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Magazine published by **Q.D. STATIONERY & SERVICES LTD**

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Your Editors: Joanna Lambe, Heidi Brown, Natalie Dalley & Nicola Botting



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**HASSOCKS PARISH CENTRE** Council Office in Adastra Park, Keymer Road - telephone 01273 842714 (answerphone out of hours) Website: [www.hassockspc.net](http://www.hassockspc.net). Parish Clerk - Ian Cumberworth  
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with the request "Does anyone know where this is in or around Ditchling?"*

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~~~~~  
*Once again Chris and Jill Kitcher will not be sending Christmas cards this year but will donate to charity instead. We would however like to wish an incredibly happy and healthy Christmas and new year (although it may be a bit quieter this year) to all of their friends and neighbours.*  
~~~~~

*Rod and Judith Jenner send Christmas greetings to all Friends in Ditchling, Hassocks and Hurst. It has been a strange year but let's hope 2021 will be better. God bless and this year we are giving Donation to Sussex Cancer Care.*  
~~~~~

### IS THERE ANYONE LOCAL

who could assist me by taking dictation and typing. I expect to pay for this. I need to record my memories of Canterbury RFC 1960-70 to cover that period of the Clubs 100th. year history that the Secretary is compiling. **Keymer, 01273 846207 or chris-daughton@freeuk.com**  
~~~~~

### AIR AMBULANCE KENT SURREY SUSSEX - CHRISTMAS APPEAL

We appreciate that Christmas might not be the same this year, with restrictions limiting our chances of parties and drinks with colleagues and friends, so why not spread the festive cheer with some KSS ideas: Brew with the (Christmas) Crew – Join us virtually at 6:30pm on the 15th December. Register for your invite below.

Why not give your virtual Christmas get together a KSS twist and download our fun party pack.

Or simply donate to our Christmas appeal to help our life-saving work.

For more information on our festive activities:

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*Katie Rose*



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**HASSOCKS CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** Although the Light Up Hassocks event is sadly not able to go ahead this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Hassocks will still have its traditional Christmas Lights throughout the village. Hassocks Parish Council is pleased to confirm that it has entered into a new three year contract to ensure the village enjoys the sparkle of lights each Christmas until 2022. This year, the Council has also paid for a much needed full refurbishment of the Merry Christmas Hassocks motif which is displayed outside Hassocks Hardware. Many residents may not realise that the electricity for this motif is generously provided every year by Hassocks Hardware and that without their support this light would not be illuminated, so a big thank you to Hassocks Hardware. The provisional date for lighting up the village is **1st December 2020**, although at the time of writing this has yet to be confirmed.

*Ian Cumberworth*

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normal until Christmas Eve. Dates and times for your diaries:

The Ditchling and Hassocks surgeries will close at 1 pm on **Christmas Eve**, re-opening on Tuesday **29th December**.

The Hurstpierpoint surgery will close at 6 pm on Christmas Eve, also until **29th December**.

All surgeries will be closed on New Year's Day. You can access medical services during this time through **NHS111, LIVI** and your nearest **A&E**.

The Mid Sussex Health Care Patient Participation Group **Midsussex.healthcareppg@gmail.com**.

*Louise Evatt*

*We thank Judy Tilbury for the following letter:-*  
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**DOWNLANDS SCHOOL REPORT** I'm writing this on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the second day of the second part of the Autumn term. As a school we have much to look forward to, despite the fact that we are all heading into another national lockdown. This time, as schools can stay open, it's business as usual, or the 'new usual' anyway!

We continue to deliver the full curriculum although we are not able to offer the full 'experience' in some subjects due to the 'bubbles'. We are looking forward to getting back to normal at some point but

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in the meantime, we will continue to make changes to improve our systems with everyone's safety as our top priority.

Last month the final raised from the #HelloYellow Day organised by the charity YoungMinds raised £1352.



We have three fundraising days to look forward to. We are holding 'Daisy's Crazy Trainer Day' on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November, raising money for Chestnut Tree House in memory of our former pupil Daisy Bushnell, who sadly passed away in 2017. On this day all students and staff come to school wearing 'crazy' trainers. Everyone makes a small donation



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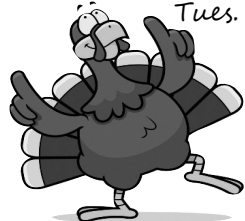


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Chestnut Tree House  
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tures in the local media and on our social media pages.

Downlands are also big supporters of 'Children in Need' and this year we will be holding a non-uniform day. We are unable to support in bigger ways this year, but we are confident that our students, staff and parents will support this very worthy cause and help Downlands to raise a substantial sum for Children in Need. 2020, more than any other year has seen an increase in mental health issues for children and this is the focus of fundraising this year.

