



LOPEN *Life*

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025

Local
Events &
Diary

Latest
Village
Improvements

Village
Mosaic
News

ISSUE 15


Edit this...

No matter what size a village, like life, it never stands still. This issue presents the latest news on our Sunday School Room rebuild, a major overhaul of a very wet and hardly accessible foot path into a delightful walk way, and with a lot of good will and some great support our small events prove they can generate much needed revenue.

Our documented mosaic supports a 5 year Roman recreation initiative, and my hat off (if not raining) to Jeremy who perseveres with the rainfall reports, no matter what new storm threatens us all!

Next issue I will be asking for villagers help to shape Lopen Life's future - what do you want to see/read, and how. So please start thinking! And now that Blue Monday has gone, stay warm and dry...

Chris Marsh - Editor - Email: chrismarshlpc@gmail.com

 /Lopen-Events-277018432630673/

Visit our village website: www.lopenvillage.org

Join The Village WhatsApp Group for all the latest - Contact the Editor



AUTOHOUSE



CARS

Looking to sell your car?

Talk to a real local market professional

- Not a registration machine
- Free valuation & collection
- No admin fees or hassle
- I pay what I say - instantly
- Family business since 2007

CONTACT - Chris - 07714 631007

- 01460 419012

Lopen Parish Council - your village STILL needs you...now more than ever.

The Parish Council are still looking for that most elusive of villagers - a new Parish Councillor - or even better - two!

Please contact the Parish Clerk - Lisa for details.

If unable to commit villagers are welcome to attend the monthly meetings.

As the County Council look to devolve some services down to Parish Council level, we will continue to monitor what impact this may have and how we may need to recruit more support.

The Parish Council are keeping a watch on all the local planning actions and an especially close eye on the development activities of the West Down Orchard Camping Park which although not in our Parish, borders it directly and influences footpath and security aspects of the village.

Check out the village website for the latest minutes and reports and if not a group member already - join the **Village WhatsApp group** for the latest updates. Contact Trevor Power on 07878 185537 or Chris Marsh on 07951 239110 to get invited. There is the open chat group and the notifications only group.

NEXT LPC MEETINGS:

Look out for the next meetings via the Whats App groups and the Lopen Life Diary - usually the last Monday of the month.

PARISH COUNCILLORS:

Chairman – Nick Jones - nick.jones.lopenpc@outlook.com - 01460 241643

Stephen Crane – scrane1@hotmail.co.uk – 01460 241412

Jenny Feeney – jfeeneylopenpc@gmail.com – 01460 419569

Chris Marsh – chrismarshlpc@gmail.com – 07951 239110

Vacancy - x2

Parish Clerk – lopenpc.clerk@gmail.com - Lisa Wilson - 07587 211150

OTHER CONTACTS:

Council: Jo Roundell Greene - 07341 560016- jo.roundellgreene@somerset.gov.uk

Member of Parliament - Adam Dance - 07767 224213 - adam.dance.mp@parliament.uk

Just Women - Pauline Rook - 240644 - prook12@gmail.com

Lopen Lads - Trevor Power - 07878 185537 - trevorpowermbe1967@gmail.com

Neighbourhood Watch - Carron Richards - 242640 - carronrichards@yahoo.co.uk

Caroline McKendrick - 359201 - carolinemckendrick@outlook.com

Police CSO - Mike Bell - Dial 101 and ask for PCSO 7954 -

mike.bell@avonsomerset.police.UK

What you may have missed...

The Lopen Christmas Craft Fayre



What a success - Thank you to all who supported it. We raised an amazing £2300 on the day. Fortunately we chose the 30th of November and not the weekend before when Storm Bert was at his worst.

Many thanks to all our crafty crafters for their beautiful knitted items, wood turning, gorgeous candles, beautiful floral arrangements, cards, baking and delicious preserves.

