

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

ISSUE 79 FEBRUARY 1995



Sidney George STAPLES

1876 - 1939

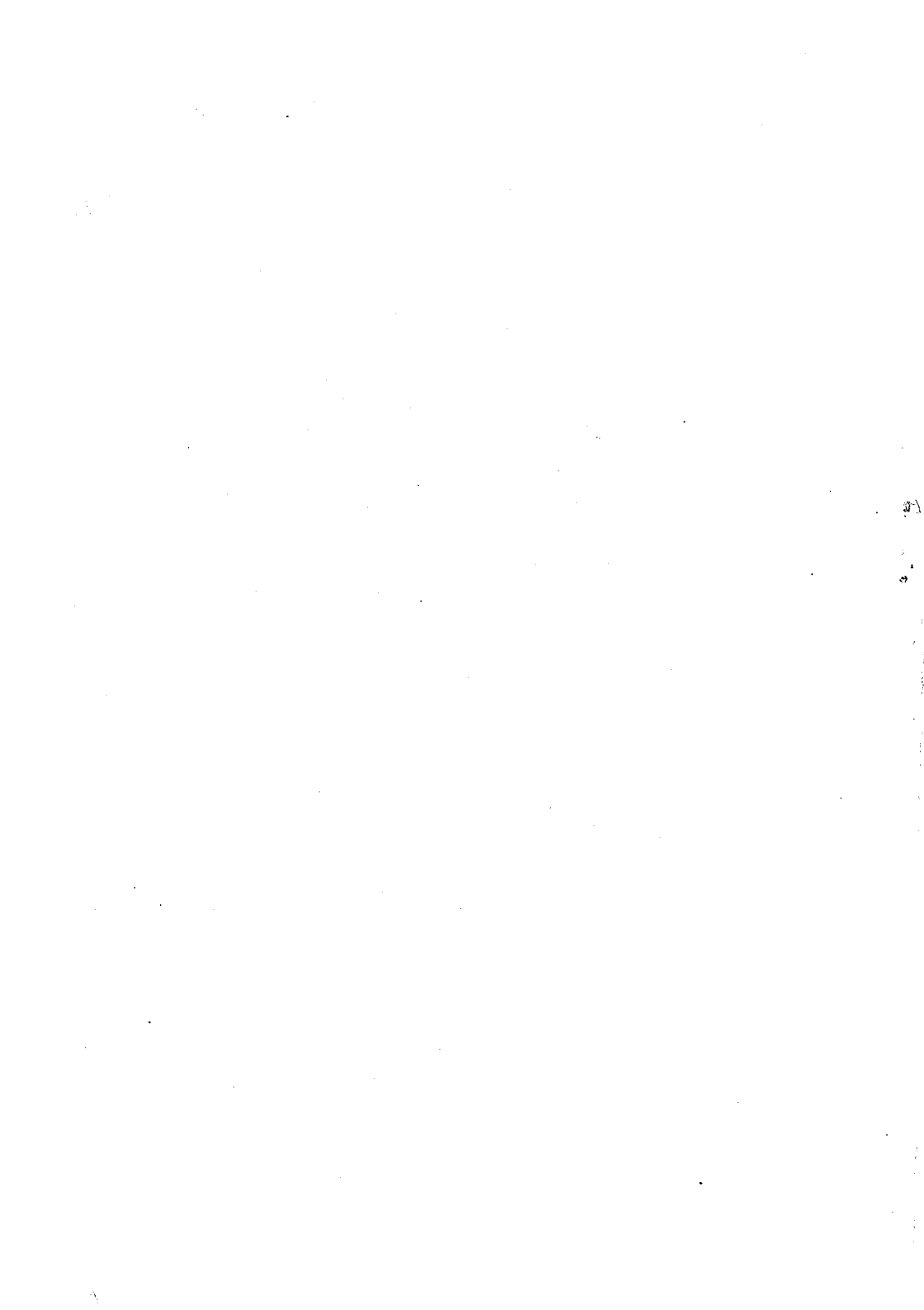
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KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

I am reliably informed that Little Ed is up to her elbows in sheep even as we speak. Yes, it is that time of year when her expensive perfume takes on a slightly more rural aroma and her "Haute Couture" is replaced by blue overalls, wellies and surgical gloves. However, 'normal' life goes on for the rest of us so your magazine is therefore cobbled together by the "two mere mortals" left in charge.