Our final fundraising day is our 'Christmas Jumper Day', taking place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. This year we are splitting the funds raised between St Peter & St James Hospice and our very own Downlands School Association (DSA). Our DSA have been unable to hold their usual fundraising events, so they have come up with some ingenious ways to raise fund virtually. They will be holding a Year 7 Virtual Quiz night and hope to hold a Christmas Quiz too. The DSA help our school by funding a variety of projects that help Downlands to give their students the best facilities.

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Due to having to spend more time outside this winter, we have embarked upon a project to provide useable outside space that is available in all weathers. During our October half term, we had a canopy put up over the playground. This will provide our Year 9's with a covered outside area. As you will understand, we have to keep our students in their Year Group bubbles so we need to provide coverage in other areas of our school and this is what the DSA is going to be helping to raise funds for.

The DSA are also planning a Virtual Christmas Raffle, which, I hope by the time you read this, has

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taken place and has been well supported. Until next time - Best wishes from all at Downlands for a very happy Christmas and a much better 2021!

*Gail Wickens*

**1<sup>ST</sup> HASSOCKS CUBS LOCAL CHRISTMAS CARD DELIVERY 2020** The Cubs are once again delivering local Christmas post in Hassocks and Keymer. We have kept the price the same as last year, to bring some well needed cheer in these difficult times. Please use correct change to keep everyone safe. Post boxes can be found in Hassocks Pet Centre, Hassocks Eyecare Centre, Marchants Estate Agents, QD Stationery and Hassocks Hardware.



All boxes close on Saturday **19<sup>th</sup> December**. Deliveries will be made up to and including **24<sup>th</sup> December**. Your continued support is very much appreciated, and we wish you all a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*1<sup>st</sup> Hassocks Cubs*

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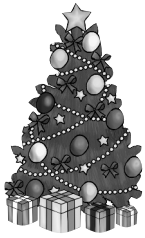
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*We will be back hopefully  
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in the pub or from the Street Food tents,  
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It's been great to see you all.*

*We wish everyone a Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year from  
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*Karen Lewis*

**HASSOCKS GOES GOLD** is amazed to announce that the 2020 Grand Total raised in Pearl's name for Research into Childhood Cancer is currently a staggering £13,249!

The generosity and enthusiasm from residents and businesses alike, especially at such a difficult time, has been overwhelming. I didn't think we would be able to even match last year's total, but we've smashed it!

Thank you so much to everyone who supported Hassocks Goes Gold 2020.

191 businesses, organisations and fundraisers got involved!

Crazy numbers and heights of sunflowers were grown!

128 fabulous prizes were donated to the auction, raising £3607

17 lapel ribbon boxes were hosted, raising £389

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65 giant gold bows were sponsored, raising £1300  
15 amazing fundraising events were held (gold runs, raffles, flipathons, sales and yoga classes), raising £7247

Keep safe in the months ahead, there will be more glitter and gold in 2021!

*Rachel*

**HISTORY OF ST LAWRENCE FAIR** I'm sorry to spoil a good story but the statement that the fair has taken place every year since the granting of the charter in 1312 "breaking only during World Wars I and II and this [year] with the Covid 19 virus is incorrect. The St. Lawrence Fair had ceased long before World War 1.

Hurstpierpoint Rector the Rev Carey Borrer, commenting in 1873 on an entry in the Marchant Diary for 10th August 1715 recording the Fair, wrote that "In later years the fair was always held on 1st May, but when the change took place I cannot tell. It is now suppressed."

The nearest equivalent in the first half of the 20th century, and which as previously stated raised money for local hospitals, was Hospital Saturday, later known as The Carnival.

The St. Lawrence Fair was revived by the parish church in 1956, initially in aid of church funds.

*John Norris*

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**HURST MONTHLY SOCIAL GROUP** Dianne & I started this group in February 2018 and were quite anxious as to how many people would be interested. HMSG has been very successful and the years programme was greatly enjoyed by our 42 members. It is sad, due to the Covid situation, that we have been unable to meet since February 2019. A letter was sent in September to all our members stating that we were staying closed and reviewing the situation in March 2021, hoping to reopen in April 2021. Thankfully all our speakers have agreed to come in the corresponding month for the following year - programme planning has never been so easy!

I would like to wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and a happy and healthy 2021.

I look forward to seeing you all again. If any of you would like to contact Dianne **01273 835284** or myself we would love to hear from you.

All the very best.

