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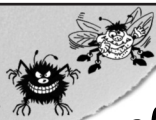
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DENNIS WALMSLEY It is with much sadness that Mike Walmsley and Sandra Pack announce that our father, Dennis Walmsley, died on the 7th December; his cremation was at Woodvale, Brighton on the 30th December.

Our dearly loved Dad, father-in-law to Ian and Jean and grandfather to Abigail, Rosemary, Joanna and Harriet, will be greatly missed.

Married to Mary, who predeceased him, he was immensely grateful for 57 years of happy marriage, his family, good neighbours and friendships. As a Hassocks resident for 63 years, Dad was known to many for his engineering skills which facilitated a multitude of voluntary and often ingenious solutions to support many extended communities and individuals.

Donations in his memory, if desired, may be made c/o Bowleys Funeral Service to Age Concern Hassocks Charity No 1114153 - Please Gift Aid, if possible.

Sandra Pack

DENNIS WALMSLEY. 1933-2020 Before Repair Café was ever thought of, Hassocks had its own one man version. For over 60 years Dennis,

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using a mixture of ingenuity and intuition, with a touch of genius thrown in, repaired and renovated, adjusted and adapted, the cars, the washing machines, and the sound systems of friends, neighbours and disabled people in Hassocks and the surrounding countryside. His passing, in December, is mourned by many.

Dennis was a local lad, born in Brighton and showed his practical bent first with home-made go carts and later by almost electrocuting his mother by an ingenious adaptation of his mains powered model trainset into an electric chair! He attended the City of London Freemans School, a co-educational boarding school. His 12th birthday was marked by surviving a near miss by a V2 Rocket. His description of the incident is characteristic: 'I woke to the most amazing racket from a colossal explosion and a cascade of breaking glass as most of the windows in the very large building reverted to natural ventilation'. It was at Freemans that he was to meet Mary, his childhood sweetheart who was to become his wife. They stayed in touch with the school for the rest of their lives.

Dennis read chemistry and geology at Queen

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Mary's College, London (handy for visiting Mary) but his heart was not really in it, and it was not until his National Service as a Radar officer in the RAF, that he found his real vocation – electronics. Creating simulators, from radar to artillery became the basis for his career.

Mary and Dennis married and settled in Grand Avenue, Hassocks in 1957 and never moved. The garage/workshop they built became an aladdin's cave of equipment, salvaged from skips or bought at specialist sales. There were few repair jobs that Dennis could not undertake and he always liked a challenge. For over 50 years he worked tirelessly in his spare time for blind people, repairing their early talking book machines – weighty objects built to last, then the first tape multi-track models, followed by cassette tape players which tended to spill yards of tape. He would travel miles, first by motor bike, then by car, to reassure elderly worried people that they had not damaged their treasured reading machine. He could put it right – and was their radio OK? He must have repaired thousands of Roberts radios, which are supplied still through the Wireless for the Blind Fund. His last service

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for blind people was 'Talk About on Tape' when he built a recording studio almost entirely from recycled material. For 16 years it supplied a free audio version of this magazine to anyone who was unable to see to read print.

Dennis never limited his help to blind people; he was there to lend a hand to anyone in difficulties: a single mum desperate for her washing machine to be given a lease of life, freeing a sooty parrot from behind a gas fire, a pensioner needing help with official correspondence, an adaptation to enable a disabled person to light her gas fire, no job was too little or too big for Dennis to tackle if he thought the recipient was not enjoying the good fortune that he experienced in his life.

His help was accompanied by a wicked sense of humour. Honed by the Goon Show, he loved the absurd. If he could reveal the shortcomings of those in authority, that was a delightful bonus. Other aspects of his extensive hinterland were well hidden, but they included a life time of serious reading, a passion for music including an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Savoy operas, and, more obviously, a passion for cats.

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But above all, Mary was his lode star. As the years went by, their personalities increasingly complemented each other. In 'Middlemarch' George Eliot reflects that 'the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts' and on those 'who live faithfully a hidden life'. We are fortunate that Dennis and Mary chose to live that life in Hassocks.

Margaret Ford

SHIRLEY SOUTH 85yrs. Beloved wife of Dennis, who have lived in Hassocks for 44 years, passed away on 15th January after many years with Alzheimers.

A nurse all her life, having served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corp in the 1960's as a Sister and worked also at Hurstpierpoint College some years ago.

Any donations are welcome to Kent and Sussex Air Ambulance.

Dennis, Colin, Julie, Rhiannon & Morgan

THE MID SUSSEX HEALTH CARE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Annual General Meeting will be held on Zoom at 7 p.m. on Thursday, **18th March**.

All patients registered with Mid Sussex Health Care are invited to attend.

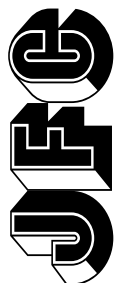
The Agenda will include Reports from the Chair and Treasurer, Election of the Committee and Officers for the forthcoming year, and Approval of an updated Constitution, which may be seen on the PPG page of the MSHC website.

Patients without access to the internet - The PPG very much regrets that there are some patients who will not be able to join them for the AGM on Zoom, but as soon as the current restrictions are lifted, they hope to arrange another event or meeting and look forward to welcoming them to it.