Thank you for this month's contributions and don't forget to write to us with your articles of information and entertainment for the March issue.

Kate

BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Tim TAYLOR
- 2nd Katy STOWELL
- 14th Gladys DENMEAD
- 16th Marianna MACKAY
- 19th Jeff NAISH
- 25th James GRIFFIN
- 27th Jenny PASCOE.

NAISH'S NOTES

The proceeds from the Xmas Disco have been given to the MS Centre at Nailsea. I understand that the £350-40p will be put towards the costs of servicing the oxygen chamber.

I receive a newsletter from the unit regularly and in the last one was a poem entitled "How would you feel" written by a MS sufferer. With their permission we have printed it below. I found it very moving.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL

How would you feel if you were me
And saw the hurdles and mountains I
see?

How would you feel if your legs were
like these
That shivered and shook or collapsed at
the knees?

How would you feel if your hands were
not good
And you had to ask someone to cut up
your food?

How would you feel outside in your
chair
If your access was blocked by a doorway
or stair?

How would you feel seeing life stretch
away
As an endless marathon to be run every
day?

BUT.....

How would you feel if I were you
Watching me struggle in all that I do?

How could I cope with the tantrums and
tears
Seeing my anger, frustration and fears?

How could I cope if I had to be
Chauffeur, nursemaid and lover to me?

How would I feel if I walked through the
door
To find my wife laid in a heap on the
floor?

How would I feel if our roles were
reversed
And you were disabled and I was your
nurse?

I couldn't manage as well as you do
So I'm glad that I'm me and thankful
You're you.

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr Dennis GOLDSWORTHY has asked if anyone along Kenn Road as far as Oakland Farm would be interested in forming a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. The main part of the village is covered already. If anyone is interested please contact Dennis or myself.

Thank you.

CONGRATULATIONS

Many congratulations to Penny GRIFFIN who has recently become engaged to Murray LEIPER from Aberdeen. Their forthcoming marriage will be held in Kenn Church in August.

RELOCATION

Mrs Gladys GRIFFIN is now residing at Waterford House, Linden Road, Clevedon. We hope she has settled in and is feeling much better.

VALENTINE DISCO

A Valentine Disco will be held at Kenn Valley Social Club on Saturday 11th February beginning at 8-30pm.

Free admission. All are welcome.

CONGRATULATIONS

Many congratulations to Ian PASCOE of Willow House who in a sustained bout of hard work has won both the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze award and the highly prized Chief Scout's Award.

Well done.

SNIPPETS

Our flag was flown on Christmas Day to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

KENN VILLAGE HALL

Kate DENMEAD has promised to organise a Quiz Evening in aid of hall funds on March 25th.

CARING AT CHRISTMAS

Caring at Christmas

We have had two letters from this charity thanking kennites for donations: One to Marianna MACKAY for the donation of food for the shelter; and one to Barbara MIDDLETON for the donation of £31 - the proceeds of a raffle.

The charity is in the process of converting two warehouses into a permanent night shelter. Although the work is going well further help is required to install the ventilation system, kitchen and laundry.

VE COMMEMORATION and THANKSGIVING

Every family in Kenn is invited to support financially and materially the Jumble Sale to be held at 2pm on Wednesday 22nd February in the village hall.

Offers of help will be much appreciated. Requests for produce, cakes, toys, books, white elephant, clothes etc.

All profits will be used to help finance the Commemoration and Thanksgiving Day.

DIARY DATES

- February 8th. Kenn WI. 7-30pm. Speaker Mrs MERRICK-SMITH of Backwell.
- February 22nd. Jumble Sale. Village Hall, 2pm.
- March 25th. Quiz Night in village hall.

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Milly STOWELL, Stella NAISH and their helpers did an excellent job when they arranged the Christmas Party for local children.

The entertainment provided by Uncle Brian and his daughter Amy

was much enjoyed by children, parents and grandparents.

Poor old Father Christmas struggled along with his sack of presents, one for each child. It's marvellous how he remembers all their names.

Many thanks to all who helped to make it such an enjoyable day.

