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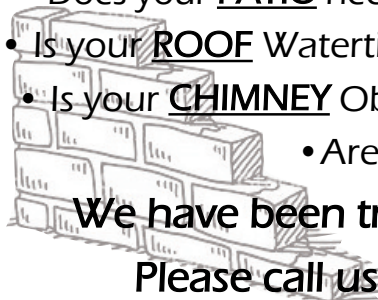
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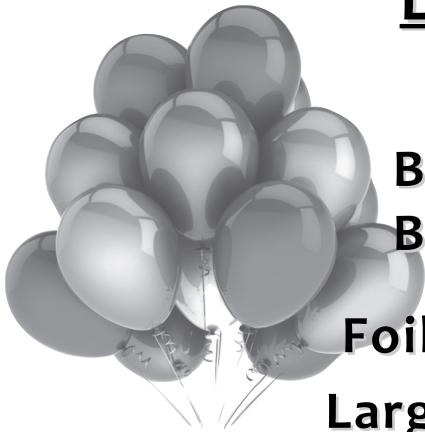
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NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS from the Acorns Nursery and Forest School!

As this somewhat turbulent year of 2020 has just drawn to a close, many parents may find themselves reflecting on the impact of this year's events on their children, but looking forward with hope into what the New Year may hold.

What is it that parents are most longing to give their children as we enter 2021? Perhaps it is the gift of new friendships, instrumental for both wellbeing and social development. Or, it might be the gift of the outdoors, as this pandemic has surely reminded us of the immense benefits of appreciating the natural world around us.

At the Acorns and Forest School, we are passionate about providing children with the best start through getting to know your child on a truly individual basis, nurturing curiosity for the world around them, and getting outdoors as much as possible!

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Step 2 – Urgent Help within 3 days?
West Sussex Community Hub 033 022 27980 or **<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/.../community-hub-covid-19/>**

Step 3 – Urgent Requirement within 48 hours?
Hurst Covid19 Neighbours' Support Group. Please call any of the numbers below to get urgent help with prescriptions or shopping. Anna Smithy **01273 834625/07850 823092**, Hazel Constantine **07789 852297** or myself Prue Heron **01273 835064/07769 904724**.
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DO YOU HAVE PROSTATE CANCER WORRIES?

Mid Sussex Prostate Cancer Support Group are reaching out to all men especially, but not limited to, those aged over 50. Some younger men, particularly those with a family history of prostate cancer, and some men from black ethnic groups are also more likely to contract the disease. We were established in 2012 as Haywards Heath Prostate Cancer Support Group and currently have an active membership of over 60 people (men and

women) living all over Mid Sussex. More than ever in these difficult times men, and their partners, need help in dealing with concerns about prostate cancer, so we are therefore actively encouraging more people to join us. Between us, our members have experienced most prostate cancer treatment options available from the NHS, and are happy and willing to talk about our experiences to help inform other men with prostate cancer worries, however personal or embarrassing these concerns may seem.

Mid Sussex Prostate Cancer Support Group is run by a small, dedicated committee. Regular meetings are held where men can compare treatments and any ongoing side effects, and to generally encourage a positive attitude to dealing with the disease. Speakers at our meetings include a wide range of professionals from the NHS, for example Oncologists, Urologists, MacMillan nurses and Radiographers. These speakers are mostly from local hospitals, and give details of current treatment options and new ones being developed. Other cancer support organisations such as PCUK and Tackle also support our knowledge base. Our most recent meetings have been held in the privacy and comfort of members' own living rooms via Zoom, and have covered topics such as treatment options, proton beam therapy and erectile dysfunction. *cont..*

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We have an active and informative website, **www.midsussexprostate.uk** which gives details of upcoming meetings. The website also has descriptions of several members' own personal prostate cancer experiences, as well as links to the major prostate cancer charities.

New Chairman Brian, from Hassocks, who was diagnosed four years ago, also by chance, and with no symptoms, says that from his experience the best way to tackle the bad news is to talk to other sufferers and gain as much knowledge of the disease as possible. Joining Mid Sussex Prostate Cancer Support Group enabled him to gain personal, in-depth knowledge of the treatment options being offered to him, and their likely side effects, thus helping enormously with the decision-making process. 'Brian's Lucky Journey' and the follow up, 'The Lucky Journey Continues' can be found on the website.

If you, or your partner, would like help and support with any worries about prostate cancer – including getting a PSA test, dealing with diagnosis and

choosing treatment, coping with side-effects or just not feeling alone in dealing with prostate cancer, get in touch with Mid Sussex Prostate Cancer Support Group, and we'll do our best to help you. Remember prostate cancer is treatable and beatable!

Please contact Brian **chair@midsussexprostate** for further information, and a telephone number to call to speak to a member.

Brian Holden



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HASSOCKS WI held a wonderfully, interesting talk on the Knepp Estate Rewilding Project in December. Like so much else, the talk, by Penny Green, Ecologist was via Zoom.

