



## The Threshold Centre

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### Hello!

Both the properties that are changing hands are in the final stages of legalities and we wish for everyone's sake they continue to go through smoothly and swiftly. It is such a nail-biting process for all concerned. Jan, who will be moving into Oak Cottage, joined us on the latest work weekend. One of the jobs undertaken by the team was clearing masses of unwanted growth from round her unit and the brook and she was enthusiastic to 'get her hands dirty'. A great start!

There are contributions in this edition from residents who regularly go on adventurous trips across the world - from the frozen north

to the scorching east. Just to prove there is life beyond the community!

But we also hear of the burgeoning wildlife on our doorstep and the quietly growing vegetable garden. We have welcomed a wonderful number of bees and butterflies, particularly busy now the gardens around our 'village green' are growing into maturity, providing the food they so desperately need.

We have welcomed many lovely people this year to our courses, events, open teas and celebrations and soon it will be our Friends Weekend - read more here...

*Gay*

## Welcome Friends Old and New...

Jane and I are delighted to be facilitating this years Friends Weekend from 19th - 21st September. This weekend has become a regular on our calendar and something of a tradition. An opportunity for the 'friends' team and our lovely venerable Threshold farmhouse to welcome visitors old and new to relax, rejuvenate and reflect. Something for everyone with a retreat meets country house party vibe!

This year we join together at the time of the Autumn Equinox; 'when days and nights are equal, and then, slowly the darkness starts to grow... This is the time of real Harvest Thanksgiving so it is a good time to sit

and evaluate your own harvest, to see if you have gathered it all in now, and make sure that you know how to keep it well.'  
(Astrocal Diary 2014)

There will be the opportunity for time in nature; walking, gardening and gathering the harvest. Cosy times around the fire with tea, homemade cakes and a chat. Reflective times with meditation, chanting and reading. And of course space, as a group or an individual, to celebrate our own unique achievements and sow the seeds of intention for what is to come. As well as great food, superb company, a little fun and perhaps some frivolity. Threshold welcome you... all for £80 plus B & B. See the website for full details of how to book.

*Amanda B X*



## Garden news

What a lovely summer! Our Village Green has been looking particularly beautiful this year, so much so that it has been suggested we might have an Open Gardens day!! Well maybe next year....

Meanwhile the polytunnel and raised beds are all producing lots of lovely veg, but this year the slugs don't seem to be a problem – it's the birds! I've never known it before, but they just go for all the young green leaves on the chard, lettuce, even young swedes and brussel sprouts. Must revive that scarecrow! We had the best strawberry crop we've ever had, and actually managed to pick most of them before the birds discovered them (last year's netting didn't survive the winter and we didn't get round to replacing it).

The chickens are doing fine in their new location with all the fruit bushes to shelter and dust-bath beneath. We were letting them out to free-range the orchard during the day, but sadly we had a resident fox for a while and he picked one off (yes, only one!), so we've had to keep them penned into their electric fence. We were left with only three hens, 2 of our old original 'rescue' hens and one new one, which was not making economic sense, so we have now bought 4 very pretty new ones and they are now all laying happily.

Linda

## Visit by Duncliffe Garden Club June 2014

This was arranged by Stephen Nutt, a former resident here and also a member of various local garden clubs etc. As he and his partner Penny have now moved away, he asked me to host the visitors. It was another lovely afternoon and they were all happy to sit in the garden and drink tea and chat, but they were also interested to learn more about our community, as most of them had not been here before. So as well as the (compulsory!) garden tour, we showed them around our farmhouse and some of our houses, and they looked at the biomass boiler, the bio-digester and the rainwater collection systems, etc.

They are a friendly, delightful group and we do hope they enjoyed their visit.

Linda



## Gardening weekend July 2014

This took place on the weekend of the thunder storms! It's always challenging for the organisers to try to find enough indoor jobs in case of rain, but in fact we were really lucky and it only rained (heavily) on the Saturday morning. Actually it was good because the polytunnel got lots of attention from all 5 of our lovely volunteers! The rest of the weekend was hot and sunny and an amazing amount of work was done as well as plenty of sitting in the garden and eating, drinking and talking – always an important part of the gardening weekends!

Thanks so much to the 5 of you who came and worked so hard and we hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did!

# From the far north to the far east tales of travels from two of our residents

## Northern Norway

In March this year, Ceri and I set off for a two month retreat on a small island called Litløy Fyr (Little Island Lighthouse in English) in the Arctic Circle, Norway. What an incredible experience we had. The second day we were there, the boat was lost to a huge storm which raged for ten days - we were truly shipwrecked and stranded! Most of the time, there were just three or four of us on the island. We absolutely loved the isolation!

Being so northerly, the sky felt very close and being in the lighthouse gave a near 360° view of the horizon - amazing! Watching the sun and moon move across the sky gave us a deeper understanding of how the heavens and seasons work. This would enhance the work we do with our business Astrocal Lunar Calendars. We were also lucky to see the northern lights many times.