Registration to Attend, Completed Nomination Forms for Election to the Committee, and Resolutions for Consideration must be received by the MSHCPPG by Thursday, **4th March** at the latest. Contact for the MSHCPPG for Registration, Nomination Forms and Resolutions - please ensure that you include your full name, address and telephone number in all correspondence:

email: midsussex.healthcarePPG@gmail.com
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On behalf of our President, Mrs Virginia Lewis-Jones, Vice President, Mrs Juliet Smith, Chairman Mr Tom Jones and the Committee we would like to take this opportunity of thanking each and everyone of you for your continued support during 2020.

This has been such a difficult year for all of us. Plans had to be re-made and then cancelled. However, in spite of everything our Poppy Appeal Collection raised £2877.51 which is just amazing in these circumstances.

Our thanks go to the following businesses and shops as well as to each and everyone of you who donated so generously:

Ditchling Museum, Ditchling Pharmacy, Ditchling Post Office, The Bull Ditchling, The Cock Inn, The Green Welly, The Hair Studio, The Nutmeg Tree, The White Horse, MAC'S Farm, Mid Sussex Golf Club, Notcutts Garden

Pride, Parkers, Perretts Farm, St George's Park Ltd, Wivelsfield Post Office and Village Store. These funds are needed even more by our Veterans and their families at this time.

Again we offer our heartfelt thanks to you all and our wish that we can all meet with each other again very soon.

Margaret Bovill

GYMNASTICS UPDATE

Disappointingly the tiers changed before we could even restart!

Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club will be reopening as soon as it's allowed, so we ask all gymnasts to check out for updates on the News page of our website **www.hurstpierpointgym.co.uk**

With class sizes having been reduced by nearly a quarter, we are offering the chance to reserve a place to join us when we restart. Please contact us via the link on our website.

Remember we have more details about us and a series of graduated exercises for you to try at home, also on our News page.

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reMEMber (the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Society)

Because of Covid 19 we haven't been able to hold our usual meetings and events, but we did manage to hold our annual ME Awareness Conference on 14th November using Zoom. Seventy people joined us, and they saw excellent presentations by Doctors Charles Shepherd, Amolak Bansal, Nina Muirhead, Paul Worthley and William Weir.

We learned about the similarity between "post-covid (or "long-covid") and ME. After covid-19 many patients suffer a wide range of symptoms including chest pain, loss of taste and smell, headaches, lasting fatigue – and many others. These are identical to the symptoms experienced by people who have ME, which typically follows a virus such as flu or enterovirus, a bacterial infection such as salmonella or other types of infection and trauma.

The speakers also explained what is being done to educate doctors about ME, as well as post-covid. They are real biomedical illnesses, not psychological or behavioural conditions which, unfortunately, is how they have often been treated in the past.

Karen Butterfill Mssch Mbcha
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Janice Kent

We thank Suzanne Glossop for the following letter:- Two years ago in June 2019 the Field Society went on a very interesting day trip to Essex, calling first at Coggeshall to look at the historic buildings there and then, in the afternoon, visiting Tiptree to Wilkin and sons Ltd. However we had a ride round their orchards (they grow their own fruits). Afterwards we visited their shop, before enjoying a cream tea, when we were given a Little Scarlet Strawberry Conserve and clotted cream – absolutely delicious.

I'm writing this now because – for the Christmas period – Budgens had a display of various Tiptree jams, including Little Scarlet. These are scarcer than normal strawberries and not as prolific so are more expensive to produce than wild ones, the jars are full of fruits bursting with flavour, and in my opinion worth their price for a special occasion. The firm has a Royal 'by appointment'. I hope they repeat this offer this year.

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SOME YOUNG CARERS FROM MID SUSSEX MANAGED TO TAKE A PRE-CHRISTMAS BREAK TO VISIT SANTA'S GROTTO AT THE SOUTH DOWNS HERITAGE CENTRE IN HASSOCKS.

After liaising with Burgess Hill Youth at Burgess Hill Town Council, the Budding Foundation charity invited some local young carers to visit Father Christmas in his grotto which is hosted by family-run Tates Garden Centres.

"We were pleased to welcome eight families", explained charity founder Clive Gravett. "They were treated to tea and cake in the restaurant after meeting Santa and receiving their gifts."

One of the families spoke of their visit: "Thank you so much for the wonderful Santa visit, it was a lovely experience for the boys and they loved their treats from Santa, thanks for a lovely day."

Jennifer O'Grady at the council, who co-ordinated the visits, said "the extra provision of refreshments in the café afterwards was an unexpected treat".

Trevor Butler

*Pictured are some of the young carers
enjoying their visit to
South Downs Heritage Centre
in Hassocks.*



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LAMB, HEATHER CHRISTINE, age 4. Daughter of the Revd. and Mrs. Bobs Thomas Lamb, of Meadowsweet, Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, 10 February 1943, at Meadowsweet, Cuckfield Road.