We learned about the project started in 2001. A pioneering process-led conservation and its extraordinary results. These include colonies of nightingales, turtle doves and the purple emperor butterfly. Last year for the first time since 1416 white storks successfully bred and raised their chicks at Knepp.

As the talk arranged by Hassocks WI was originally intended as an open meeting, we welcomed visitors from the community. So, when life returns to new, normal, hopefully in 2021 Hassocks WI extends a warm welcome to our current and future members. Come and visit us. Our regular evening meetings are held on 3rd Monday monthly at 7.45 pm at Adastra Hall visit www.wihassocks.org.uk for further information.

Gerry

HURSTPIERPOINT FOOD BANK The Hurstpierpoint Food Bank has had to adapt this year due to the pandemic, so we now deliver twice a week to those needing our support. We now also have a food drop point at the Coop on Hurstpierpoint High Street and are very grateful for any donations of non-perishable goods (such as tinned meat, fruit, vegetables, puddings, rice, pasta, cereals, tea, coffee) as well as cleaning products and toiletries.

Over the Christmas period we will continue to operate a delivery service. We usually deliver on Wednesday and Friday mornings, however, on 25th December and 1 January, we will not be making any deliveries.

Anyone who would like our support should email us at hurstfb@gmail.com and we would love to help. We want to do our best to ensure that no-one in our village goes hungry over Christmas or at any time of the year.

Catherine Tong



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THE LATE JULIA (JILL) KITSON died peacefully in her sleep on Friday 27th November 2020, a week before her 85th birthday, in the superlative care of staff at Woodlands Nursing Home in Burgess Hill. She lived fifty years in Hurstpierpoint, from 1969. Those who knew her will know our dear mother lived a life of genuine Christian love, deeply spiritual and extending that love effortlessly outwards to her family, friends, and everyone she met. Her quiet charitable deeds directed to anyone in need were bountiful with particular attention towards the protection and love of children and animals. She was the most loving wife, mother, grandmother and daughter. Her last years were troubled with progressive Alzheimer's and after extended hands-on live-in care with family, we eventually moved her to Woodlands eighteen months ago where we visited her every day until lockdown. Like many in our situation, this year of lockdown has been devastating, but our trust in the outstanding Woodlands team was well placed, thankfully. 'FaceTimes' and full PPE visits were offered throughout. Jill's funeral was in Holy Trinity where she was a Martha, and her ashes will be buried with her husband, Alan, The Garden of Remembrance behind the church. We asked that, instead of flowers, people who wished to might give to their own favourite charities, but we did pile her high with flowers because she adored them! We so appreciate all the truly lovely things

people have said about Jill. She is greatly missed, and her memory lives on ever in our hearts and minds.

Sarah Platt, Robert Carpenter and family

AGE CONCERN, Dale Avenue, Hassocks BN6 8LW – Telephone **01273 844461**.

Happy New Year to you all! We hope we can eventually maintain normal services soon here at Age Concern. We were able to open up our new Charity Shop in December which was very busy and we thank everyone who has supported us. As I write I do hope we are still open! It is very difficult to have up to date information on here as we have to submit this many weeks before! We will try to operate as best we can along with the up to date current Covid guidelines. Keep safe everyone and hope to see you very soon.

All at Age Concern

HASSOCKS TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD It doesn't look as if we will be meeting again for a while, but I hope that you had a good Christmas and would just like to wish you a very happy, and healthy 2021. Unfortunately we lost two valued members in 2020, they will be missed by us all. When the current virus situation is resolved I will be writing to you all with details of our eventual meetings, but in the meantime keep well and busy.

Sheila Southwell

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DITCHLING DOWNS WI We are holding zoom meetings until we are able to get back in Ditchling Village Hall.

Our next meeting is on **5th January** and the speaker is Janet Pennington who will talk about 'The History of Small Shops through the Ages'. For more information email **ddwisecretary@gmail.com**. *Sally Willis*

THE POPPY APPEAL 2020 has been very different for us this year as we were not able to collect as individuals due to the Corona virus.

The majority of our shops in Hassocks that were allowed to stay open and able to have a collecting tin on their counters managed to do quite well due to the generosity of the good people of Hassocks, Clayton and Keymer.

Our total donations for this year's appeal came to £4,959.47.

We were not able to have 'Manned Static' tables at Southdown Garden Centre this year with 'The Military Vehicles' group that usually help to collect along with our volunteers, and also missed not having collectors on the street in Hassocks to help as well.

Greatly missed this year was our usual gathering

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on Remembrance Sunday at The Royal British Legion in Woodland Road to walk to The War Memorial at Saint Cosmas & St Damian to lay wreaths.

Nevertheless, on the 11th November, a short service was arranged at The Keymer War Memorial and people managed to gather at a safe distance to lay Wreaths and Crosses in memory of their loved ones. Here's hoping that we can look forward to a better and brighter 2021. *Carol White*

THE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP OF HURST, HASSOCKS AND DITCHLING U3A have been investigating the Hassocks and Hurst pubs, past and present. To make our findings available to all we have produced a short book. This is titled *Hostelries in Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, Past and Present*.