*Ann*

**RECORD HURST GYM AWARDS** With excellent work from the gymnasts and coaches, Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club will be presenting a record number of awards this term. With nearly

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200 already earned, the total will be well over that record mark by the presentation days in December. These will be supplemented by the Annual awards for each year group deferred from July.

The coaches have been working extremely hard, not only with the gymnasts, but also with the new Covid clean regime, sterilising mats and equipment between every group and keeping the children in the classes in safe bubbles of six. Over 90% have renewed attendance this term, while average class sizes have been reduced by nearly a quarter. Praise is due to the Pre-schoolers who are coming in independently and working very hard on their skills. As you may know, with current restrictions on gatherings for adults, we have taken the sad decision to cancel the Christmas Fair. We hope it will be reinstated next year.

Our waiting lists have disappeared for all current classes. If you think you are on the waiting list for any group please enquire because our waiting lists are empty. There are a just few spaces in each class for January and the Spring term.

More details about the Club are on its website **www.hurstpierpointgym.co.uk**

*Andrew*



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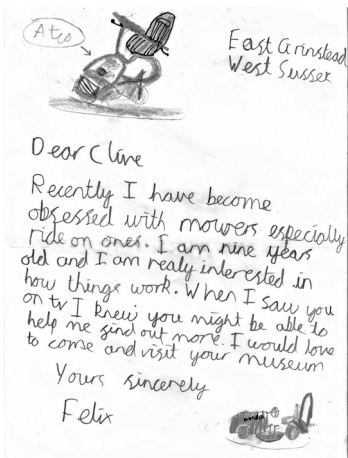
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YEAR-OLD  
FROM EAST  
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HAVE HIS  
UNUSUAL  
WISH COME  
TRUE**

The youngster wrote to the Museum of Gardening asking for a special look at their amazing collection

of ride-on lawnmowers. Curator Clive Gravett wanted to meet a fellow enthusiast, and invited Felix along for a special behind-the-scenes tour at the South Downs Heritage Centre. Felix saw a television item about Clive's collection and it was arranged for him to visit with his parents, brother and sister for a full tour and the rare opportunity to sit on various mowers, something

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not normally permitted. "Felix really enjoyed the visit, and he and his family joined us for tea and cakes, plus more questions about lawn mowers", explains Clive who presented Felix with a signed copy of his book - Two Men Went to Mow."

"Felix was thrilled to get a copy of your book and took it to bed with him to learn more", his mother said. "He has spent all weekend scouring ebay for mowers and with his birthday coming up next month is working on persuading us that a mower would make the ideal gift. And he has almost convinced his grandfather to store it for him!"



*Clive Gravett*

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Hassocks Infants' Festive Light Trail will be on all day.

Street Food Night Market and Mulled Wine at The Hassocks Pub from 5 pm to 9 pm.

Carol Singers in The Hassocks Hotel Marquee from 6 pm to 7 pm.

The high street is open late for Christmas Gift Shopping from 9 am to 9 pm. Please be responsible, follow Government Guidelines and have a fun event. Support small local business. Feel good about it.

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lieve that every child is a gift and every child is gifted. We are proud of our inclusive family atmosphere. We are a small school that thinks big with exciting cross-curricular learning. We have a brilliant team of supportive and nurturing teachers and teaching assistants in all four of our classes. Pupils start in our Buttercups class with a great outside space and Outdoor Learning in our beautiful grounds every week.

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Please see what our parents said in our latest parent questionnaire.... ‘What do you like about Twineham CofE School?’ There is a sense of caring, nurturing and community from the school and staff. We are happy with the size of the school and the flexibility with settling in as we’re aware that the same is not offered at other schools. Caring and friendly environment for children. Lots of good after school clubs. All wonderful. The family environment. All teachers know all children. Always made to feel welcome if need to come into school to discuss anything. Nice atmosphere, friendly. I am happy with the school and teaching ü Inclusivity. Friendly. Such a lovely, positive energy at this school, all the staff are approachable and very friendly, Headteacher knows every pupil and is there every morning, rain or shine, to greet them. The small friendly classes. The outside learning. The kids like the caring community & the fact they have friends in other year groups. That you wel-

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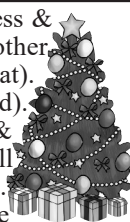
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*Nicola Brotherton*

### **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HASSOCKS**

wish you all a very Happy Christmas. Details of services will be published on the Church websites and on posters around the village.

Churches Together in Hassocks will be at the December village market with Messy Church at Home family activity packs to give away. And for those who will be missing the traditional coral services this year why not come and pick up ‘Home for Christmas’ a free CD with traditional carols and some modern Christmas songs along with Bible readings a short Christmas message.

