

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF LEE & LINCOMBE VILLAGES
AND SURROUNDING AREAS AND OUR VISITORS

LEE & LINK'EM NEWS

AUTUMN 2026

£1



GREETINGS AND FAREWELLS SIT SIDE BY SIDE
WATCHING OVER THE CHESS TOURNAMENT AT THE GRAMPUS INN

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CELEBRATING
30 YEARS
1997-2026



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Oct 19, 7pm	Lee Flower Show AGM, Memorial Hall
Oct 24, 10am-12pm	Villages working party (weather permitting)
Nov 8, 10.30am	Remembrance Sunday, St Matthew's Church
Nov 14, 7.30pm	Dave Kelly of the Blues Band in concert, Lee Memorial Hall
Dec 6, 5-7pm	Valley of Lights Outdoor Christmas lights switch-on followed by drinks at the Memorial Hall
Dec 13, 3.30pm	Chess Tournament, The Grampus Inn
Dec 17, 6pm	Carol Service, St Matthew's Church
Dec 24, 10pm	Christmas Communion Service, St Matthew's Church

Further ahead in 2027:

Jan 9, 10am	Fuchsia cutting
Jan 11, 6.30pm	Lee Gardening Club - first meeting, Lee Memorial Hall
Feb 2, 7.30pm	Lee Memorial Hall AGM
Feb 6, 7pm	Quiz
May 3, 10.30am	Lee Flower Show coffee morning, Lee Memorial Hall
May 21	Spring Fayre
Jul 29-30	Arts & Crafts Fair setup
Jul 31 - Aug 8	Arts & Crafts Fair
Aug 14	Lee Flower Show, Lee Memorial Hall
Aug 15	Ferret Racing, Pixie Meadow



PARKING

Village:

Memorial Hall ANPR pay to park
or residents can be added to the
hall parking list, email
lmhcarpark@gmail.com

Seafront:

Lee Bay National Trust Car Park -
ANPR pay to park or free for NT
members (scan your membership
card and enter your registration)



New regular feature - please send details of your events to advertise@loveleebay.co.uk

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS & VISITORS

EMERGENCY: CALL 999

First aiders: Becca Wyles 07870 908724
Bill Harvey 07460 209743 / 01271 862906

GoodSAM (goodsamapp.org): CPR trained?
Please join up to help in rural emergencies



DEFIBRILLATOR:

Meadow-facing wall of Lee Memorial Hall
What3Words: [///frames.cyber.cult](https://www.what3words.com/frames.cyber.cult)

No access code required (unlocked cabinet)



Combe Coastal GP surgery	01271 863119
NDDC out-of-hours emergency	01271 388240
DCC Highways - road hazards/drainage	0345 1551004
Environment Agency - river and coastal flooding	0800 807060
Power cuts	105 or powercut105 to report online
Lee and Lincombe Resilience Group	Becca Wyles 07870 908724 Alun Dobson 07870 440003

Hall bookings	leevillagehall@gmail.com
Lee Memorial Hall committee	chairLMH@proton.me
Watercolour Workshop	Jane Johncock 07857 452071
Men's Skittles Team	Alun Dobson 07870 440003
Lee & Lincombe Residents Association	residents@leeandlincombe.org.uk
Lee WI	Carolyn (Pres.) 07368 103825 Margaret (Sec.) 07711 529015

GREETINGS AND FAREWELLS



I am delighted that this 30th anniversary year edition of the Lee & Link'em News is not the last! In the last edition I explained why, unless some new volunteers came forward, this edition would be the last.

However, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response to wanting the Lee & Link'em News to

continue and, most importantly, several people offering to join the team of volunteers to support Gina-Luisa in its production and distribution.

I can gracefully retire confident that Gina-Luisa has a team around her that will ensure that the L & L News will continue with the high standards it has always maintained. I know that new ideas are already being generated so look out for these in the Spring 2027 edition as the L & L News enters its next 30 years!

Ian Stuart

The 2027 Team – Enid Bowman, Anne Easy, Gina-Luisa Groce, Kathryn Hone, Trevor Huggins, Becca Wyles.

We are delighted to welcome at least two new babies to the village. Dorothy (Dotty) was born in the spring. She is the daughter of Tabby and Toby in Lincombe. Jasper was born at the end of September, he is the son of Oakley and Harriet at Hillymouth.

the old schoolroom craft gallery



The old schoolroom was once the village school, now it is home to local contemporary artwork, ceramics, jewellery, cards, art supplies, books and maps.

Freshly ground coffee and other hot drinks available to takeaway, alongside snacks, ice creams and delicious treats!

www.wildcoast.co.uk

Instagram @ OldSchoolroom.leebay

Facebook- the old schoolroom craft gallery lee bay

Tel: 01271 874067



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Heather Booker of The Gate House, Lee, on 6th September. A full-time resident for over 60 years, Heather was also a very diligent member of the Lee & Link'em News team for many years. A full tribute to her can be found further on in this edition.

Finally, a warm thank you and very happy retirement to our long-standing Lee & Link'em News editor, Ian Stuart, as he steps down after many years volunteering at the helm. We are immensely grateful for his years of dedication in compiling and distributing every issue. Ian, enjoy your well-earned peace - and a blissfully quiet inbox every four months!

NEWS FROM ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH



I am writing this note on the morning of October 5th after a most successful Harvest Festival celebration the previous evening. There were well over 50 people in the church, including 15 in our special occasion choir in the gallery. All joined in lustily singing well-known hymns as well as hearing seasonal readings. The church was beautifully decorated, with many people also bringing items for the Ilfracombe Food Bank or contributing generously to the collection for the Food Bank. After the service we moved to the Memorial Hall for a splendid supper enjoyed by everyone. So an excellent occasion with many thanks to the choir and all who helped with decorating the church, and planning all aspects of the supper.

As well as the regular services every Sunday, there will be a number of special occasions in the coming months. Remembrance Sunday is on November 8th. There will be the usual special service in the church at 10.30am before we all go outside to the road in front of the War Memorial to observe the two-minute silence at 11.00am and the reading of the names on the memorial. Any road traffic always respectfully stops and, after the ceremony, drinks are served in the hall. Everyone is welcome to the service or just to the ceremony at the War Memorial.

Thoughts will soon turn towards Christmas and there will be two special occasions leading up to Christmas to

which everyone will be most warmly welcome. On Thursday 17th December at 6.00pm there will be a traditional Carol Service of carols and readings in the church followed by seasonal refreshments in the hall. Then, on Thursday 24th December at 10.00pm, Christmas Eve, there will be the Christmas Communion service in the church with the singing led by the choir. Full details will be published nearer the time but put the dates in your diaries!

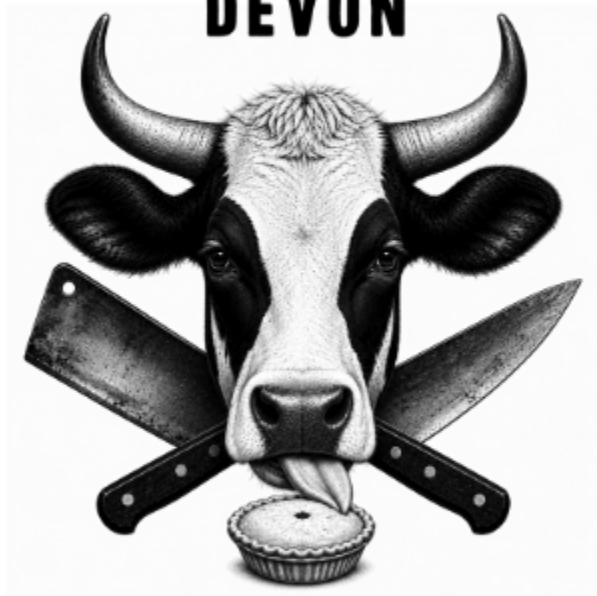
The summer season has gone well. It has been a pleasure to celebrate three weddings with the church full to overflowing on each occasion and, more recently, two baptisms. Over the summer period, hundreds of visitors have enjoyed the pleasure of the small but beautifully formed church. Many have commented with moving remarks about the building and its atmosphere. In the last issue of the News, Simon gave a report on the important work of keeping the building in good condition for all to enjoy and I thank him again for all he does. Similarly, I thank Louise and Daisy for the excellent way they run The Old Schoolroom Craft Gallery and Gift Shop. The combination of the church and gallery provides a most worthwhile attraction for visitors.

Thirty years ago, soon after moving to the village, I was asked if I played the organ – someone had noticed a piano in the house. The person who was organist at the time was not well and someone was needed to stand in for him when he was too ill to play. After much persuasion, I agreed to practise when no one else was around and play when it was necessary. Sadly, the gentleman died a month or so later. I have been playing nearly every Sunday since then. I would dearly love to hand over to someone else or to have someone to share with. Compared with most church organs, the one here is tiny, but it makes a decent sound, especially if played by a good organist - which I am not. If you or anyone you know would be interested in playing or just having a look at the organ, please contact me. Perhaps parents might encourage their children to have a go without any pressure on them. I would love to hear from anyone, however small or large your interest.

