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The

HONITON

Flyer

WINTER 2022

THE FREE AREA GUIDE ABOUT HONITON FOR HONITON

PRODUCED QUARTERLY: WINTER • SPRING • SUMMER • AUTUMN

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We hope that by the time you
are reading this, you will be
quietly settled and enjoying
Christmas.

The
HONITON
Flyer

Our Winter 2022 Edition of The Honiton Flyer should have arrived just in time for Christmas, to give you all the opportunity to read it during the Festive break.

And we cover some interesting topics. On **Page 6**, our regular contributor Martin Long from Friends of Honiton Station, details the benefits of re-instating double railway tracks in our region.

Then on **Pages 16 & 17** we took a quiet walk to Fire Beacon Hill, near East Hill, to admire the views over Sidmouth and Exmouth.

Local historian Terry Darrant gives an account of bleak Christmases years ago at Honiton Workhouse, on **Page 20**.

Our journalist Ana Collingridge attended the 50th Anniversary celebration of Ugandan Asians arriving at Heathfield. Ana gives a full account on **Pages 24 & 25**.

It is always a delight to meet our candidates for Honiton Women at Work, and it was no exception for this edition. Please meet Heather, Caroline and Sarah on **Page 26**.

And on **Page 30** we spent a very pleasant hour exploring the ruins of Dunkeswell Abbey.

With best wishes for Christmas 2022, and a Happy & Healthy 2023.

Anthony Bucke. EDITOR.

The Honiton Flyer.

Email: honiton@theantiquetourist.com.

Wednesday 30 November 2022.



At Dunkeswell Abbey

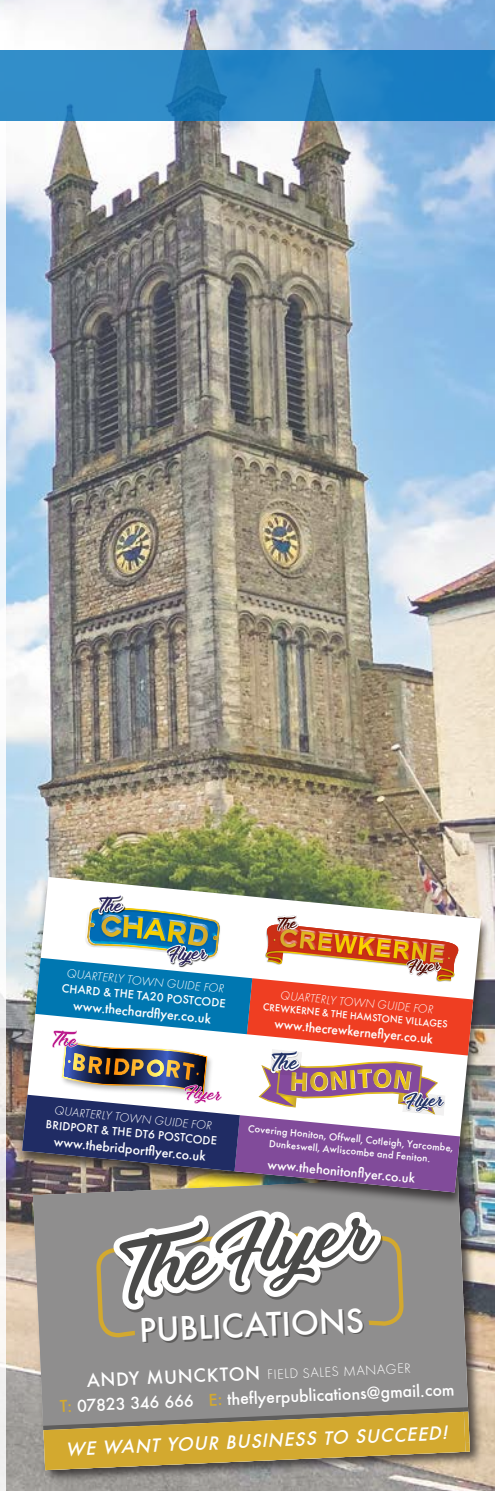
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INDEX WINTER 2022

