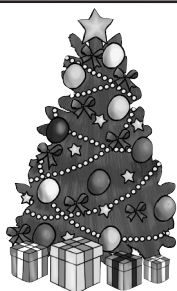


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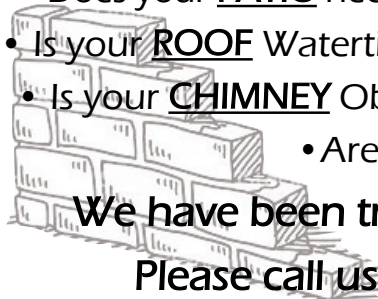
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of the Nativity Scene from Light up Hassocks 2018

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LOCAL ACTIVITIES

DITCHLING DOWNS WI

Tues. 3rd Dec. 7 pm

HURST MONTHLY SOCIAL GROUP

Wed. 4th Dec. 2 pm

DITCHLING WI

Thurs. 5th Dec. 2.15 pm

MID SUSSEX ASSOCIATION NATIONAL TRUST

Thurs. 5th Dec. 2.30 pm

DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY

Thurs. 5th Dec. 7.30 pm

BURGESS HILL CHORAL SOCIETY

Sat. 7th Dec. 7.30 pm Christmas Concert - JS Bach's wonderful Christmas Oratorio. Tickets 07522 493966

FRIENDS OF WINDMILLS SCHOOL

Sat. 7th Dec 1 - 3.30 pm

HENFIELD ARTS SOCIETY

Mon. 9th Dec 2.30 pm

HASSOCKS FIELD SOCIETY

Mon. 9th Dec 7.45 pm

White Horse, Ditchling

Festive Food & Fun

The Guide HQ, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint

Christmas Celebrations

Ditchling Village Hall

Party Time

Clair Hall, Haywards Heath

Christmas Past in West Sussex - Dr Caroline Adams

Ditchling Village Hall

Film - Green Book (12A)

St Andrews Church, Burgess Hill

Windmills School, Dale Avenue, Hassocks

Christmas Fayre

Henfield Hall, Coopers Way, Henfield

The Art of Celebrating Christmas - Dr Sarah Pearson. Guests welcome

Adastra Hall, Hassocks

Christmas meeting with Phil Gravett. Visitors welcome

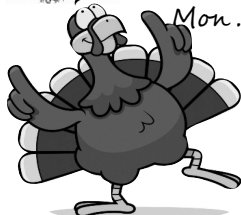


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HASSOCKS EVENING JAZZ

Tues. 10th Dec. 8 pm

ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

Wed. 11th Dec. 7.30 pm

DITCHLING HISTORY PROJECT

Wed. 11th Dec. 2 - 5 pm

Come along and share your knowledge of Ditchling and ask any questions

HASSOCKS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Wed. 11th Dec. 8 pm

RBL CLAYTON & KEYMER WOMENS SECTION

Thurs. 12th Dec. 3 pm

HURST, HASSOCKS & DITCHLING U3A

Fri. 13th Dec. 2 pm

BURGESS HILL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Sat. 14th Dec. 10 am - 3 pm

Christmas Market with local groups and good causes. Free Entry

STONEYWISH VISITOR CENTRE

Sat. 14th Dec. 10 am

Xmas Festival - Exhib. & reading - Rosemary, plus medieval & renaissance instruments

NEWTIMBER CHURCH

Sat. 14th Dec. 7 pm

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CHESTNUT TREE HOUSE

Sun. 15th Dec. 12 pm

Annual Christmas Carols afternoon - BBQ and Raffle

HASSOCKS WI

Mon. 16th Dec. 7.45 pm

DITCHLING VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Tues. 17th Dec. 9.45 - 11 am

HASSOCKS VILLAGE MARKET

Sat. 21st Dec. 9 am - 1 pm

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Legion HQ, Woodland Road, Hassocks

Christmas Tea

Adastra Hall, Hassocks

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Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill

Spatham Lane, Ditchling

Church Lane, Newtimber

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Sun. 15th Dec. 3 pm Adastra Hall

Carols Together - For all with light refreshments

Sat. 21st Dec. 10 am - 12 pm United Reformed Church

Godly Play - For all, bible stories and craft activities

Sat. 21st Dec. 4 pm St Francis Church

Christingle Service

Thurs. 26th Dec. Age Concern, Hassocks

Boxing Day Party call to book 01273 842122

HASSOCKS TOWNSWOMENS GUILD

Age Concern, Hassocks

Mon. 9th Dec.

Tues. 17th Dec. 2.30 pm

Outing to Roundstone Garden Centre

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Fri. 20th Dec. 7.45 pm

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1ST HASOCKS SCOUT GROUP CHRISTMAS POST UPDATE



The local deliveries of cards by the scouts will once again be taking place. Collection boxes will be located at QD Stationery, Marchants, Hassocks Eye Care, Age Concern and Orion News.

The service will start from Light Up Hassocks on Friday **29th November** with the last collection at 4 pm on Friday **20th December**.

William Whitehead

Chris & Jill Kitcher

would like to wish all their friends and neighbours a very happy Christmas and a healthy new year.

As we have done for many years now, instead of sending greeting cards we have chosen to donate to charity.

We would like to wish all our friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2020.

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Tony Parris

HASSOCKS AERODROME In the February 2016 edition of Hassocks and Keymer Talk About a letter from Michael Worthington-Williams of Camarthen-shire asked the question "Does anyone remember Hassocks aerodrome?"

I recently came across a very interesting article on the Southdown Gliding Club's website (southdowngliding.co.uk/southdowns-wartime-history/) which gives details of the operation of gliders during the Second World War from a field in Hassocks alongside the London to Brighton railway line, and which could well be the same location as mentioned in Michael Worthington-Williams' letter.

These days the Southdown Gliding Club operates from Parham Airfield.

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THE HASSOCKS TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD met for their monthly meeting on the 22nd October and on this occasion instead of a usual speaker we enjoyed a craft afternoon which was organised by our Chairman, Sheila Southwell, after which refreshments were served and the raffle drawn.

On the following Saturday twenty one of our members attended our annual Federation Day along with members of other Guilds which was held in Adastra Hall. All agreed the day was a great success and we look forward to meeting up again for a spring lunch.

We will next meet on the **9th December** for an outing to Roundstone Garden Centre, and this will be followed by our Christmas Party which will be held in our usual venue, Pauline Thaw Centre on the **17th December**. We have very interesting speakers lined up for 2020, so if you would like to join us please speak to Sheila Southwell on **01273 841106**.