*Darryl Sinclair*



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**THE WINDMILLS SCHOOL** The first half term back at The Windmills has been very productive – despite the new restrictions imposed on the staff, children and parents. Teachers are finding new ways to teach in interesting and motivational ways within the new classroom environment and the children are obviously relishing the challenge! In science, Year 6 learnt about light, its properties and how it travels. With the help of special glasses, they were able to see how white light diffracts to create the spectrum of colours that make up a rainbow; a symbol that has obviously featured a lot over recent months. Despite the weather changing and the rain making an appearance, each of the year 5 classes really enjoyed spending a day in the school grounds working with Mr Marlow our outdoor learning expert. They learnt to use an array of tools, equipment and skills to begin preparing the ground for a wellbeing area – coppicing, lighting fires, creating shelters as well as hunting for mini-beasts of course! All of the other classes will get the chance over the coming term to continue the work already begun with the aim of making this space suitable for promoting mindful activities and to encourage wellbeing and



respect for our natural environment in the dedicated wildlife area. Meantime in the classroom, year 4 were becoming expert embalmers by mummifying a willing teddy bear and conducting a tricky scientific experiment in the form of the mummification of an orange - to be compared over time with a non-mummified orange. We await the results! Year 3 have used a range of methods to investigate and present the findings of their comparison between their own diet and that of a rabbit when studying food groups. Foods from both diets were sorted in a Venn diagram and the children created bar charts to show the results of their investigations into the sugar content of drinks. To complete their learning the children used their knowledge to plan a balanced meal using an ingredient from each food group to create a delicious meal they would enjoy eating themselves! Finally, we wish to thank all those who donated towards the cost of our new 'Ninja Course' adventure playground which was installed over the summer break. As well as offering an interesting activity for the children, this area acts as a bright and cheerful welcome when entering the school site!

*Sue Bandy*

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*We thank Derek and Michael Earl for sending in the following:-* Further to the photo of Hassocks British Legion football team kindly submitted by Sue Farrell, Derek and I recognise the following:

Back row reading from left to right: A Fagg; Punch Parsons; ? Gerrard; Doug Simmons; G Love; T Abbot; S Simmons; G Brooker; A Burnett.

Front row reading from left to right: E Mottram; G Prout; C Saunders; ?, ?

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### **GIRLGUIDING BEACON DISTRICT (HAS- SOCKS AND DITCHLING)**

Hassocks Rainbows Need YOU! Our wonderful group of 5 to 7 year old Rainbows is desperate to meet two inspirational new leaders to take on their popular and over subscribed unit. If more volunteers come forward, we could run two units as there is an ever increasing waiting list!

The group of 12 meets once a week for an hour and leaders offer support as the girls explore, challenge themselves, have fun and make new friends. Rainbows learn by doing: they play sport and games and love art and craft. Best of all they love the space Girlguiding offers them as they try out new things and build up self confidence.

Training and support in delivering the new and exciting Rainbow Programme will be given and volunteers will have the opportunity to develop their own skill set and will be warmly welcomed by the rest of the team at Hassocks Guide Hall.

If you think this might be something you are interested in, and have time to put something back into our lovely Hassocks Community, why not check out the Girlguiding website for more detailed information? You can also email Beacon District

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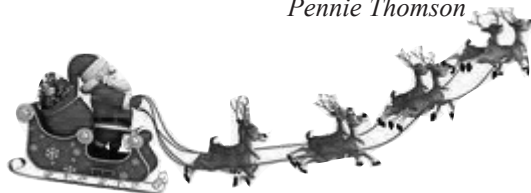
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Thank you, Lauretta Major at Hassocks Village Cleaners!

Meanwhile, Hassocks Guide Leaders wish to say a Big Thank You to Lauretta Major at Hassocks Village Cleaners for coming to the rescue and leading our Working Party to make Hassocks Guide Hall ready for Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units to meet indoors again.

By giving up two Saturday mornings and sharing her expertise, the space has been transformed. It is now sparkingly clean as well as Covid Secure. Lauretta kindly offered her time and all the necessary cleaning products, free of charge. Now, the Leaders and girls in Girlguiding Beacon District can all benefit from this very generous support and we cannot thank her enough. How lucky we are to live in such a warm hearted community.