4 You From Me Ltd	Page 14
Antiques Bazaar	Page 31
Atkins Auctions	Page 34
Axminster Garden Machinery	Page 13
Belly Dance Heaven	Page 27
Blackbury Honey Farm	Page 11
Bluebird Care	Page 36
C Plant Services	Page 15
Caravan & Motorhome Solutions ..	Page 13
CMS Valeting Service	Page 13
Colourfence	Page 7
Crafty Otter Campers	Page 29
Culm Valley Pet Cremations	Page 35
Curt Willis Motors	Page 33
Daisys Dairy	Page 21
Devon Permanent Makeup	Page 11
East Devon Lock & Key	Page 27
EGF Carpets	Page 13
First Light Home improvements	Page 15
Gorilla Grounds Gardens	Page 8+9
Homefire	Page 21
Honiton Tile & Bathroom	Page 12
Howdens	Page 10
Kode Print & Designs	Page 10
MST Auctioneers	Page 33
Nana's Attic	Page 15
Oliver Joseph Fitness	Page 22+23
Ottery Office & Computers Ltd	Page 15
SKY Dive Buzz	Page 2
The Chippee !	Page 27
The Coastal Boutique	Page 21
The Heathfield Inn	Page 5
The Honiton Eye Clinic	Page 17



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THE FRIENDS OF HONITON STATION

There has been a railway running through Honiton since 1860. In its heyday the line was part of a route that took passengers from London to Plymouth and to the holiday resorts of North Devon and North Cornwall.

By the 1960s, however, it seemed to be in decline, with services run down, the line beyond Exeter closing and many of its branch lines shut down. The future seemed to be one of managed neglect and eventual closure. Long stretches of the line were reduced to single track and historic station buildings knocked down.

However, this is a railway that simply refused to lie down and die. After a long campaign, a key section of double track was reinstated through Axminster nearly 15 years ago, allowing what had become a two-hourly service to return to a more acceptable hourly one. Almost overnight passenger numbers doubled, and have continued to increase since then.

And yet the potential for more is prevented by the remaining long sections of single track, which mean that one train an hour in each direction is all that is possible.

But it need not be like this. South Western Railway, Network Rail, MPs and local councils, as well as passenger groups like ourselves, are unanimous that the way forward is for two trains an hour to operate between Axminster, Honiton and Exeter. But to achieve this, we need the reinstatement of double track between Honiton and just outside Feniton, and from west of Whimble to the M5 bridge near Pinhoe.

With all the new housing at Axminster and Honiton, at Cranbrook and around Pinhoe, there is no doubt that the passengers will be there. A detailed plan has been written by a group led by Network Rail. Everyone is now campaigning hard to get the Government to agree the funding needed to carry out the track and signalling work required.

The railway line through East Devon has a fantastic future. Or it will do, if we can secure the improvements needed to return the line to something like railway we once had, before Dr. Beeching got his hands on it.

Martin Long
The Friends of Honiton Station

To read our latest newsletter, go to our website: friendsofhonitonstation.org.uk



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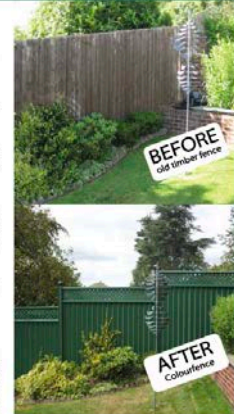
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TREAT YOUR GUTTERS LIKE YOUR CAR

After 10 years in the gutter business, I have seen too many gutter problems. Totally collapsed systems, serious water damage and even personal injury. **All avoidable too.**

Good news: You should rarely have gutter problems – with the right approach.

Bad news: Acting when problems arise causes unnecessary stress, cost and damage.

Having a proper maintenance, cleaning and clearing plan in place is the answer. Three steps to get it sorted.

1. Get up to date

Make sure all gutters, valleys, downpipes and drains are cleared, cleaned and functioning properly, correctly secured and joints are tight.