Name: Heather C Lamb
Birth Date: abt 1939
Date of Registration: Mar 1943
Age at Death: 4
Registration district: Cuckfield
Inferred County: Sussex
Volume: 2b
Page: 264

Name: Bobs Thomas Lamb
Record Type: Baptism
Baptism Date: 12 Dec 1900
Father's name: Harry Lamb
Mother's name: Caroline Lamb
Parish or Poor Law Union: Rotherhithe Christ Church
Borough: Southwark

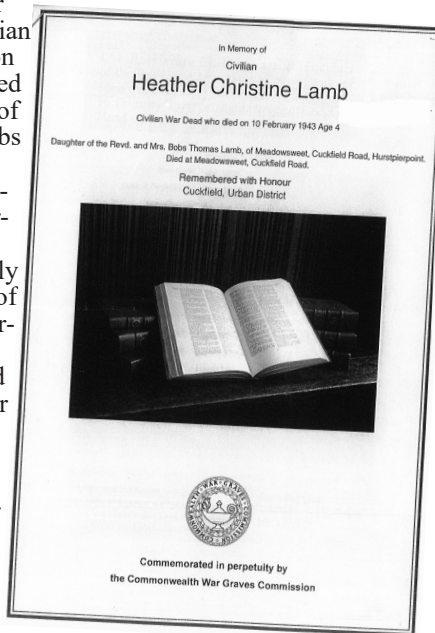
LAMB Bobs Thomas of 99 Barlow Moor Road Didsbury Manchester died 24 September 1961 Administration York 1 January to Catherine Margaret Lamb widow. Effects £1101 8s. 5d.

Named after Heather Christine Lamb a Civilian War Dead who died on 10th February 1943 aged 4 at home. Daughter of the Revd. and Mrs Bobs Thomas Lamb, of Meadowsweet, Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint.

Heather was the only civilian war dead of WWII in Hurstpierpoint.

My brother Tony and I watched the bomber come around from their landing. Our mum shouted out very loudly get your gas masks on. Its believed they were trying to hit the geometer.

Mum got Tony, my late sister Diane and myself and put in the cupboard under the stairs. The bomb then landed on Heathers house. *Dave Evans*



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With appointment grim to keep.

With unseeing eyes, warm salty tears
Roll down his tormented face,
Which, gathering soft breezes kiss away
From that lone and lofty space.

T'was here the wretched man expired
O'er the lonely path he trod,
Tormented, troubled, broken, tired
Did answer the call of God.



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And here full 'Four Score' years ago
Ascend the path he knew,
No eye took in the buttercups,
Or bluebells, oh! so blue.

He claimed his chosen Beechen Tree
With hempen noose surround,
And girdled thus the branch most near,
His feet not touch the ground.

So if it is, you choose to pass
Old Queen Victoria's trees,
A sobbing there can still be heard,
When aloft on a misty breeze.

A spirit which enfolds that space
Lives on for souls who dare;
For those who live in solitude
May choose to loiter there.

Few who chance to pass this way
May glance at Victoria's tree,
Know little of its forgone years,
But nothing of its mystery.

In pausing, view the cowslips which
Are forbidden to the touch.
Drink in the air, still sobbing there;
In beauty there is much.

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While Covid restrictions apply we are operating Repair Café Hassocks remotely, with many of our volunteers doing the repairs at home. You can book an item for repair on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/repaircafehassocks/ and we'll see which of our brilliant team of volunteer repairers can take it on. You will then arrange with the repairer how to drop off your item (at the repairer's home or another location). If parts are needed we'll let you know what you need to buy. While not everything can be fixed, in the last month our amazing volunteer repairers have successfully repaired a range of items including a remote control car, a dehydrator, a wobbly lamp, a nest of tables and a coffee machine.

We're looking forward to the day when we can all meet in person and operate the 'café' part of the Repair Café.

The repair café is a free service, but even the remote operation has costs so small donations to support our work are always welcome on www.hkdtransition.org.uk/.

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DITCHLING SCHOOL WORLD WAR II LEARNING BY YEAR 5 & YEAR 6

In Year 5 & 6 we have been learning about World War 2. We had a workshop from Chartwells, who provide our lunches, which told us about rationing in the war. The talk explained all about the food and ration books, so we understood the amount of food you could eat. We had a quiz too, and all our questions were answered which helped us to learn.

On Evacuation Day Year 5 and 6 all dressed up as children from WW2 being evacuated from London. We carried our suitcases with our clothes, a teddy and our homemade gas mask. We made sure we had our lunch for the trip and of course we had



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a label around our neck to say who we were and where we came from. When we arrived in school, we got taken to the hall to be billeted. While inside the hall, we got inspected- luckily I had ensured my fingernails were clean! Phew! We were then picked by host families. If you were lucky, you would get a nice parent.

Most of us had a packed lunch, with food that would have been eaten in the war. Some of us had our food wrapped up in brown paper. I had a Dairy Milk bar, apple and a jam sandwich. During the day, we did some activities that were done in the wartime, such as make do and mend (we sewed up holes in socks and some of us even made sock puppets). For a while, we did first aid practise on burns and cuts. Half of us learnt how to treat burns and the other half learnt about cuts, then we taught each other how to do it. Throughout the day some air raid sirens went off, so we got into the dark, small shelter and sung songs e.g. 'Run rabbit', 'We'll meet again' and 'Daisy, Daisy'. Wherever we went we carried our gas masks that we made at home.