*Pennie Thomson*



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**STONEYWISH** It is always satisfying to have a pet hate and mine is listening to the weather forecast. A weather forecast is like the quintessential party-pooper, a blurb that spills the name of the murderer before you have so much as opened your thriller. As soon as you hear 'the forecast' you pre-judge the day. The friendly forecaster assures you that a depression, approaching with unerring exactitude, is bringing you gales of so many miles an hour, so many inches of rain, temperatures below the seasonal average, pure misery on the roads. There it is. You can see a satellite photograph of the white vortex spinning across the Atlantic. No matter that the sky of the moment is blue; the sun brilliant; the birds singing. You know that something nasty is on its way. Living on a damp and draughty island, as we do – something nasty is always on its way, unless we are having unseasonably fine weather, in which case we are filled with forebodings about the Jet Stream getting stuck again. There is a horrid sense of Necessity about the whole business, so that even if you know a little about chaos theory and the impossibility of predicting anything with certainty, a feeling remains



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that Life itself has been plotted and mapped, just like an impending cyclone. Armed with a satellite forecast, we cancel our arrangements at the touch of a cell-phone button. Rare now are the soggy picnic excursions of the bad old days, the huddle of friends in crowded cars, juggling steaming mugs of tea while windows fog, obliterating the view. We know better today. We wait for a more propitious day. But something important – the art of adapting and making the best of whatever comes, is eclipsed. And with it the delight of living on the edge, enjoying *experiencing* rather than knowing. Here I take my hat off to the intrepid campers who embrace all weathers on our campsite. And to the ponies and sheep setting their backs, as I write, to the discomfort of an autumn squall. What the weather forecast did not and could not tell us, is how this depression tastes, smells, looks: how massed ranks of clouds appeared yesterday morning on a blue horizon, gilded banners waving; how a wind blowing out of November, tumbled golden leaves along the gutters; the pepper-shot of pigeons or jackdaws hurtling from church steeple and tree-top; the sour drip of cold berries in hedgerows...



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Modern understanding of life seems set on a trajectory away from the warmth of personal experience towards impersonal data or received knowledge, with value judgements (prejudices) supplied by experts in every field. We are encouraged more and more to see existence from a satellite's perspective. And this 'global' view reduces reality to flat screen images, maps, graphs, equations and finally to the quantum realm of pure supposition. At this level the complex and mysterious processes of the living world can be managed, modelled, predicted and massaged, whether we are talking of the weather, or of blood pressure or of happiness. It seems to me that all this ultimately misses the point, for we are humans, not cyphers. Like the 'experts', I care passionately about the state of the planet, about the health of the nation, about the fate of bees and sparrows. But I also think that a habitual satellite mentality cripples our ability to think and feel like warm-blooded beings. We need sometimes to turn off the forecast gurus and listen instead to the murmurings of the Earth within our own horizon's sphere. Down here the perspective is gentler, more resilient, less manipu-



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lated. All things have their own time and reason. We are part of an embracing whole and constantly taken by surprise, by the freewheeling spontaneity of Nature. The neurosis and fear, which saturate the satellite mind, dissipate, restoring our free, ancestral right to knowledge through experience and the poetry and beauty which lies embedded within it. It takes a poet to put it best. If ever you feel that life has been probed, mapped, reduced and packaged till no place any longer seems joyous and free, then you need what Keats called 'Negative Capability', the art of not knowing everything. To rest, as he put it 'in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' is to recover an enchanted world where truth is 'proved' upon the pulse and can be dreamt into reality by any unqualified Adam. 'I am certain of nothing,' says the poet in one of his letters, 'but the Holiness of the heart's affections...' 'I live in the eye...' From this heartbound, earthbound perspective possibility is infinite. So on this brooding, cloud-bound day, the present-goes something like this: the larches are turning golden from their branch-tips down; herons

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have returned to the Big Pond and stand, like wet boulders out in the field; the chickens shake the mud off their feet, but prefer to hunt slugs in the rain, with porcupine spikes for feathers, than dry off nicely in their hut; leaves lie thick in the grass. Slopping to and fro with cold hands and heavy buckets is part and parcel of the moment. This space is uncomfortable but vital and free. And we receive energy from the independent and free things around us.

As the days draw in and winter drives us indoors, the world may shrink to four walls and the tiny orbit of kitchen and fireside, but horizons go on expanding. Essentially we know that Galileo was wrong. The sun still sets and rises! We affirm it every day. Despite every scientific proof to the contrary, we know the sun goes round the Earth, because we feel it just as we feel the Earth going round *us* as it carries us on its own mysterious course. And we can prove this by turning around, as ecstatic children do, and watching it spin...

And as you shake your heads, I see you conclude that this is what comes of taking tipsy elderberry cordial (purely medicinal!) at bed-time. So with

that delicious concoction in hand, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and may you find that every nut has a sweet centre!