Ray NAISH

KENN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Owing to an electrical fault the January meeting of the Kenn W.I. was conducted in an atmosphere of Stygian gloom entirely in keeping with the wintry weather outside. The evening was redeemed, however, by the miracles performed by torchlight in the kitchen by the tea ladies, the beautiful floral arrangement from Mrs. Megan Harris and last but by no means least a talk with lovely slides by the Rev. Martin on Devon, glorious Devon. It is easy to forget how beautiful and interesting a county Devon is and how simple it is for us to get there. Rev. Martin was warmly thanked by Mrs. Joyce Jeffrey. The competition for a picture postcard of Devon was won by Mrs. J. Jeffrey, gold, Mrs. J. Ings, silver and Mrs. J. Morris, green. We were also delighted to welcome two new members, Mrs. Harris and Miss Weaver.

The annual competition prizes were presented and the winners for 1994 were joint first Mrs. E. Prew and Mrs M. Crawley, third prize went to Mrs. J. Jeffrey. Gardening vouchers were also

given to Mrs. Blake and Mrs. Kingcott to thank them for the marvellous work that they do on the Trade Stall. We are indebted to them for a large proportion of our income. Our nominated Charity for 1995 is to be Workshops for the Blind. Used Christmas cards will be collected for St. Peters Hospice. Subscriptions for 1995 are now due, the fee this year is £12.

An invitation to the Birthday Party at Congresbury W.I. was accepted. It is hoped to arrange a social skittles match at the Kenn Valley Social Club on 30th March to which husbands will be cordially invited.

It was decided that a letter of protest at the proposal to inject cows with BST should be sent to William Waldegrave, our local M.P.s, M.E.Ps and any other influential person we can think of. Members feel that BST has been insufficiently tested (it is banned in America) and there are suggestions of a cancer risk and farmers could produce sufficient milk for our needs without it.

At the February meeting Mrs. Merrick-Smith will talk on relieving stress with aromatherapy. The competition is for a perfume bottle.

V.E. DAY COMMEMORATION IN KENN

Ten people attended the meeting in the Village Hall to try to decide whether there should be any arrangements made for the village to commemorate the 50th anniversary of V.E. Day. There were a great many apologies and offers of help.

After various suggestions had been made and fully discussed it was agreed that if possible the programme should be as follows:

1. A church service to be held on Sunday May 7th and the collection donated to one of the ex-servicemen's associations.
2. Childrens' sports to be held in the

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

afternoon of Monday May 8th in the field by the Village Hall.

3. A tea

4. A social evening in the Village Hall and barbecue (outside if the weather is willing) with music of the Glenn Miller, Vera Lynn variety.

5. An exhibition in the Village Hall of memorabilia of the Second World War, and of children's projects if any have done one at school.

Mr. John Griffin will be looking for helpers to organise the sports, so please contact him if you are able to help. Mrs. Naish will be asking for assistance with the barbecue, so any offers will be gratefully received. The ladies will be arranging the tea, so please see Mrs. Dyer if you can help. Mr. and Mrs. Griffin are putting on the exhibition so if you have photographs or ration books or any other such thing they will be glad to hear from you.

There will be a Jumble Sale on February 22nd in the Village Hall at 2.30 p.m. to raise money for the initial expenses. Any monetary donations will be gratefully received. A bank account for the occasion will be opened and any surplus after the event will be sent to ex-servicemen's associations. Mr. Ford at the Old School is to be keeper of the purse, so if you would like to donate he will be happy to receive it.

Enquiries are to be made to see whether it will be feasible to give a commemorative souvenir to the children.

A further meeting is to be held in the Village Hall on Monday 13th March to see how plans are progressing. All are welcome to attend.

PARISH MEETING CENTENARY

Having seen various reports of Parish Council centenaries I have looked at the minute book to see when Kenn had its

first meeting.

It was held in the Schoolroom on Tuesday 4th December 1894 at 6 p.m. The Rev. R.T. Still was unanimously elected chairman. Mr. Angus George McGregor of Portbury House was elected as District Councillor. There were no other nominations. Mr. Charles Staples was elected as Waywarden. The appointment of Overseer and Assistant Overseer was left until the meeting on Lady Day.

No parish matters of any importance were brought forward for discussion so the meeting then closed.

Those present were: Rev. T.T. Still, J.J. W. Stuckey, W.H. Withey, H. Wall, C. Staples, Samuel Dyer, Edward Sprod, Angus G. McGregor, Thomas Hardwick, James Neads, John James, Alfred H. Hollyman, James Fry, Henry Staples, Samuel Carey, Samuel Baker, William Tinklin, Albert Denmead, Arthur Bacon, Joseph Orchard, George Dyer, John Richardson, B.A., James Fry, Charles Holly.