Towards the end of the day, we wrote letters home to our parents as if we were evacuees, posted them and our parents read them when they had been de-



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livered. We talked about how you would feel in an Anderson shelter, an Anderson shelter is something in the war you could have in your garden and you could go into it to stop yourself from being bombed. We enjoyed making model Anderson shelters with mud and cardboard, then we used our technology skills to add sound effects of sirens and bombs to our models.

We also wrote a diary entry about what it would be like in the war. This included how they would have felt, and also how the Battle of Britain ended.

Overall, it was a really fun experience and it showed me a lot about what life was like in WW2.

Michelle Hemes



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HURSTPIERPOINT PLAYERS have been delighted with the response to their first-ever 'virtual' Pantomime. Robin Hood, directed by Sam Nixon assisted by Annette Squire, was licensed for presentation on You Tube via our website for fourteen performances from Christmas Eve 2019 to New Year's Day.

Needless to say it has been the proverbial steep learning curve for all of us and we've found the experience very rewarding – knowledge which will no doubt come in useful as we consider whether or not to stay 'virtual' for our first production of 2021 now under consideration. But the Players have been encouraged by positive comments sent to our website ...

"Just watched the Panto - great fun :) Lots of laughs, good singing and clearly a LOT of effort gone into this virtual production. Now you can all have a rest as... it's behind you! sorry - you started it :) - Jason

"Locally made, fun for all and uplifting. Check out Hurst Players pantomime - Robin Hood. We enjoyed it. In the year we've had, organisations like this need our support. Watch and donate. Congratulations to all cast and crew. Well adapted!" - Cal

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Hello, just to say how much we admired the performance and especially the initiative you all showed in the most difficult of circumstances. We really enjoyed the show—especially the forest sequences with the golden carpet of leaves. What a triumph over adversity. Best wishes for 2021. - Patrick and Mary

We did not ask viewers to pay to see Robin Hood and there was no need to register but something went a little astray with our idea to give satisfied customers the opportunity to make a donation to help with production expenses. Although it seems that many families found their way through the system, we have heard from people who wanted to donate but had problems. However, if you saw the production, had such difficulties, and would like to make a small donation could we suggest that you go to the Players website [hurstplayers.org.uk] where you will find details of Pay-Pal and credit card donating.

The Players hope to be able to announce details of their first production in 2021 as soon as current problems resulting from the transmission of Covid 19 are resolved.

Anne Hopper



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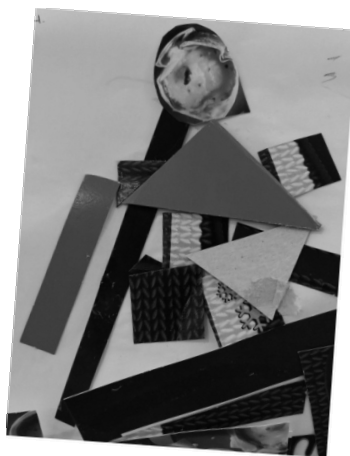
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Settling into 2021, we have been delighted to see the returning of children after the Christmas break, with many new faces! As a small and personable nursery, we believe that establishing a positive relationship with our children's families is essential. During the turbulent year just gone, the relationships between children, parents and our highly-qualified nursery staff have provided a hugely supportive network which has been invaluable, benefiting both children and their families at such an important time of their child's development.

We are taking registrations for children aged 2 to 8 at both of our two settings in Lindfield and Westmeston Nr. Ditchling, also offering forest school sessions for home educated children. Telephone **01444 45508**, Email: Janetirwin@janetirwin.com, www.theacornsnurseryandforestschool.com

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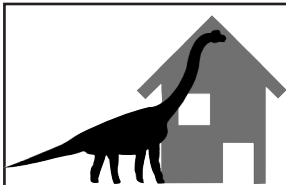


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Walks are arranged on Tuesdays and weekends throughout the year and vary in length from 4-12 miles. During the summer there are short walks on Wednesday evenings, trial walks and leisurely nature walks.

New and experienced walkers are both very welcome and if you would like to try one of our walks please get in touch via the Contact Form on our website, email

msrpublicity@gmail.com

or telephone our Secretary and Publicity Officer, Sue Blandford, on **01403 255654**.

Jo Mitchell

MY VOLUNTEER ROLE IN MID DOWNS RADIO I am the Membership and Training Co-ordinator for Mid Downs Radio that broadcasts to patients, staff, and the wider community at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath.

It is my job to respond to anyone expressing an interest in volunteering. Most enquirers want to be presenters, but there are others who want to work

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on the outside broadcast unit, interviewing people and keeping audiences entertained at events. There are some who want to work on the technical side, be involved with marketing and publicity and people who just want to support the charity in any way they can. Recently, Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) has provided several enquiries from young people wishing to help, who are now in the process of training or awaiting training.

When I receive an enquiry, I send out information about the radio station, volunteering and membership forms to complete. When these have been returned, I check all the required information has been provided and MDR's volunteer criteria has been met. Referees are obtained to confirm the applicant is suitable. The final part of the enrolment process is to ask the volunteer to pay their membership fee.