Ian Stuart, Churchwarden, 01271 863396
ian@leedevon.co.uk

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OPENING HOURS
TUESDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-4PM
SATURDAY 8AM-3PM

LEE BAY FORMER HOTEL AND CAR PARK EDGE TOWARDS THE FINISH LINE



Readers will have heard and seen that the National Trust Car Park is now open at the bay and seems to be doing good business, even if the inevitable teething troubles with the payment machine may have dented visitor numbers.

A new information board and map have replaced the old one, which the Lee & Lincombe Residents Association (LLRA) has requested for posterity (potentially to be placed elsewhere), and the National Trust is continuing to landscape using native plants. This is quite an investment, and is an encouraging sign of the Trust's commitment to the site, how it blends in with the local area and ensuring that nature is considered.

The next step for the car park is the build of the café (see adjoining article), which is expected to be completed in late February.

Elsewhere, although the development of the old hotel may have hit a few challenges, it now at least looks close to completion, expected by the end of the year.

The focus of the current work is on the outside public area, reflecting the old seating area which was in the same place, on the corner opposite the Mill. The hope is that this becomes somewhere to sit and enjoy the view, particularly at high tide when the beach is inaccessible. Progress is also being made on landscaping the site.

Inside the new apartments, the focus is currently on the trades: plumbing, electricians, as well as plastering and fitting out kitchens and bathrooms.

Although we understand sales are slow, we hope to welcome new residents in the spring.

Naturally, we hope that the end of the work brings new neighbours who will take part in and add character and life to the bay, and remove a source of disruption and concern... It's been a long time coming!

Matt Dearden, Chair, LLRA



*Good food, cooked with love and
local, seasonal produce*

FORE STREET, ILFRACOMBE

AUTUMN / WINTER OPENING HOURS

WEDNESDAYS • 11AM-2PM

Coffee, cake & light deli-style lunches

THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS • 11AM-4PM

Lunch / brunch, deli, coffee & cakes

SUNDAYS • 1PM-6PM

Home-cooked Sunday roasts

& homemade classic puds

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THE NEW CAFÉ: MEET THE MERMAID

The couple behind the thriving Porthole Café and Kiosk on Marine Drive in Woolacombe has won the lease for the new coffee kiosk in the National Trust car park at Lee Bay. Beth Newsome and Jim Coslett – actually brother- and sister-in-law – plan to open the kiosk on March 1 next year.

It will be called the Mermaid, but don't expect it to feature lurid, fishy maidens. The inspiration was actually a song by Joni Mitchell, 'Carey', from her Blue album:

*Come on down to the Mermaid Café, and I will
Buy you a bottle of wine
And we'll laugh and toast to nothing
And smash our empty glasses down*

"We both love Joni Mitchell," says Beth, "and I've always liked the idea of a Mermaid Café. We were thinking for ages about the name and referencing the seaweed and woods of Lee Bay. For a while the working title was the Kelp Hut, but then the Mermaid just came to me and we both loved it."

The kiosk is yet to be built but now has planning permission. Unlike the Porthole it will have no indoor seating, just the food counter and an accessible toilet. But Natural England has provided picnic tables, some of which will be on the higher ground behind the building with a view of the sea, the others in front of the cabin with some kind of canopy to shelter customers from rain.

From March to Easter it will be open five days a week, then seven days throughout the summer until October half term. Opening hours provisionally will be 10am to 4pm, though may be adjusted according to demand. "Like the Porthole, if we say we're open we'll be open, whatever the weather," says Jim.

The pair say they don't want the Mermaid just to be a "Porthole 2". Its branding is currently in the hands of a design firm in Braunton. "There's something a bit mystical about Lee," Beth says. "We're keen to reflect the sea in front and the valley and woods behind. There will be lots of natural textures – wood and stone – to try to make it blend in. Lee is a special location and it must fit in."

The menu, too, may have differences from the Porthole,



Beth Newsome and Jim Coslett
at the Porthole in Woolacombe

though it will maintain the principles of serving Devon-roasted coffee and world food using local produce, including vegetables from Amary Farm and ice cream from South Molton.

Given the history of Lee and its tea gardens, the pair are mulling a nod to the cream teas and pasties tradition "with a twist" – something they chose not to offer in Woolacombe where there is an abundance of tea rooms. "There could be some surprising items that are unique to Lee," Beth says.

They are also committed to sustainability, so use real crockery rather than plastic, and will rent or sell reusable cups.

The pair have been working together since 2013. They founded a street food company called Seadog, which some will remember from pop-up feasts they put on in the Memorial Hall. Jim once ran the Olive Room in Fore Street, Ilfracombe, and Beth had various roles as a chef locally.

Once the Mermaid is up and running, Jim and Beth are hoping for regular local customers as well as holidaymakers. They don't see the café as being in competition with the village's existing businesses, the Grampus and the Old Schoolroom.

"The more options there are, the more people will come and have a wander around. It's good for everybody," Jim says.

Kathryn Hone

THE RIDE OF THEIR LIVES



Two local residents tell Trevor Huggins about their monumental cycle along the length of Britain.

If you enjoy an occasional bike ride, the hills around North Devon are challenging enough. For Lee and Lincombe's Julian Witts and Iain Williamson, who have just cycled from the southwest to John O'Groats, their idea of a challenge is very different.

The two men covered over 2,000 miles in their separate journeys, with Julian fundraising for a local charity on a 12-day, organised trip with a group of riders, while Iain made a solo, month-long tour of family, friends and old haunts. However, they both arrived at John O'Groats on September 25 – and promptly dived into the freezing waters of the harbour, as if the cycling hadn't been challenging enough...

Despite cycling 'only' 900 miles, both agreed that Julian, whose journey started at Land's End, had the rougher ride. "I realised on the third day that I just had to keep to my own pace, as the others were so much faster," he says. "But it meant that I was going to be pretty much a solitary cyclist, meeting up with the others at lunch and coffee breaks." The days were long, with the alarm set for 6am to get ready for the tougher rides, which finished around 6pm, and the weather was mainly wet and miserable.

Yet there were also wonderful moments. "The Lancashire Dales was a beautiful day, the roads were

lovely, winding and undulating," he recalls. "And there were some beautiful bridges – Clifton in Bristol, a couple in Scotland, and Ironbridge which really stood out."

Other high points included the kindness of strangers when they learned about Julian's bid to raise money for Adventure Therapy, an Ilfracombe-based charity that organises outdoor activities to support people facing physical or mental health challenges. "I think the nature of this charity really struck a chord with them," he says. "It's about helping people who can't make that leap into enjoying all the therapy that nature's got available to us, like surfing, horse riding, archery, forest crafts or just hiking. On the road, I was really grateful for how very supportive everyone has been for me here - their generosity buoyed me up every hill. It was a real community effort." At the time of writing, his JustGiving page had raised over £2,000 including Gift Aid.

However, no trip is without danger. "And I did have one near-death experience," he admits, remembering a day spent mainly in heavy, fast-moving traffic along rain-swept A-roads between Warrington and Preston. Eventually, his route took him onto a quiet lane in beautiful countryside, the sun came out and he began to slowly wend his way up a steep hill. "And then, all of a



THE RIDE OF THEIR LIVES, CONTD.

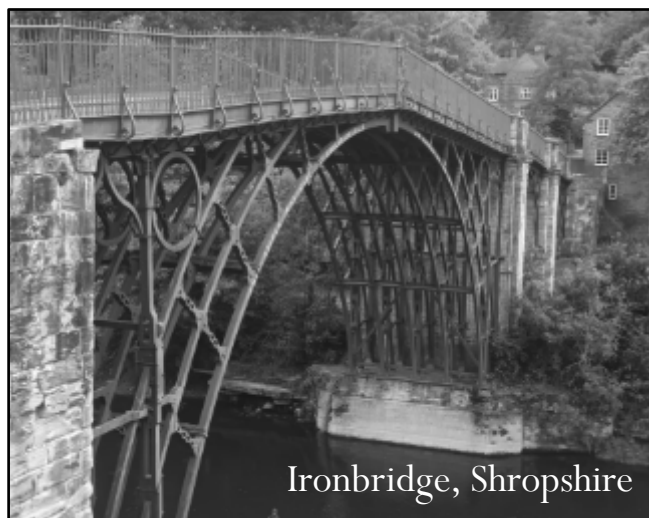
sudden, all hell breaks loose – the bike is juddering, and I'm almost thrown completely off it! A grey squirrel had just leapt from the hedge and right into the spokes of my wheel. If I'd been zooming down the other side of the hill at 25-30mph, instead of going up, it could have been the end of me." Fortunately, both Julian and the squirrel lived to tell the tale, and there was a happier encounter to come with the furry species. "One of the great moments of the trip was seeing a little red squirrel dancing along in front of me in the Scottish Highlands."

For Iain, the aim was to celebrate his 70th year by doing something memorable – and enjoying the ride.

"My longest day was Julian's shortest, and I had a couple of hours most days when I could visit a ruined abbey, a castle, an art gallery or Hadrian's Wall," he says. "So, I had time to make the most of it and I was incredibly lucky with the weather." Starting out from Lincombe, his route to see friends and family took him eastward into Wiltshire and across to Cambridge for an echo of his student days at Downing College. "It was absolutely marvellous, I arrived in King's Parade and the Copper Kettle café, where I had spent far too many hours as a student, was still there, as were two of the pubs I used to go to. I also found my old room in college, although I didn't go in. Fifty years on, it made me feel really old!"