2. Plan regular maintenance

I recommend at least an annual check. It's like getting an MOT on your car. If you have a lot of trees around it may need to be more frequent.

3. Plan it yourself or have it done for you

If you are good with ladders and have the time, just add it to your calendar. If not, book a professional service to do it for you.

When we do gutter cleaning and clearing, it is all done safely from the ground with specialist equipment.

CHECK YOUR ROOF TOO

Most blockages happen as a result of roof moss and debris making its way into your system. Once a roof is cleaned and treated, it becomes an easier maintenance task.

ROOF TOP TO ROADSIDE

Now is the perfect time to get your gutters cleared, with the leaves almost entirely fallen, gutters are potentially at their most blocked!

At Gorilla Grounds and Gardens we are all about taking care of property. If you want me to check the condition of your gutters or roof, I am more than happy to do so.

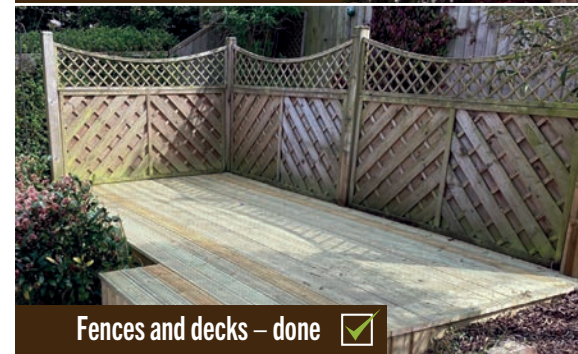
Get in touch and have that gutter MOT done!



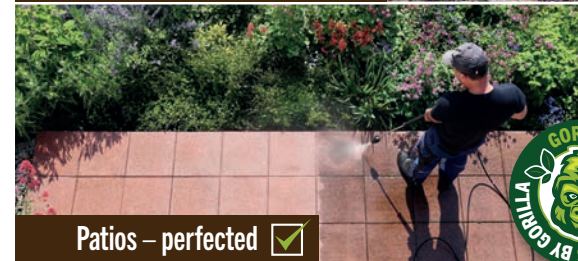
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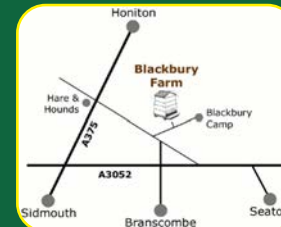
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Steve's son Andy now heads up the showroom, with expert help from their team of advisors, designers and installers.

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Firstly the team meet the client and establish their requirements. Much inspiration comes from the variety of displays in the showroom at Honiton Tiles and Bathrooms. Then a site visit by Steve, followed by a fairly intense session deciding the most appropriate layout and materials, and fittings. Then comes the presentation to the client, which may result in amendments and revisions. Hopefully the next stage is supply and installation, followed up by aftersales service and guidance.

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A short winter walk at East Hill - with a marvellous pay-off; the fantastic views over Sidmouth and Exmouth at Fire Beacon Hill!

This walk starts near Putts Corner on the Honiton – Sidmouth Road. Turn down beside The Hare and Hounds towards Ottery St Mary. Then just at the top of the hill turn left at Chineway Head. Follow this lane right to the end, and find the Forestry Commission carpark at White Cross and Fire Beacon. There are no charges for parking here. There seem to be numerous pathways leading in and out of the woods, and a clearly defined, solid-surfaced “droveroad”. We took the lefthand branch of the “drove-road” which is a solid track and followed it, soon with farmland on the left and woodlands continuing on the right. There is evidence of farm traffic through here, so look out for heavy farm machinery. We dropped through a dip, and as you rise up the other side, bear left at the fork. This is glorious woodland - mainly beech trees, so expect a riot of colour, particularly in the autumn. We continued until the lane dropped away, and then turned right along a pathway signed Fire Beacon Hill, onto



the beacon and heathland. *(Continuing down the hill brings you eventually to the main road near Waitrose at Sidmouth)*

As soon as you emerge from the trees the panorama appears, almost at your feet! Straight ahead is Sidmouth and the English Channel. Continue with the drop on your left and spot The Bowd Inn, and donkeys in the fields closer in. As you continue, the vista opens out and Exmouth and the Exe Estuary become visible, with Berry Head in the far distance.