Avril Williams

GODLY PLAY is a way for adults and children to hear Bible stories, then have a chance to think about them and take part in craft activities. Why not come along and try the activities or just pop in for coffee, tea, cake and a chat. Organised by Churches Together in Hassocks our next Godly Play will be on Saturday **21st December** between 10 am and 12 noon at Hassocks United Reformed Church; the story will be told at about 10.30 am. There is no charge and all are welcome.

Darryl Sinclair

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BURGESS HILL CHORAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Start your festive season by joining us for our ever-popular Christmas concert, where we will be singing JS Bach's wonderful Christmas Oratorio. It is a dazzling work of Christmas music, with Bach at his most exuberant and tuneful. With its trumpets, drums and bells and joyful choruses, it will make a fabulous introduction to Christmas for all the family.

The concert features a concert orchestra and young soloists at the start of their professional careers; it also includes carols for choir and audience related to each section of the Oratorio. The concert takes place on Saturday **7th December** at 7.30 pm at St Andrew's Church, RH15 0LG. Tickets are available from BHCS members, the Burgess Hill Town Council's Help Point, on the door, or phone **07522 493966**. See also www.burgesshill-choralsociety.org.uk. *Frances Eales*

Editors Note:- Last month we published an item about the potential closure of our local libraries. We should have made clear that this article was a joint announcement from both Linda Taylor and Kirsty Lord.



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THE CLAYTON & KEYMER BRANCH OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION

We meet at 3 pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month at our headquarters in Woodland Road, Hassocks. We are a friendly group and visitors are very welcome.

For further information about our activities, please contact our Chairman, Jenny Budd on **07719 922326**.

12th December will be a social event - our Christmas Tea. A big thank you to those who organise it, for their time and effort in providing such a scrumptious feast.

Thanks are also due for your support and contributions to the Christmas Fair we held in November, it's really appreciated; the funds raised help so many good causes. Another recent fund raiser - our Harvest Table - proved a feast for the eyes and was sold to raise benevolent funds.

The Reverend Darryl Sinclair, the Minister of Hassocks United Reform Church gave a talk. Thought provoking - it was based around the harvest table; with a quiz about the air miles involved in ordering a take away pizza - a staggering tens of thousands of miles just for fairly basic ingredients - good reason to grow and buy locally. Dar-

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ryl also gave a lively rendition of "Diary of a Church Mouse" by John Betjeman. Very entertaining, it made the point that selfish attitudes such as "I won't bother, the little bit I could do won't count" or "I'll keep quiet as nobody will listen to me" is not likely to promote change, but by joining together in voice and deeds we can make a difference. A theme aptly demonstrated by all the efforts of those who support our coffee mornings, every little contribution counts.

Finally, we look forward to seeing you all again in 2020 and extend our good wishes for Health and Happiness both at Christmas, and throughout the coming year.

Liz Thomas

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAROLS We would like to extend an invitation to join us and our team for the annual Christmas Carols afternoon in The Greyhound Pub, Keymer on Sunday **15th December** from 12 pm onwards. Raffle and BBQ raising funds for Chestnut Tree House. Please come and join us for a great family event - all would be very welcome.

Sean and Alison

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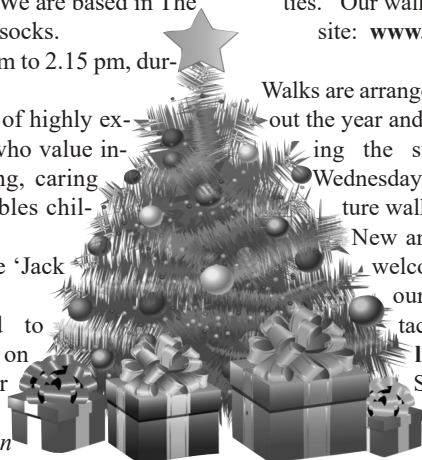
Open Monday to Friday 9.15 am to 2.15 pm, during term time.

We have a long standing team of highly experienced and qualified staff who value individuals and provide a loving, caring and fun environment that enables children to thrive and achieve.

Please visit our Facebook page 'Jack and Jill Playgroup'.

For more information and to arrange a visit please contact us on janet.jandj@gmail.com or **07729 431473**

Emma Croydon



MID SUSSEX RAMBLERS As the Ramblers' group for the Mid Sussex area we offer a varied programme of walks throughout the year to suit all ages and abilities. Our walks programme is available on our website: www.midsussexramblers.co.uk along with information about the group.

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New and experienced walkers are both very welcome and if you would like to try one of our walks please get in touch via the Contact Form on our website, email msrpublicity@gmail.com or telephone our Secretary and Publicity Officer, Sue Blandford, on **01403 255654**.

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HERBIE FLOWERS' CONCERT WILL BENEFIT CANCER BOY Ditchling Village Hall, Sunday 5th January at 3 pm

Fans of the popular musician Herbie Flowers will be delighted to know that he has a concert planned for the New Year. Joined by several well-known local and international musicians, he will play a range of music in a variety of styles that always prove very popular with his audiences.

Demand for tickets is expected to exceed supply so those interested should not delay in getting their tickets from Ditchling Post Office or by phoning Sylvia Bain on **01273 845361**. There'll be a magnificent raffle and refreshments will be available.

The money raised will go towards non-NHS treatment for a little boy with a rare, aggressive and life-threatening cancer. Eight-year-old Magnus has had major surgery, chemotherapy and immunology treatment since being diagnosed in January 2018, aged just six, with a stage four neuroblastoma and he has now finished his NHS treatment. Magnus's family is very thankful for the excellent NHS care he has received but, without further treatment such as new gene therapies now available in the United States, Magnus would have only a 30-35% chance of survival because this cancer usually recurs within five years. However, with gene therapy and other emerging treatments available abroad, his chances of long-term survival are much higher.

Magnus's parents are both nurses and the high cost of treatment in the US is beyond their financial reach, hence the efforts of their family and friends to raise money to give Magnus the best possible chance of life. He has already undergone his first gene therapy treatments in New York and will have a real chance of survival if he's able to continue to benefit from these cutting-edge treatments.

The Mighty Magnus Medicine Fund was created in May to raise funds for essential treatment not offered by the NHS. Those wishing to help Magnus can do so by donating direct to his fund: Bank of Scotland Magnus's Fund 80-22-60, a/c 17458563. You can Gift Aid your donation if you are a UK tax payer, thus increasing its value by 25%.

Alternatively, Sussex residents can attend the delightful concert on **5th January**. Your support at this event would be greatly appreciated – please come along and bring your friends!

Sylvia Bain

THE ARTS SOCIETY HENFIELD will meet on Monday **9th December** at 2.30 pm at Henfield Hall, Coopers Way BN5 6DB. The event title is The Art of Celebrating Christmas. Dr Sarah Pearson will describe and illustrate the ways of depicting Christmas from the Middle Ages to – almost – Modern Times.