I then match new members who wish to present their own show, to one of our established presenters, although not all our team wish to train new volunteers. Typically training can take anything from a few sessions to 3-6 months. The volunteer can set their own training schedule. When the mentor believes their trainee is ready to present solo, a sample show is recorded. The MDR Pro-

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gramme Manager listens to the recording and makes his decision whether the recruit is ready to go-live. He will be looking for a good on-air demeanour, an interesting, varied and balanced presenting style.

A day and time in MDR's schedule will then be found for the new starter to start broadcasting. This can require some creative thinking and juggling around of programs. A short period of monitoring will then follow to make sure everything is going well, and the person is settling in.

The high incidence of Covid-19 and the fact Haywards Heath is in tier 4, means we are not allowed to enter our studio on the first floor of the Princess Royal Hospital. The hospital is admitting many patients with the virus presently, consequently we are unable to train any new members for now. In the meantime, if anyone would like to be put on a list to become future volunteers of the radio, contact me by email at membership@mdr.org.uk

Despite the pandemic, the station is still broadcasting 24/7 on 1350 AM, via the Internet at www.mdr.org.uk and your smart speaker. All important information on the pandemic is being updated constantly by the MDR Production Team, so listeners are getting the very latest information. Some of our presenters have software and the capability to produce their own weekly programmes from home, sending it in via the MDR Production Team to upload. As you can see, many opportunities exist for those interested in radio.

David Hammond

STAR CINEMA Wishing everyone a happier and healthier year in 2021, and hope to see you soon...ish!

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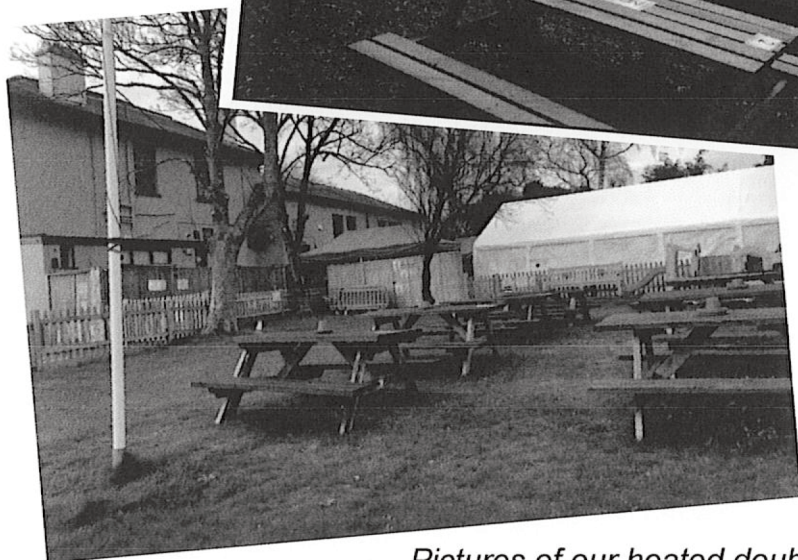
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We very much look forward to welcoming you back
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We miss you all and hope you stay safe and well.

Chris, Gillian and the team



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DITCHLING WI Due to ongoing Covid 19 regulations Ditchling WI continues to have both their Committee meetings and monthly meetings via Zoom

We also continue to advertise our meetings via 'Talk About Magazine' to whom we are grateful for managing to keep its magazine full of local information during these difficult times.

Our next Zoom meeting is **2nd February** with Elizabeth Gowing "The Rubbish Picker's Wife: an unlikely friendship in Kosovo".

We look forward to seeing you then meanwhile, keep safe.

Mercedes Madden

NEWS FROM STONEYWISH We are three days into the new year, and I must confess I have never felt more ready for a fresh start. I was actually excited to see the Winter Solstice come and go and now scan the sky every morning and evening for signs that the days are truly lengthening. Such signs may be masked by bad weather, but the Earth itself knows better. Spring is coming and this year I am banishing the morbid whispers that have plagued me in previous years, for it has become all too easy to shake one's head over every seasonal anomaly as a sign of doom. Primroses blooming before Christmas; great tits singing their spring song two months early; hazels flaunting their catkins with premature abandon are all 'unnatural' now – evidence of Climate Change. We say Nature is confused, as though Nature had forgotten its own

rules. Yet we forget to acknowledge that our own model of 'normal', ('White Christmases' and 'Bleak Midwinters'), come from our geologically recent memories of Europe's Little Ice Age - itself a natural anomaly. Just now, when any and all signs of life are welcome, I am glad to think that the winter is shortened by another day and that if snow comes with a bite in April, as it assuredly will when the apple blossom is at its tenderest, then at least the days will be longer, the sun higher and warmer and the thrust of Nature's life force stronger to withstand it. Each day I cut grass for the three chickens which live in a pen near our house. Working my way around the garden I have an intimate knowledge of just what is growing in our lawn. Alas, it would make a groundsman weep! Already the tender shoots of, cleavers, dandelion, shepherds purse and yellow dock are sufficient to make a succulent salad. The emerging leaves of violet and celandine, herb robert, cuckoo flower and ground ivy are jostling for light. I cut carefully round them, savouring the thought of the flowers soon to follow. Those patches which enjoy the most sunlight are growing noticeably faster. And the hens, eagerly feasting on their 'greens', are beginning to lay again. Thus, what begins as a mere trickle of vitality, gains in momentum until it becomes the roar of sap which will signal full-blown Spring, but at this stage it is no more than a gurgle of meltwater beneath the ice. You have to listen hard to hear it amidst the groans of winter, yet its

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message is the promise of Life and we ourselves are inexorably caught up in the flow. This is the song of what the 12th century mystic and herbalist, Hildegard of Bingen, termed 'viriditas' – Latin for greenness, vitality and health.