Our refreshments were magnificently served by Louise, Sarah, Nicky, Jonathan and Ross. Many thanks to scone supremo John Milner too.

Our raffle was superbly organised by Mary Chapman and big thanks to all our stall holders who seemed to be having fun too. It was great to see the village come together for this event. Trevor did a marvellous job advertising the event over the previous 6 weeks. Thank you! It's incredible to have so many talented people in such a small village!
Roll on next year!

What you may have missed...

SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM Update -

Phase 1 - the new thatch, was completed in December. This allowed me to claim the outstanding grant monies (£14,000), these were received in January.

On Thursday 2 January the Coffee Stop equipment was moved into the church and on Friday 3 January a great team of 14 volunteers moved the tables, chairs, etc to Ballarat for safekeeping - a big thank you to the team and to Seamus the van man!

Phase 2 - the floor replacement, commenced the following week. The extent of the decay to the old timbers was significant. An inscription with the name "D E Pittard 196?", etched in cement, was found under the floor!

The floor replacement will be followed in March by **Phase 3**, the installation of a new kitchen. Jean Morton and Belinda Bezance have done a sterling job and devoted much time to the design and the appliances for the new kitchen. The design was presented to the PCC at it's January meeting and was unanimously approved. New infrared heating was also approved and the project group is now reviewing lighting and other possible enhancements.

A number of items, a fridge, small oven, microwave, hob, etc are now redundant. Anyone wishing to give them a new home please contact me - donations welcome.

In the meantime - **WANTED !**

Four Lopen stalwarts currently mow the churchyard grass to keep it looking tidy. We now have one vacancy, applications invited!

Remuneration - a feel good factor and camaraderie.

Steve Chapman



What you may have missed...

Hopefully residents will be pleased to see the completion of works at the wooded footpath at the end of Rydon Lane.

After over 18 months of deep mud along an increasing distance on the footpath, where even summer use of the path proving difficult this year, the long-term correspondence and site visits undertaken by Cllr Feeny and the Clerk with Somerset Council have paid off. The new Rights of Way Officer for Somerset Council has proved really helpful and proactive and a team of workers arrived in the first week of January to dig out mud, lay french drains, install shuttering and fill the path with aggregate/chippings.

If you haven't yet seen the new path, see the photos here for the transformation. The team also cut a way through the large fallen tree further up the route.

Next step - we're working towards a kissing gate nearby where there are two broken stiles at the two orchard junction heading towards Over Stratton. However, due to recent restructuring at Somerset Council there are now only four ROW Officers for the whole of Somerset and budgets are more than strained, so fingers are very much crossed.



All Saints Church

SERVICE DATES:

February Services:

Sunday 2nd Holy Communion - 9.00am

Sunday 16th Parish Communion - 10.30am

March Services:

Sunday 2nd Holy Communion - 9.00 am

Sunday 16th Parish Communion - 10.30 am

Rev Bob and Julia Hicks 01460 76406

bobhicks66@gmail.com

juliahicks1@gmail.com

Jonathan Delbridge

01460 240025

info@jonathandelbridge.com

Please check the Church Porch notice board for latest information

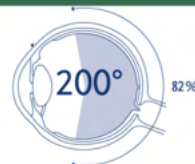


ROBERT FRITH OPTOMETRISTS

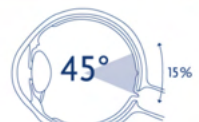
Experienced optometrists delivering outstanding eye care in a relaxed and friendly environment.

A wide range of products and services including tailor-made spectacle frames and lenses, emergency eye care and the latest in 3D eye scanning technology.

Introducing the New **optomap** ultra-wide field retinal imaging technology, giving us a comprehensive view of your eye health



with **optomap** ultra-widefield retinal imaging



without **optomap**

28 Princes Street, Yeovil

01935 474333

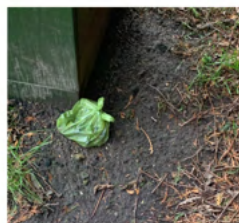
We are happy to collect any unwanted glasses for us to use in our eye testing work in Kenya.