Guests welcome to attend for a fee. More info call me on **01273 494633**.

Stephen Wyman

• Lucy Locksmith •

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BLACKCAP: HOME FOR CHRISTMAS Sussex is no place for a warbler in winter. As daylight, temperature and their insect food dwindle, blackcaps, whitethroats, chiffchaffs, reed, sedge and willow warblers all evacuate England. Each September their fragile, feathered bodies fly to Spain and sub-Saharan Africa on the promise of warmth, food and, ultimately, life. So finding a blackcap swinging on your birdfeeder in December will be as unlikely as seeing Santa at a midsummer barbeque. But at Christmas miracles can happen.

Blackcaps return to England in April. Cuckoos and chiffchaffs, also early migrants, broadcast their arrival with their monotonous two-note tune but the blackcap lets loose a rich, full-throated, joyous warble; a defiant announcement that he's cheated death for another winter. This colourful song comes from a colourless bird, yet there's something stylish and continental about the blackcap's appearance. Their two-tone grey suit and black beret pulled over dark eyes make them look like some Parisian beatnik. You'd expect to catch one sat in a willow smoking Gauloises and muttering about Sartre. The female bird's beret is a rich chestnut brown; hardly qualifying her to use the name blackcap at all.

The laws of nature clearly state that all European blackcaps must migrate south for the winter. But in the sixties a small gang of nonconformist blackcaps in Germany started a revolution. They headed south-west instead of

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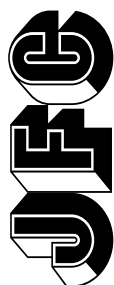
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south, ending up in England. Mother Nature is not kind to those who disobey her rules and this suicide squad was surely sentenced to a frozen death in our frosty winter. But instead they found a new England. A land of mild winters, ornamental berry bushes and kind people who hung balls of fat in their gardens. They didn't freeze and starve. They survived.

Not only that; the following spring's short flight home to Germany meant they arrived ahead of their law-abiding neighbours, who were still struggling back from their long-haul holiday. The returning rebels were able to claim the best territories and produce larger families. They raised more revolutionaries who returned to England each winter. Now a small population of blackcaps make our gardens their winter home; exotic apparitions of summer amongst the robins and frost. They'll be gone again by the time 'our' British blackcaps return, exhausted and oblivious, in April.

Animal migration is amazing. Each year across Europe millions of perilous journeys are undertaken as birds, bats, butterflies and other wildlife flee hostile conditions. Each year we as our own species have been forced to make dangerous migrations to survive. The paths of refugees and migrating birds will cross as both are forced on journeys over the same treacherous mountains and seas. Let's hope they all find someplace safe this Christmas.

Michael Blencowe



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DITCHLING FILM SOCIETY Our Christmas film will be shown on Thursday, **5th December** and is called *Green Book* – the 2019 Oscar winner. Don Shirley (Mahershala Ali), is a cultured, world class African/American classical and jazz pianist who is about to embark on a concert tour in the Deep South in 1962. In need of a driver and protection he recruits a tough-talking bouncer called Tony Lip (Viggo Mortensen), a blue-collar worker who hails from an Italian/American neighbourhood in the Bronx. Despite their clashing attitudes to life and ideals, the two men soon develop an unexpected bond whilst confronting racism and danger in an era of segregation. The period in which the film is set is romanticised with a handsome palette that could have been lifted from an Edward Hopper painting. The film which is a warm comedy-drama was inspired by the true story of a tour and gives one a bumpy but enjoyable ride through the Deep South.

Director: Peter Farrelly, US English 2018, 130 minutes, 12A Cert.

Our first film of the New Year will be shown on Thursday, **9 January** and is entitled *Shoplifters*. The story is influenced by the Japanese recession, including media reports of how people live in poverty and resort to shoplifting. Set in Tokyo, a Japanese couple, Osamu and Nobuyo, stuck with part-time jobs and hence inadequate incomes, avail themselves of the fruits of shoplifting to

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make ends meet. They are not alone in this behaviour as the younger and the elder of the household are in on the act. However, the unusual routine is about to change from carefree and matter-of-fact to something more dramatic as the couple open their doors to Juni, a beleaguered young girl. The reasons for the family's habit and their motivations come under the microscope and this excellently scripted film is a harrowing look at a working class family in Japan just trying simply to make ends meet.

Director: Hirokazu Koreeda, Japan Japanese 2018, 121 minutes, 15 Cert.

The films will be shown in Ditchling Village Hall. The films start at 8 pm. Doors open at 7.30 pm. Our hugely popular mulled wine and mince pies will be available before the screening of our Christmas film. There is ample free parking behind the hall. Guests and temporary members are welcome (payable at the door).

Rowena Cager and Melanie Samuel

From a Hassocks reader:- I use the footpath known to oldies as 'poo alley' behind grand avenue - the other day going through I was worried by the amount of tree cuttings that were strewn over the path causing a trip hazard. It is a public footpath and as such should be kept clear for people to traverse safely. If your garden waste falls onto the path please clear it away.

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NEWS FROM STONEYWISH I have spent the afternoon breaking up last year's apple pruning's for kindling and three fat sacks of twigs are now added to our existing stock in the woodshed. This is a pleasant and satisfying job. As Michael says, fire-wood warms you twice, first in the chopping and then in the burning and we are blessed at home with two hearths: an open fire for chilly evenings, and a Rayburn which warms our water and provides us with a cooking range throughout the winter. The first frost arrived two days ago and Michael has been 'wooding' in earnest for some time now, carting and splitting the basketsful of logs which keep both chimneys going. So far, so good. The house has once more acquired that smoky, sooty aroma which lends it a misleading air of antiquity. We sometimes unwittingly acquire the aroma ourselves and are hailed by friends with the greeting: "Oh! You smell like a bonfire!" followed quickly, as they read our dismay, by the doubtful reassurance: "It's a compliment!" However it may be, relying on wood, rather than just playing campfires, comes to dominate one's way of life. There is a wholeness in sitting before a blaze of logs you have grown and cut, seasoned and stacked. You are caught up in one of the great, mysterious natural cycles of the earth. The carbon from this tree escapes into the air, and will later be recaptured by other plants and trees as they transpire and grow. The wood here reduced to fertile ash, will encour-