We discovered many interesting facts whilst doing our research. Did you know for instance that the Greyhound has previously been called The Blue Anchor and then The Plough and Harrow before it was renamed The Greyhound? The New Inn at Hurst replaced another inn which closed 570 years ago! Copies of the book are available at QD Stationery in Hassocks. *Margaret*

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Yet everything is not doom and gloom
We'll find things to enjoy
Once again the flowers of Spring will bloom,
No virus can destroy,
We'll have virtual celebrations.
See our Grandkids through the door,
And pray for a perfect vaccine
And get our lives back once more
So try to think on the to future
Forget the bad year that has gone,
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Happy 2021!!!!

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RESTARTING – AND LOOKING FORWARD

TO 2021 Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club will be reopening on the **5th January** for the Spring term. In the first weeks of January they will be presenting the 183 awards gained in 2020 and also the awards for each year group deferred from July. The Club can now reopen in any Covid tier level. The vast majority of children are renewing, while average class sizes have been reduced by nearly a quarter.

With current restrictions on gatherings, we are re-formatting the Arts Competition to take place during regular session time towards the end of term. Sadly we won't be able welcome friends and families to watch, but know the gymnasts will rise to the occasion again with their performances.

Our waiting lists have disappeared for all current classes, so any children wanting to join can take advantage of the few spaces available in each class for the Spring term.

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

Andrew Hair

**Deadline for the
February 2021 issue is
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NEWS FROM STONEYWISH January is a good month for telling tales. The days are short, the nights are cold and the comforting lights of Christmas have been consigned once more to a box in the attic. Ahead stretch several more months of winter slop out of doors and the British climate, like a watercolourist who muddies her palette, seems to have plastered the countryside in dull washes of grey and brown. In the days of yore, (fondly remembered now as B.C. - Before Covid), one could have repaired to a cosy pub or friendly hearth, huddled with friends and chased away the doldrums with something warming to drink, abandoning life's cares in the timeless pleasure of reminiscence. Well, such things being pretty much washed out too for the time being, I invite you to join me in imagination by the Rayburn here and settle yourselves comfortably as the light fades behind the lime tree outside the window. The blackbirds have finished their last minute mutterings, the geese are quiet, the chickens all gone safely to roost. Here there is a sense of sanctuary, with new bread rising on the stovetop, the strident ticking of an old cuckoo-clock, wafts of cooking, shadows picked out in lamplight and the embers and echoes of conversations past, which any chance observation can revive, quick as memory.

Tonight, the subject is horses. Never having had much experience of horses, I have been trying to

win the trust of the two Shetland ponies which in summer live in a little enclosure in the farm centre, and in winter enjoy the greater freedom and rougher grass of Bernie's Field, a paddock just behind the Pinetum. Pebbles is brown, with a straw-coloured mane and tail, the other, which for want of another name I have come to call Luna, is moon-coloured, shaggy and mischievously fond of rolling in the mud to camouflage herself in the colours of the season. I go down once a day with morsels of apple in my pockets and call them over. They are adept at feigning deafness. Even though we have been best friends the day before, they make a canny assessment of the scene. Have I got anyone with me? Do I come with an ulterior motive? Is the treat I am waving at them a genuine gift or a decoy? Perhaps I have a head collar or rope hidden behind my back. Perhaps I have some dastardly plan to drag them off for hoof-trimming by the farrier. One or another of the pair will finally amble across and standing at a distance, reach out her lips to take the fruit I offer. After the third piece she will let me touch her nose. The other may approach at this point. We put our heads together and have a silent chat. Gradually I am permitted to stroke her forehead or the soft spot behind her ears, and she will lean up against the fence and push with her full body weight, flirting, rubbing her flank and watching me the while. Finally they will

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return to their private world. The grass is sweeter there. I am impressed by the innate wisdom of their wariness. Their friendship cannot be bought cheap. At the slightest unexpected move, they skitter away and a primordial instinct self-preservation, lightning swift, replaces the unhurried deliberations of their minds when in repose.

When Michael's family came to Ditchling, horses were an essential element of farming life and Michael's father, 'Peter', had great affinity with them. Long after other farmers had embraced mechanization, Peter kept his horses, for the love of working with them. Caroline, Michael's youngest sister inherited the gift and worked rearing and training horses for much of her life, but Michael preferred to be with his cows and his equine encounters tended more towards comedy and disaster. In the early days, cart horses did all the heavy work at East End Farm, pulling waggons and powering the harrows, ploughs, binders and reapers and rollers which were needed to till the fields and produce the food for livestock. One of

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these horses became a casualty of war. As Peter and his brother Tom were ploughing one day in Sharface field, German planes appeared and swooped low overhead, spitting gunfire. The men hurled themselves into a nearby ditch and saved themselves, but the poor old horse was hit and had to be put down. There are later black-and-white photographs of Michael's father sitting on a horse-drawn binder, with Prince, his dark bay to the fore and of Michael's mother sitting proudly astride the same animal outside the farm's flint barn. Life was good, but life with animals is always something of an adventure.

