



ATWEST

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SOMERSET



County Council


ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT WEST SOMERSET

ATWEST TRAVEL CLUB

Page 1

*Happy New Year

Page 2

*Deb's Joke and
Fun Page

Page 3

*Deb's Puzzle
Page

Page 4

*Minehead
revisited

Page 5

*Atwest in the
Press

Page 6

*Car Scheme
*Subscriptions

Page 7

***Travel Club**
trips for March

Page 8

***Travel Club**
trips for February

Well, the newsletter is back to full size and with a full complement of pictures, stories, fun stuff and trip information! However, it has largely been done in black and white to reduce the printing costs. This will make a big difference to the cost of production each month and should mean that the subscriptions you pay do come somewhere near covering the cost! We hope you enjoy it and aren't too disappointed that I haven't shown you more of the range of colours available on my computer!



One of our buses went on a great adventure recently and here it is pictured somewhere on Dartmoor!

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Deb's Joke and Fun Page!

Sorry, I know this is a little unseasonal but I think it's funny!

During one of the Karpov-Kasparov world chess championships they came to an adjournment and left for their hotel.

In the lobby of the hotel several chess enthusiasts could be heard bragging, "I could beat Karpov with no problem". "Oh yeah, I could beat both of them at the same time." "That's nothing, I could beat both of them blindfolded!"

Finally, the hotel manager had had enough and threw them all out of the hotel.

"But why?" a bystander asked.

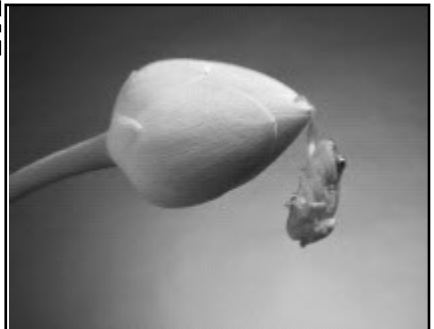
"Because," the manager replied "I hate ..."chess nuts boasting by an open foyer!"

What did the footballer say when he accidentally burped during a game?

"Sorry, it was a freak hic."

Why did the banana go out with the prune?

Because he couldn't find a date.



This is one heck of a flower bud!



Training has already begun for Christmas 2012!

How many ears has Captain Kirk got?

Three: the left ear, the right ear, and the final front-lear.

Deb's Puzzle Page!



How are you feeling? This might help!

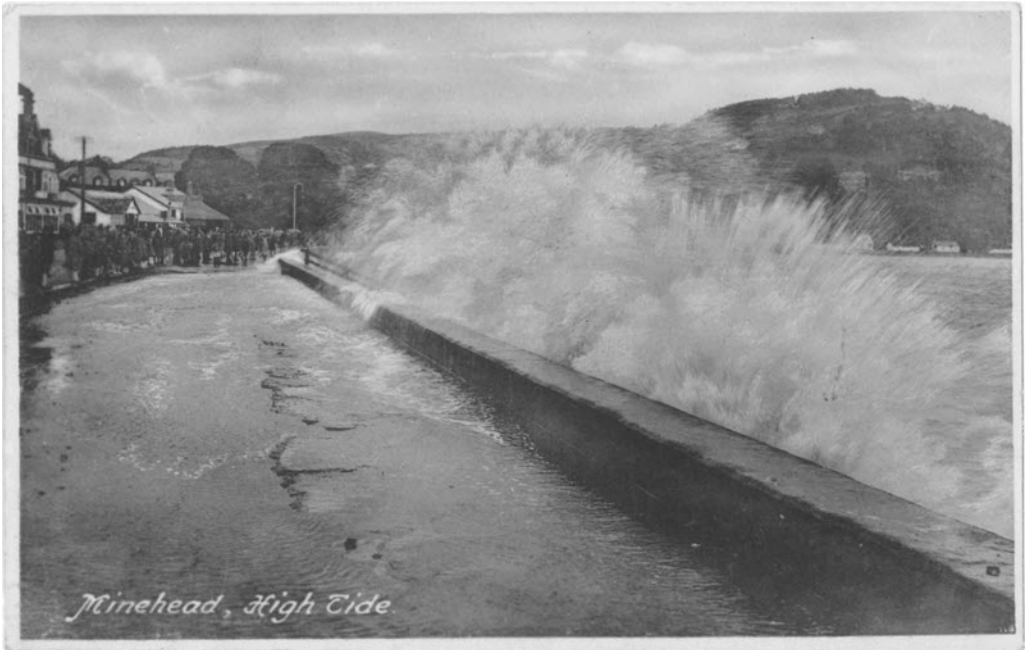
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Time to get those little grey cells working again after the Christmas break!