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age next seasons growth when scattered on the soil. It is all somehow deeply reassuring. More disconcerting is the fact that fire like all natural processes, is inherently volatile and unpredictable. Knowledge and skill may help. As Michael never tires of telling me: "you have got to know your wood." And believe me, I do try. Dry oak burns hot; holly and ash will burn green; blackthorn is fragrant; pine and chestnut spit. White willow is all flame and no heat. Alder is too full of water to burn at all. But there's more to it than that. When it comes to cooking dinner, you need a good 'bottom' in your fire. You need the wind to be in the right direction. A downwind with a depression coming will hardly congeal an omelette. And then if the wind is right and the fire is roaring, no amount of knob twiddling will keep the temperature down. You need to be on hand to open the oven door before everything inside burns to a cinder! There is never a dull moment. And I regret to admit I have often got too engrossed in what I was doing, or gone out without attending to this demanding fire-baby and come back to find it dying or dead, at which point I have to confess to a hungry farmer that supper will be an hour or two late. But would I change this nuisance for modern convenience? Never in a million years. This is what makes winter so delightfully welcome when it comes. Bringing the outside inside and transforming it through the hearth, the crucible of the 'home' into warmth, com-

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panionship, food - elemental magic. The surplus logs and logs which are no use for burning, are stacked throughout the Reserve in heaps to rot. There they trap fallen leaves, sprout crops of fungi, house hibernating wildlife, feed beetle grubs and provide a theatre for the myriad dramas of small creatures. Inside, outside. How I love it when we can feel the energy of life coursing through the house, through our own hands and back to the things we tend. This way every back door is a door to the Nature we are made of. Though the Reserve is officially closed, Yuletide is approaching, and I cannot end without wishing you all 'Wolcom Yole'! So here's a warm invitation to one day when we are open. There will be a Christmas Festival Day at Stoneywish Visitor Centre, Spatham Lane on Saturday **14th December**. The Sussex Waits are returning to play a wonderful selection of early music on their medieval and renaissance instruments from approx. 11 am to 12 pm. A little earlier at 10.15 am there will be a story reading from one of my books. The Visitor Centre will be decorated with forest greenery in true Stoneywish style with an exhibition of Rosemary's prints, cards, books and paintings for sale. Free mead cake, cookies and spiced punch for all comers. Why not bring your boots and take a free stroll round the Reserve while you are here? We will be open till dusk.

As for Yule logs - the burning, not the chocolate variety - the old custom was to drag in an entire trunk, too large

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to fit in the fireplace and feed it gradually to the flames throughout the 12 days of Christmas. The head went in first, till only the tail remained. The last little bit would be saved for lighting the next year's log. This way the sacred heart-warmth of the home was preserved from year to year - a tiny, precious ember of the sun which was to return in the spring. Which is exactly what I wish for you when the cold north wind is blowing!

Rosemary

A letter from a Hassocks Reader:- When we moved into Chancellors Park in 1985 we were able to walk up the stream at the bottom of our garden to the URC Church. This summer we could only go a few yards before being stymied by overgrown vegetation from gardens bordering the stream together with garden rubbish. Today I pulled out from the stream a piece of carpet 6ft by 1ft. Maybe residents do not realise that they have a legal responsibility for the area of stream bordering their garden to the midpoint of the stream. Why not clear the bank and make it a feature of your garden.

Up to 2 years ago kingfishers were regularly seen and heard but I presume the vegetation is too dense now to facilitate their passage. What a shame as it was a delight to show these colourful birds to the grandchildren.

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Paul Young and South Downs Nurseries' team members Jackie, Chloe and Carolyn.

NEWS FROM SOUTH DOWNS GARDEN CENTRE

The Hassocks Garden Centre has been busy collecting hats for its autumn woolly hat campaign.

Paul Young from Brighton-based charity Off The Fence paid a visit to South Downs Nurseries to collect the generous number of hats the customers donated in just a few weeks.

This homeless charity has been doing amazing work for over 20 years in Brighton and Hove, and its vision is to

children's charity is setting its sights even higher for 2019.

Among the projects to have benefited from The Budding Foundation's event at South Downs Nurseries last Christmas were gardening and conservation project with several local schools and clubs, as well as respite care and equipment for disabled youngsters. Smaller grants included school uniform assistance, educational laptops and course fees for young people trying to turn their lives

end poverty in the local area.

"Staff and customers have been amazing", explains Sarah Mead from the Brighton Road store. "They donated all manner of head-gear and it's great to help Paul and the team at Off The Fence who do such good work assisting the vulnerable."

To find out more about this charity please visit www.offthefence.org.uk.

Santas Toy Factory - Santa's grotto which last year raised over £23,000 for a local

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around. The fund was also able to meet the shortfall in funding for the Burgess Hill youth minibus.

Now tickets have gone on sale for this year's mammoth Toy Factory in Hassocks as well as for a brand new destination at Old Barn Garden Centre at Dial Post near Horsham where Santa's Enchanted Forest will see a magical plantation come alive with a story telling owl, enchanting music and even a waterfall.

Clive Gravett, founder of The Budding Foundation said: "We are very excited to have been given this opportunity by Tates of Sussex to open our second grotto. The Tate family fare very kindly funding the construction of the grotto, and you can book online direct with us so all of the ticket revenue comes straight to the charity.

"We are hoping to raise more than £40,000 this year from grotto ticket sales and other associated Christmas activities. We are also looking for more volunteer elves, so if anyone can spare a few hours or even a few days over the Christmas period, please get in touch."

For more information, contact the charity via their web-



James Moore, Steve Parsons and Jackie Laughton from South Downs Nurseries with Carol Hughes

site www.thebuddingfoundation.co.uk.

St Peter & St James Hospice - Carol Hughes from St Peter & St James Hospice popped into a Hassocks garden centre (24th October) to collect a cheque for a whopping £1,791 from a charity coffee morning held at South Downs Nurseries earlier this month (11th October). With Carol are James, Steve, and, most importantly – coffee

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fundraising superstar at the Brighton Road store, raising more than £1,500 of this total selling raffle tickets in the run-up to the coffee morning!

"Many thanks to everyone who participated or supported the coffee morning at South Downs and helped us to raise this fantastic amount of money for a worthy cause", said Rebecca Houghton-Knapp from the garden centre.

Tates Garden Centres, which runs the Hassocks attraction, held the fundraiser to mark Hospice Care Week. Each of its four Sussex sites (Newhaven, Hassocks, Portslade and Dial Post) donated profits from hot drinks purchased during the morning.

Representatives from each centre's chosen hospice were present at the coffee morning which also welcomed local dignitaries, such as MPs.

"Collectively, the four garden centres raised over £4,100 during this year's event", added Rebecca. "That's a huge increase from last year's total of £2,500 and we are most grateful to everyone who contributed."

The raffle, held at each site, was to win an afternoon tea for two, with a draw for every 50 entries. This raffle raised over £2,000 with over 30 winners collectively across the centres.