Prince had his own capers, which were fodder for fireside tales. Once as he was working in Spatham Field, (now the Stoneywish campsite), he was startled by the sound of a brass band, attending a military funeral in the cemetery nearby. At the first trumpet-blast he took off with Peter and the roller in tow and crashed through a ditch into the adjacent sewage works. This was the horse which also made the celebrated pig-bin rounds of the village in what

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must have been Ditchling's earliest food-waste recycling service. As a teenager, Michael kept his own pigs - enormous hogs which lived out in the hovel across the paddock and would rear up on their hind trotters and peer over the wall of their styres when they thought food was coming. In order to feed his pigs, Michael instigated a household scraps collection service and went from door to door with horse, cart and pig-bins, loading up leftovers and peelings, later to be cooked up into 'swill'. The outward journey was sedate enough, with a leisurely amble round the empty streets, but as soon as the horse's head was turned towards home he would set off at a trot, increasing in speed until, by the corner of East End Lane, he was going at a regular gallop. Michael and Caroline, would arrive home breathless, standing erect in the cart and hanging onto the reins like Roman charioteers.

During one round, Michael being on his own, he was invited into his Grandfather's house for a cup of tea, and left the cart unattended in the High Street. By the time he re-emerged the horse had wandered off and he had to scour the village to catch up with him. This was Ditchling in the 1950s. By the time I came to Stoneywish, in 1992, there was a splendid Shire horse here called Mr. T. At over 19 hands high, he was then thought to be the tallest horse in England and he was the inseparable companion of Charlie, a diminutive, rough-coated donkey. When the blacksmith came to trim the feet of this pair, Michael would steady the animals by their head collars while I held the buckets of oats which were to distract them and keep them quietly occupied. Mr. T was a gentle giant and the first three feet would be an easy job. I remember the acrid smell of the hoof parings and the sound of

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This Is My Life

of the blacksmith's rasp and Mr. T munching his oats in contentment, but by hoof number four he would begin to get bored and raise his great head, lifting Michael clean off the ground. Charlie hated to be caught and brought in for these occasions and once I saw Mr. T kick out in his defence – a powerful hind kick which missed Michael's head by inches and could easily have done for him. Michael, with his back turned, remained blissfully unaware.

Oh, but of course there are more stories, and more tea still in the pot. Are you going already? I understand. You have to be up early in the morning and the wind sounds rough outside. But you haven't had time to tell any tales of your own yet and sharing is the essence of companionship. What secrets do the Shetlands tell each other, I wonder, when I have once more trudged out of sight? Certainly they have the wisdom which is the birthright of all creatures with a will to survive. Trust only those who have palpably earned your trust. Be wary of glib words or promises, and hold fast only to that which can prove itself true. Lastly, treasure good company. Words are fine, but the best communion is to be found in the quiet beating of companionable hearts. This New Year I feel we are going to

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need the wisdom and courage and loyalty of horses to hold on to all that is precious in the world. And may we all cherish and delight freely in the gifts of hearth-sharing, life-sharing, very soon.

Rosemary

SUSSEX SEARCH AND RESCUE From time to time the team are called out by Sussex Police to assist in the search for a vulnerable missing person suffering from dementia. One of the first questions the police may have for the family or carers is "Is the Herbert Protocol information available?"

The Herbert Protocol is a form that carers, family or friends of a vulnerable person, or the person themselves can fill in. The initiative is named after George Herbert, a war veteran of the Normandy landings, who lived with dementia. He died whilst 'missing', trying to find his childhood home.

It contains a list of information to help the police if the person goes missing, it may include any medication required, places previously located, and a recent photograph. This vital information may just hold vital information as to the potential whereabouts of the missing person.

Further information can be found at:

www.sussex.police.uk/herbertprotocol

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THE WINDMILLS JUNIOR SCHOOL were given the opportunity to take their learning out of doors this term. Each class has had a session with the school's outdoor learning expert Mr Marlow, ably assisted by the teaching assistants. He has been teaching the children about the joys of being outside and how to use tools safely to be able to manage and develop the area. The activities included: learning about woodland management, using tools to prepare the ground and foliage, coppicing to create a 'Willow World', lighting fires, creating shelters and, of course, hunting for mini-beasts along the way. The ultimate aim of the project is to develop an exciting new Wellbeing Area on the school site that is good for wildlife and for the mental health and well-being of the children. Regardless of the weather conditions, the children were absolutely fantastic and got stuck in to exploring and developing this area! They showed resilience and enthusiasm for the tasks and worked well in groups within their class bubbles. They were rewarded at the end of their session with a cup of hot chocolate made on an open fire. The next stage, is for the children to design what our wellbeing area looks like. They are busy with their

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designs that will be submitted to Mr Marlow who will incorporate the children's ideas into his plan. We look forward to developing and using this space to encourage wellbeing, respect for our natural environment developing new skills.

On Friday 13th November, children were invited to wear spots, yellow or sporty clothing in return for a donation to Children In Need. The children got fully involved and looked absolutely amazing – some even managed to combine all three elements. We are thrilled to say that we raised £910, all of which will go to this fantastic charity.