*Rosemary Pavey*



### reMEember, THE MID SUSSEX-BASED CHARITY FOR PEOPLE WITH ME (CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME)

We have missed meeting our members during the past year but we held our Annual Conference as a Zoom meeting on Saturday 14th November. Expert speakers were Dr Charles Shepherd (medical advisor to the national ME Association), Dr Amolak Bansal (consultant immunologist), Dr Nina Muirhead (surgeon), Dr William Weir (consultant physician of Harley Street) and Dr Paul Worthley (GP). It is becoming clear that "Post-Covid-19" or "Long Covid" is almost identical to CFS/ME – it may even be the same thing; CFS/ME frequently follows a virus or other infection. We are still open for enquiries; you can e-mail [me\\_cfs@hotmail.com](mailto:me_cfs@hotmail.com) telephone 01273 831733, or go to our website [www.remembercfs.org.uk](http://www.remembercfs.org.uk).

*Janice Kent*

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*Volunteers busy wrapping 4,000 parcels  
at Adastra Hall*

**THAT'S A WRAP** Santa's volunteer elves had a highly-productive day at Adastra Hall in Hassocks making sure all is ready for visitors to his grottoes. "In a single day we've managed to wrap over 4,000 presents for our charity grottoes, run by The Budding Foundation", explains Rebecca Houghton-Knapp from family-run Bates Garden Centres. The village hall saw 36 volunteers working hard for some ten hours to wrap 4,000 gifts. "A huge thank you to everyone who gave up their time today to

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make this possible", adds Rebecca. "Obviously it is a difficult year this year, but the Budding Foundation is hoping to raise as much money as possible with their two charity grottoes – Santa's Enchanted Forest at Old Barn Garden Centre near Horsham and Santa's Grotto at South Downs Nurseries in Hassocks."

Last year the grottoes raised £43,000 to help children's projects across the area.

*Rebecca Houghton-Knapp*



*Taking the carefully-wrapped presents back to  
the grottoes in Hassocks and Horsham*

**HURSTPIERPOINT**

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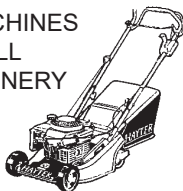
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**SUSSEX VALE ROTARY.** Circumstances have forced us to change our meetings, which we now hold on-line via 'Zoom' every 2 weeks, interspersed with occasional Saturday breakfast gatherings. About once a month, we still have speakers, which we share with Hassocks WI when the subject is of joint interest. We still try to help our local communities, as you will see below and would welcome your support to continue with our efforts.

**Light Up Hassocks (LUH) – Update.** As you must know by now, Sussex Vale Rotary has regretfully announced that LUH will not be taking place this year, like many other events it has been affected by the Coronavirus epidemic. However, as mentioned previously we will still be running the Christmas Poster competition for the younger children and we would like local businesses to take part in the "Best Dressed Window" event. As usual prizes will be awarded with judging of the Posters happening

## DEADLINE DATE FOR JANUARY 2021 ISSUE IS 30TH NOVEMBER

shortly after the schools return from the half-term break. The Best Dressed Window judging will take place on 7th December and the announcement of the winner on Friday 11th December.

In addition, we are examining the possibility of running an on-line Christmas Concert in early December. Please check on Facebook or our website for an announcement.

**Coronavirus Crisis.** Sussex Vale is continuing with our efforts to support local communities. We are helping the local foodbanks and will also replenish the Children's Activity Packs when they are needed. As there still remains a need for our emergency food parcels, we will be distributing them through the local infant and primary schools in Ditchling, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint.

Our Christmas Hampers will be distributed again this year, to help families have a cheerier Festive Season, all the more important with the current crisis. Help - We have recently placed a number of

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posters around the villages appealing for donations, as you will appreciate all these activities made on behalf of our local community have a cost and the Covid restrictions have prevented us from running our usual fund-raising events. All help will be appreciated and as we have no admin or other costs, you can be sure every penny will be spent on good causes.

Despite the difficulties we are facing, there was some good news last month when the WHO announced that the 'Wild Polio Virus' has finally been eradicated from Africa. This leaves Afghanistan and Pakistan as the only two countries which continue to suffer from this disease. Rotary has been working on eradicating Polio from the world since 1988, contributing large amounts in financial support, but also providing volunteer doctors and nurses to administer the vaccine. Sussex Vale members planted purple crocuses around the area in October to support the continuing battle to rid the world of this dreadful disease and to mark World Polio Day. If you are interested in learning more about Rotary and how you can help, please contact our club secretary on

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secretarysvr@gmail.com, or 07546 111996, he will be pleased to hear from you. We can also be found on Facebook and our website. Finally the members of Sussex Vale Rotary wishes 'A Merry Christmas and Good New Year' to each and everyone in our local communities.