After the THIRD seat overlooking the valley, turn right inland to the “trig-point”. Pass this, and soon turn right onto another path, then left handed back into the trees. Following the finger posts soon brings you back to the original drove.

Turn left and retrace your steps to the carpark.

DISTANCE? 2 miles

DURATION? Around 65 minutes.

O.S . MAP? Not necessary.

DOGS? Welcome but always under control.

DIFFICULTY? Easy/moderate. This is largely level walking, with a firm solid surface, so mobility scooter users may be able to access some of the route.

DATE of WALK? November 2022.



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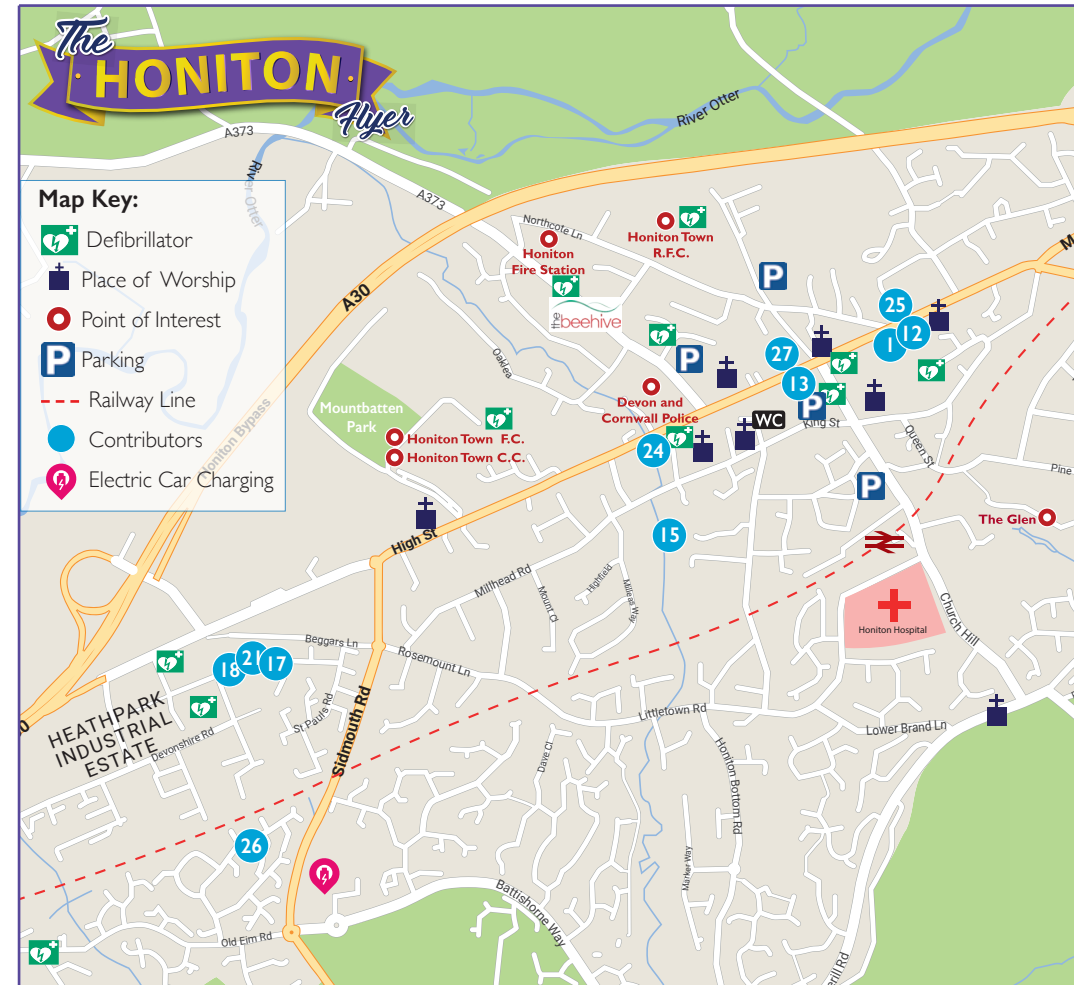
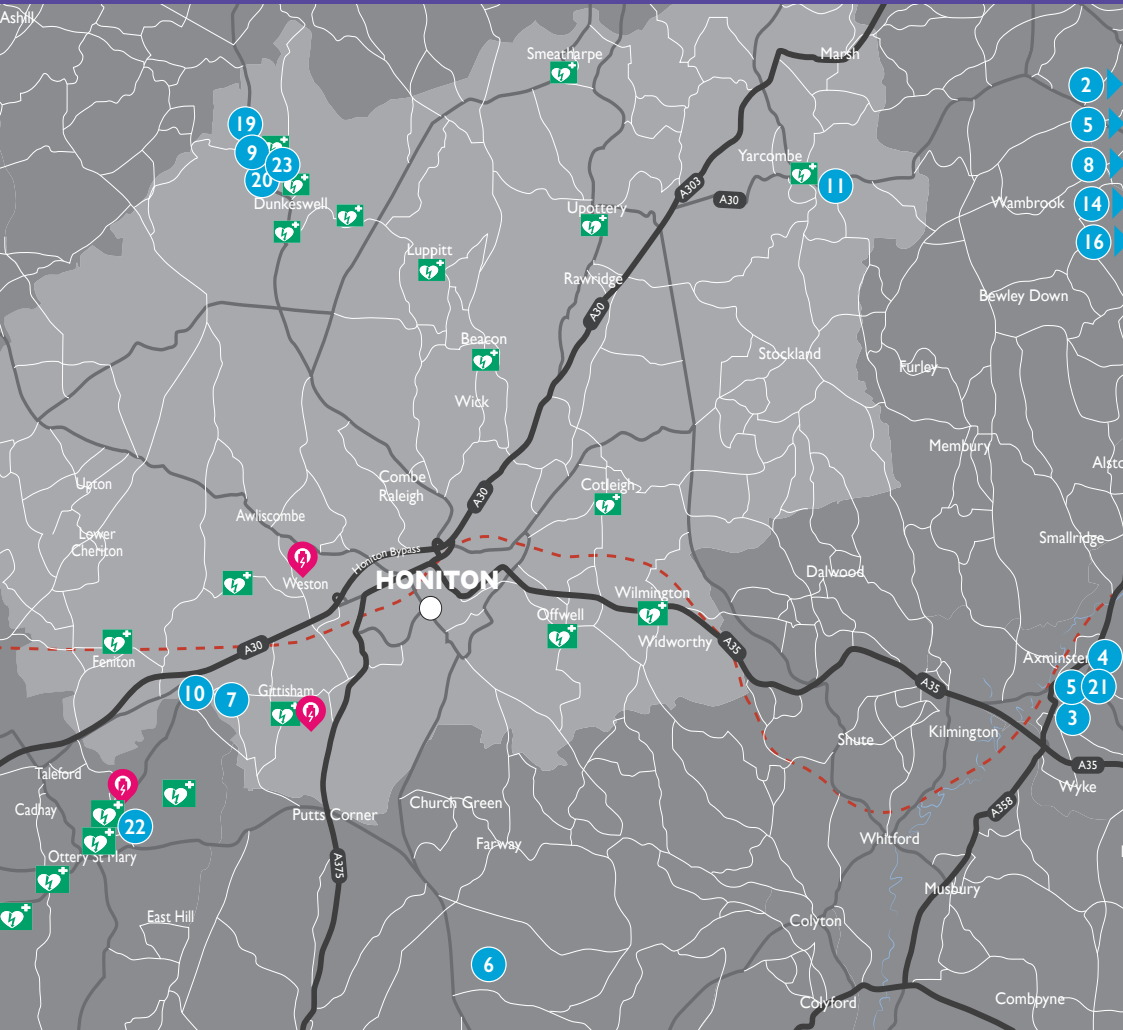
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For the first time in over 2 years we all hope, and look forward to a Christmas “untainted” with Covid; a festive season without isolation from lockdowns; nor tears from tiers or fears from new variants! However, our endurance last year and the year before could be put into perspective if looking back to Victorian Christmas’ in Honiton.