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Parish Council will meet in the Village Hall on Monday 6th February at 7.30 p.m. All electors are eligible to attend.

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

This service, held on the afternoon of January 15th, was a great success.

The Church was packed with about 120 attending to take part in the Thanksgiving for the completion of the restoration of the roof, the Dedication of a Memorial Board inscribed with the names of all those interred in the Garden of Remembrance, and the Dedication of a lectern in memory of Richard WHITEHEAD, Churchwarden and Sacristan for over twenty years.

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

There was a rather disappointing number of actual Kenn people present, in fact, they were outnumbered two to one by visitors.

People whose near relatives are interred in the Garden of Remembrance and who could be traced were sent special invitations. There was a marvellous response to these invitations. The late John and Vera HINTON's daughters and sons-in-law drove down from Stratford on Avon and Worcester, and Robert GUEST, son of the late Mildred GUEST came up from Chard to attend. The majority of the relatives who came lived locally. Many replies were received from long distances from relatives unable to attend.

The cost of the Memorial Board has been covered by donations received from relatives of those names inscribed on the Board.

After the service, refreshments were served to the congregation who had a great time talking to people who in many cases they had not seen for years. Several people were disappointed at not being able to attend due to illness or advancing years.

Ray NAISH

TEA AND CHAT

This month Tea and Chat will be held on Thursday 2nd February at Apple Acre, Kenn Street, the home of Deryck and Renee BELL. As usual, it will start at 2.30pm and everyone is welcome.

Wendy PAPASOLOMONTOS

SIDNEY GEORGE STAPLES

A KENN MAN AT THE BATTLE OF OMDURMAN

The time is September 1898, the place Sudan in Africa. The world is in, by the standards of today, a reassuringly stable period. All the great monarchies of Europe are intact; Czar Nicholas II and

his wife and Grandmother Victoria rule between them, the two greatest empires the world had or will ever see. As it's September, Queen Victoria will be at Balmoral for her Autumn holiday. At Number 10, Lord Salisbury keeps a steady hand on affairs of nation and empire. Out in Africa a young Cecil Rhodes dreams of ever greater Empires.

Here in the Sudan Lord Kitchener leads "The Nile Expeditionary Force" an army of twenty thousand British and Egyptian troops. As they advance to the city of Omdurman, in the ranks is a young man of Kenn, 22 year old Sidney George STAPLES, a grenadier guardsman.

What is Sidney thinking, knowing that he would probably be fighting the enemy (the army of the Mahdi, leader of the Dervish Empire) on the morrow. On the great plain beyond Omdurman one hundred thousand armed fighting men held the Sudan under subjection. Three times the Mahdi had humbled the powerful British Empire: at El Abed; Abu Klea; and, most famously, when they broke through General Gordon's crumbling parapets at Khartoum and took his head away on a spear. The Victorian did not take kindly to this sort of carry on. Now Kitchener was back to settle these old scores supported by the Egyptians whose agenda was to rid the upper Nile of a thorn in their flesh - the Mahdi and his hordes.

They march under a blazing African sun, with the Nile on their right flowing from the heart of Africa to the Mediterranean. On the river with its green islands sailed gunboats and army supply vessels mixing with local craft about their business.

Marching armies break camp at dawn in the desert in order to take advantage of the coolness of early morning. By mid-day, with the sun high, they will be halting, making camp, preparing a meal and settling down for the night. This afternoon, Kitchener's force back up to

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

the Nile which offers protection from the rear, supply from the boats, and water. During the day Kitchener, had ridden three lengths ahead of two mounted standard bearers who carried the Union and Egyptian flags. No doubt they are all glad to get out of the saddle, or off their feet and under some shade to rest for an hour or two, before eating the evening meal.

That night, we imagine Sidney would have found it very difficult to sleep with the night sounds of the army all around him, and thought of the day to come with the certainty of battle. Would he be injured or even lose his young life just as he was entering into manhood. Maybe, like young men the world over, he was just excited and looking forward to the challenge and drama of action under fire and testing himself. We can be sure he will be thinking of home, that far off village called Kenn, set in the green and rich pastures of England.

Was he already courting Maude Carey whose father ran the Rose and Crown? Had they reached an understanding before he left for the Sudan?