From the Fens, his route tracked north and west to the Yorkshire Dales, Cumbria, the Scottish Highlands, the Isle of Arran and back across the water to meet Julian, via the northernmost point of the British mainland, Dunnet Head. "The hardest day by far, and the only one where I struggled, was from Slaithwaite to Settle in the Dales, because there were four monumental climbs." Three of them featured 20 per cent gradients, the other 10 per cent, with a bike carrying 10kg of luggage.

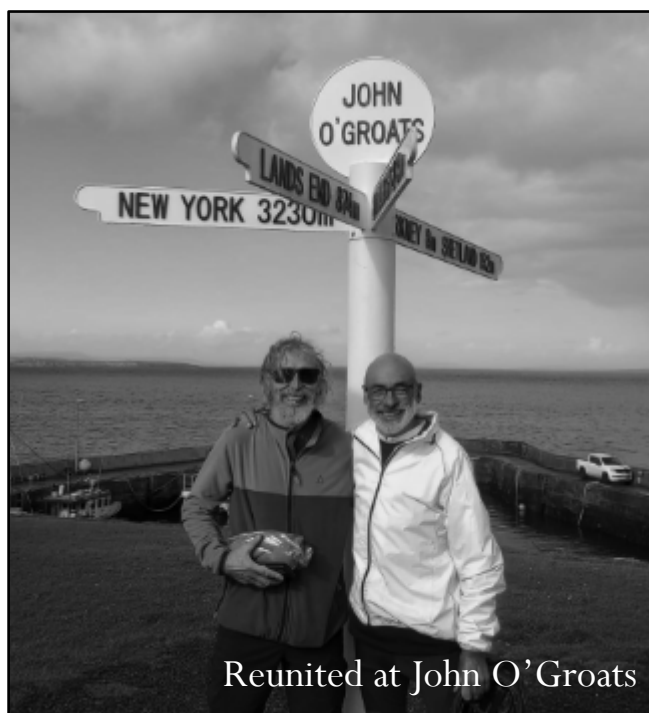
Special moments included England's highest mainline railway station at Dent, the "absolute heaven" of seeing thousands of seabirds feeding during the ferry trip from Troon to Arran, and "the godsend" of a pop-up pub serving food towards the end of a gruelling ride from Fort William to Inverness. Along with Arran, the other location to stand out was the small town of Cromarty, on the southern shore of the Cromarty Firth. "It reminded me of Lee," he says. "It was right at the end of



Ironbridge, Shropshire

the road, and yet it seemed to be a thriving little community, with a community sauna in a horsebox on the beach, a cinema, and some lovely small business units with fantastic views out over the firth."

Clearly, both men's journeys have lit a flame. Iain is mulling a north-south ride through France with a small tent and an eye for a municipal campsite. As for Julian: "There's not a shred of me that wants to do Land's End to John O'Groats again. But I'm really looking forward to getting on my bike again and having my next adventure. And this time, it'll be about enjoying it as you go, and taking a bit longer..."



Reunited at John O'Groats

A NEW FACE, A NEW MENU AND NEW BEERS AT THE GRAMPUS



It has been a fantastic summer at The Grampus Inn, packed with sunshine, great food, and a vibrant atmosphere both inside the pub and out in the garden. Recently voted the eleventh best pub in the whole of the UK for 2026 by Time Out, we are hugely grateful to everyone in the village and surrounding area for your continued encouragement and support. Seeing so many familiar faces through our doors means the world to us.

As we head into winter, there are plenty of exciting changes underway, starting with a few new faces on the team. We are thrilled to welcome our new Head Chef alongside our new Pub Manager, Myles Smith. Myles, an award-winning documentary sound engineer who moved from Bristol to Ilfracombe as a teenager, joined us in August after a successful career in film and TV. Returning to The Grampus is a true full-circle moment for him, as his very first job at 14 years old was washing dishes right here in our kitchen. Together, our new team is hard at work developing fresh ideas, special events, and an exciting new winter menu set to launch in November, which includes the recent and already popular addition of a traditional Sunday roast lunch served alongside our usual offerings.

We are also expanding our drinks selection across the board. On the taps, keep an eye out for two standout

arrivals: Grampus Fraoch, a light brown ale brewed right here in our on-site microbrewery using harvested heather flowers instead of traditional hops, and Tomorrow Lager, a crisp draught non-alcoholic option from Bristol's Wiper and True brewery. These join a growing range of low and alcohol-free beers, ciders, and spirits alongside our established house ales.

Our evening entertainment features a blend of familiar weekly favourites and fresh weekend additions. Weekdays keep their lively rhythm with pub games and skittles on Tuesdays, Malarkey band practice on Wednesdays, and our traditional open mic night on Fridays. On Saturdays from 8pm, we are launching a new, relaxed acoustic session designed as a stripped-back, drum-free evening where singer-songwriters can showcase their talent in a chilled setting. Whether you are a seasoned musician trying out new material, entering a games tournament, or just looking for a cosy spot to enjoy live music, everyone is welcome.

With Christmas celebrations, special event nights, and much more in the works, there is plenty to look forward to in the coming months. Be sure to keep an eye on our social media pages for all the latest announcements and upcoming winter opening hours. Thank you once again for making this summer so memorable, and we look forward to welcoming you in by the fire throughout the winter months.

Bill Harvey



THE GRAMPUS INN - CHESS TOURNAMENT

CHESS TOURNAMENT

3.30PM SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2026

THE GRAMPUS INN

NORTH DEVON EX34 8LR



- FREE participation
- We have a limited number of chess sets but please bring one if possible
- 10 minutes time limit for each player per game
- We will use the 'chess clock' app on phones to time the games
- All ages welcome (children must be accompanied by an adult)
- WhatsApp message Joe Steer on 07309 016368 to sign up (places are limited)



An all-comers chess tournament has become a regular feature of the Grampus over the past year, with the latest held successfully on October 4th and the next scheduled on December 13th. "Players are aged eight to 80 and it's just a good atmosphere, it's fun," says Bill Harvey.

Organised by Joe Steer since 2025, they are held about four times a year on a Sunday, with everyone playing three preliminary rounds, followed by a grand final. The winner

gets to hold aloft – but not take away – the Westminster College Chess Cup won by Bill's father more than 70 years ago.

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LEE FLOWER SHOW



The Flower Show broke with an almost 100-year tradition this summer, being held for the first time on a Saturday in mid-August instead of a Thursday in late July. We realised that young families and working people couldn't make it on a Thursday – a hangover from when many villagers were taken up with 'changeover day' on a Saturday.

Finding a free Saturday in a summer full of weddings and events at the Memorial Hall was not easy but we opted for August 15. This meant that some different flowers and produce were in season. Added to that, the heat wave and drought were challenging for competitors. However, the 335 entries – and adult entrants – were higher than in recent years, which was terrific.

It may have been dry and dusty outside but on the day the hall was ablaze with colour and sweet perfumes from the glorious floral displays. Many visitors were entranced by the sight.



Three of our four regular judges were unavailable this year. St John's Garden Centre, which used to provide two judges, pulled out, and the judge for cakes and other home-made goodies was injured in an accident just beforehand. But luckily, local expertise was on hand. Will Davis, from Amary Farm, agreed to judge the produce; horticulturist Paul Hipkin assessed the pot



plants, including some stunning Chairman's Choice fuchsias; and Lyndon Worrall stepped in at the last minute, using his catering expertise to taste and judge the domestic entries.

Also essential to the success of the day were those volunteers who put up all the display tables then cleared everything away at the end. The show can only function with the support of our village communities.

We were disappointed that we had very few entries from children in the show. We would like to find ways of encouraging them to take part, and to make the show

LEE FLOWER SHOW, CONTD.

fun for them. They are essential for keeping our flower show alive in the future. Parents, do let us know if you have any ideas.

Next year's show will be held on Saturday, August 14, and our coffee morning will be on Monday May 3 from 10.30am, both in the Memorial Hall. Please spread the word, and start planning your planting!



A gardening club for Lee

The Flower Show committee has decided to launch a new gardening club in the village to encourage gardeners to share their expertise.

The first meeting will be in the Memorial Hall on Monday January 11 at 6.30pm. The cost will be £3 per adult, £5 per couple, and no charge for children. This is to cover the cost of hiring the hall. If it's successful it will be held on the second Monday of every month. In the future we hope to host speakers and even garden visits, as well as being a forum for people's gardening questions, and plant and seed shares. Please do come along!

Tony Seymour



RECLAIMING OUR VILLAGES

It's taken many (too many!) years, but we can finally see Lee and Lincombe emerge from the uncertainty and disruption of the building work at the bay. As the evolution of the former hotel nears completion and the National Trust car park opens, the LLRA wanted to seize the opportunity for residents to reclaim our villages.



This was the idea behind our plan for a rolling series of working parties: for residents to help pull back areas that have become overgrown or neglected.

The idea is not to try to manicure the valley (as someone said: "This is North Devon, not Surrey!"), but to ensure the villages are welcoming, well-kept and ever more pleasant places to live. The hope is that by demonstrating that people who live here care about where they live that visitors may also treat Lee and Lincombe with respect.