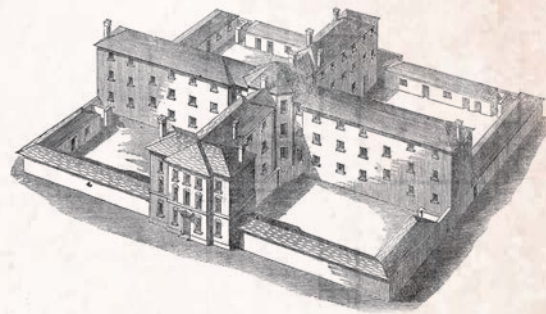
At a time before the welfare state many would spend yuletide in the poorhouse or worse, yet whilst times may have been tougher back then there were still charities and people who tried to make it as enjoyable for those less fortunate.

Those who were in the Honiton Union workhouse is one example: throughout the establishment’s minute books there are references to kind gestures and mentions of gifts given to the inmates. A Miss Susan Venn entertained the inmates of the workhouse for “tea” in April 1892 as she was unable to provide a Christmas tree in December due to an influenza outbreak. Miss Venn did similar in February 1886 when she arranged for a Christmas tree to be erected, and presents given to the workhouse children. Many of the town’s ladies who “possibly could” attended the event for what is said to have been “a pleasant evening”. Miss Venn had transferred the tree from the town’s “ragged school” where she had offered a similar “treat” at the end of January of the same year.

A Mr. Edmunds and others distributed gifts to the 317 paupers at the workhouse for Christmas and New Year 1891 and other people of the town were also noted to have donated items such as ‘cuffs for the children’ and ‘rabbits’ for eating. The alms receivers were also given about 12 shillings each at Christmas as well as extra monies in case of sickness. There were also many bequests, made by a variety of different people, that were used to setup local Honiton charities, including a 18th century gift left by Richard Minifie, which was distributed on 21st June and at Christmas. Elizabeth Harris left a sum of £50, in 1782, so that bread could be given to the poor on Christmas Day.

During the recession of the 1930s, hundreds of unemployed queued for their bread rations; in 1957 only 30 old people were given a loaf but by 1962 the interest on the original £50 could only provide 24 loaves however, other benefactors made it possible for each caller to be given a loaf, a shilling and an orange for the Christmas festivities! Many of these smaller charities still exist today as the amalgamated Honiton United Charities and still provide help and support to those in need around the town.

by Terry Darrant



Carved monument to Rev Richard Lewis, teaching his pupils 1843. Credit: Allhallows museum.

-THE COASTAL BOUTIQUE-

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**50TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF
BRITISH UGANDAN
ASIANS ARRIVING
IN HONITON BEGINS
AT SITE OF FORMER
RESETTLEMENT CAMP**



Entertaining the guests in the Joanna Leach Auditorium with popular Indian folk dances performed by Arundhati and company from Exeter



Anniversary cake made by Cathryn McCollum with edible lace icing as Honiton is famous for its decorative lace. The BUA logo ribbon to represent the British Ugandan Asians who were temporarily housed at the Heathfield Resettlement Camp and the heartfelt message of Thanks Honiton to all those who welcomed them 50 years ago



Councillor Ian Thomas, Mahendra Dabhi, Cllr Ian Hall and the Lady Clifford are pleased to unveil the commemorative plaque on the wall of Blackdown House, HQ for East Devon District Council at Heathpark and built on part of the site of the former Heathfield Resettlement Camp



