

BORDER HOLIDAYS AND HORSES – Adams Anchorage and New Cwm Farm Newsletter for Autumn 2011



Hello again to all readers. Here is our Autumn 2011 newsletter. This has been a really good year for birds, lots of cuckoos calling, and more warblers than I can remember anytime before. Some of these tiny, fragile little birds have already left, also some of our beautiful swallows. There are lots of lovely birds which stay with us all year, but the skies seem so empty when the summer visitors have gone. There are still some baby house martins yet to fledge, and I fear for them on their long and arduous journey to Africa.

Seasons!

We seem to have had the last of the gorgeous sultry late summer days and are now entering the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. The early trees are beginning to change into their autumn livery, to be followed by a riot of colours as a prelude to the winter shutdown. The last of the still sweetly scented honeysuckle drape along the hedgerows, soon to change into wonderful Old Man's Beard, beloved of flower arrangers at Harvest Festivals. Our lambs have grown really well. Richard has taken two lots to market, and they achieved top price each time. He said they looked like "little plums" in the pen! The tail end of Hurricane Katia brought some bright and breezy weather, with clouds scudding across the sky.

Anchor Super Mare!

Richard has two trotters in for training, and the little mare, Ithon Gift, is proving to be a real star! We were persuaded to take her on just over a year ago as a last resort because she had managed to smash the knee of the chap who was trying to break her in at the time. She had a reputation for being dangerous, but it didn't take Richard long to work out that she simply panicked. He broke her in gently and she went to a training establishment near Ludlow. Unfortunately they couldn't cope with her panic attacks, so back she came!



Gifty first ran at Knighton Races in May, and was soon bringing home rosettes for thirds and seconds, culminating in her first win at Penybont on August Bank Holiday Monday. Son in Law Mike videoed the event, and you can hear little Emma's excited voice: "Grandad's winning!"

Static Caravans and Campsite

We are about to close things down at the end of this season. The statics are far too cold in winter, and the campsite far too muddy. Chestnut and Ash caravans are named after nearby trees. Unfortunately our horse chestnut tree has been ailing for some years, and the time has come to fetch him down. It will be a really sad day, because every Easter since I have known Richard I have picked some sticky buds to open on the kitchen window sill. It does gladden the heart to have some tangible evidence of spring. On the positive side, there's some amazing fungi growing in the tree roots.

Hatched, Matched and Despatched

Richard found our grand old lady, Girl Friday Daisy Roots (Daisy) dead in the field one morning. She was 39. We first met her 15 years ago when we collected her from a loan home in Gravesend and fetched her

to New Cwm Farm, where she has lived out the rest of her life, apart from a few years when she went out on loan. She was called Girl Friday because she was the sort of pony that could do any job, and Daisy Roots because she had black legs, like boots!



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Wassail, Drink Hale!

There's more to orchards than meets the eye, apparently. Wassailing is an old English ceremony to bless the apple trees, the best fruiter being the boss of the orchard (and you have to keep in with him). A group of peasants would go to this tree, break some bread in half, dip it in a bowl of cider, and put the bread in the branches. The leader would then say: "Wassail" and the rest of the peasants would reply: "Drink hale" and then they would all drink the cider. Not a lot of people know that. Sounds like a good excuse for a booze up to me.



Clunton Scrumpers is a cider-making club, presided over by Harry Collins (aged 89, who still lives in the house where he was born, and he cultivates the second most impressive vegetable garden I have ever seen). Every year parishioners help to make cider, and they have a cider drinking day. One can only speculate what happens but Clunton is a small village and everyone's home is within crawling distance.

Comments?

We really do welcome comments of all kinds. We get many plaudits, which is of course wonderful, but equally we welcome suggestions for improvements, as we would much rather know why we have fallen short, rather than have guests vote with their feet.



Butterflies on Ice Plant

Beacon Hill – I was conned!

One September afternoon a few years ago I went with Richard in his Brother in Law's Land Rover across the Beacon to a farm called The Crug to feed the cattle there. It was a hair raising trip as the track was unusable and we had to go cross country, over ditches and through hedges, mainly downhill so at least gravity was with us. When we had fed the stock, Richard told me I would have to drive the Landy back as he had to take Mike's tractor. I said I couldn't drive back the way we had come – it would be more difficult going uphill, and as you get older the yellow streak gets bigger. He said we would be going via The Llugwy, and no, no, it wasn't a track, it was a tarmac road. And so it was. To start with.



I began to panic when Richard stopped the tractor, walked back to me and said brightly: "You're in 4 wheel drive, so that's all right - put it in second gear, low box, and just keep going". There wasn't much I could do at that stage, except what I was told. The road turned into a narrow track and got steeper and steeper and rougher and rougher. There were rocks and ruts and tree roots and crazy tilts left and right and water pouring down. I followed the tail lights of the tractor as we went up and up, muttering: "Tarmac road my ****. This'll cost him a beer." At one point there was a sideways slope with a drop, lumps and ruts, an overhanging tree, and a sharp bend all together. Eventually the gradient eased, and we were out on the top. There are some journeys you always remember and this was one, trundling across the Beacon on edge of night following the tail lights of the tractor, like red eyes.

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