The first two-hour working party saw 15 of our neighbours come out in glorious sunshine to tackle an area where gulleys and drains were blocked and which posed challenges for drivers' visibility and for walkers. The impact of the work was greater than any of us expected; with the road effectively widened and gulleys and drains cleared for the autumn and winter months ahead. Special thanks to Will from Amary Farm for



disposing of the cuttings and scrapings, ensuring it all went back to the land.

Enthusiasm for a second party was unanimous and a straw poll conducted on the day selected the sharp bend opposite Park Cottage/Charlton Cleave as the next project; the aim again to widen the usable road, improve visibility and space for pedestrians – as well as revealing the stream which runs beside the road here and which has been lost as a feature.



The provisional date is Saturday October 24, and we hope to hold one session each month – being flexible to do so only when the weather is amenable; we want these to be fun, social occasions rather than hard labour! Thank you to all those who took part (or would have done, had they been available). Hope to see even more of you at the next working party later this month.

Matt Dearden



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE LEE & LINK'EM NEWS FLASHBACK TO 1997: VILLAGE MEMORIALS

John Giddey, who had just celebrated his 91st birthday and was Lee's oldest inhabitant when this article was published in 1997, describes how the 1914-18 war memorials came into being.

World War I had just ceased and Lee, like so many small parishes and hamlets, was counting up its losses. Sixteen young lads had perished. I was a lad of 13 and knew them all. The village was devastated. What could be done to repay them? Someone suggested a memorial of some kind. Everybody thought this a wonderful idea. A meeting of the village was called in the schoolroom under the chairmanship of the late Rev. W. McMichael, who had lost one son and other relatives. The room was packed. It was finally agreed to pick from three proposals, - a tablet in the church, a wayside cross or a village hall.

Cross

It was thought best to place the wayside cross on the right-hand side of the church. Ways and means were then discussed to raise the money. Whist drives were popular and Mr & Mrs Armstrong gave permission for the Old Farm rooms to be used. Mr and Mrs Giddey Senior also agreed to let their Wayside Tea Rooms for anything, 'teas', games etc. Donations were given, and collection boxes placed at various points in the village. Meetings regarding progress were called from time to time. After a very short time we all assembled in the schoolroom to learn that enough money had been raised for the 'Wayside Cross' to be put in hand. Mr Huxtable, a stonemason of Ilfracombe, was given the work, and in a very short time we all assembled outside the church for a dedication service by the Bishop of Exeter. Our beautiful cross stands today in all its glory and remembrance. A service is held each Armistice Day.

Tablet

There was found to be a huge sum of money left over, and it was agreed that the tablet in the church should be fixed. This was quickly put in hand, and the tablet can be seen in the church on the left-hand side.

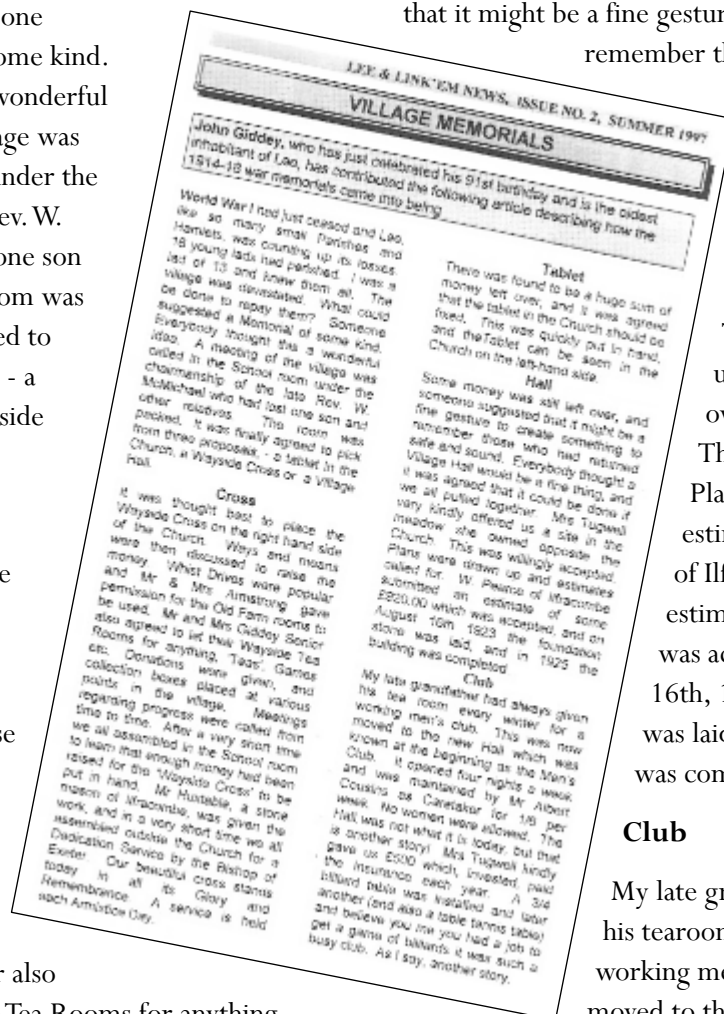
Hall

Some money was still left over, and someone suggested that it might be a fine gesture to create something to remember those who had returned safe

and sound. Everybody thought a village hall would be a fine thing, and it was agreed that it could be done if we all pulled together. Mrs Tugwell very kindly offered us a site in the meadow she owned opposite the church. This was willingly accepted. Plans were drawn up and estimates called for. W. Pearce of Ilfracombe submitted an estimate of some £920 which was accepted, and on August 16th, 1923, the foundation stone was laid, and in 1925 the building was completed.

Club

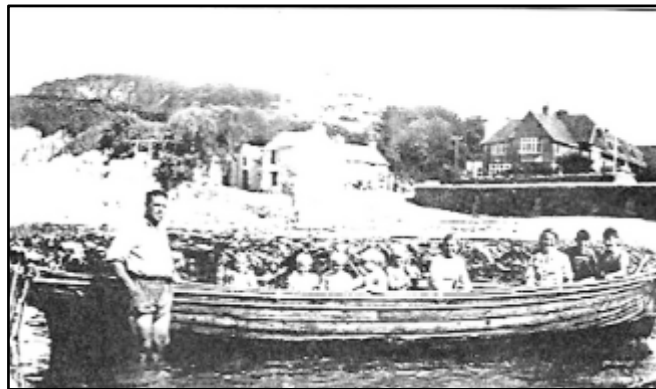
My late grandfather had always given his tearoom every winter for a working men's club. This was now moved to the new hall which was at the beginning as the Men's Club. It opened four nights a week and was maintained by Mr Albert Cousins as caretaker for 1/6 per week. No women were allowed. The hall was not what it is today, but that is another story! Mrs Tugwell kindly gave us £500 which, invested, paid the Insurance each year. A billiard table was installed and later another (and also a table tennis table) and believe you me you had a job to get a game of billiards it was such a busy club. As I say, another story.



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE LEE & LINK'EM NEWS

FLASHBACK TO 1997: PIRATES ON PARADE

This summer there will be no boat trips from Lee. Kate Madden interviews Bill Cook, whose family ran the trade for more than 60 years.



Charlie Cook and the Pirate of Lee circa 1950. The children include Michael Wilkins of Millfield (2nd from right) and Peter Richey (3rd from left)

"Anybody here for a motor boat trip? Half an hour around the coast to the lighthouse and back ... it's lovely out on the water today." These dulcet tones will be heard no more. Bill Cook, now in his 78th year, will no longer stand at the foreshore helping people on and off the boat and regaling visitors with tales of his lifetime spent on the water. Last year saw the clinker-built Pirate of Lee II finally put out to grass after European safety regulations made its continued use as a pleasure boat commercially unviable. Lee Bay will be a poorer place for its absence. The Pirate II was the last in a series of boats which have served visitor and local alike nearly every summer since before World War I.

This then is a fitting time for a memorial to Lee boats of yore; and inextricably woven into this boating history is the story of a local seafaring family, the Cooks. With the help of Bill Cook we remember times when boats were an integral part of village life.

Bill's earliest boating memories are of two boats, The Lion and The Molly which were 20 foot long. They were owned by Mr & Mrs Kingdon, the parents of Elaine Huxtable and Barbara Tarran, both of whom still live in Lee. Following the death of George Kingdon in 1933, Mr Pilley, (a local landowner who lived at Cliffe and who employed Bill's uncle Charlie Cook as a gardener), asked Charlie to help Mrs Kingdon's boatmen, Puff

Lovering and Bill Barbbery, to man the two boats throughout the summer.

This was a full-time summer job. Both boats were operated by oars only and Charlie used The Lion to land and return people from some six motor boats such as The Rowena which travelled out from Ilfracombe with visitors. The boats were supposed to carry 12 people but sometimes took up to 20! Bill says there were enough lifebuoys on board, but they weren't necessary as "people used their common sense back then." Trippers might stop for tea in numerous tea gardens, then return to the boats; or they might walk across the Tors or take a Charabanc - departing every 20 minutes in summer - to return to Ilfracombe.