February 2025 - Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT	NOTES
Monday's	Tai Chi @ ARK at Egwood 9.30-10.30 am	£5 Just turn up!
Thursday's	Yoga @ ARK at Egwood 9.00-10.00 am	£5 Just turn up!
Tuesday 11th	Just Women 7.30 - Zoom Talk by Heritage Centre - Somerset Women	Contact Pauline Rook for details 07845 968125
Wednesday 12th	Coffee Stop 10.30-12.00 Look out for Village WhatsApp for Location details	Tea, coffee, cake and chat, all for a good cause and a £1
	Check out our Whats App groups for details: Lopen Notifications & Reminders & Lopen Village	Contact Trevor on 07878 185537 or Chris on 07951 239110 to join
Monday 24th	Lopen Parish Council Meeting 7.00 - All Saints Church unless advised	All Welcome
Wednesday 26th	Coffee Stop 10.30-12.00 Look out for Village WhatsApp for Location details	Tea, coffee, cake and chat, all for a good cause and a £1

Canine Lovers...

Much as we love our dogs,
some aspects of them need to
be our pets pet responsibility
- please take it away with you
and dispose of things
thoughtfully. Thank you



March 2025 - Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT	NOTES
Monday's	Tai Chi @ ARK at Egwood 9.30-10.30 am	£5 Just turn up!
Thursday's	Yoga @ ARK at Egwood 9.00-10.00 am	£5 Just turn up!
Tuesday 11th	Just Women Talk by Mary Cooper on Crewkerne in Bloom & Gardening Questions	Details from Pauline Rook 07845 968125
Wednesday 12th	Coffee Stop 10.30-12.00 Look out for Village WhatsApp for Location details	Tea, coffee, cake and a chat, all for a good cause and a £1
	Check out our Whats App groups for details: Lopen Notifications & Reminders & Lopen Village	Contact Trevor on 07878 185537 or Chris on 07951 239110 to join
Wednesday 26th	Coffee Stop 10.30-12.00 Look out for Village WhatsApp for Location details	Tea, coffee, cake and a chat, all for a good cause and a £1
Monday 31st	Lopen Parish Council Meeting 7.00 - All Saints Church unless advised	All Welcome

LONG RANGE DIARY.-Look out for details in the months to come::
 Saturday 24th May - Afternoon Tea and Plant Sale in the Sunday School Room
 Please contact Victoria Bennett about Plant donation
 September - 1st weekend - Flower Festival, - contact Victoria Bennett
 2nd weekend, - Lopen Music Festival - contact Jonathan Delbridge



EVERY LITTLE HELPS

And a little from everyone helps enormously... but I am not asking for money; I am asking for your unwanted clothing and footwear for men, women, children and babies, all sizes, to send to refugees who live in camps, sometimes permanently, mainly in Southern Europe and the Middle East. We know there are families fleeing from camp to camp and country to country with limited options for their futures. For the first time charities there are asking Raft (refugee aid from Taunton) for large suitcases no longer in use. We can all feel helpless when viewing such distress. But, as wars erupt in many countries and other wars continue, and refugee numbers rise in adjacent states there is this way to help.

I am seeking good clean warm washable clothing for all, particularly at present warm coats, either outgrown or no longer needed, all ages and sizes, and footwear to withstand mud, rain, snow as wintry conditions can be harsh. In addition blankets, sleeping bags, tents, unopened hygiene and toiletries are always requested, and now large suitcases. From April summer clothing and footwear will be required.

I began by writing 'a little from everyone' and I wish to emphasise this. Whatever you can donate will be really appreciated by those who receive them, for practical reasons obviously, but equally importantly, they will know the world has not forgotten them.