What's happening at home. Well it would have been peaceful for sure. No roar of distant motorway, no thunder of jets coming and going from Lulsgate, no grunt of tractors in the field, just the squeak of harness as the horses go about their labour, the creak of wagon or trap wheels as they pass up or down Kenn Street. Homes and barns with oil lamps for light, no hum of electric motors in the milking parlour but the hiss of a jet of milk plunging through the head of froth into the bucket as farm hands doing the early morning milking snuggle up to nice warm cows contentedly chewing their feed from the manger.

At the Vicarage, the newly installed Rev. Walter PERKS is preparing for his first Harvest Festival at St John's, thinking maybe how lucky he was that the church

was in such good order, having been restored not long before. Also what a wise move it had been, with so many children in Kenn, to enlarge the school.

Back in Africa, as the cold cloudless night sky showed the first signs of pre-dawn colours, the lancers were out reconnoitering. A good thing too because as the darkness fades they can see the vague blur of a host coming on. As the first light catches the shimmering spears, there arises from fifty thousand throats a great battle cry, affirming their faith in and devotion to the Mahdi.

Seeing Sidney's proud bearing in his photo, I think he would not have wished to be anywhere else on that dramatic morning but standing shoulder to shoulder with his comrades facing a foe which outnumbered them two or three to one. He would recall to his children in later years that they found themselves fighting not only men but women too - fighting with even more ferocity than the men.

As the Dervish army advanced, the British cavalry hearing them withdrew to the flanks. By now Kitchener has his army in position, and as the cavalry clears the field of fire, so the great Dervish attack is decimated by the steady fire of the British and Egyptian rifles and artillery.

The Dervish banners wilt and go down. Thus the black dream of Mahdism vanishes in the drifting smoke of well-drilled musketry.

A day of awful destruction which rids the Sudan of Mahdism, avenged Gordon and reaffirmed to the world the long memory and long arm of the British Empire.

Within a short time Sidney was headed home. He left the Guards and was offered the chance to join the Metropolitan Police; he turned that down and decided to remain in Kenn and settle down with Maude. They married in our church and moved into "Rose Cottage"

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

down on the Moor Road. Here their children, James, Eileen, Veronica, Donald, Samuel and Winifred were born.

Sadly Maude was to die on the first of June 1924, she was only 45. The following day, Sam and Winifred being the youngest went to "Riverside Farm" to live with their grandparents. The other four children, which included 12 year old Don, stayed on at "Rose Cottage" with their father. In time they all married and left home.

Sidney suffered from a stomach condition caused, he always maintained, by drinking the unboiled Nile water whilst on the Omdurman Campaign. By his late fifties, Sidney, a sick man, moved also to "Riverside Farm" to live in part of the house where Sam and his wife Irene now lived with their family.

Sidney was not to make old bones. He died on July 18th 1939 aged sixty three.

You can see the well-tended grave of Maude and Sidney STAPLES on your right as you enter our churchyard from Church Path, ie the main gate.

It's ironic that Sidney survived the Sudan Campaign but possibly brought home with him the condition that was to shorten his life.

It's also interesting to contemplate how different the village would have been if Sidney STAPLES had been lost at Omdurman and his large family had not been around to enrich our village life.

In writing this article I'm indebted to several members of the family for their help and advice.

There was another young man on the battlefield that day. The story of his day I would like to write about ... but it's another story and I'll need to get permission from Little and Medium Ed first.

J GRIFFIN

KENN PEOPLE & PLACES QUIZ

1. We may call it Kenn Street but according to records it is? **High Street**
2. Single timber? **One Elm**
3. What nectar for a Mediaeval feast? **Honeymead**
4. Baptist/ Horse's Shoulder? **John Withers**
5. Leader from grocer's shop/Hide away in water? **Margaret Stowell**
6. Metal/value? **Goldsworthy**
7. In our alley/snow white top? **Sally Whitehead**
8. Was justice done here? **Kenn hangings**
9. Animal/canal? **Bullock**
10. Mice/grapes/festivities? **Wine and Cheese Party**
11. Open space/beaver's home? **home? Moor Lodge**
12. Early priest/change of colour? **Sam Dyer**
13. Did the banana boats dock here? **Kenn Pier**
14. Not first or last/Imperial measure? **Middleton**
15. Not Jill/cab? **Jack Hanson**
16. Happiness/effort **Fun Run**
17. Lights/singing/colour? **Christmas tree on village green**
18. Fruit/field? **Apple Acre**
19. The more you beat them the better they are? **Walnut tree**
20. Did the bonny Prince hide here? **Oak Tree Farm**
21. Information/vistas? **News and Views.**

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

NUMBERS QUIZ

What a lovely time I had doing the numbers quiz - now for the truth; I found it extremely frustrating and a great mes-ser of the house, reference books were strewn everywhere. Those who think my house is so untidy it would not be noticeable.....