It is clear that Lee Bay was a far busier place in the 1930s than ever it is now. Bill remembers queues four-a-breast stretching from the beach slipway to the bandstand (that small area of parking above the White House) with people waiting to board boat or bus.

Charlie, Puff and Bill charged 2d each way for their water taxis and split the proceeds four ways with Mrs Kingdon. They continued to operate each summer until the outbreak of war in September 1939. The boats were then laid up for the duration behind what is now the Beach House but was then just a field belonging to the hotel where two cows were kept to supply the hotel with milk.

Charlie Cook spent most of the war on minesweepers in the Irish Channel, whilst the older men, Puff and Bill stayed at Lee. After the war, it was felt that the boats were no longer suitable for their task and Mrs Kingdon, deciding she didn't wish to invest in a new boat, gave her blessing for Charlie to have his own built and for him to take over the shoreline activities.

Charlie ordered his boat from Mr Tommy Waters, who ran a small boat yard in Appledore, then the centre of a thriving shipbuilding industry. The boat was due to be delivered at Whitsun but disaster struck when the wood selected for the craft was incinerated in a fire at Dulverton Mill. In spite of this setback, half a dozen men managed to construct the 22-foot Pirate of Lee in just two weeks and the new boat was on the water in time for the summer of 1947.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE LEE & LINK'EM NEWS

FLASHBACK TO 1997: PIRATES ON PARADE, CONTD.

The Pirate, as well as being larger than The Lion and The Molly, differed in one other significant respect. She was powered not by Charlie's biceps but by a Seagull outboard motor. The Pirate arrived in Lee in a lorry with just the water line painted in. Charlie Cook treated the wood with a 50/50 mix of paraffin and linseed, varnished it and painted her name on a wooden plaque attached to the stern. She was then launched without ceremony, to do duty for the next 20 years.

In the same year Charlie's nephew Bill returned to Lee, having spent the previous 12 years in the Merchant Navy on cargo ships. He was to spend the rest of his working life combining his gardening skills with time on the water. Some years before, Bill had bought an Appledore salmon boat from Mr White of Damage Hue for £5, which his father Lou Cook had looked after whilst he was away at sea. On his return he ordered from Waters a new 20-foot boat, with a centre keel for sailing, which he named The Beatrice Mary. Although working as a gardener and later as a chauffeur, he still managed to man the boats on summer evenings and weekends.

Bill's father Lou, who until 1939 had tended the golf links on Damage Cliffs, left for Falmouth at the outbreak of war to work on tankers. On his second trip to Canada, he narrowly escaped death with the rest of the crew when his ship was torpedoed. Fortunately, Lou was in the stern, and the bow took the brunt of the impact. He returned to Lee in 1941, having been sent to Exeter hospital suffering from back problems, and spent the remaining years of the war working in Combe Martin and Ilfracombe on Target ships. Lou had a 20-foot boat called The Swan. Following the war and after the closure of the golf course, he joined Bill and Charlie on the water. For years, all three boats were moored in the bay at Black Pit.

A few local youngsters such as Chris Clement used to help out, loading and unloading passengers in busy times, though their aid was sought by Charlie and Lou in the main. The younger Bill didn't have much time for them. "They were never fast enough and always off getting up to trouble!"

Now that the boats were equipped with motors, they were able to go further, and the men ran trips to Bull

Point lighthouse as well as mackerel fishing trips, often late into the evenings. Sometimes, if the tide was high, they might need to land their passengers at Sandy Cove where they could scramble up the cliffs (in the days before the National Trust provided the wooden steps) and walk over the top to return to Lee. However late Bill got back, his wife Betty was always waiting up with a hot meal prepared, or ready to cook some of the evening's catch.

As well as piloting the boats and gardening, the men, especially in the winter months supplemented their incomes with rabbiting. They rented large amounts of land from the beach up to Lincombe and armed with a whippet, two lurchers and a lamp powered by a motorcycle battery, Bill and his father and uncle made a tidy sum selling rabbits at 6d each to the villagers, residents of Ilfracombe, and, when the haul was good, to Mr Gammon, the Morteheo butcher.

Lou Cook retired from the boats in the 1960s with increasingly poor health and The Swan was then sold. He died in 1969 having suffered for 10 years from a duodenal ulcer. Bill believes that the shock of being torpedoed contributed substantially to his illness.



Bill Cook at the helm in the late 1950s

Charlie and Bill continued operating their boats. In Whitsun 1963 Bill had replaced the Beatrice Mary with Beatrice Mary II. After sending her back to Appledore to be fitted with an 8 horsepower Stuart Turner inboard motor he launched her in November on the same day

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE LEE & LINK'EM NEWS

FLASHBACK TO 1997: PIRATES ON PARADE, CONTD.

that President Kennedy was assassinated. However, passenger numbers were dwindling.

The closure of the railways and the rise in car ownership meant fewer people walking over the Tors and fewer pleasure trips out from Ilfracombe.

The last motor boat to land passengers at Lee was the Elizabeth in 1963. Nevertheless, Bill and Charlie were kept fairly busy until disaster struck the Pirate of Lee in September 1968.

As usual, the boats were moored in the bay. Suddenly, following a thunderstorm, southwest winds swung into the northeast. This wrenched the stern from the Pirate, which was thrown onto the rocks and wrecked. The Beatrice Mary II fared better. She filled with water and sank at her moorings but survived intact.

Undaunted by this disaster, Charlie ordered the Pirate of Lee II, again from Waters at Appledore, and she arrived on the 1st of January 1969. Charlie and Bill resumed their trade the following summer.

Charlie died from cancer aged 65 late in 1977, leaving the Pirate II to Bill, who was not sure at first what to do with her. After a year he decided to sell The Beatrice Mary II, which drew 8 inches more water than the Pirate (which had been built especially for Lee Bay). He owned a spare Stuart Turner engine which he had Tommy Waters put inboard for him and he re-launched the Pirate at Whitsun 1979.

Bill had sold the boat to Jeff Tulett in 1987 and had continued to help in the summer, but now, owing to licensing requirements, the boat sits high and dry outside Jeff Tulett's bungalow in Home Lane. Since 1945, licences have been required for pleasure boats and all the Lee boats conformed with the requirements - life saving apparatus for 32 including life jackets and belts, flares, smoke floats, compass, lights, torch, ship-to-shore radio. However, this is no longer enough. To meet new regulations, as of next year boats need an additional life raft and another telephone, two crew on board at all times and even a shoreside office, expenses that cannot be justified by a few £2 summer trips around the lighthouse.

So, the Pirate of Lee II is now looking for a new owner. For the information of potential purchasers, the Pirate

is in better than shipyard condition. The Cooks take great care of their

possessions, as a glance at Bill and Betty's home, The Schoolhouse, or a glimpse of their immaculate Renault, will testify. Tommy Waters, who built the family's boats, used to say: "Let the Cooks have the boat for two years and all the rough spots will be rubbed off - it'll be worth more than they paid for it!"

So, it's goodbye to the old Pirates, but perhaps we should end on a positive note. Whilst it's sad to see the last of the Pirates, it's good to see some boating activity remains in the bay. Peter Richey still rows out for miles - in a boat also built by Tommy Waters - for a mackerel for tea or to fetch shopping from Ilfracombe.



Bill Cook and passengers circa 1950

The regular summer visitors, the Bradshaws, who have long connections with Lee, always come equipped with a dinghy. Other regulars on the water are Angus Eveleigh and myself, Luke Irvine and Sophie and the Nustedt lads. Meanwhile, the Witts family at Wrinklewood have introduced their kayaks and take to the water daily in these seagoing craft, often going as far as Minehead and Lundy. It's not quite a case of use it or lose it, but it would be tragic if the understanding, love and respect for the sea which only comes from getting out there amongst it were to be lost to all. Here's then to all the Pirates of Lee, past present and future.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE LEE & LINK'EM NEWS

FLASHBACK TO 1997: MEMORIES OF LEE IN 1939

The following letter was sent from a lady who had worked in Lee Bay for one summer just prior to the outbreak of World War II and whom I met revisiting the area this spring with her daughter and husband.

"As a young woman I was employed on an irregular basis to travel and demonstrate for Viyella House, Guerlain and Chanel perfumes. In the summer of 1939, through The Lady magazine, I found a 'live in' job in The Smugglers Cottage, to work in the cafe for three months. The cafe was connected to the hotel, and we had meals provided and no housework.

Miss B was in charge. She had just sold her hotel in Cirencester. Sally, a slim and attractive young woman, and I shared a bedroom, and John, the odd job man, swept and cleaned and looked after the toilets and lived elsewhere. I was a good swimmer and often swam out to the buoy anchored on the far edge of the bay.

Shortly after my arrival I was in the kitchen. John was sweeping the floor and I was astonished to hear him

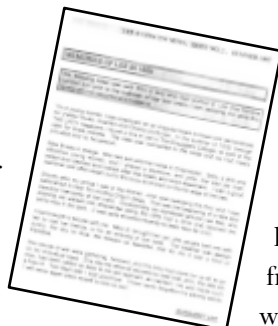
reciting Gray's Elegy. That was the beginning of a rare and beautiful friendship of the mind. Occasionally we wandered around Lee Bay. One evening

we walked into Ilfracombe along the cliffs, had a drink and returned the same way in the dark. (I was quite shocked recently to learn how far it is!)