*Trevor Butler,
Rebecca Houghton-Knapp
& Sarah Mead*



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FEMALE FOUNDERS IN HASSOCKS SOLVE EACH OTHER'S PROBLEMS

Ditchling resident and business owner, Abigail Lock, has taken the lead in creating a new networking event for female founders and women in business in Hassocks.

Abi has launched a new type of event — the Thrive Meetup for Hassocks — which will take place at the Talking Hands Café. Consisting of two halves, attendees benefit from listening to a female founder-led talk and also participate in a peer support session during which attendees solve each other's business challenges.

Abi joined the Thrive Meetup in Brighton in 2018 when she was at a crossroads in a corporate career. 'Going to the Thrive Meetups enabled me to ignite my passion for learning, starting up and being something new and true to myself' says Abi. With the belief, support and resources from peers at Thrive, and from brilliant friends and family, Abi has founded a healthcare recruitment business (Lock Healthcare Recruitment) which she will be launching soon.

Having attended the Thrive Meetup in Brighton, Abi was keen to create a Thrive Meetup for women in business in Mid-Sussex who can't attend the Brighton-based event.

If you identify as a female founder or woman in business, join Abi at her first Thrive Meetup in Hassocks. There are a limited number of spaces, book early to avoid disappointment: www.meetup.com/Thrive-

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Meetup-for-Female-Founders-and-Women-in-Business/

The Thrive Meetups are one activity of The Thrive Effect — a purpose-led, membership organisation for female founders and women in business in Sussex which is on a mission to give women the inspiration, knowledge and connections they need to build a business that lasts. For more information, visit www.thethriveeffect.co.uk. *Abigail Lock*

DO YOU LIKE TO SING? Heber Opera is looking for enthusiastic singers to join the chorus for its 2020 production of *Martha* by Freidrich Von Flotow. Rehearsals for this jolly opera start in January for performance in May 2020 and we would like to arrange to meet interested singers from 7.30 pm on Sunday **8th December** in Hurstpierpoint Village Centre. An ability to read music is an advantage but not essential, as rehearsals are designed to be supportive and encouraging. All voices are welcome, but we would particularly like to hear from tenors and basses.

Please contact Heber Opera's Musical Director Michael Withers on **07802 735190** or heber@michaelwithers.co.uk to find out more and to arrange a time to meet on **8th December**.

For more about Heber Opera, visit www.heberopera.co.uk or www.facebook.com/heberoper *Jenny Hawkes*

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Are you bored and lonely? Or do you know someone who is? How about coming along to our centre where you can have a nice hot chocolate, selection of coffees and tea and cake and meet some new friends. We also serve lunch at 12.15 pm, two or three courses at a very reasonable rate. Do come along one day and have a look at our centre. Transport can be provided locally. We are your local Social Centre providing a warm and inviting environment to encourage people to venture out of their homes. If you would like to just come along one day please feel free to pop in and take a look.

We have purchased a Table Tennis Table! Do let us know if you would be interested in having a go!

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What a great day we had on our trip to Kew Gardens recently, the sun was shining and we enjoyed the Glass Sculptures all around the gardens. We recently had an afternoon of playing skittles here at the Centre, what fun that was! A few ex bowlers within our members! We will most definitely be arranging skittles again.

Knit and Natter - do come along on a Wednesday morning for a chat with fellow knitters, we are again knitting squares for the Salvation Army so please do come along. If anyone does have some double knitting wool to donate to us we would be very grateful.

Well Balanced Community Falls Prevention Service, in partnership with Mid Sussex Wellbeing and Active House Solutions are holding Balance classes here every Wednesday afternoon. Please call **01444 477191** to book your place.

Hearing Aid Maintenance checks/batteries are held here by Action for Deafness on the first Tuesday of each month 9.30am, but only that day per month - NHS Only - just turn up and a waiting system is in place. On other days we do not hold batteries here, you do need to contact your supplier for these.

We have Scrabble, German Scrabble, Art, Canasta, Mahjong, Knit and Natter and Craft sessions held here - new members always welcome - please do come in and ask us in the office or take a look at our website. We regularly arrange in house entertainment and outings



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too.

Volunteering – Have you got time on your hands and would you like to help us out? We are looking for a Driver/Bus Escort to help our members on and off the bus, to help fill in some of our rota and also for holiday cover when some of our Volunteers are away. Please do get in touch and come and have a chat to us in the office.

We will be closed on **25th & 26th December and 1st January**. Happy Christmas! *Age Concern*

HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED OR RETIRED TO HASSOCKS AND WONDERING WHAT CAN FILL YOUR TIME NOW?

There are several activities held at Adastra Hall – come and have a look at the posters in the foyer. Scrabble is one of them and is held in the Committee Room every Monday afternoon (not Bank holidays though) from 2 pm to 4 pm. It is a friendly atmosphere and not too serious or competitive. You can have a chat with a cuppa and a biscuit and make new friends. Contacts are Judy Brown on **01273 842464** (email jbrown60@hotmail.com) or Sylvia Howard on **01273 846763** (email sylvia-howard21@gmail.com). It is not an official club so no joining fees or yearly subscriptions are payable. You do not have to turn up every week and is on a 'drop in' basis.

Sylvia Howard

ALL THE RIGHT NOTES will be presenting their annual Christmas concert on Wednesday **11th December** at 7.30 pm at the United Reformed Church in Keymer Road, Hassocks. Escape from the pre-election hysteria as the local 50-strong community choir sing music by Lewis Capaldi, the Supremes, the Eagles, and the Beatles as well as seasonal pieces from Kelly Clarkson and Chris de Burgh. There'll be the songs for the audience to join in – including the ever-popular 12 Days of Christmas – and a glass of wine and a mince pie during the interval.

Tickets are available from members of the choir, on the door, or by emailing **alltherightnoteschoir@gmail.com**. *Paul Simpson*

CHURCHES TOGETHER wish you all a very Happy Christmas. You are invited to join us for our Carols Together on Sunday **15th December** at Adastra Hall starting at 3 pm. An afternoon for all ages of informal carol singing with light refreshments.

We are also holding a Christingle Service on Saturday **21st December** at 4 pm at St Francis church, Priory Road. Look out for details of our Crib Services and Christmas Day services on posters around the village and the church's individual websites. *Darryl Sinclair*



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Call me Stephen Hamilton for a chat about your kitchen:

Mobile: 07565 722055

FREE IT SESSIONS? The next sessions are **3rd and 10th December**.

Free technology help sessions for the over 60's at Hurstpierpoint College, starting on Tuesdays during term time, in collaboration with Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

The friendly students at the college will be on hand to help you with any technology related questions you may have, every Tuesday during term time from 2.30pm until 3.30pm with time for a coffee and chat afterwards.

Any questions you like, big or small, from turning on your device, to using Skype or looking things up. Bring your laptop, iPad or any other devices you have questions about. The college also has PCs to use if needed.

