

DIARYKEEPERS JUNE 2012

What is it like to live now?

“Started Cherry Picking Full Hands”

– Joe Snell, June 29, 1914

Between 1914 and 1938 Tamar Valley resident Joe Snell kept a daily handwritten diary of his life in the Valley. The diaries give a fascinating, personal and often poetic account of the comings and goings of valley life. They include everyday incidents “AJ ordered 2 pairs of trousers”, the marking of the changing seasons “heard cuckoo first time”, his work “Over 1000 bunches of flowers for Devonport Market”, leisure “swimmed length of baths with wings” as well as touching on wider issues “war ended” and his social life “Bank Holiday. Mary Snell and I went to the races”.

To celebrate this wonderful record of time passing and to share what it’s like to live in the Tamar Valley now, you are invited to take part in a month long valley diary in June 2012. See below for how to take part and where to pick up your diary.

JOE SNELL'S DIARIES

Joseph Snell spent his whole life working a market garden at Radland Mill in the parish of St Dominick. The diaries were kept in his family for over 60 years until their presence was revealed in the course of a conversation between Phyllis Morrish, his niece, and Natalie Allen a social historian and Tamar resident who has written a number of fascinating books about Tamar life and history. Natalie was given permission to borrow the diaries and uncovered their varied and rich content and went on to use excerpts as part of her fascinating account of memories of the Cotehele Valley Market Gardeners 'Full Circle'.

INSPIRATION

I am very grateful to Phyllis Morrish and Natalie Allen for being able to celebrate these wonderful diaries and share them with you now almost 100 years later. What drew me to the diaries was their simplicity and brevity. There is something in the short summaries of each day that avoids frills and gets straight to the point and reminds me sometimes of haiku poems (short Japanese poems). What is also fascinating is the recording of the national and global context of the times alongside Joe's own daily existence.

Reading some of Joe's diaries inspired me for the first time in my life to start a diary using a similar format. Usually one and a maximum of two sentences a day, just reflecting at the end of the day what had just passed and looking for what seemed important to write down or record. Its three months later and I'm still hooked! Like Joe Snell's entries mine range from everyday events to something special. I hope you get as much from keeping your diary as I do.

What should I write?

Each entry should be one or two sentences long only. The sentences can be very short and simple and can be about entirely different things. Write about any part of your life: what is happening in the landscape; your garden; school; work; local events; world; dreams; shopping; fears; hopes - Whatever feels important. You can combine the very personal with what you hear about happening the other side of the world. If you are using Twitter the limit of 140 characters per tweet is a useful guideline. Don't worry if you miss a day, just think back to what single event or thought stands out. More information is on the website. Remember – no more than two sentences each day.

SHARING THE DIARIES

The submissions from Diarykeepers will be crafted into a free public performance in September 2012 which all participants and members of the local community will be invited to. The diaries will be acknowledged collectively so that people will be unaware of exactly who has written what ie the authorship of any collection of words will be shared. The Diaries may also form the basis of a short publication. The artist reserves the right not to record any unsuitable material. The material will not be used to generate any profit for anyone involved.

How do I take part?

Pick up a free hand-made Diarykeeper's diary from Tamar Valley Visitor Centre at Drakewalls or local pub, post offices or shops (listed on our website) or email or phone and we will send you one by post.

Participate by email, text or twitter. Contact us by email, text or twitter with your name and where you live so we know you are taking part.

You can also sign up for twitter and email alerts in June.

What will I get out of it?

It's important. Your personal history could be as fascinating to future generations as Joe Snell's is to ours. Taking time to briefly reflect on what stands out from the day, pinpointing what we find important and what impacts on our lives also helps us think about where we live, what we value, the seasons and how things change.

When the contributions are gathered together they'll give a portrait of Tamar Valley life in one month of 2012 and you'll be contributing to the living history of the Valley. All Diarykeepers will be acknowledged collectively.

How do I send in my entries?

You can send in your entry daily by twitter, email or text or at the end of the month by email or post. You can drop your Diary in at the Tamar Valley Centre or back at one of the local pick up points or by post. We'll need to receive your diary by Monday 9 July 2012.

Where can I pick up a diary?

Spar, Bere Alston
Jan Brown's Shop, Bere Alston
The Old Plough Inn, Bere Ferrers
Margaret's Hairdressing, Bere Ferrers
The Post Office, Gunnislake
Mavis, Milton Abbot
Drake Manor Inn, Buckland Monachrum
Calstock Village Shop, Calstock
Limekiln Gallery, Calstock
Treesurfers, Gulworthy
St Dominick Post Office, St Dominick

The Tamar Valley Visitor Centre, Drakewalls

Who can take part?

Everyone can take part and you only need to write one or two sentences each day. You could take part as an individual or family.

Email: diarykeepers@tamarvalley.org.uk

Twitter: [@diarykeepers](https://twitter.com/diarykeepers)

Tel: 07849073394

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