Every day, we experienced the incredible views of the sea and the Lofoten mountain range, the wild weather, the stunning light, the white tailed sea eagles, the cold fresh clean air, the physical exercise, the simple day to day life and the inspiring connections with Elena, our host, and the other two volunteers. Everything that we consumed whilst on the island had to be brought by boat then carried up 230 steps - phew! There is no running water or electricity on the island although there is a well and solar panels give power. It's very off grid and everything Elena was setting up was done with an ecological ethos.

For us, it was very much about giving to and supporting someone else's dream. We both found this deeply rewarding. A deep connection with the land, the sea and the mind blowing beauty of our surroundings. The elements were wild and we felt tiny out there in the ocean. We experienced deep peace, tranquillity and the time to really live in the NOW!

An amazing experience which has given us a much needed break from our lives. Coming back with a fresh outlook has meant that positive changes have been made in our lives resulting in more creative time for our business and ourselves.

We're now planning our next trip to Scandinavia and not sure exactly where it will be - all we know is it will be north and cold unlike Michael's trips to India!

Tina



## India

As many of you may know I disappear to South India every winter for 3 months or so. India has been part of my life for a long time. I went overland to India in 1964, and again in 1969, to study Sociology at Madras University for 3 years. I fell in love with Tamil Nadu and its culture and have been returning there regularly since 1989. My main home there is a Benedictine Monastery called Shantivanam Ashram in a village called Tannirpalli ('the place of the water' in Tamil). It welcomes all people who are seeking God (whatever that may mean for each individual) and provides a quiet space for their personal meditation and contemplation. I act as the Assistant Guestmaster greeting Westerners and helping them to adjust to the simple Ashram life. I have been privileged to get to know many of the villagers, and especially one family in particular. They give me every year 2 yellow Indian shirts - one at Christmas and one at Pongal (the Tamil Harvest Festival in mid January)! So when I wear them I have a constant reminder of the kindness and vivacity of the Tamil way of life.

Michael



# Summer wildlife at Threshold

Well, you know summer has arrived when our swallows are back. We have had the first batch of five healthy chicks located in the front porch of the farm house. I think the other nest above the door is being checked out by another pair. Another nest is located to the rear of Amanda and Bill's house. Interestingly it is not just the parents feeding their young but other swallows associated with the family are carrying out chick feeding duties as well.



swallows in the porch

Other wild news. Gold finches continue to strip the roof slates of moss on the farm house for nest building. Our woodpeckers are making early morning visits to the tree in the garden as well. The big news is that a pair of herons are looking at a nesting site in the field opposite, in the old oak trees to the right of the field. I have found the wagtail nesting site, but I think a certain cat got there first, sadly. Lots of young voles about (well I find the wounded ones!) enjoying the abundance of food. Our fox Basil has not been seen for some time, I think he or she has moved on?

Sadly our owls have not returned this year, to keep our rodent population down, though they have been heard at night round and about. We have a pair of Pipestral bats flying around though I'm not sure where they are roosting – hopefully in our expensively created 'bat loft' above the workshop, as required for our planning permission! The Summer has brought in loads of insects which will in turn boost bird numbers and prepare them for the Winter ahead.

Just a quick note, if you do see a wounded bird or rodent, put them quickly into a cardboard box and cover it and leave them for a hour or so. Most don't survive the shock of a cat attack but a dark box gives them a slight chance.

Charles

## Keep in touch

To sign up to our mailing list, please email the office at: [info@thresholdcentre.org.uk](mailto:info@thresholdcentre.org.uk)

To avoid disappointment, please phone before visiting.

We welcome visitors to our:

- Afternoon Teas
- Open Meditations
- Work and Gardening Weekends

and the various courses that are run here.

Please remember that this is also our home and we have busy lives, so turning up hoping to be hosted and shown round could end in disappointment - Thank you.

With best wishes from us all, Jane, Amanda, Peter, Susannah, Bill, Michael, Gay, Andrew, Linda, Ceri, Tina, Amanda B, John, Jamie, Rozzie, Stephen, Charles, Muriel, Jon, and not forgetting Monty the dog & Flash & Eddy the cats.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The courses and work weekends prove very popular, so please book early to avoid disappointment.**

### Friend's Weekend

An opportunity to experience cohousing with emphasis on relaxing and having fun, hosted and enjoyed by the Threshold Team. £80 plus B&B

**Sept. 19-21**

### Cohousing Workshops

The workshop provides an opportunity for individuals or groups to experience life in a cohousing community for a weekend, at the same time learning how to go about setting up a project. The cost of a weekend is £150 including lunch, tea/coffee; evening meals. Accommodation at the Threshold Centre - single occupancy of double rooms £35 & double occupancy £25.

**Nov. 14-16**

### Gardening/Work Weekends

A great opportunity to experience the cohousing lifestyle and to work with us and get to know us. You'll meet interesting like-minded people and have a fun weekend - it's not all work! Arrive in time for Friday supper if you can, otherwise early on Saturday.

**Oct. 17-19**

### Afternoon teas for Visitors and Enquirers

These take place on the first Saturday of each month from 3.00 to 4.30 pm. An informal gathering with a chance to look round and meet the residents. Please let us know if you would like to come, and bring cakes to share.

### Open Meditation

The first Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm. We offer meditation and visualisation techniques suitable for all levels of experience.

There is no charge, but donations are welcome.