Deputy Lord Lieutenant for County of Devon the Lady Clifford, Chair of East Devon District Council Cllr Ian Thomas, Chair of Devon County Council Cllr Ian Hall and Deputy Mayor of Honiton Cllr Helen Hurford are joined at the newly planted silver birch tree by Teji Sond, Manoj Chitnavis, Margaret Lewis BEM, Mukesh Makhecha, Mahendra Dabhi, Bina Pepper, Rob Waldron, Ana Collingridge and Jay Chande

A day of civic ceremony and celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of British Ugandan Asians' arrival at Heathfield Resettlement Camp in Honiton, took place on Saturday 29th October. The event was organised by the BUA50 at Honiton planning committee, in partnership with East Devon District Council. Chair of EDDC, Councillor Ian Thomas welcomed everyone to the district council's headquarters at Blackdown House on Heathpark. In his opening speech, Councillor Thomas said: " During October 1972, around 1,800 people experienced Britain for the first time where we stand today. 680 beds were swiftly assembled, huts cleaned, classrooms set up and teachers recruited to

welcome the first of the arrivals from Uganda. The challenges of our new citizens must have been extraordinary, with virtually all aspects of their lives disrupted. The Devon accent, a new British culture, food and language must have presented enormous challenge, yet their resilience has been exceptional. Rather than looking at their expulsion as life destroying, they saw it as a setback. They didn't get downcast, got up and started all over again. Their successful integration into British Society and their valuable and continuing contribution to multicultural Britain is a testament to that."

Guest of honour, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Lady Clifford of Chudleigh who attended as the

King's representative for the county of Devon, symbolically turned the soil as a silver birch was planted. Lady Clifford said: "It is a huge honour and privilege as a Devonian to join you for your anniversary and to celebrate the welcome and safe haven given by Honiton to those who were forced to flee a tyrant." Following the tree planting ceremony, a plaque was unveiled on the wall of Blackdown House also commemorating the important event in Honiton's history and acknowledging with 'gratitude the welcome, help and support from local residents, the council and voluntary groups'.

The second part of the day's programme took place at the Beehive. Compere, Jay Jina invited the guest speakers to say a few brief words, with all echoing the same sentiment that "Honiton had been a beacon of light in the darkness" for many British Asian families fleeing from President Idi Amin and his 'militia men'. Most had been given 90 days to leave but civil servants living in the northern district of Kampala were only given 48 hours notice. In Britain, the part played by 63 voluntary organisations, who had worked together with the Ugandan Resettlement Board, was an 'extraordinary achievement'. Film clips were shown of the arrival at Honiton camp, departure from Honiton Railway Station and 2022 interviews.

Entertainment was provided by students from the University of Exeter, with an opening dance from Swati Gola, there were also Indian dances from Arundhati and Arundhati and Company who closed the show with Bhangra, a traditional folk dance from the Punjab region of India. A poem written by Jay Jina gave an understanding of how the experience had been for Ugandan Asians arriving in Devon. Malaika, a song often heard on Ugandan radio at that time, was sung by university student Sachin and there was African drumming and dance by Shuma Dance.

A 50th anniversary cake was ceremoniously cut by Munira and Riyaz, girl and boy cousins born at Marl pits Hospital on December 8th and 28th December 1972. The day ended with a buffet of Indian savouries and a Devon cream tea. East Devon District Council were thanked for their "unstinting support in making the day's celebration possible." Thanks were extended to Allhallows Museum, the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, British Ugandan Asians At 50, Wendy and volunteers at the Beehive, students Dominic Case and Charlie Forbes and Mahendra Dabhi, Margaret Lewis BEM, Steve Parsons, Bina Pepper, Ana Collingridge, Rob Waldron, Mukesh Makecha and Manoj Chitnavis – BUA50@ Honiton.

By Ana Collingridge (c)

HONITON WOMEN AT WORK

HEATHER STEVENS - CONNETTS FARM

Heather is from New Zealand and came to work on a dairy farm in Blackborough on The Blackdown Hills as part of her "European tour" - and she stayed! Heather is still involved with that farm, but 32 years on she runs a Christmas tree business with husband Nick. Now they farm 25 acres of trees, around Dunkeswell and Blackborough. They sell Christmas trees in season, and compost, manure, woodchip and bark all year-round.