I had brought a bicycle with me. Miss B. brought her car, she usually took me with her to visit her friends, or for an evening in the hotel. The weather was always sunny, the sky so blue, the flowers so beautiful, that for me it was a kind of paradise.

The clouds of war were gathering, however, and the time had come for us all to go on our individual ways. One day we were all stunned to hear that John, the odd job man, had been called up back to his old regiment, as captain! He was made such a fuss of. Two days later I said goodbye. I have never forgotten his parting words "I will never again allow myself to sink so low".

Margaret Lee



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REVIEW: GEORGE AND THE DRAG QUEEN, PIPELINE THEATRE OCTOBER 1, LEE MEMORIAL HALL



Kiko Gomersall as the drag queen

We were thrilled to host Pipeline Theatre's production of 'George and the Drag Queen'. A full house appeared captivated by the superb performances of the three actors, who took us on a journey that started with light-hearted, fete-related banter to a much deeper examination of the isolation and loneliness, persecution and trauma and fear and hope that the characters had experienced.

The village fete setting was a comforting and hugely appropriate background for a village hall audience, but the narrative took us into the war zones of Syria, the chaos of refugee camps, the loneliness of the misfit in the family and the school yard and even centuries back to the Crusades. As the story unfolds, we discover the connections that bind the characters together and the impacts they have on each other's lives.

It is a deeply moving play, brilliantly written and realised using just a revolving gazebo and clever lighting and sound design to immerse us in the story. A fete day narrative over the tannoy and some excellent fete references keep the tragedy and comedy beautifully balanced. As several people said:

"It really should be required watching", and "It's worthy of the West End".

Thanks so much to the audience for entering into the fete spirit and baking such a fabulous array of biscuits! We're pleased to announce that the evening raised about £300 for the Pickwell organisation from the raffle, refreshments and our 20 percent of ticket sales revenue.

If you didn't manage to see Pipeline's show, they are touring it nationally for the next few months <https://www.pipeline theatre.com/tour-dates.html> Go if you can, or send a friend in Yorkshire if you can't!

Kate Madden



Gomersall with Alan Munden

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BEAFORD IN LEE

Bryony Shaw was the first Lee resident to work with Beaford as a local promoter. When she moved away, a few of us took over so as not to lose this brilliant initiative. Over the last 12 or so years we have hosted some wonderful events, from puppet theatre, jazz bands, a cappella groups to a range of theatrical productions. We have met some fantastic performers in the process, often putting them up overnight ourselves, or seeking other villagers to do so.

Being a local promoter for Beaford, I am struck by how often people say to me after an event how 'professional' the performers were or how they didn't expect it to be so good. I guess a village hall venue is often associated with amateur dramatics (no disrespect intended as am-dram is also often brilliant) but the fact is, that the performances are professional because the performers are! It is their job and it is the brilliant arts organisation that is Beaford that helps to sustain these artists and companies in an era of constantly shrinking funding and audiences.

Beaford's work to support rural touring and bring affordable arts events to the far corners of North Devon is nothing short of heroic in my opinion. Their long-standing experience and expertise means that they are one of the few regional arts organisations that have consistently received Arts Council funding which enables them to continue to support and promote a wide range of events.

I am often congratulated after an event. This is kind but quite frankly misplaced, all we – Alex Giffoni, Alan Bannister and I – have done, is turn up to a Beaford presentation event in a village hall somewhere and chosen from a menu of a dozen or so suggested performances – be they music, dance, theatre, circus or whatever – which we feel may be suitable to stage in Lee. We are entirely reliant on – and never let down by – the excellent knowledge, taste and ultimate choices of Mark Wallace and the Beaford team.

Over the years our own choices from Beaford's offerings have often been influenced by our own personal interests and stage of life. I tend to favour theatre, and when my children were young perhaps learnt more to events for youngsters. The others are perhaps keener on the musical offerings. So we pick

our favourites, decide together what we think will work in Lee, check dates are available and then ask Beaford if we can have it. There are many local promoters so we don't always get our first choices, but our consistently supportive audiences tend to work in our favour.

We have staged events in venues other than the Memorial Hall: the church, the Yoga Barn, the Grampus, Yomer Woods and even a show that took the audience through Borough Woods and up over the fields of Shaftsboro Farm by starlight!

Of particular appeal to me when I first began promoting for Beaford, was the affordability factor for the audience. Taking my family to one of our local theatres was always too expensive for us; getting involved in Beaford, I was able to organise kids' shows in Lee and Woolacombe where a family could attend for just over £20. Nowadays, when we put on Beaford shows in Lee at a tenner an adult, when I know I've just paid ninety quid for a matinee in the West End and the train will cost me that again, I think it's crazy to charge so little. But then I remember how important access is and I hope that those of you who come to support the shows will continue to do so and spread the word, so that we can help keep the arts available to all.

At our last Beaford offering, George and the Drag Queen, I was especially struck by the importance of community. Looking around, I realised I knew everyone in the audience and was moved that we all appeared to share empathy with the powerful themes of such excellent theatre. On the lighter side, we could all relate to the play's setting at a village fete and I absolutely shared Maddie's pride in her biscuit triumphs. The fact that so many people couldn't believe I had made the cake for the raffle but attributed it to Carol, Queen of Cakes, is a source of great honour for me – I may well now have the confidence to enter next year's Show Stopper in the Flower Show!

Beaford promoters meetings happen twice a year, and anyone is welcome to join us. Get in touch if you'd like to come or feel that there is something you'd like to see in the village which isn't represented. And thank you always for your support.

Kate Madden

UPDATE FROM LEE & LINCOMBE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (LLRA)

We're all prepared for cancellations due to bad weather, but the postponement of the LLRA AGM earlier in the year due to an excess of good weather must be a first!

When the meeting did happen, we were fortunate to be able to host representatives from the National Trust as well as our local County Councillor, Sara Wilson, along with more than 50 or so members and residents.

As part of our monitoring of the work on the hotel site, the LLRA has been liaising with the different parties involved. For the National Trust, Alison Marsden, Project Officer, North Devon, and Jonathan Fairhurst, Head Ranger for North Devon, became our direct contacts, and so we were pleased they agreed to accept our invitation to present their plans. These have since been largely delivered, although work on the café will not start until later this year for completion in the spring.

Sara Wilson joined us to explain the plans for reform of local government structure in Devon. However, since the meeting the new government has revisited the plans and the restructure is now on hold pending review.



Given Sara's explanation of the complexity and costs involved, this may be a good decision.

Sara has been a great help in trying to restrain the consistent use/abuse of road closure notices by utility companies. We cannot say we have stopped this, but we have had some success in having unauthorised closures contested and reopened (the same day). This is work in progress!

Further tireless work has been carried out by Alan Bannister as we try to ensure the village is not left 'cut off' in the event of a power cut or other outage which

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UPDATE FROM LEE & LINCOMBE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (LLRA) CONTD.

might see home phones unusable as they have switched to internet-based calls. Alan updated the meeting on the progress he has been making with our local MP, Ian Roome, who has taken up this cause and lobbied the mobile phone providers to ensure signal is available in rural constituencies. Currently O2 is the leading provider able to provide a satellite signal to enable messages and emergency calls, but hopes are other networks will pick this up as applications continue to be approved.

As many of you know, the further work of the LLRA continues throughout the year: from the Japanese knotweed 'task force' (led by Enid) to the new 'tradition' of the Valley of Lights – where residents coordinate switching on their outdoor Christmas lights (led by Martha and Enid). This year's date is set for Sunday 6th December. Becca has been leading on Resilience Planning (with further updates to follow). David has been pushing Highways to ensure roads are kept clear and also maintaining the books; working with Ilfracombe Town Council on the management of the public toilets.

Beyond these points, the committee work to handle other issues on behalf of residents, from responses to large-scale or commercial planning applications (or those which impact the conservation area) to litter-picks or the new working parties taking place (see related article). Our mission is to try to make Lee and Lincombe even better places to live and to ensure the residents have a forum for concerns and, where possible, a collective voice.

The AGM saw the re-election of the committee for another year. They are:

Matt Dearden (Chairman), David Biggerstaff (Hon Treasurer), Alan Bannister (Vice Chairman), Enid Bowman, Pat Coates, Andrew Harvey-Bryant, Owen Rolfe, Martha Scarrott and Becca Wyles.

Please feel free to contact any of us with any concerns or issues with which you think we can help, or email us at residents@leeandlincombe.org.uk

Matt Dearden

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LEE ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR 2026

More than 1,000 visitors were treated to a fantastic array of locally created works at the annual Arts & Crafts Fair at the Memorial Hall from Saturday 1st to Sunday 9th August. Our 17 exhibitors certainly did not disappoint – with each one arranging their own display of beautiful work and taking their turn on the sales table.

The huge variety of crafts included colourful stained and fused glass decorations, textile art, handmade jewellery created from recycled silver, and artwork by several very talented local artists, including woodcuts, lino prints and watercolours. The displays also featured blacksmithing, organic knitting wool and kits, contemporary and traditional ceramics, functional items created from upcycled fabrics, many different styles of greeting cards and incredible pictures created with recycled paper. In short, there was something for everyone! There was also a grand prize draw with many items kindly donated by some of the exhibitors.