There will be a minibus available to pick people up from Trinity Road car park at 2.15 pm before every session, and drop back around 4 pm. For everyone else, please just go to the college reception and you will be shown where to go. There are a few steps up in both the minibus and the college.

No need to book, just turn up. For any questions, please leave a message on our answerphone **01444 242760**, or e-mail Nicola4@msopc.org.uk. *Nicola Brotherton*

HURST MONTHLY SOCIAL GROUP The presentation by Stephen Hand, the manager of the Shoreham branch of The National Coastwatch Institution, was most interesting. Their role is to Spot, Plot & Report to the Coastguards and they are operational 365 days a year. A truly wonderful service & many thanks to Stephen and all his colleagues for volunteering to provide this service.

On the **4th December** we are having Christmas Celebrations with the Handbell Ringers - do come and join us.

Contact Dianne **01273 835284** or myself **07806 670359**.

Ann Tranter

DITCHLING SINGERS We are rehearsing at the moment towards two performances in December. Our December rehearsal dates are: Sunday, **1st December** 4 pm – 6 pm at the Old Meeting House in Ditchling, and Sunday, **15th December**, 4 pm – 6 pm at Keymer Church Hall. New members are always most welcome, no auditions, just come along or contact Julie on **01273 844818**. *Erika Chapman*

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JOYEUX NOËL AND A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM EVERYONE AT THE ACORNS NURSERY AND FOREST SCHOOL

This is always a wonderfully magical time for children and Acorns children are enjoying lots of special activities, culminating with Christmas concerts and parties.

Should you be looking for a small nursery with traditional values, excellent indoor and outdoor facilities and 'good' and 'outstanding' Ofsted reports, please come and see us in action.

We have two nurseries. One is in Janet's home in Lindfield and the other is held at Westmeston Parish Hall near Ditchling. We incorporate Forest School adventures into our daily programme and the children spend happy and carefree times outside, playing and exploring every day. Both nurseries welcome children age 2+ and our blog on facebook and website demonstrates the amazing range of activities.

At Westmeston, children bring their bikes and scooters and quickly gain in confidence and expertise. Westmeston also offers Forest School sessions for home-educated children up to age 9 and 'Stay and Play' sessions for toddlers and parents/childminders, plus a summer holiday playscheme for 2-11 year olds.

Lindfield offers childcare before and after the nursery



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Private tuition for children and adults is available too. Please phone Janet Irwin for full details of all we offer on **01444 455081** www.theacornsnurseryandforestschooll.com email: janetirwin@janetirwin.com

Janet Irwin

DITCHLING DOWNS WI For our October meeting Rukshana Master came to speak about the lives and exploits of five generations of Parsee women in her family. This talk proved to be a fascinating insight into the operation of the colonial Raj in India. Her great, great grandmother was the first Indian woman to receive an education (unheard of at that time). She attended a school for the daughters of the British Colonial Service which suited her admirably being a Parsee, as men and women are treated as equal. Her education and influential contacts in India gave her an entrée into Colonial and European Society and she travelled extensively, meeting King George V and Queen Mary and even received an audience with the Pope. Throughout her life, she encouraged Indian women to follow her example to become educated and independent. Rukshana has written several books based on the journals kept by the previous generations of her female ancestors.

Sally Willis



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DOWNSFEST is returning! We are really pleased to announce the date for next year's DownsFest is Saturday, **5th September 2020** at Adastra Park, Hassocks. We are excited to reveal that "One Step Behind, The Masters of Madness" are confirmed as our headline act, the UK's Premier and longest surviving MADNESS tribute band. Each member of One Step Behind grew up as a Madness fan and perfecting his portrayal of his original Madness counterpart has been a labour of love. They cover the wide spectrum of Madness songs: Baggy Trousers, One Step Beyond, House of Fun, Our House to name a few!

Last year we were delighted to bring over 18 local acts to our DownsFest stage. Performing at DownsFest has launched several bands to launch their music into our community and wider afield. Now we are looking for more local acts covering all genres and musicality. Please contact us on downsfest@outlook.com if you're interested to play onstage at DownsFest. DownsFest has raised £1,000 for St Peter and St James Hospice and we're looking to increase this figure for them this year.

Keep in touch via our Facebook or website, www.downsFest.co.uk Tickets will be on sale soon!

Michelle Binks

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CHRISTMAS MARKET Saturday **14th December**, in Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill, 10 am to 3 pm.

An array of stalls in support of local groups and good causes, including The Monday Group, Paws and Claws, Trefoil Guild, Woodland Mead School, Burgess Hill in Bloom, Kitty for Needy Critters and The Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Free admission. Refreshments available throughout the day.

Hosted by Burgess Hill Horticultural Society.
www.burgesshillhorticulturalsociety.com, **01444 245509**.

Flo Whitaker



DO YOU VALUE YOUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT?

The Woodland, Flora & Fauna Group are a nature conservation group striving to conserve our local countryside and wildlife. We restore meadows, woodland ponds, nature reserves, and undertake projects to sustain endangered wildlife populations in Hurstpierpoint and surrounding settlements.

We have many projects underway but are desperate for volunteer assistance. Could you help us please? If you can please contact me on **01273 834001**.

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HASSOCKS WI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Boring? Not a bit of it! After the necessary initial business, the 49 members present were entertained with a pictorial review of the many and various past year's activities, by President Hilary.

The WI Choir and the Christmas Fairies, helped us celebrate last December, and in January Resolutions were made to enhance local bus services, and promote the importance of smear tests for women.

Recycling was February's topic, and Dr Hilary Morris gave a thought - provoking talk on 'Women in Medicine' in March.

A Casino Night and a 10th Anniversary Party followed. In June the Hall was transformed into a courtroom, complete with trial.

In July we welcomed Ian Gledhill, for a well - researched talk on the history of 'The Seaside'.

In September we experienced Paracise with Maxine, an enjoyable musical routine (no floor work!)

Hilary reminded us of past trips to the Sky Garden, the Albert Hall, Leonardslee, West Dean and South Bank - the latter aiming at lobbying MP's on the subject of climate change.

We spent a busy afternoon making cushions for breast cancer patients, and produced successful entries for the South of England Show, and the Autumn Show at Ardingly.

Kate Hastings



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CANDLELIT EVENING Tickets are now on sale for a candlelit evening celebrating Christmas as Sussex used to, with folk group Cotillion at Newtimber Church. A festive evening of songs, poetry and story telling on Saturday **14th December** at 7 pm.

Tickets in advance include interval mulled wine and mince pies etc. Call Lucy **01273 831877**, lucy.newtimber@icloud.com or Gill **01273 835013**, gillian.bedlam@googlemail.com

Newtimber Church, Church lane, Newtimber BN6 9BT. A pretty Downland church with heating, snugly blankets and a superb raffle.