Said Heather - "My joys are my family of 3 lovely children, and being so much part of the rural community here on The Blackdown Hills."

- CONNETTS FARM, DUNKESWELL

CAROLINE BUSHELL - FOUNTAIN ANTIQUES CENTRE

CAROLINE BUSHELL - Partner at Fountain Antiques, High Street, Honiton.

I became involved in the antique textile trade by default, after attending farm sales in the 1970's/80's and being more interested by the household effects rather than the tractors! This led me to commence trading at flea markets and village fairs. By 1990 I had started trading in Fountain Antiques and in 2006 became a partner in the ownership and still am! I spend a lot of time laundering my stock, but will always find time for walking my Tibetan Terriers in our wonderful countryside. Throughout this time I have also run small 'Textile Events' in the South West with great friends and fellow traders. I meet lovely customers and am always excited by the chance to find more textile treasures. - 132 HIGH ST, HONITON EX14 1JP



SARAH WESTCOTT - FIG & IVY

I have dreamed of owning my own Boutique ever since I was little and when lockdown happened, I decided to make my dream a reality - and opened Fig and Ivy Lifestyle.

I wanted to create a lifestyle boutique full of all my favourite things because I believe you have to be passionate about what you're selling. I source products from all over the world for the boutique but I have a real love of Danish brands and the LADIES FASHION brands we have instore. I just love the simplistic, elegant, sustainable ethos behind a lot of the Danish products. The reaction when our customers see the unique collection of wooden toys we stock is lovely, as it brings back a lot of memories from their childhood.

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The abbey was founded in 1201 as a Cisterian Monastery, and a "satellite" of Forde Abbey, which is a few miles away on the Dorset/Somerset border. Dunkeswell Abbey grew in size and importance, and at one stage the buildings covered 6 acres with nearby trout ponds, woods and agricultural activities to supply the monks.

The abbey was closed in 1539, following the dissolution of the monasteries, and most of the building demolished soon afterwards, with the materials being taken for re-use in other nearby properties.

Now, surrounded by a small community of cottages and farms, this is a very tranquil place to visit. We had a sunny afternoon to explore the ruins, and see the towering remains of some of the original buildings, with other parts clearly absorbed by an adjoining farm. Near the site of the original cloisters stands the parish Church of The Holy Trinity, built in the mid 19th Century by the Simcoe family. This wonderfully plain church with a surprisingly large number of pews gives tribute to the former importance of this community, and place for work, meditation and worship.

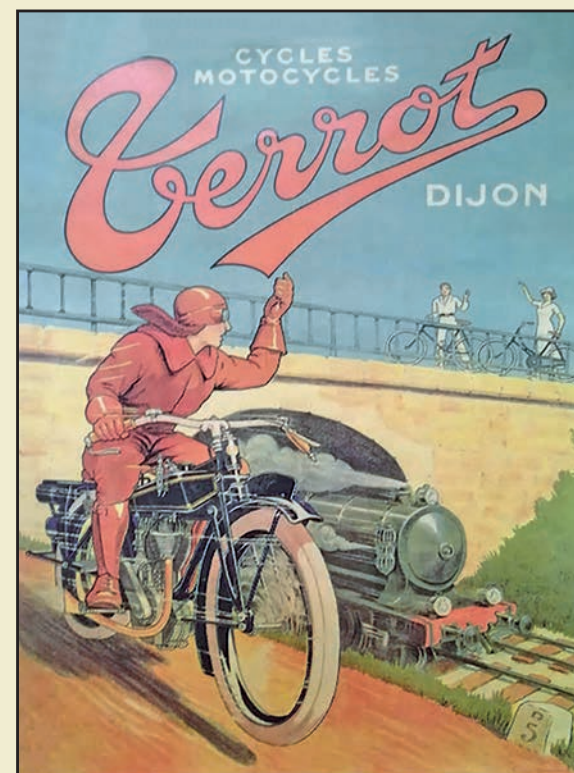
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