MINEHEAD REVISITED by Mike Prescott



This is a sight that we shall probably never see again on Minehead seafront. Since the coastal defences have been enhanced we even have grass and other plants growing at the top of the beach along behind the Jubilee Cafe.

This scene of waves crashing over the wall was a regular occurrence during the winter with the high tides.

I remember going down there many times after school when the east wind was blowing in. One time in particular I shall never forget - opposite what is now the Carousel was an anti-invasion blockhouse. We'd stand behind it and look along the wall to the east watching the waves as in the picture. Anyhow, this time we heard a loud thwack, looked up and there was a massive wave coming over the top of the blockhouse. Of course we were soaked!

As the postcard shows, the waves were quite an attraction (no TV in those days). I can remember, not so long ago, the sea reaching up as far as where the garden centre is now! Happy Days sadly gone forever!



ATWEST IN THE NEWS!

Pensioners' Christmas lunch rescued



STAFF at community transport organisation Atwest helped save the day for West Somerset pensioners who were in danger of missing out on their annual festive lunch.

The group stepped in to find an alternative venue for the district's annual senior citizens' lunch, which is cooked and served by West Somerset Community College students at the Minehead college.

This year the college hall had been fully booked and the lunch looked set to be cancelled.

Atwest manager Brian Worrall sought assistance from the college and eventually managed to find an alternative venue, providing one could be found.

He then called on local businessman Paul Merson who was more than happy to host the annual event in the newly-refurbished ballroom at his family-owned pub, the Hobby Horse.

Atwest staff then hit the telephones and contacted local residential and care homes to pass on the

good news.

"Two or three of the care homes had already arranged something else, but Lloyd Parry, our schedule manager, rang everyone and organised nine of our buses to pick up 115 residents and cars to get them to the Hobby Horse in time for their lunch," Brian said.

Once again, year 12 students from the college took responsibility for the party, decorating the ballroom and putting crackers and floral centrepieces on all the tables.

There was musical entertainment from a jazz band while lunch was being served, followed by more singing and games after the meal was finished.

Mia Briggs, public services subject leader at the college, said: "After lunch there was singing and dancing led by Louise Dootan, a couple of games of bingo and a visit from Santa.

There were presents in the sack for everyone before the band led some Christmas carols.

"It was really pleased to have given their guests a fabulous start to the Christmas season."

Brian thanked the Hobby Horse staff and Merson family for their generosity and praised college staff and students for helping to make the lunch a success.

Pictured at the lunch, from the left, are (back) Luke Cutler, Harrison Fletcher-Page, Santa aka Jake Davies, Frances Jones, (front) Deane Lodge, residents Nancy Filley, Pat Hinchbody and Margaret Wyatt.

Photo: Steve Gusecott

Both these features appeared in the Free Press in December 2011!

Chuffed with new base



WEST Somerset community transport scheme ATWest showed off its new base at a special open day this week.

The organisation staged a five year search for a central site and fleet of vehicles when it took over the Aornn site in Brunel Way, Minehead last year.

A £120,000 project to provide a timber panel office building and concrete area for vehicles was completed earlier this year and ATWest moved into the new premises three months ago.

And on Tuesday local dignitaries and representatives of organisations involved in the project were given a guided tour of the new facilities. ATWest funding officer Barbara Middleton said the build-

ing had been designed by local architect Chris Mitchell and constructed by Robert Gregory of Minehead-based Pinocchio.

"We used local contractors and local materials wherever possible and it has been built expressly to incorporate as many energy saving and carbon friendly features as possible," she said.

In addition to money raised by some of ATWest's customers, the organisation also received grants from Local Action for Rural Communities, Future Builders England, the Leonarda representative Anne-Marie Spalding, Chris Mitchell, West Somerset councillors Maureen Smith and Ian Melhuish and a grant from the Alcombe and Minehead Transition Group.

Mrs Middleton said West Somerset Council had also been the organisation to hand when prospects over secure-

ing, a centralised base were exhausted.

ATWest company manager Brian Worrall said the open day had gone very well and visitors had been impressed with the new facilities.

"It is a lovely building and we are well chuffed with it," he said.

"It helps make us a much more professional outfit."

Pictured at the open day, from left, are Barbara Middleton, Brian Worrall, LANC representative Anne-Marie Spalding, Chris Mitchell, West Somerset councillors Maureen Smith and Ian Melhuish and a grant from the Alcombe and Minehead Transition Group.

Photo: Steve Gusecott

MINEHEAD COMMUNITY CARS



Minehead Community Cars

As many of you may know Atwest took over the running of the social car scheme from Engage in September. This uses volunteer drivers driving their own vehicles, for which they are paid a fixed rate per mile. We started with two drivers (inherited from Engage) which has grown to ten.