*Duncan Honeyman*

### **HURSTPIERPOINT HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY**

Because of the Coronavirus we have been unable to hold our popular monthly meetings at the Guide HQ. However we are considering holding virtual meetings using Zoom, in the New Year. That very popular speaker, Dr Geoffrey Mead, has said he is willing to give a presentation in this way. Please watch the notice boards and local media for further announcements.

Or contact me - telephone **01273 832280**, e-mail

**w.kent123@btinternet.com**

In the meantime we wish you all a very happy Christmas and a better new year than the old one.

*Bill Kent (Chairman)*



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### HURSTPIERPOINT PLAYERS

Hooray! It won't be a Panto-less Christmas in Hurstpierpoint as the Players are just about to finish filming 'The Tales of Robin Hood' ready for transmission on the Hurst Players YouTube channel from Christmas Eve through to 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021. Who said wishes can't come true – its Christmas!

We have an enthusiastic cast of not-quite thousands plus a substantial technical crew including director Sam Nixon assisted by Annette Squire – and you'll see many familiar faces, some new ones and some young ones when the Players take to the Forest. Rehearsals have been going on for a while now in the open air (all Covid-distanced, of course) in and around the village. By the way, we're still hoping to find one or two Players who seem to have been over-awed by discovering a hidden Sherwood Forest just off Hurstpierpoint High Street and who are either lost, or they've just decided to stay there. You can return them to the Players Theatre at number 147 – or get in touch with us on our website: [hurstplayers.org.uk](http://hurstplayers.org.uk) and we might collect them – especially if they're playing a leading role! Seriously, we'll all be together for the Festive Season and hope your readers will join us – check out that website for more details as we get closer to the festivities.

And a Merry 'Robin Hood' Christmas!

*Anne Hopper*

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LONG-TAILED TITS - The ties that bind "Who are these people?" You've hardly seen them all year yet here you are, paper hat askew, squashed between them on the sofa at Christmas. On a branch out in the cold darkness of the garden, also sandwiched between aunts, brothers, cousins and daughters, a tiny bird is asking a similar question. Long-tailed tits and humans are two of Britain's most social species. And just like a visit from your relatives, the arrival of a long-tailed tit flock in your garden can turn tranquillity into chaos. It's like someone has emptied a box of feathered fireworks over the fence. They manically bicker on the bird feeder and swing acrobatically upside-down on the fat balls, all the while trilling, rattling and screaming 'cee-heee-heee' like a troupe of Michael Jackson impersonators. What you're witnessing is a group of roving relatives, roaming the neighbour-



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hood to pillage your peanuts. This posse of outlaws consists of in-laws, brothers, sons and daughters. With their gorgeous pink, black and white plumage and those ridiculously long tails, these flying lollypops must qualify for Britain's cutest bird. Then, suddenly they're gone and the pulse rate of the garden returns to normal.

By late winter the extended family will drift apart to find new partners, ready to start new families. In March, the foundations are laid for an epic construction. Moss building bricks are lashed together with ropes of sticky spider's webs. The walls rise, a camouflage cladding of lichen is added to the roof and a cosy filling of a thousand feathers lines the interior. The end result looks a crocheted stomach and soon there will be plenty of rumbling from inside as eight hungry chicks demand to be fed. But raising a large family can take its toll. The constant hunt for insects can exhaust a parent almost to breaking point. And that's when something unusual and wonderful happens. Their family arrives to save them. Aunties and uncles who have not been successful raising their own family that year will selflessly help the parents and feed their nephews and nieces.

Once the children have flown the nest the whole

gang remains together and joins with other siblings to form your chaotic neighbourhood feeding flock. But the biggest challenge of the year still awaits: winter. Freezing night-time temperatures exact a heavy toll on our garden birds. And that's why at Christmas, hidden deep in a hedge, you'll find the extended family of long-tailed tits huddled together on a frosty branch, sharing their warmth and surviving. Like them, we can all extend a warm wing to surround and support our family and friends this Christmas, whether near or far. Because none of us can get through this on our own.

Sussex Wildlife Trust is an independent charity caring for wildlife and habitats throughout Sussex. Founded in 1961, we have worked with local people for over half a century to make Sussex richer in wildlife.