Quite independent of our own mental constructs and readings of the world, (a natural proclivity to believe the worst), our bodies respond to the returning sun with the same animation as the plants about us. New research by Professor Gerald Pollack identifies two kinds of water in our bodies: basic liquid, and gel which forms a lattice-patterned layer wherever basic water comes in contact with water-loving surfaces such as cell walls and membranes, thus insulating them against water leakage. These two kinds of water each carry an electrical charge, the gel-phase being negative, the basic water, full of animated, self-repelling protons, being positive. Together they act like a battery, providing a vital source of energy, fuelling chemical reactions inside the cells and driving the circulation of blood (our own equivalent of plant sap) through our capillaries – truly an engine of life. But what is still more exciting is that this animation is increased when exposed to sunlight and

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that it is also stimulated by contact with the earth and with other living beings, such as our pet cats and dogs, but most significantly by the natural electromagnetic emissions of human touch. The palms of our hands are literally a source of healing energy, and guess what? Contrary to current belief, we are actually good for one another! Life affirms life. And the more closely we can align ourselves with the natural rhythms which sustain all of creation, the more we can benefit from them. This is the essence of the ancient Chinese teaching of Lao Tsu: "Go with the flow." This way we can hitch a free ride. We have millions of solar batteries of our own, working like bilio. For free!

As for a new year resolution? Michael has been researching his family tree and came across this motto on the Alford coat of arms: 'Vive ut vivas!' or 'Live for Life!' That seems as good an aim as any, and one with which every living thing at Stoneywish visibly concurs. So if such humble things as dandelions can show us the way, cramming each moment, good, bad or ugly, with irrepressible vitality, I hope we can take heart and follow their example. Happy New Year!

Rosemary

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HURSTPIERPOINT HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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Bill Kent

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 5TH MARCH

The theme for this year is "Build on a Strong Foundation" and has been prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu, which is situated in the south western Pacific Ocean 1.100 miles to the east of Australia.

At the present time I cannot give any precise details about our service in Hurstpierpoint, what we are able to do will depend on the Covid restrictions in place on the **5th March**. We are hoping to hold a service in Holy Trinity Church Hurstpierpoint, at 10.30 am.

Confirmation will appear in the Mid Sussex Times and on posters in the village, notice sheets

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had an extremely difficult job deciding the best dressed window from amongst the super displays and our congratulations go to:

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Liz Mercer

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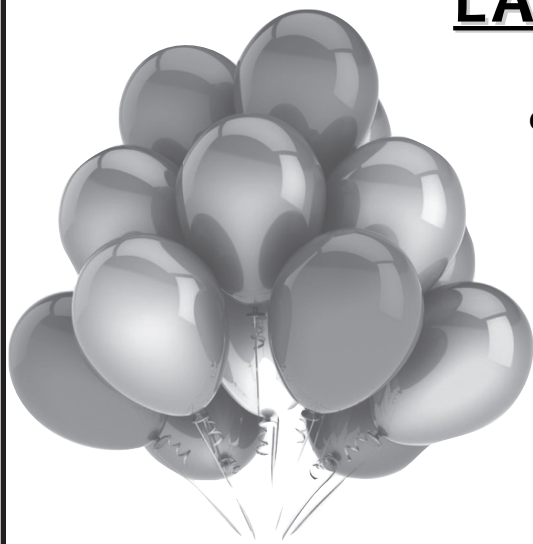
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RESPONSE TO STEVES COMMENTS IN THE JANUARY ISSUE.

I felt it was required to respond to Steve's comments on vaccines published in the January edition. I always enjoy reading Steve's views on village life, however would like to say that as someone who works in Hospitals and sees firsthand the devastation Covid has caused it is not helpful to promote such views. As Steve rightly states this is a personal decision, however feeling you have a strong immune system is no guarantee of not contracting Covid. Furthermore the vaccine is not just about the individual but about stopping its spread to others around you. So even if you don't want the vaccine for yourself, please have it for others sakes. *Luke Evans*

YEW Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' famed donkey ride into Jerusalem. Recreating that palm-branch-strewn journey in Britain has been botanically challenging, since palm trees don't grow in our climate. Instead, churches gathered sprigs of native yew to provide the ceremonial décor and in some areas, the Sunday before Easter became known as Yew Sunday. And that's why every

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churchyard has a yew.

Well, actually the yew's churchyard connection is because yews are evergreen and can miraculously regrow from a dead stump. The trees were planted as a symbol of everlasting life and a reminder of the Easter resurrection. But, hold up; how come over 500 churchyard yews in England and Wales are older than their churches? It must mean that the yews themselves were pagan places of worship and the churches were built around them. Or they were planted on the graves of plague victims to purify the dead. Or it could be something to do with long bows. Or keeping the waiting congregation sheltered and dry each Sunday.