However, no amount of reference books can help with wrong questions. In my memory I remember 7 Dr Whos - Hartnell, Troughton, Pertwee, Baker (Tom), Baker (Colin), Davidson and McCoy not the 6 as in 6 APDW (on T).

As for 46 LETS in CTC (Lowest English Test Score in Cricket This Century), did anyone get it?

Most enjoyable though and can't wait until next year. Congratulations to Mr PASCOE on his victory, but it will be short as I intend to pull out even more stops next year.

Medium Ed

JANUARY BIRD NEWS

Firstly, let me tackle the query raised in last month's KN&V. GREATER SPOTTED WOODPECKERS do visit garden nut feeders but they are shy birds and rarely seem to visit continually any one garden. Incidentally, the male has a crimson head whereas the female has an all black head.

I am concerned to read that the typist's "Life List" is likely to pass mine with a couple more trips abroad! Seriously though, it was a very interesting article, and I have no doubt, Richard that I would not have found identifying South American species any easier than you did,

With no prolonged cold spells the Kenn Moor has not exactly been full of birds. However, the census team were pleased to note a few SNIPE and also a small party of TEAL early in the month. A pair of STONECHATS was present in Claver-

ham Drove and, on a non-avian note, a youngster had landed a good sized, around 8lbs, pike from Blackditch Rhyne.

By midmonth, a pair of LITTLE GREBES (dabchicks) were feeding on aforesaid rhyne, with four MOORHENS and evidence that the MALLARDS were beginning to pair up. A real surprise, however, was a flock of 20 GOLDEN PLOVER, which swept low over the moor; I have only ever seen this species (on the Moor) during very cold weather previously - what does this mean!!

KESTREL and BUZZARD have both been observed and around 70 LAPWINGS were feeding on the wet fields.

My small garden has hosted both a male, and a week later, a female BLACKCAP. These warblers are generally known as summer visitors but, increasingly in recent years, a few have overwintered - generally feeding in gardens on insects or berries. They are small birds, the male with a black and the female with a brown cap. So please let me know if you are lucky enough to spot one.

Trevor RIDDLE.

TYPIST'S NOTE

We have a male blackcap that has visited the garden for some weeks over December/January. He, unlike the book description of blackcaps as aggressive, seems timid and often visits at quiet periods such as last thing in the evening. On these visits, he likes peanuts and we have started to put a few on the bird table for him.

KENN HISTORY GROUP

At the January meeting we had the pleasure of watching the video of Mrs Christine MALET's visit last October to meet some of her pupils from her time as teacher at Kenn School between 1936-42. We were able to recapture the enjoyable afternoon everyone had. Our grateful

KENN NEWS AND VIEWS

thanks to Maurice FORD for taking the video for our village records.

We also showed some slides of our holiday in America 3 years ago when we visited New York, Niagara Falls and Boston.

We then discussed the possibility of staging a small exhibition of World War II memorabilia on VE Commemoration Day, May 8th in Kenn Hall. If anyone who lived through those times has any photographs etc and would like us to show them, please get in touch on Clevedon 872948.

Our next meeting will be on Monday February 13th, 7-30pm at The Granary when we hope to have a speaker. Please feel free to join us.

G GRIFFIN

SARAH MARY WAINWRIGHT

Mrs WAINWRIGHT passed away recently in Clevedon aged 88. Very long time residents of Kenn will remember when Mrs WAINWRIGHT, with her husband George and children Annie, George, Florence and Phyllis, lived at "Moor-gates" in Kenn Street; this was during the 1930s.

When the family lived here, Mr WAINWRIGHT ran a small pickle-making factory in the buildings around the house. He took the pickles to Bristol in his three-wheeler van to be sold round the shops. They also kept a small herd of milking goats, a rare thing in those days. Mr WAINWRIGHT died several years ago. Annie married an American and went back to his country but died at a very young age. George and Florence live in Clevedon, Phyllis in Bristol.

The family have always kept an interest in Kenn, George and Florence attended the school reunion held last Autumn.

Ray NAISH