Meanwhile, every day featured a tempting spread of homemade cakes to be enjoyed with a cup of tea or coffee, providing the ideal opportunity to take a break after shopping!

There are many people involved in organising and running this annual event, so a huge thank you to everyone who played a part. Without all our exhibitors, bakers, kitchen helpers and everyone else who volunteered, it would not be possible to hold a fair which this year raised a fantastic £3,875.48 to help maintain our lovely Memorial Hall. Also 'thank you' to the 1,052 visitors who came to the fair and supported our very talented local artists and crafters.

Lee Arts and Crafts Committee



LEE ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR 2026, CONTD.



LEE WI AUTUMN 2026 REPORT

In 1926 Lee WI was formed to provide a meeting place for the ladies of the village to learn and have fun together. Over the years the format of meetings has changed; now there is far less rigidity and we spend an evening a month learning new skills, hearing about keeping well or listening to speakers on a variety of subjects.

Our Autumn/Winter programme includes - a talk by Giles about his father Dick King-Smith, a craft session making a variety of Christmas cards and in December a Snowman Beetle Drive.

We meet in the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm on the second Thursday of each month and other ladies who think they might like to join us are more than welcome to come along to any meeting as a 'Taster Session'. We will be more than happy to welcome you. If you would like to contact one of us beforehand, call or message one of the numbers here.

Carolyn (President)
871545 or 07368 103825

Margaret (Secretary)
863093 or 07711 529015

Enid (Treasurer)
07870 908822

Elizabeth (Committee Member)
864732 or 07980 207697

Mary (Committee Member)
07742 487024

FERRET RACING IN PIXIE MEADOW

It was a delight to welcome back Terry Moule and his amazing ferrets to the Pixie Meadow for an afternoon's racing on Sunday, August 16th.

Terry travels around Devon to many of the big country fairs with his ferrets, so coming to Lee is quite a different venue for him. He arrived with his precious cargo and, with the help of his wife, Rose, set up all the colourful runs before the gate opened at 1pm. Visitors were then invited to place their bets, with the first race starting at around 1.30pm. While waiting for the racing to begin there was a refreshments tent serving cider, beer and other tempting beverages, along with soft drinks, while a delicious BBQ was available throughout the afternoon in case you were feeling peckish.

Before each race, Terry chose some little helpers from the audience and when he blew his whistle they lifted up the cage trap doors and the ferrets raced through the coloured pipes. Everyone immediately began cheering

and shouting to encourage the ferret they had backed to be the winner. Under the rules, the winning ferret had to come out of its run completely - including its tail! Terry and Rose then had the job of catching all the ferrets and popping them back into their basket before selecting four different ferrets for the next race. This caused some amusement as, of course, the ferrets were enjoying a bit of freedom, but Terry is such an expert that none of them escaped into the meadow! The afternoon continued with those whose ferret had won its race collecting their winnings.

So, a big thank you to Terry and Rose, the amazing ferrets and everyone involved, not forgetting all our lovely locals and visitors who came along and supported us. We hope you enjoyed your afternoon and we hope to see you all again next year!

Lee Memorial Hall Trustees





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We offer UK postal annual subscription (3 issues) too, delivered to your door for £9 per year.

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COME RAIN OR SHINE - MEMORIES BY MARK OLDHAM

This article has been adapted from an original piece written by Mark Oldham, who has been visiting Lee alongside his late wife, Jackie, since the 1980s. Mark was moved to write after learning that the Lee & Link'em News might soon come to an end - a prospect that struck a deep chord with him.

His reflections were further spurred by personal sorrow, following the heartbreaking loss of Jackie, who sadly passed away in August. To honour her memory and support the publication, he shared his fondest recollections of their decades in the village. Below is an extract of what he wrote:

Come rain or shine, we've seen it all. It never disappoints.

When we first started coming to Lee in the late 1980s the first people we met were Mrs Race at Ivy Bank with her trusty Labrador, then Elizabeth and Bob Gilliat.

So it was fitting that we saw Elizabeth when we came this year when we visited whilst staying in Braunton. It was a hastily arranged holiday as Jackie had been given

a terminal diagnosis, but the one place we decided to come to specifically was Lee Bay. It was a challenge, but we made it, even being able to walk to the bay from the Memorial Hall car park, to sit on those well-worn rocks watching the tide go out. This is the bay where we have been with our families, rock pooling, sandcastle making and loving life, even enjoying the occasional swim.

Our dogs over the years were also approving of the bay: Kelly, our red setter, then Oliver, Harry and Charlie - our Cavalier King Charles spaniels. Finally, our wonderful border terrier Alfie - a ringing endorsement from those with more legs than us! We have had wonderful hosts over the years, including the chalets at Ivy Bank, Brookdale, the Blue Mushroom and many others. We loved all of them!

Finally I'd like to share a poem written for our wedding anniversary in 2006.



Contrasts

Along the Northern coast of Devon
Where the land meets with the sea
Sheltered by high hills and woodlands
There's a little place called Lee.

Off the main road down winding lanes
Right down to the edge of land
Where the waves lap on the beach
Making rock pools and glistening sand.

Narrow pathways of wild flowers
Hedgerows growing bright and bold
Pretty cottages with lovely gardens
Are memories I will always hold.

Way up high upon the cliff tops
Coastal paths look out to sea
Sheep and lambs are quietly grazing
It seems there's no-one there but me.

Over stiles that lead to woodlands
Where the trees grow green and tall
Sunshine drifts between great branches
And silver streams make waterfalls.

Yet...far away our city bustles
Traffic rushing everywhere
Massive lorries fill the roadways
Pumping fumes into the air.

In foreign lands mad war is raging
People dying needlessly
I'm so glad I've been to Devon
To quiet, peaceful, pretty Lee.



Heather Booker



5th October 1935 - 6th September 2026

Heather was born in Bath on October 5th, 1935 and moved to Cheltenham shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Some of Heather's earliest memories were connected with the war. She remembered accompanying her mother and father to Milford Haven, where she saw flying boats, and the beginnings of Operation PLUTO – the Pipe Line Under The Ocean project to lay fuel pipelines beneath the English Channel. On one occasion, her parents woke her during the night to see the green and red navigation lights of aircraft crossing the sky, each towing two gliders on their way to France for the D-Day landings.

Heather attended Pates Grammar School in Cheltenham, which she remembered as a modern and enjoyable school. Among its more unusual features was the teaching of Latin through stories of Winnie-the-Pooh. A subsequent move to Bridgwater Grammar School was something of a culture shock, where she recalled "gowned & mortarboard-wearing grim faced teachers taught Latin by making them recite and learn great chunks of the Iliad. Very boring, so gave it up!"

When her father retired, the family moved to Teignmouth. Heather joined Boots the Chemists as an apprentice in pharmacy, and made medicines from basic ingredients, poultice plasters and liquid medicines prepared from dried herbs. She found the work interesting but became frustrated that female pharmacists were paid less than their male counterparts for the same work. Determined to pursue a different profession, she secured a place at the Royal Dental Hospital in Leicester Square, part of the University of London, and qualified as a dental surgeon in 1964.

That same year, Heather bought a dental surgery in Ilfracombe and lived in a flat in Capstone Crescent overlooking the sea. Having previously lived in London, she remembered the move to North Devon as "absolute bliss."

She married Ron, a highly skilled and artistic technical instructor at the Royal Dental Hospital, and together they built up the dental practice. In 1965 they bought the Gate House in Lee. It was then an almost derelict property, but the wild garden contained a stream running through its entire length. It was, by Heather's own admission, a purchase made for rather impractical reasons – but it would become the centre of her life for the next six decades.



Heather's interest in the natural world was already developing. She joined the Ilfracombe Sub Aqua Club and particularly enjoyed diving around Lundy, where the variety of marine life made a deep impression on her. She became convinced that Lundy should be protected as Britain's first Marine Nature Reserve. It ultimately took around 40 years of campaigning and considerable work, much of it by Ilfracombe-born marine scientist Dr Keith Hiscock, before that ambition became reality.

Her commitment to conservation extended well beyond the marine environment. Heather became closely involved with the Devon Wildlife Trust and was invited to attend a major conference in London associated with the founding of the World Wide Fund for Nature. The occasion, organised by Prince Philip, Sir Peter Scott and Prince Bernhard, brought together royalty and distinguished figures from around the world. Among those Heather remembered seeing were Thor Heyerdahl, Jacques Cousteau and Neil Armstrong at the reception in the White Ballroom at Buckingham Palace, a memorable occasion.

Heather loved sailing and had been interested in "messing about in boats" for many years. In 1972 she bought a Westerly Centaur, which she named Ciona. She sailed from Ilfracombe for several years before undertaking a non-stop passage around Land's End to Dartmouth. The River Dart became an important part of her life. Its quiet scenery, relatively undeveloped riverbanks and abundant wildlife provided an ideal place for a permanent mooring. Heather particularly enjoyed being able to observe wildlife at close quarters, including seals, ospreys and kingfishers, while also having excellent sailing both on the river and along the coast.

It was sailing Ciona from Dartmouth to the Isles of Scilly that led to another lasting love: Tresco. Heather was captivated by the island's combination of beautiful beaches, turquoise water and extraordinarily varied habitats. It was also "amazingly easy to get away from people all day!"