The children have also been fully enjoying the range of opportunities that we have managed to continue to offer them in a coronavirus safe way. The year 6 children have benefited from small group tenor horn lessons taught by a WSCC music specialist and paid for from the school's PTA. We've been hearing the sound of sweet music getting sweeter as the term has gone on – our Tenor Horn pupils have been making great progress and we feel very fortunate that we were able to adapt the classes to facilitate music lessons during the pandemic.

Sarah Jacobs



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Being that things were a little different this year, Robin and Sally-Ann decided to take to modern technology to ensure that the pupils of the school could still 'do their part' for such a wonderful cause.

From the living rooms of 50+ dancers, Sally-Ann led a Zoom danceathon with a team of fellow teachers - all of the children and adults that took part raised £1547 this year - a fantastic amount!

A huge thank you to all involved and to those who donated!

Sally-Ann

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I'm sure it was only yesterday,
I heard a skylark sing.
And did we have a Summer?
- I can't remember being hot.
And what about a holiday?
Something else that I forgot!

It really can't be Christmas
I'm going to turn back the clock.
What happened to our Autumn?
I'm really in a state of shock.
Well, IF it's nearly Christmas,
And I can't believe it's true,
The only consolation,
Will be to spend some time with you !

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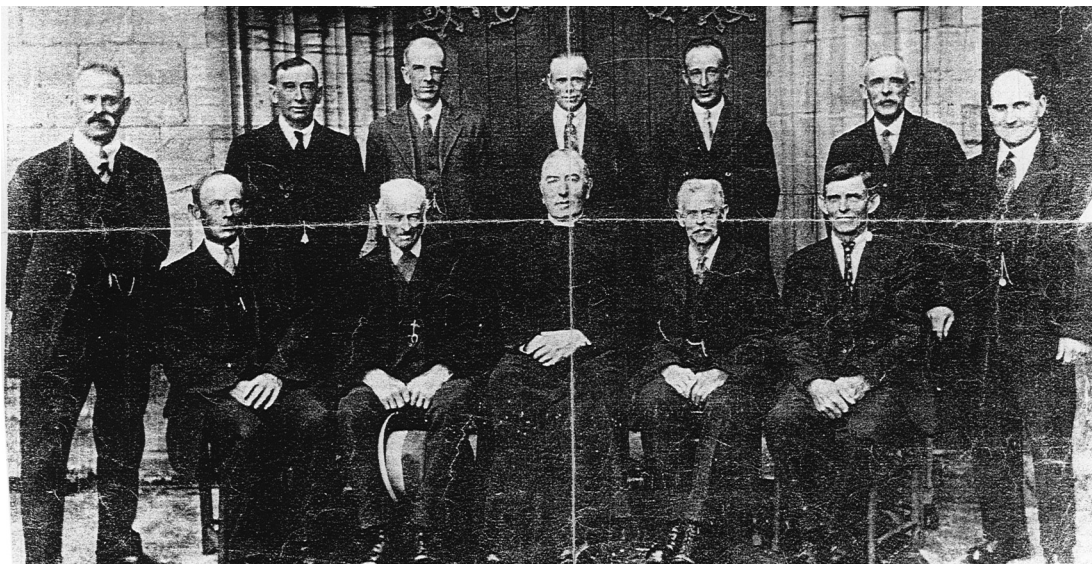
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Front Row – Charly Diplock (Blacksmith for Mr Russell in Pitt Lane), George Masters, Tom Mansbridge, Rev Harding, Bill Stenning (Gardner for Treeps, George Lucas (Gardner for Rucaford)

Back Row (Left to right) - Fred Fiest, Ern Dancy, George Mansbridge, Jack Woogar, Harry Richerson (Gardner for Piper the Solicitor) Jim Jennings (who worked at Hurst College and lost a leg in the first World War)

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THE ORIGIN OF DIPLOCK MEWS Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council asked me as I was born and have lived in Hurstpierpoint all my life if I would like to put some names forward for the new development for the ward Little Park (Idenhurst) and was very happy when they adopted all of them.

So, some of the new residents have asked me if I could supply a little history of the names. Each month will I aim to just do that, starting with Diplocks Mews named after Charly Diplock.

Charly was the farrier for Mr Russell who had a Hardware shop in the High Street. Charly was also a Bell Ringer with his best mate Harry Richerson (see in the group picture). They both received medals for long service to Bell Ringing.

I remember after school in the late 1940s visiting The Forge in Pitt Lane to watch Charlie shoeing the horses and he would often give us chestnuts which he had cooked off his brazier.

The second picture is of Charly opposite the White Horse Pub standing outside his home at No 4.

Dave Evans



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SORRY AGAIN! We were so very sorry to have to cancel the Christmas show but are sure that you will all understand the position that this frightening coronavirus put us in during this worrying and unprecedented time. We were all disappointed, too.