Lucy Dalrymple

BOXING DAY PARTY Another Boxing Day Party has been organised at Age Concern for anyone whether a couple, family or an individual who are on their own over the Christmas period. This year will be the **27th December** that Churches Together have organised this party. If you or anybody you know would like to come please call either Jacquie on **01273 842122** or Wendy on **01273 842201**. You can also email claytonkeymer@gmail.com and request an invitation or leave contact details. We do provide lifts if anybody would like them. There is no charge.

It will be a fun time with entertainment, a game of beetle, afternoon tea, a glass of sherry and of course a visit from Father Christmas.

Chris Moss



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SANTA ROY Whilst holidaying in Cyprus last August my 23 year old Grandson, James, fell from his hotel balcony resulting in life saving brain surgery.

After 5 weeks he was flown back home by air ambulance. He is now in the RSCH, although not fully conscious he can now breath unaided.

Santa would like to help him in his recovery by delivering or handing out Christmas presents at your home or party from 2nd November 2019 up to Christmas Eve. For details and booking prices please contact **Santa Roy** on **07719 659123**

WHY DO WE HAVE CHRISTMAS TREES?

Romans used fir trees to decorate their temples during Saturnalia, a feast in honour of Saturn, the god of agriculture, and the predecessor to Christmas.

In northern Europe, people planted cherry or hawthorn plants, or created pyramids of fruit or candles. Evergreen trees were thought to keep away evil spirits and illness, and were put up during the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, to remind them that the spring would return.

Another predecessor was the Paradise tree, a fir decorated with apples to represent the Garden of Eden on Adam and Eve's day, which fell on December 24.

It is thought the first person to bring a tree indoors was the German theologian Martin Luther. Walking through

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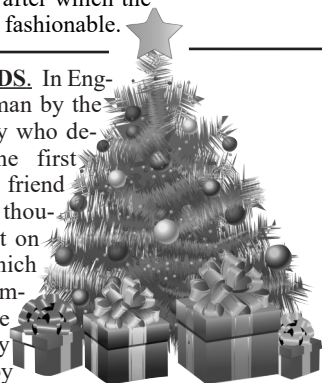
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a forest, he was so taken by the beauty of stars twinkling through the pines that he took a tree home and attached candles to each branch.

Germans decorated their trees with edible goods and glass decorations. Tinsel was originally made in Germany from thin strips of silver. Electric lights were first created in 1895 by Ralph Morris, an American telephonist.

Christmas trees made it to Britain in the 1830s, and in 1841, Prince Albert set up a tree in Windsor Castle. In 1846, the Royal family was sketched standing around their Christmas tree, after which the practice became very fashionable.

CHRISTMAS CARDS. In England it was a gentleman by the name of J.C. Horsley who designed and sent the first Christmas card to his friend Sir Henry Cole. A thousand copies were put on sale in London, which bore a picture of a family party with the words "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you!"



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SUSSEX VALE ROTARY We continue to be quite busy and had an excellent evening at our annual Race and Quiz Night, raising £1,700 for our charitable causes, as well as sharing an entertaining and amusing event. Our support of the Memory Moments Café in Hurstpierpoint is proving successful, with more people coming along to meet others for tea, coffee & cake, and be entertained in a relaxing atmosphere. The Café meets on the first Thursday of each month, between 2 and 4 pm at Court Bushes Recreation Centre, Willow Way, Hurstpierpoint BN6 9TH, you can find out more at www.knowdementia.co.uk.

We are hoping to sell all our Hassocks calendars as they provide the finance to pay the costs of putting on the event. So, if you enjoy LUH and would like it to continue, please buy one. They have wonderful local pho-



tographs provided by the U3A photographic group.

November continues to be busy as we are helping the 'Link To Hope' charity by packing Christmas shoe boxes for transportation to poorer countries in Eastern Europe. We will also be distributing our Christmas hampers again locally and making street collections in Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks in December. Please give us your support.

Sussex Vale Rotary draws its members from Burgess Hill, Ditchling, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and surrounding areas. If you are interested in learning more about Rotary International and how you can help, please contact our club secretary on secretary@rotary-sxvale.org.uk, or **07546 111996**, who will be pleased to hear from you. We can also be found on Facebook and our website is available at www.rotary-sxvale.org.uk.

Duncan Honeyman

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The following article is extracted from a weekly news sheet for Ditchling & District 'The Beacon', published in 1920 and sent in by a reader.

DEW PONDS – Basil Hargrave, Ditchling.

We all know the nursery rhyme which asserts that Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, and perhaps most of us, in later years, have doubted the accuracy of the statement, seeing that it is not customary to go up the hill to fetch water. But these old rhymes have a trick of justifying their statements and proving themselves in the right even when they seem to be wrong.

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It was right on the top of the hill that the dewpond lat from which the water had to be fetched. But how long ago may that have been? Well, we really don't know, for this is a case where a few hundred years or so make little difference. We do know, however, that the dewpond on the top of the hill – on top, say, of these rolling Sussex Downs – is of great antiquity. We may make bold to assert that even in pre-historic times, when Neolithic races roamed along the Downs, the dewponds were there. The Downs were the principal habitat, the hills being not only the natural highway of the period, but, broadly speaking, the only habitable part of the country. For the weald below was a dense and impenetrable forest, abounding in danger and difficulty – wild beasts on the one hand, engulfing morasses on the other – and men had perforce to maintain themselves and their flocks on the Downs, daring only to enter the weald on an occasional hunting expedition.

Yet water was as much a necessity of life then as now, and whence could it be obtained? The answer is, from the dewponds. No wonder, therefore, that we are inclined to look upon dewponds with a feeling akin to veneration, for though, of course, only a few can occupy their ancient sites, some we may well believe, are of untold age. But it is not only for their antiquity that dewponds are remarkable. Their mere existence on the height – unfed, yet never failing, as Kipling tells us – is more or less a marvel and a mystery. How are they replenished? There is no spring to feed them, and he ordinary rainfall is quite insufficient to account for their not drying up in summer. Yet even in a drought they have a good supply of water – enough at any rate for the large flocks of sheep which are daily pastured on the hills. There have been various theories put forward

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in explanation of the phenomenon and the name “dew-pond” is indicative of one which is still widely held. According to this theory the dewpond replenishes itself by the condensation of dew. The water in the dewpond, it is supposed, remains at a lower temperature than the immediately surrounding atmosphere by reason of the bottom of the pond being made a non-conductor of the heat which the earth stores up from the day's sunshine. As a consequence the pond condenses upon its surface the moisture held by the warm air, much in the same way as a glass jug, when filled with cold water newly drawn from the spring or tap and taken into a warm room, may be seen to be quickly clouded on the outside with a dense mist.