With grateful thanks,

Geraldine Downey, Merriott tel. 01460 271358

SECURE SELF STORAGE LOPEN



- Secure, purpose built Self Storage
- 250 units from 20-260 sq ft
- For all your business & household storage needs



beehive
self storage



Call now for more details

**01460
243100**

or visit our website:

www.beehiveselfstorage.co.uk

Lopen Business Park,
Mill Lane, Lopen, South
Petherton, TA13 5JS



Just Women

It is about 25 years since a few of us got together to start the 'Just Women' group in Lopen. A few of those original members still go, myself included. However, our membership numbers are now dwindling and so its future is becoming less assured.

Over those years we have had some truly inspirational meetings and outings, learnt about all sorts of things, had our horizons broadened and got to know each other and made great friendships. It is amazing what stories are hidden beneath those faces. One of our very best meetings in my opinion, was one where we all brought an object that gave an insight into our pre Lopen lives, everything from working for the UN in Libya, nursing in deprived London, rescue by life boat etc etc.. We went home at 10.30 that night!!

JW is free of all constraints, we run on a very informal basis, membership is £5 for the year and a small fee for some meetings which pays for the occasional speaker. We are completely happy with irregular attendance, dip in and dip out. It is not a huge commitment to join, the small management team is very stable, once the programme for the year is roughed out, we just jog along, members help where and when needed.

It would be such a shame if this joyful opportunity for getting together was lost within our village.

Our programme for this year is as follows, *highlighted events* are open to partners & friends.

Jan - Lunch at the Crooked Swan

Feb - A zoom talk from the Somerset Heritage team on 'Somerset Women'

Mar - AGM and talk by the Crewkerne in Bloom team

Apr - Catherine Bond of CB Plants Merriott, talk about garden pollinators

May - Tea Party

Jun - Outing to Caissons Gardens near Bath - very special

Jul - Cadhay Manor house tour and gardens

August - holidays

Sep - Skittles at Dennington

Oct - Talk by amusing David MacLean about Priest House Muchelney

Nov - Bring a hat with a story

Dec - Xmas. - again!!!

If you would like to be pu on our email list to be informed of upcoming meetings please email either Prook12@gmail.com or christianne@lopen.me.uk

Always look on the bright side...

Rainfall report 14 January 2025 Jeremy Rook

December 2024 was a relatively dry month - I recorded 39 mm of rain against my Long Term Average (LTA) of 103 mm. it was the first under-average month since August.



For the calendar year of 2024, we had 1,047 mm as against the LTA of 902 mm - the sixth wettest year since I started recording here in 1997.

So far in January we have had 62 mm against the LTA of 89 mm for the whole of January.

It is pleasant to have a dry spell but Winter rainfall is very important for the country as a whole - especially the South East of England which has the lowest annual average rain and a large and growing population.

Taking England alone its population has grown from 46 million in 1976 to nearly 58 million in 2024 (figures from the Office for National Statistics). During the intervening years we have luckily not experienced a severe drought as we did in 1976, but there has not been much addition to our water storage either.

Luckily for us in Somerset we have many fewer people and we have large aquifers which store the water underground where it will not evaporate in hot weather.


**trading
post**

FARM SHOP • SOMERSET



Trading Post Farm Shop
Lopenhead | Somerset | TA13 5JH

01460 241666
hello@tradingpostfarmshop.co.uk
www.tradingpostfarmshop.co.uk

Westcountry Cheese Deli
Large Organic Selection
Exclusive Gin Collection
Weekly Veg Box Scheme
Local Beers & Ciders
Fresh Eggs
Daily Fresh Bread
100+ Local Suppliers
Ample Car Parking
Refill Room
Garden Centre

"A Mini
Borough
Market"

- Sunday Times
May 30 2021

Winners of the Muddy Stiletto Award
for The Best Farm Shop/Deli in
Somerset & Dorset 2021



Volunteers finish 5-year Roman mosaic endeavour

A team in Somerset used period-accurate tools to produce 140,000-piece flooring at a replica villa, despite an absence of formal archaeological training. Volunteers have worked for five years to create a Roman mosaic floor using original methods, tools and techniques.