And between them they do at least 10 trips a week, a number which is rapidly increasing!

The car scheme is designed to help people reach destinations where there is little or no public transport, or where it would be difficult for them to access public transport due to health problems.

The most common types of journey are to reach hospital and doctors' appointments, though journeys can be booked for other purposes. So far we have helped passengers get to **Musgrove** and **Nuffield** hospitals in Taunton, to **Minehead** and **Williton** hospitals, to **Kingdom Hall** in Taunton, the **Conquest Centre** near Taunton, and meetings of the **Blind Association** in Minehead. We can also help with appointments at **Exeter** and **Bristol** hospitals and many other places when there is just no other way to get there.

The cost to the passenger is worked out on miles travelled and this will be calculated before the journey is booked.

Do you think this service might be of use to you? If so, phone Atwest on **01643 709701** for more information, or to book transport to your destination.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Although not due until April 1st this is a good opportunity to ask you for money!

This year we will be charging £5 per address so couples will pay £5 between them and receive one newsletter. For individuals there is no change from previous years.

We won't automatically be sending the newsletter to group leaders but if a member of the group wishes to pay the subscription and is happy to pass the information on to the rest of the group then that is helpful for us.

Thank you!

MARCH'S TRAVEL CLUB TRIPS

Thursday 1st March

BLACK VENUS INN, CHALLACOMBE

£3.50 per seat

Another well established favourite with the Travel Club this is a very atmospheric pub in a delightful setting. You can be certain of a good food and with luck you will get to see some beautiful scenery on the way and way back!

Tuesday 6th March

TIVERTON

Arrive 11.30am, depart 3.00pm **£7.00 per seat**

I heard a comment recently that the Edinburgh Woollen Mill in Tiverton is good value - one very good reason for visiting. There are also some big name stores, lots of independent shops, a very interesting market, and a castle. Enough reasons?

Monday 12th March

WILLOWBROOK GARDEN CENTRE, WELLINGTON

Arrive 11.30am, depart 2.00pm **£4.00 per seat**

I really like this garden centre - there is a good range of plants and they are excellent quality. There are also garden sundries, gifts, an aquatic section, a small pet centre and a really good restaurant!

Wednesday 21st March

WELLS

Arrive 11.30am, depart 3.00pm **£8.00 per seat**

It is a long time since we've been to Wells but hopefully this price will tempt enough of you! Wednesday is market day which is enough of a draw but there are also lots of shops, places to eat, and of course the Cathedral!

Monday 26th March

COTTAGE INN, KEENTHORNE

£3.50 per seat

Our last visit was a great success with delicious good value food. And with a scenic ride out there across the Quantocks, where you might be lucky enough to see ponies and other wildlife, what better way to spend a day?

Friday 30th March

BURNHAM-ON-SEA OR SANDERS GARDEN WORLD

Arrive 11.30am, depart 3.00pm **£6.00 per seat**

Another place we haven't been for a while but hopefully with spring just round the corner a trip to the seaside will be just the ticket. Or perhaps you will be tempted by the vast range of plant goodies available from Sanders!

FEBRUARY'S TRAVEL CLUB TRIPS

Monday 6th February

STAGHUNTER'S INN, BRENDON

£3.00 per seat

With luck and a following wind it will be a lovely sunny winter's day so the views across Exmoor can be properly appreciated! This is a perennial favourite for the Travel Club and combines wonderful food with a glorious ride out.

Wednesday 15th February

SNOWDROP VALLEY

£3.50 per seat (includes £1.00 donation to the Snowdrop Valley Scheme)

The trip will start with a ride down Snowdrop Valley and a chance to get out and have a close up view of this wonderful spring phenomenon. Lunch will then be at the Rest and Be Thankful at Wheddon Cross where Wednesday is Carvery Day!

Monday 20th February

TAUNTON OR MONKTON ELM GARDEN CENTRE

Arrive 11.30am, depart 3.00pm **£4.50 per seat**

You all know what Taunton has to offer and by February the new season's fashions may well be available! If that isn't your cup of tea then the garden centre will be full of gardening inspirations and associated goodies!

Friday 24th February

BARNSTAPLE

Arrive 11.30am, depart 3.00pm **£7.50 per seat**

Market day is always a good reason to go to Barnstaple but there are also some interesting shops, lots of places to eat, and of course the journey takes in some lovely parts of Exmoor. Fingers crossed for the weather!

There is no fixed booking day for either February or March's trips so please book on 01643 709701 as soon as you would like once you have seen the newsletter.