The mean by which this insulation from the earth's heat was accomplished are very simple, and might easily have been used without any scientific knowledge of the result. A suitable depression in the surface of the ground was selected, and enlarged or deepened if necessary. The bottom of this was thickly covered with dry straw, which was coated with a layer of puddled clay – pockets of clay are frequently found in the chalk of which the Downs are formed. The whole was then made compact and even by drinking round and round it a broad-wheeled wain to which a yoke of oxen were harnessed, and with the first rainfall or – as in later times – with the emptying into the cavity a few barrels of water, the pond had begun its existence. It was left to fill itself, and so long as the bottom remained intact, free from the growth of weeds and rushes, it would not fail, even when the ponds in the weald were dried up. Thus the dewpond justifies the statement that Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water.”

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IN PRAISE OF WINTER

Winter is here and we do need
To let the trees and flowers sleep
We need the snow, the rain, the frost
How else would we have water which costs,

If we had sun all the year round
The rivers would dry up in the ground
We need some time to rest and play
To work in darkness, then come what may

The spring and summer, autumn too
All have their place in the 12 month flow
So here is winter and why is it here?
When the trees undress...

Then the snow so clean...
Falls on the hedge like a duvet cover
Protecting the birds to tide them over
The shortage of food, except in the gardens
Where kind people hang the peanut basket

And what about people who freeze and shiver
In shoes or boots they stand and quiver
And what of germs which would prevail
If we had not the snow and hail.

Church Services for Christmas

Christmas Eve

St. Cosmas and St. Damian, Keymer

9 Lessons and Carols 6.00 pm

First Mass of Christmas with carols 11.30pm

St. Francis of Assisi, Hassocks

Crib Service 4.00 pm

St. Edwards RC Church Keymer

First Mass of Christmas with Carols 7.30 pm

United Reformed Church, Hassocks

Crib Service 3.00 pm

Christmas Day:

St John the Baptist Clayton

Eucharist with Carols 11.15 am

St. Cosmas and St. Damian, Keymer

Holy Communion 8.00 am

Family Eucharist with Carols 9.45 am

St. Francis of Assisi, Hassocks

Family Eucharist with Carols 9.45 am

St. Edwards RC Church Keymer

Mass with Carols 9.30 am

United Reformed Church, Hassocks

Family Service 10.00 am

The good lord knows what he hath done
When he hath sent the winter sun
He knew his work it is quite clear
That's why the winter days are here.

© Anisah Cooper

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

In a jungle clearing in Africa, summoned by a drum
To join a celebration, the native people come.
Of a story known as Christmas, which they all will know
Brought to them through their ancestors by missionaries,
long ago.

Australia and New Zealand, and Islands far way,
Will join the same celebrations that belongs
to Christmas Day,

In China, Japan and Alaska, whatever their race or creed,
For people all over the planet, it seems to answer a need.
Somehow the words "Goodwill to all Men"

is how we would like things to be,
And the wonderful message of "Peace on Earth"
is something we all want to see.

It's such a magical story, that never seems to date,
The birth of a long-awaited child, to which
we can all relate.

The shepherds the kings and the angels the
shining star above
No matter how often we hear it, it's always a
message of Love.

So have a lovely Christmas, it's a time we hope to share,
With all our friends and families like people everywhere.
And let's exchange a greeting, that all the world can hear,
We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Peaceful and Happy New Year

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STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

It's a rare event these days but I had four very excitable young ladies come running through my shop door shouting and screaming and even doing 'the jazz hands' – whatever it is knowing my luck it will be the booby prize – but once they'd managed to contain themselves and take a breath I did cautiously approach them, trust me at my age everything is done cautiously these days, to ask them why they were so excited, was it me, my cats or just being in Hassocks? Well it was definitely Hassocks related, they had just been to view the empty shop on Orion Parade and were so obviously pleased with the outcome they'd come over to celebrate in my cat lounge. Now these four young ladies were beautifully groomed with immaculate hair, eyelashes and nails and obviously they were hairdressers and are planning to move from their salon in Brighton because it's become too expensive with rent and rates to here to open up another hairdresser – Oh Yippee! I thought that's just what Hassocks needs but I won't say anything, they were obviously enjoying the moment mind you several other people have viewed it so let's not assume it'll be another Hair and Beauty shop even if it is all decked out with that in mind.

The more energetic of you will probably know that I hold the keys to the tennis courts in Adastral Park which at the moment are all locked up because apparently moss has grown onto the surface which supposedly has made it slippery.

Now this is a special tarmac surface which even when wet is non slip and don't tennis players like to play on grass courts? Isn't Wimbledon all grass courts which in my mind is much more slippery than a tarmac surface with a bit of moss growing here and there, I suppose what we're dealing with here is health and safety going a bit O.T.T.? the 'Powers That Be' are worried that you will graze your knee or worse still fall and break a nail, anyway I decided to do a bit of investigation work and become a Stacey Dooley for half an hour.

Firstly, I snuck over to Hassocks Hardware to see how much moss killer was – (luckily Colin didn't recognise me - it must have been the wig!) – Then I crept round to the tennis courts, racket in one hand, ball in the other, then I realised I had forgotten my key. So this ended up being a job for Spidey Stevie or should I say Stacey, up I went, it's quite high you know and getting my leg over at the top was quite a feat if I wasn't careful I could split my difference anyway I eventually descended onto the 'highly dangerous' mossy surface hoping I wouldn't do the splits and call the paramedics, they'd never get me out anyway. I then took on another brilliant disguise I became what's his name oh yes 'ANDY McENROE' and with my trusty racket began whacking my ball all over the place throwing myself from side to side, racing round like a lunatic, I even threw in a few special disco moves. I couldn't slip over to save my life, but god I was knackered and now I've got to climb back out again and resume my very important investigation which is this, the surface is safe. You're much more likely to slip over and drown or develop trench foot using the park itself and no other area of the park has been restricted. The 'Powers That Be' should at least let the tennis club use the courts who are at the moment using the Weald Tennis Club which I bet they are enjoying very much but who is paying the bill for them to do so, who indeed? Why don't Adastral Tennis Club pop over to Hassocks Hardware, purchase some moss killer, treat the surface of the courts with it then go in mob handed with some stiff brooms and scrub it off, job will be done. If you want to do something about it you will or you can let the 'Powers That Be' ruin your sport and to all the non-members who enjoy a game of tennis from time to time, weather permitting, you've got a voice in this community – use it.

As always I will finish with - please support your local shops and remember to love the wildlife.

Merry Christmas to all Love Steve x

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