Many of you now able to visit Hassocks Health Centre will no doubt have realised that 'Bunty's' seat outside the centre has been repaired and repainted. From the monies in the bank when Friends and Neighbours disbanded we gave various donations to worthy Charities including St Peters and St James Hospice but, knowing that the seat was in a poor state we kept money back to-pay for that to be done.

Chris Brown came to our aid and has made a really fine job of repairing the arm (you will recall that some 'person /personos' had used a knife to slice a large indent in one of the arms) now you 'can't even see the join' and the seat looks as new. Thank you Chris.

Sadly, in answer to a fundraising letter from

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Dame Vera Lynn's Children's Charity I had to write telling them that our concert party had disbanded. For several years we had, from the proceeds of our Christmas shows sent a donation to that Charity but of course that is no longer possible. I have received a very nice reply to my letter thanking us for our past valued support and those thanks I also pass on to YOU, who were our audiences,, for your generosity at those shows.

We want to wish you a Happy and Healthy 2021 and pray that everyone stays well and safe.

Dorrie and your friends and neighbours

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will not resume face to face surgeries until the Spring at the earliest due to the pandemic but are very happy to meet residents outside (socially distanced), talk over the phone or via video link (e.g. Zoom). Please contact one of us to discuss your issue and we will happily arrange a meeting if needed.

Kirsty Lord



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Culpeper did his growing up upstream in Isfield, just north of Lewes. The country lanes and starry Sussex skies were his classroom and the hedges and the heavens taught him botany, astronomy and astrology. He learnt about love too. In 1634, Culpeper and his Sussex sweetheart planned a secret Lewes wedding and a speedy elopement to the Netherlands. But tragedy struck when his love-struck lady's carriage was struck by a lightning bolt en-route to the ceremony. She died instantly.

There's no cure for a broken heart and Culpeper left Sussex to start a new life in London. He threw himself into his work as a lowly apothecary's assistant, cataloguing medicinal herbs on Threadneedle Street. At this time, medicine was only

practiced by elite physicians. They would charge exorbitant prices for their secret remedies and would not even demean themselves to talk to patients, instead requesting a sample of urine to make their diagnosis. Culpeper believed medical treatment should be available to all - not just the privileged.

Setting up his own practice in a poorer part of London, Culpeper started treating forty patients a day with herbal cures derived from English plants. Then he dropped his botanical bombshell. Culpeper published an incredible tome that instructed people how to pick their own remedies, free of charge, from the hedges and meadows. The book was 'The English Physitian' (1652, later enlarged as 'The Complete Herbal'). His book promoted and preserved folk remedies at a time when physicians and priests were discrediting village healers and preventing them from passing along their traditional knowledge. Enraged, the medical establishment accused Culpeper of witchcraft. But his Complete Herbal endured. It's been in contin-

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uous print longer than any other non-religious English language book, running rings around Tolkien and Rowling and their tales of hocus-pocus.

No doubt Culpeper's herbal remedies could have come in useful for some of you over the festive period; wild privet (for headaches), blackthorn (for indigestion), rosemary (for flatulence) and the juice of ivy berries 'snuffed up into the nose' (for hangovers). So, start 2021 by raising your Nutribullets and ginseng teas to the healing properties of Mother Nature, and to four centuries of Nicholas Culpeper.

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.

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wildlife courses, Wildlife magazine and our Sussex guide book, Discovering Wildlife. It's easy to join online at sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/join

Michael Blencowe

A LITTLE JOKE TO CHEER US UP: An old lady living in a cottage on the Russia/Belarus border, received a visit from an official who informed her that the border line was being re-located and was going to go right through her kitchen. The official then gave her the choice of either living in Russia or Belarus and she answered without hesitation "Why Belarus of course". The official puzzled by her quick decision, asked her why she was so emphatic and she replied "I couldn't stand another of those long cold Russian winters"

Sheila Southwell

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A CHAIN OF FAMILY-RUN SUSSEX GARDEN CENTRES pledged to make it “Christmas as usual”, or at least as close to usual as they can in these difficult days.

Staff at Paradise Park in Newhaven, South Downs Nurseries at Hassocks, Portslade’s Mayberry Garden Centre, and Old Barn at Dial Post were determined to offer as much of their usual festiveness as they could amid Covid restrictions and precautions.

For a start, their Sussex-grown poinsettia were available as usual. This bright red plant which epitomizes Christmas for so many has grown very well this year and stocks are already coming in. Also arriving were the first deliveries of cut and potted Christmas trees. “We had thousands of these British-grown, non-drop Nordmann beauties to choose from”, explains Rebecca Houghton-Knapp. The talented wreath-making team were also hard at work in the Wreathery, crafting handmade seasonal wreaths.

Christmas meant a visit to Santa for many and the renowned grottos, operated by The Budding Foundation Charity, at Old Barn Garden Centre in Dial Post and Hassocks’ South Downs Nurseries, they were geared up to be Covid-secure.

“our elves are having extra ‘Elf & Safety’ instruction to ensure social distancing and comply fully with government guidelines“, explained charity founder Clive Gravett. This year, all visitors had to pre-book a time slot to avoid queuing and, already, tickets sold fast.

