www.facebook.com/countrymenuk)

We hope as many of you as possible can access the fun on Facebook. The page is called CountrymenUK Dorset.

Or you can support us on our just giving page:

www.justgiving.com/countrymenuk



Tied in knots!

One of our gentlemen took his own session. Sharpy, a retired fire officer, showed us a whole range of useful knots. We're now accomplished in clove hitches, sheep bends and lots lots more. Thank you so much Sharpy!



Cider making

Of course as it's Autumn we have to think about apples and we are very fortunate around the farm to have lots of them, my favourite being the russets.

Marc kindly brought in his cider press and with extra apples that the men brought in we were all busy chopping and winding the machine. We have made several gallons which is now fermenting and look forward to tasting some very soon.

Any suggestions for what we should call our special brew?

Apparently "No scrumping took place at all"!! (Steve)



Working together on a project. All smiles!



Basket making with willow

On a warm afternoon we welcomed Jonathon from Hillfield Friary to show us how to make willow baskets.

A large group sat under the trees on one of our few warm dry days this summer to learn the skills of weaving and then put our hands to having a go! We have some really talented men.

Now our cakes can be served in our home made baskets.

We look forward to doing more in the Winter months from some of the template frames which we now have to work on.



Words from a Volunteer

How many farmers and those related to farming complain about the weather? Is it any wonder; is there any other industry so dependent at certain times of the year on circumstances completely outside of their control?

Recently, and there's a certain irony in this, it takes the ultimate townie, Jeremy Clarkson to remind us of this vulnerability through the television series Clarkson's Farm. The programme may make us wonder at times. How many of us knew that Lamborghini built tractors or that the Cotswolds is a real place?!

This summer has been cooler and wetter than usual, it is England we are talking about and the farm's refurbished polytunnels have faired in different ways. Flowers have bloomed in the cooler tunnel protected by overhanging tree branches whereas temperatures have soared in the tunnel open to the scorching sun, which believe it or not we have had several days, at least during August.

Contrasting climates have been created, Dorset's own Eden Project.

It is always very special to see the fruits of Spring planting' efforts mature to harvest after weeks of watering and weeding. And be sure we are not at Rylands short of informed knowledge and opinion about crop growing.

The fuchsias blossom in one environment and giant cucumbers are spawned in the other, vying for space hidden under the spikey expanse of lush green leaves.

Such mutants in size are quite bitter and an acquired taste but it's a shame to let them be wasted. Peeling them, and grating the white flesh, then adding a few teaspoons of apple vinegar brings them alive for salads or making an exotic coleslaw, thanks Bev for the inspiration.

CB 29/9/24

COUNTRYMEN'S COLUMN

We have welcomed several new men over the past few weeks: Richard, Geoff, Nigel and Brian G - a warm welcome to them all.

We have missed gentlemen who have been in hospital- it's especially lovely to see Bob and Cliff back with us and to Mike who has had a hip replacement but has now returned and is busy doing all the jobs around the farm. It's rumoured that it was the cakes that he missed the most!!

Rev Richard has also had a hip replacement and we hope to see him back again soon.



Geoff - with just a few of the last cucumbers!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 5th October: Volunteer Fair Wincanton.
- 8th October: Harvest Festival at the farm with songs, poetry and more cake!
- 17th October we will be joined by Chris Hannam from Dorset Forge and Fabrication who will be showing us how he has built his wonderful metal structures.
- 2nd November: come and see us at The Health and Well-being Event at The Dorford Centre, Dorchester.
- 19th December Christmas Event. Details tbc

Happy Birthdays!



To Harry



To Martin



One of the sculptures from Dorset Forge

COUNTRYMENUK

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A Country Journey

A Country Journey is a 200-mile multi-day cross-country walk by Roger Sewill and his horse, Scarlet, a native Dales Pony. Together they are journeying from Surrey to Dorset.

The expedition will take two weeks and cross five Counties: Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset. Roger and his horse will travel along ancient rural pathways and cross two cities, Winchester and Salisbury. En route, they will seek overnight accommodation from farmers and landowners. As a Land Agent and a Reading Agricultural Consultant, Roger knows how farmers and rural people value the countryside. The journey will create opportunities to meet many individuals and hear about their personal countryside journeys. As a Trustee of the Countrymen UK Club, he will raise awareness of the challenges rural people face with deteriorating health.

Many challenges lie in waiting, but Roger and Scarlet welcome the opportunity to share their adventure and the rural issues they encounter.

We will be sharing part of the journey with Roger and Scarlet and you can follow them on www.instagram.com/a_country_journey.

Their journey will finish at Rylands Farm on the 29th October when we very much look forward to hearing all about their travels.

If you would like to donate, please do so at:

<https://localgiving.org/fundraising/ACountryJourney>