Every Wednesday half a dozen volunteers meet in a reconstructed Roman villa on Somerset's marshes to work on a colourful 140,000-piece mosaic. Kneeling on the floor of a large dining room, they carefully place small stone and tile cubes, known as tesserae, in lime mortar to create geometric shapes and animal motifs.

After five years, the volunteers at Avalon Archaeology, a site with reproductions of local historical buildings run by the South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) near Glastonbury, laid the last stones to complete the project this winter.



Richard Brunning, 58, the project lead and senior archaeologist at SWHT, said: "We believe it is the only recreation of a Roman mosaic in the UK made entirely by untrained volunteers, using the same materials and techniques as the Romans did.

"The finished result is a great testament to the dedication of the volunteers, who have produced a great work of art despite having no prior experience." Somerset is home to some of England's grandest Roman villas, which are rural homes of the nobility often adorned with frescoes and mosaics that were built in the late Roman period when money and wealth poured into the region. So once the villa at Avalon Archaeology was completed by volunteers in 2019, Brunning wanted to add an authentic mosaic to evoke a similar sense of prosperity.



The mosaic was recreated using about 140,000 tesserae. For the design he chose a mainly geometric pattern excavated at Hurcot, near Somerton, filling any blank spots with additional elements including fish, a dolphin and an elephant found at Whatley, Newton St Loe and **Lopen**. Over the next two years two dozen volunteers spent hours hand-making 140,000 tesserae using regional white, blue and grey lias, yellow Doulling stone and reclaimed red tiles.



Martin Day, 69, estimated he made about 30,000 of them, spending much of the Covid lockdowns in his garage using the traditional hammer and hardie, a chisel set upright in a block of wood, to get square cubes of about 13mm. He said: "I think it was very important that we did the whole thing with local materials in exactly the way the Romans did. None of the mosaics that we used for our design are actually accessible to the public so it gives local people the opportunity to see the designs the Romans used in Somerset." Once the tesserae were ready, a rotation of between two and five people met each Wednesday to lay the mosaic, small sections at a time, starting with a solid black border on the outside before advancing to more complicated guilloche patterns and animal motifs. Wendy Murray, 65, said: "The mosaic laying is a challenge, it's like a jigsaw puzzle. At least we do have the box, so to speak, we have the design and the basic shapes drawn out roughly in the mortar. "Quite a few of us are not in our youth so kneeling down could be a bit of a problem. We were all complaining about our knees and the cold as well in winter, obviously there's no heating in the building so it could be rather cold."



Inevitably the untrained volunteers made the odd mistake throughout the three years it took but the group decided that if it was not noticeable from 5 feet away they would simply leave it, according to Leela Bunce, 44.

She said: “We worked so hard to do it as accurately as we can but what I love about it is that there is the odd little mistake here and there. That makes it even more authentic because if you look at any of the mosaics from Somerset and around the world there is always a little mistake. That is what I particularly love, it shouldn’t be completely perfect because that makes it very human and very relatable.”

With only a handful of excavated Roman villas accessible to the public, Brunning hopes that the project at Avalon Archaeology will help visitors to imagine how Roman nobility would have lived in rural Somerset hundreds of years ago.

Brunning, who has been an archaeologist for three decades, added: “It’s a lovely process as an archaeologist because you’re translating the information from the holes in the ground into something real and tangible. I feel like I really fully understand the process now of Roman mosaics so when I’m excavating one I can truly appreciate what I’m excavating.”



**Article reprinted from The Times by Charlotte Alt First published
Sunday December 29 2024, 6.00pm, The Times
All photos courtesy of Brad Wakefield - Bristol**

EXCELLENCE IN OAK