Clive, whose charity supports young people in need, added: “In these difficult times we didn’t want children to miss seeing Santa and so we are making every effort to show them that despite the Topsy-turvy times they are experiencing, Santa will be there for them”.

Rebecca Houghton-Knapp

*Checking the poinsettia plants in the Tates’ nursery
Receiving the first consignment of UK-grown Christmas trees
The wreathery team hard at work*





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2020: GREEN SPACES, HOPE AND THE NEED TO DREAM Pembury House, Clayton, NGS snowdrop openings - On Friday March 13th 2020, Nick and I were looking forward to our last day of NGS snowdrop garden openings and being able to visit other gardens, plant fairs and just being able to get life back to normal. Then in the morning, rather than a cancellation due to the cold, wet weather we had our first call from somebody concerned about "this virus". We ploughed on that day and only in the evening did the full reality of "this virus" start to dawn. Much of Europe was locking down and we needed to have the materials for the new brick paths and other jobs we needed to do if we were to be locked down

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We had raised over £4000 for the NGS charities but slowly it dawned that there would be no more NGS gardens to visit and no more funds being raised. In a usual year the NGS has been able to donate around £3 million pounds to various nursing, health and well-being charities and it seemed that the very charities that needed our support would suffer. However the NGS team at Head Office, the Trustees, the garden openers and volunteers rallied and not only did some garden visiting begin again after lockdown 1, but virtual tours of gardens across the country became available for all to view, small tea parties were arranged, a big raffle was managed on line and plant sales on people's drives and in gardens surprised everybody by raising £117,000 across the country.

There is hope now so Nick and I are planning our NGS openings from mid-February to mid-March. COVID restrictions allowing we will open the garden to visitors. Whether we are allowed to offer cake and coffee we will see. Watch our own website for details: www.pemburyhouse.co.uk

Meanwhile we still have the need to get lost, to dream and to be hopeful as we move deeper into winter. Can I suggest that you find the NGS website: www.ngs.org.uk and read the 2020 Impact Report, then visit some gardens virtually? One of the aims of the NGS is to support health and wellbeing so do not worry about a donation, just scroll down and get lost in gardens far and wide. Later into December the gardens planning to open for the NGS in 2021 will be listed on the website so you can start to plan your outings too.

Let's hope you can visit Pembury House Garden in Clayton in 2021 and even have coffee and cake!

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Jane Baker

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HERE AT THE AIR AMBULANCE KENT SURREY SUSSEX, we have been working on an exciting alternative to our talks offering to groups throughout the year. We love to get out into the community and talk to people about how we work, innovate and save lives, but sadly this year has been very different. We are delighted to say that we have been able to continue spreading awareness virtually, joining members of groups in their Zoom and Team meetings. We would greatly appreciate your support to help spread the word.

Here at Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex, we strive to save lives by providing the best possible care every minute of the day, every day of the year. Being the UK's busiest and one of the world's leading 24/7 Helicopter Emergency Medical Services, at the forefront of utilising technology and innovation to save lives and improve patient outcomes. Last year alone, we were called out to help over 2,500 people in life threatening conditions. During the pandemic, we have not dropped a shift and have continued to serve our region 24/7 to those most in need, along with supporting the NHS at this time. In mid-April, we launched our Coronavirus Emergency Appeal as an urgent appeal for support. We faced an anticipated shortfall of £2 million pounds,

which was a projected loss of fundraising income due to the pandemic. Thanks to our fantastic supporters they have helped reduce that shortfall but we are still facing a significant deficit, and your help during this time is needed now more than ever.

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LEO HOUSE - AIMEE'S STORY Fifteen years ago, Marie and Martin welcomed their beautiful new baby girl, Aimee, to their family. After an easy pregnancy and normal birth, they were over the moon to bring their perfect, healthy little girl back to their family home in Eastbourne.

Their world was turned upside down, however, when Aimee had a seizure at just four months old. By nine months old Aimee was diagnosed with Dravet Syndrome, a rare form of epilepsy that affects every area of her life.

A happy little girl, Aimee "lives in her own little bubble" according to mum Marie. "She is so cuddly, loves school and playing with her car and train toys." But her condition means that Aimee suffers seizures on a weekly basis, often having six to eight fits in the space of a few hours. Aimee is mobile, but unsteady on her feet, she can communicate but is unable to speak and has a severe learning disability. She is also tube-fed and has a strict medicine routine to control her condition.

For the first four years Aimee would have a seizure every seven to ten days. It would last up to an hour

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and result in her being hospitalised for four to five days at a time, putting a massive strain on family life.

Looking for some respite from the demands of caring for a child with such an unpredictable condition, the family were referred to Leo House at Home. They started receiving regular visits from one of the Community Nurses, who takes care of all of Aimee's needs whilst the rest of the family enjoy activities that are usually out of bounds for them.