No-one seems sure where this association started but, whatever the reason, yews look right at home in churchyards. Dark, dense and unmoving they solemnly preside over the sad ceremonies held underneath their boughs and have seen generations come and go (but mostly go). Yews themselves deliver death and every part of them is highly poisonous; their leaves, their bark, their seeds. Only the fleshy red arils around the toxic seeds are harmless, encouraging birds to feed on them and disperse the

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poisonous cargo within. Yet death itself does not seem to inconvenience the yew.

Two rival British yews are advertised as the oldest living thing in Europe, at an alleged 5000 years old. Not many yews in Sussex can rival these great evergreen granddaddies. Most of our whippersnappers are probably just a couple of hundred years old. The problem is it's hard to accurately age a yew. As they get older, their blood red heart-wood rots, leaving them hollow inside and without traditional growth rings. Its heart may no longer be in it but that won't stop the yew from growing.

One of the oldest yews in Sussex can be found in Stedham churchyard near Midhurst. It's estimated to be a mind-boggling 2,500 years old. Over in Wilmington, at the foot of the Long Man, a monstrous yew dominates the churchyard. At a reputed age of 1600 the tree is 600 years older than the church. Supported by wooden props and straining

against rusting chains, it's as if a travelling circus is exhibiting an aging dinosaur. It's worth a visit to both these old timers. For me, standing in the shadow of a plant that is 40 times older than you is humbling and a reminder that for us mere humans, life is brief. 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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DOWNLANDS SCHOOL In my last article I wrote about our forthcoming fundraising days, we were looking forward to: Daisy's Crazy Trainer Day in memory of our student Daisy Bushnell where we raised money for Chestnut Tree House Hospice by asking all students to wear their 'Crazy Trainers' to school in exchange for £1. We raised £1140 on this day, and are proud to say that our other fundraising days were hugely successful too:

Children in Need - we held another non uniform day and raised a wonderful £1359.

Hello Yellow for Young Minds - where everyone had to dress in yellow raised £1352.

Selling Poppies for The Royal British Legion - £200 (this was the total raised from selling poppies in school). We also encouraged our students and their families to donate online and purchase 'virtual' poppies which I'm sure many did however we can't see this in our fundraising total.

Our Christmas Jumper Day, on the last day of term was hugely successful, raising £1292.60 which is going to be split between our Downlands School Fund (to benefit out students) and St Peter & St James Hospice. All students & staff that took part wore a Christmas Jumper or something Christmassy in exchange for a £1. It was also our last day of term and instead of holding the usual assemblies, we held a 'virtual' extravaganza that was broadcast 'live' to the students in their tutor groups. This was no mean feat and the first time we had been 'live'

to the whole school. It was a huge success with our Head, Mr Wignall comparing the whole event. It started with his Christmas address and was then followed up by a presentation about 2020, some hilarious videos made by our staff and even Father Christmas made an appearance! It was wonderful to hear the collective laughter throughout the school when the broadcast was taking place. We hope that we sent our students off in style for their Christmas break.

Moving on now to this term, we are still concentrating on our fundraising efforts by raising money for another canopy to keep our students warm and dry during their outside social time. The other area that we are focussing on is to raise £10,000 to have our school counsellor in school for one more day every week. This is something that is really important to us. The decline in the mental health of students since the pandemic started has been well documented. There are more children in need of support and we are doing our best to help them. In order to help more of our students we need to fundraise to assist with this. Keep an eye on our social media pages to find out how we plan to do this.

We are excited to announce that we will be launching our own 'School Lottery' in the next few weeks. Tickets are £1 per week and weekly prizes will be won and each individual has the chance to win the jackpot of £25,000. More will follow, keep an eye on our social media pages for updates.

Can you help us? Do you know about matched funding?

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Is this something that your company or organisation offers? If so, we are looking for support in this area? As you can see we are lucky enough to have a very generous student/staff & parent body and finding an organisation that would be willing to match our fundraising efforts would be hugely beneficial to Downlands. If you can help, or would like more information, please contact gwickens@downlands.org.

As a school would like to thank our DSA for organising some fabulous fundraising activities in December. We would also like to thank our local community for their support of these events. The DSA organised a virtual quiz raising £450. Students and their families took part in this evening event and had a wonderful time. It was very popular and we hope to hold another one soon. The DSA Christmas Prize Drawer was a phenomenal success. Usually we would sell paper raffle tickets to parents, our local community and to anyone wishing to take part. This year, for obvious reasons it wasn't possible to sell tickets in this way. The DSA took it upon themselves to find an alternative solution, and oh what a solution it turned out to be! We were lucky enough to be gifted a number of wonderful prizes ranging from a holiday in Greece, to beauty vouchers, shopping vouchers, cases of wine & beer and some delightful jewellery. Tickets were £2 each. The prize draw closed on the 10th December and was drawn randomly, winners were advised via email, and using our social media pages. We were delighted to have raised £5754! This is a record

for Downlands and one we hope to repeat for future summer and winter prize draws and raffles. We thank everyone who made this happen, those who organised the event, donated prizes, bought tickets and joined in with the spirit of the event.