We rely on the support of our members to help protect our rich natural heritage. Please consider supporting our work. As a member you will be invited to join Michael Blencowe on our regular wildlife walks and also enjoy free events, discounts on wildlife courses, Wildlife magazine and our Sussex guide book, *Discovering Wildlife*. It's easy to join online at [sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/join](http://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/join)

*Michael Blencowe*

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That Father Christmas will come

And say Ho ho ho

What will Christmas be like this year

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*Janet Irwin*



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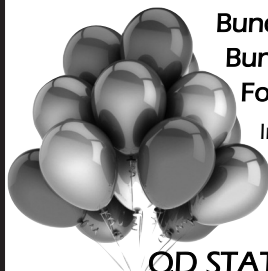
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Our New Charity Shop is open Monday to Friday 9 am – 4 pm and Saturday mornings 9 am – 12 pm. Do come along and have a look at our brand new shop which is now filled with a huge assortment of clothing, shoes, bric a brac, children's toys, books, curtains and Christmas decorations! We are currently accepting donations of items for the shop. We have all the Covid precautions in place, with track and trace, temperature checking, mask wearing and a one way system and can offer a safe and welcoming place for you to come and see us.

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Sadly we are not able to run our full Day Centre services of minibus transport, cooked lunches and outings at the moment but expect to re-open fully once vaccinations are available to everyone. Covid risks also mean that our medical transport service cannot operate.

Christmas and New Year – We will be closed from 2 pm on Christmas Eve (Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> Dec) and will not reopen again until Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020. We wish you all a happy Christmas and hope the new year brings us better times ahead. Thank you for all your support.

We look forward to seeing you!

*From all at Age Concern*

**THE TEAM AT OLDLAND MILL** would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Mill has witnessed many challenging times in its more than 300 year existence, and we are proud that despite the unique challenges this year has presented, we have been able to continue milling flour and carrying out essential maintenance. Thank you for your generous support and we hope to be able to welcome you back in 2021.

*Rebecca Street*

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## STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

The girls at QD tell me this is the Christmas edition which at the moment seems ages away but, if it is and they aren't going to squeeze another one in before Christmas then let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy festive season, not that you'll be able to do a great deal, but what you can do I'm sure you'll enjoy very much.

Anyway, as I'm mentioning QD can I just say that I consider them to be an essential shop just like all shops, no matter what they do are essential and to make them close for one month or longer is just ludicrous. All the Hairdressers and Barbers in this village are following all the Government Guidelines and then some, so making them shut achieves nothing. Schools, colleges and universities are all still open as are Garden Centres, yes, Garden Centres are apparently essential, for what I hear some of you ask. Well when I eventually got through to a Government spokesperson who by the sound of him wasn't the brightest brick in the building, said "people need somewhere to go and large areas are deemed safer than small ones" - so that beautiful little shop in Ditchling, Poison Ivy who sells the same products as the Garden Centres that surround her has to close the shop while they stay open and destroy her Christmas trade. In my opinion and it is my opinion this whole second wave lockdown is a total waste of time and money and very unfair to the small shops that help prop up this countries economy - I'd better stop there or I'll be in trouble.

Pavilion Electrics as you all know has now gone and I think something new will be happening in there fairly soon, but in the meantime do you remember they used to do Vacuum Cleaner repairs. Well to help out I'm going to become a drop off and collection point for the Vacuum Repair man, I'm open all the time so it only seems sensible for us to do it, so if it doesn't work anymore bring it in and let the man from R & R Electrical work his magic on it.

Do you remember a few months ago I called for a statue of Dame Vera Lynn to be considered for Ditchling, well no news on that yet, but the next best thing has been created by a local firm and it's a Amber Ale, Bedlam Brewery has called the charity Ale 'The Dame', I wonder how you get hold of it, could be nice for Christmas.

Light Up Hassocks naturally is cancelled this year which was a sensible decision, but we have 'Son' of Light Up Hassocks on the 19th December by which time I'm sure, most of you will have done your Christmas shopping. You've got street food, mulled wine and carol singing which are all at The Hassocks Pub, the village market which is always a good venue to visit is open in the morning from 9 am to 12.30 pm as it normally is just before Christmas. Us shop keepers will be open, but I won't allow more than 3 people at any one time in my shop and I shall close at 7 pm, as I normally would 9 pm is too late - the animals need to be settled down before I can leave. Whilst I applaud the organisers for doing this event, I think the shops should have been left out of it and just concentrate on the outdoor events, also you must be aware that the road is not closed off to traffic so cars will be zooming up and down the Keymer Road as they always do on a Saturday night so I hope you'll be careful - my advice is do what you want to do early, enjoy the mulled wine and Choir Singers and then go home.

Before I go I'd just like to say how very sad it was to hear of the passing of Nigel Dewdney. He'd often come in the shop for some Kibble as he called it and a chat, he was a lovely man and if I had to describe him in two words it would be 'instantly likeable', God Bless you Nigel your smiley face and dry humour will be very missed by a great deal of people.

Just a small update before I go, Poison Ivy like a lot of shops including QD Stationery are doing a call and collect so you can still support them.

Please have a wonderful Christmas love Steve, Nola and all furry friends.

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