Marie explains, "I would never usually go to the cinema because I would be terrified to turn my phone off for two hours and focus on anything other than Aimee. But with Kirstie, our Community Nurse, I can do just that. She knows Aimee and us so well, I know she will look after her with the same care and attention that I would." Due to Aimee's complex medical needs, the family were shielding at home for months when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. "It was really hard for us. We have been working from home, trying to take care of Aimee and her medical needs, it has

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been really intense. But we have had regular contact from Leo House at Home and they really have been a lifeline for us. We know that there is always someone at the end of the phone if we need them.” When the family came out of shielding, they began having visits from their Community Nurse, Kirstie, again, “recently, Kirstie has been taking Aimee out and about for the day when she visits. This is because my husband and I have been working from home, so it gives us a little bit of time to get our heads down and work.”

“It really is fantastic knowing that we have the support of Leo House. We have been given the opportunity to build a really strong relationship with our Community Nurse, something that doesn’t often happen with other care providers.”

Leo House was established by Brighton Lions Club to help life-limited children, young people and their families living in East and Mid-Sussex as well as in Brighton & Hove. Leo House support children and young people with a life-limiting condition from birth to 25 years of age and their families.

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ilies. We know we cannot cure them but we can help to give them the best quality of life for as long as that might be.

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If you’d like to make a donation directly into our bank: Sort code: 40-14-0, Account no: 51335979, Name: Leo House, Registered charity no. 1091541. A company limited by guarantee, number 3803928.

Angie Lintott

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MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL have notified Towns and Parishes that the Mobile Refuse collections which were suspended earlier this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, have now been ceased permanently. The decision to cease the provision of this service was supported by the following information:

Mobile Civic Amenity collections do not allow for waste to be kept separate and recycled or reused; therefore, not meeting the objectives of the waste hierarchy which was incorporated into UK law via the Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2012. The waste collected at the Mobile Civic Amenity Site can be removed from households using other services; including the MSDC bulky waste service and garden waste collection service.

There are two Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS) within Mid Sussex, where residents can also dispose of any additional waste items. Enforcing social distancing measures at temporary sites is difficult and MSDC need to ensure the services provided can be controlled to support Government



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guidance. This is not possible with the Mobile Civic Amenity Sites.

The links below provide more information on additional services available for you to dispose of your waste.

Bulky Waste: **www.midsussex.gov.uk/waste-recycling/bulky-electrical-household-waste/**

Garden waste service:
www.midsussex.gov.uk/waste-recycling/garden-waste/

Household Waste Recycling Sites:
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/waste-recycling/household-waste-recycling-sites/>

Alternatively if you wish to speak to someone about any of these services or other waste collection matters, the MSDC Waste Management Team can be contacted on **01444 477440**.

Ian Cumberworth

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STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

Here we are again at yet the end of another year. My God they go quickly these days I expect we'll all be shouting Happy New Year when the appropriate time arrives out with the old and in with the new. It certainly has been a challenging year and one lives in hope that the year ahead may be perhaps a little less challenging. None of us know what's round the corner and in many ways it's best we don't. So it's difficult for me to give people an honest answer when asked if I'm going to be queuing up to get inoculated? The short answer is No the long answer is I make no secret of the fact I'm a bit strange, I love all animals especially foxes, I must kiss mine at least 20 times a day, he's just so scrummy and when you've got something so beautiful leaping in your arms you just can't help it. I can only sleep five hours a day, that's it, any longer and I feel even more strange, so I stick to the five hours and I suppose I must inhale at least a kilo of cat hair over the course of a year, but my immune system is iron clad, so I'm just going to sit on the fence and see what happens. Hang on a minute the wife's whispering in my ear apparently I'm not strange just eccentric, I'll take that!! But please don't take any notice of me, the vaccine is a huge break through and will I'm sure bring life back to some kind of normality in the future, I just hope it's the magic bullet everyone expects it to be.

It's a great shame but Pavilion Electrics will no longer be a shop of any description, it is being converted back to a residential property. With the way retail is at the moment it does make sense of course, it was a house originally as were all those shops down to McColls, if you look at an old picture of Hassocks you'll see how they looked in the past and who knows they may just look like that again in the future!

I've heard a whisper Smarty's Dry Cleaners may soon be under new ownership, it has been on the market for a while so it could be a done deal, it's amazing to think it's almost a year since Reza was killed, no fault of his own, but by his own Country Men, he was a lovely man and still greatly missed.

How kind of the Light Up Hassocks people to put a couple of carrots on either side of the Merry Christmas Hassocks sign, I'm sure Father Christmas will share them amongst his Reindeer on Christmas Eve!

Thank you one and all for all your custom over the last year, not just from me but from all the shops in Hassocks, Keymer and Ditchling and the surrounding villages. We all are extremely grateful, please use us whenever you can, I'll be closed Christmas Day but open again Boxing Day if you need anything. Take care of yourselves and let's look forward to a more settled New Year.

What a wonderful sight to come in on this December morning to 100's of knitted Angels left all over Hassocks, for over Hassocks, free for people to pick up from the local Parish Churches. Thank you for that it lifted alot of spirits and especially to the Ladies that knitted them.

Love Steve, Nola and all furry friends xx

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