Along with teaching, planning and having some kind of outside life during the busiest month of the year, our staff were given a challenge by our Head of Technology, Mrs Moller. Mrs Moller and her husband (also a teacher at Downlands) are keen runners and regularly run with the Downlands Running Group. Mrs Moller provides motivation to all in the group. During December she extended this motivational spirit and asked the staff to get involved in a running/walking challenge in aid of Shelter. Staff were encouraged to donate £5 or more to Shelter and to then walk/run as many kilometres as they could. The competitive spirit entered the school and staff were noted to be out walking & running at all times of the day or night, in all weathers just to clock up the most kilometres. We were put into groups of three and challenged to beat our peers. Everyone kept an eye on the spreadsheet and tried to better their individual performance on a daily basis. On the 18th December the total amount of kilometres we had walked/run in three weeks was 5228.76km – this equated to walking to Quebec in Canada! One staff member managed to clock up 307 km's on their own! It was a great way to get into the Christmas spirit and helped us all make room for a few extra mince pies!

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With the running challenge, selling face masks, a staff raffle and our Christmas card Christmas tree our staff raised £480 for Shelter.

I think that is all our news for now, please remember I wrote this in early January, so if news seems out of date I apologise, but for us it's current. We will hopefully have some more updates about life at Downlands in the March issue.

Don't forget our Amphitheatre is now available for hire. For any information about this please contact Sue Jones on sjones@downlands.org.

As always best wishes from all at Downlands, and in particular for a happy and healthy 2021. Keep up with our news by following, liking, sharing and commenting on our social media channels

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Gail Wickens

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Methodist Church and Hall - in Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint bookings can be made through Margaret Taylor on **01273 832286**.

Hurst Scout H.Q. - has a hall and kitchen as well as a smaller meeting room. Ideal for parties, classes or meetings. Ring Heather Hush on **01273 831023** email: bookings@hurstpierpointscouts.co.uk.

Please Note: 1st Hurst Scouts have a website for hall bookings where users can view the diary, check prices and download the booking forms – <https://www.hurstpierpointscouts.co.uk/hq-bookings>

Hurstpierpoint Village Centre - has three spaces for hire, a hall that seats up to 200, a conference room for up to 20 and the Club Suite for up to 40. The Club Suite is ideal for children's parties, offering its own kitchen and toilet facilities. The kitchen serving both the hall and conference room is also free of charge. Email hurstpierpoint.pc@btinternet.com or www.hurstvillagecentre.org

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STEVE'S BACK PAGE GOSSIP

Now you wouldn't think in these very uncertain times I'd still be having people coming into my shop to ask about available shops to start a new business in, but they keep on coming. Earlier this month a group of young oriental ladies came in to ask about finding an empty premises to open up a nail bar! All I can do is direct them to the shops that are obviously empty, but they seemed hell bent on trying to find out about the shop next door to Budgens, our old friend the charity shop. I will be honest my communication skills were a bit stretched because every other word they said was 'Thank You' and they all said it at the same time. I did begin to wonder if I was being filmed as it was the most surreal experience. Do you remember the little green aliens in Toy Story that all spoke together, it was just like that and to top it all they came down from London they weren't local.

Next and a little bit more normal wanting to have a shop on our high street was a Chiropractor. Personally, I thought these practitioners operated out of rooms in houses rather than shops. However, with all these lengthy lockdowns we've been having lately I expected a lot of people have been over-doing the home gymnastics and could do with a bit of gentle back and neck massage. So there you have it Nails and Back will they ever make it on to our high street, who knows but it makes a change from Coffee and Hair.

Refit seems to be the in word at the moment. Budgens has gone for it big time with the whole interior being ripped out and everything replaced - should be interesting to see what it's like when it's finished. Mind you we'll never find what we're looking for, I expect everything will all be changed round, anyway. Just as an extra bit to write about did you see the huge lake that appeared out the back of Budgens, caused by I assume, turning off the massive air conditioning units. You could quite easily have scuba dived in it and it isn't going down very quickly - get your snorkel?

Also on the refit band wagon is the Deli which I thought had only just been done a short while ago and to be perfectly honest looks great to me.

I know things are tough at the moment, but if you can open - even if it is for take away or call and collect - then do it. Customers turned away don't always come back.

Bella and Megs seems to have turned it into an art form. There is always a queue at the door and the feedback from customers is extremely flattering, you just have to pick something you know people want and do it well. Just look at Andy's (A Twine Butchers) fabulous meat and great service, you may pay a little extra but if you want the best then you know where to go. It's no good putting your head in your hands and just giving up. People love a fighter & not the old refit excuse.

Did you see that nice little article about our popular barber Russell Thatcher in another magazine. Takes a good picture doesn't he and another refit which looks very nice. Mind you every time I went past his shop and peered through the curtain it was his lovely wife that was on her knees doing all the rubbing down and filling in. I reckon she's the DIY expert in the family, sorry Russell your secrets out but you have to admit she's done an excellent job. After reading the article about Russell, especially where he mentioned his college days, it did make me think of mine which were in the late 60's. I went to the College of the Distributive Trades which was in Leicester Square, London and I was sent there by Moss Bros of Covent Garden, it was the start of the extraordinary period of my life which I'd love to sit down and write about one day because it was amazing, anyway that's it for this month. Thank you for reading this and don't forget any Hoover type problems you've experiencing just bring them to me to be fixed, you'll be amazed.

Love Steve and his amazing furry friends

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