Heather and Denny Booker got together in the 1970s after her marriage to Ron came to an end. Denny had been a friend and, although she did not know it at the time, he had been in one of the gliders Heather had watched flying to the D-Day landings. Together, they shared a deep interest in nature, sailing and the outdoors. For more than 30 years they returned to Tresco twice a year, having bought a timeshare cottage close to the sea. They also spent weekends and holidays aboard Ciona. Eventually, as Heather's mother became increasingly frail, it became difficult for Heather to spend extended periods away from Lee and Ciona was sold.

Heather's own health eventually forced another major change. By 1987 her mobility had deteriorated sufficiently for her to retire from dentistry. It took eight years before she discovered, through her own process of trial and error, that she was intolerant of wheat and lactose. It was a time when food intolerance was poorly understood and information was difficult to find, however by eliminating both from her diet she regained full health.

Retirement brought the opportunity to devote herself fully to her garden at the Gate House. From May 1987 onwards she spent almost every day tending to it. She was supported over the years by paid gardeners, volunteers and friends. The garden became a considerable undertaking, with Heather taking an exacting interest in its plants and their care. Her enthusiasm for horticulture eventually led to the garden becoming part of the National Garden Scheme, raising money for cancer and other charities. For many years she also worked extensively with the Bannisters in their vegetable garden at No. 2 Brookdale.

Her greenhouse became particularly productive, becoming known around the village for the pink brandy wine tomatoes, peaches and grapes. She took great pleasure in cooking with her own produce and would sometimes proudly count as many as 10 home-grown vegetables in an evening meal.

Heather developed a particular interest in Rodgersia, which were particularly suited to the damp, partially shaded conditions of the garden, building a National Collection of more than 100 different cultivars, many of which originated in her garden. She had a remarkable knowledge of plants, using their botanical names exclusively, since the Latin name would always provide useful information about a plant.

Heather was the first secretary of the Lee and Lincombe Residents Association, joined the fight against Acorn Blue's early hotel development proposals and was a longstanding member of the Lee and Link'em team.

She also supported a wide range of organisations and causes over the years, most notably the RNLI with a large donation in memory of Denny (who had volunteered with them) which was used for the purchase and maintenance of a new launch and recovery vehicle in Ilfracombe.

Heather also supported The Woodland Trust, Doctors Without Borders, Greenpeace and the Green Party. Heather's concern for the natural environment was a consistent theme throughout her life, whether expressed through marine conservation, wildlife, gardening or the organisations she chose to support.

Heather was a woman with strong opinions and high standards, and she could be very particular about how things were done. Friends remember her as highly intelligent, analytical and knowledgeable, with a great capacity for learning. She was happiest when she was investigating something, tending her plants, reading or discussing a subject that had caught her interest.

She retained an active interest in the world around her for many years. She also enjoyed driving her BMW, particularly when heading into Horner Wood.

Many people from all over the world have stayed at the Gate House with Heather over the years, offering a cultural and work exchange, each enriching her life in different ways.

Heather combined a lifelong curiosity about the natural world with a determination to learn, to question and to make a difference; continuing to learn well into her 80s, taking part in online courses with the Open University.

She also still returned to Tresco whenever she could and treated close friends to shared holidays with her there. It's clear from visiting Tresco Abbey Garden that it was a huge inspiration for her own garden, with less than hardy plants from the Mediterranean, South Africa, Australasia, Asia and so on, growing happily in the microclimate of Lee. She often admitted to "gardening above her status."

As the years passed, Heather became less able to work in the garden she had devoted so much of her life to. She continued to maintain an interest in her plants and, until after her 90th birthday could still be found working in the greenhouse. Increasing frailty gradually confined her more often to the house, where she spent much of her time reading.

In the last couple of years, following a few falls, her health wavered. Following a lengthy hospital stay after a stroke, she enjoyed her last week at home looking out over her garden with visits from close friends.

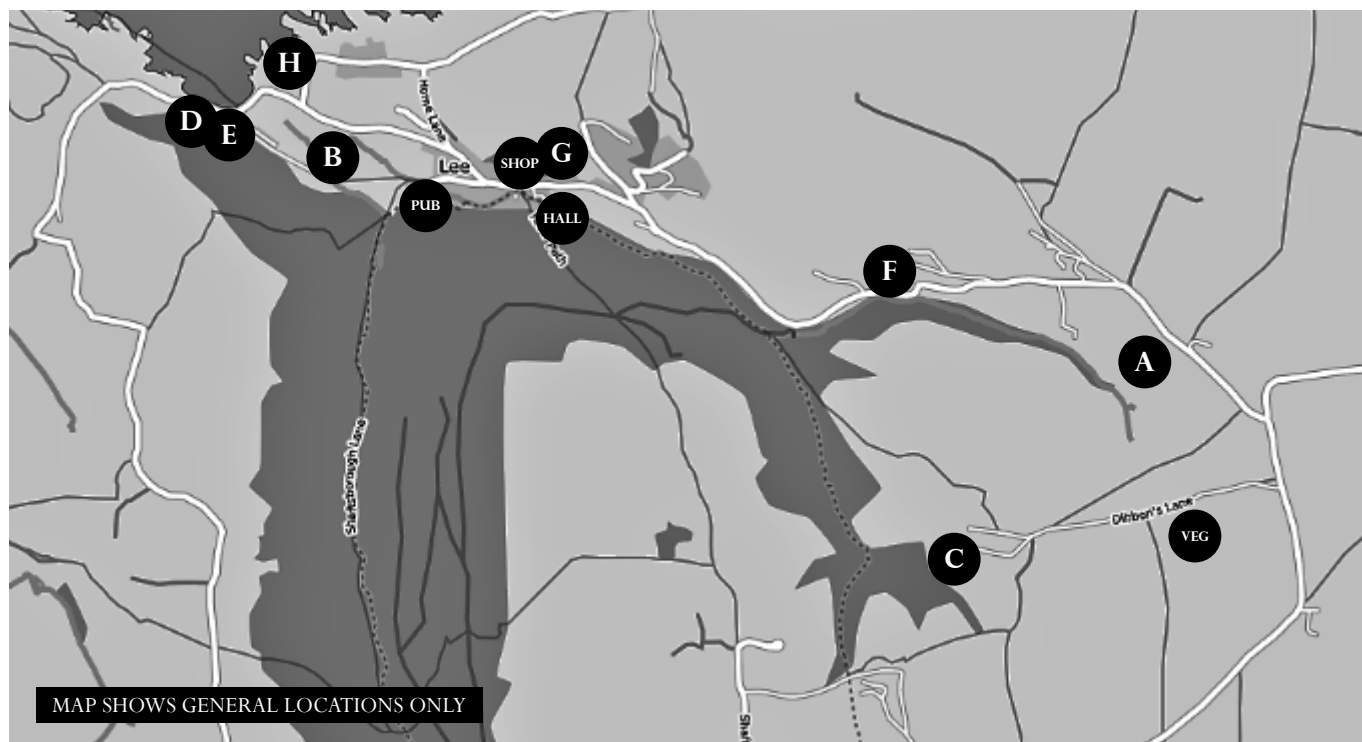
Heather lived at the Gate House for more than 60 years. The house and garden were more than simply her home: they became the setting in which many of her interests, friendships and convictions came together. From the stream that first attracted her to the property in 1965, through decades of gardening and wildlife conservation, to her lifelong fascination with the natural world, Heather leaves behind a garden and a legacy that reflect the things she cared about most.

Her life was characterised by independence, curiosity and a determination to understand the world around her. She remained committed to learning throughout her life and to the belief that the natural world was something worth understanding, protecting and leaving in a better condition for those who followed.

Phil Johncock



LEE & LINCOMBE ACCOMMODATION & SERVICES GUIDE



VILLAGE SERVICES

- pub. The Grampus Inn - www.thegrampusinn.co.uk - Bill Harvey _____ (01271) 862 906
- shop. The Old Schoolroom Craft Gallery & Gift Shop - www.wildcoast.co.uk - Louise Thompson _____ (01271) 864 067
- hall. Lee Memorial Hall - www.leememorialhall.co.uk - for hire: email Jo Mitchell _____ leevillagehall@gmail.com
- veg. Amary Farm - Organic Market Garden - Zoe Davis _____ 07368 339 387

SELF CATERING (MAX. PER UNIT)

- A. Lincombe House (2,6,5) - www.lincombehouse.co.uk - Richenda S Carter _____ (01271) 864 834
- B. Chapel Cottage on Beach Lane (9) - www.chapelcottagelee.co.uk - Ginny Potts _____ 07528 492 364
- C. Lower Campscott Farm Holiday Cottages - www.lowercampscott.co.uk - Kathy Mortimer _____ (01271) 863 479
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- E. Beach House (9) - ginnypotts@hotmail.com - Ginny Potts _____ 07528 492 364
- F. Lee Chapel (up to 6, discounts for smaller groups) - www.visitleechapel.co.uk - Ginny Potts _____ 07528 492 364
- G. The Old Vicarage (15) - www.theoldvicaragelee.com - Amanda Robertson _____ 07973 963 887
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