

Cuckfield Life

Inc. Brook St, Ansty & Staplefield

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue #22 : Aug/Sept '14

Free



Is your allotment ready for the Show?

page 14

WWI exhibition at museum

page 30

Tour of Britain on the way...

page 4

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EDITORIAL

By David Tingley, Editor

I suppose this is our 'holiday' issue, it being well into August, but there is still plenty to write about and share with you.

First and foremost we should congratulate the group responsible for writing and producing Cuckfield's **Neighbourhood Plan**, which was wholeheartedly welcomed by voters in the referendum last month. This is great news and power to this community. Read more on **page 4**.

There are events that have already happened; a **Macmillan** fundraising event (**p.12**), the unveiling of the **defibrillator** (**p.5**) and the very interesting-sounding **Blessing Service for local pets** at Holy Trinity Church (**p.18**).

Then there are events to look forward to; the **Ansty Sports & Social Club Family Fun Day** later this month (**p.10**), the special **WWI exhibition** at Cuckfield Museum (**p.30**) and the exciting news of the **Tour of Britain** coming through the village on 13th September (**p.4**).

Then, of course, we have the good people of Cuckfield! **Evelyn Stenning** was invited to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace (**p.11**), we chat to two allotment holders **Claire Mitchell** and **Jim Turnbull** about their preparation for the **Village Show** at Cuckfield Park on 13th September (**p.14**), foster carer **Monica Bayliss** find herself in the spotlight in the feature on **page 20** and **Paddy Westbury** shares his story of completing the **Marmotte Granfondo cycle ride** (**p.32**).

If you're wondering what the **Cuckfield European Association** has been up to, then you will be rewarded by turning to **page 24** where this month's newsletter awaits.

Finally, I know that there are many **keen photographers** amongst our readership, so can I request that you send in any stunning portraits of Cuckfield to us by email (photos@cuckfieldlife.co.uk) please? Any used on the cover will receive a local shopping voucher of their choice! Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Issue #22 – Aug/Sep 2014 –
3,400 copies printed

Next magazine copydate:
28th August 2014

Next magazine published:
15th September 2014

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Cuckfield Life Published by Kipper



David Tingley
As summer view looking
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We'd love to hear from groups, organisations and individuals about what's happening locally. Include a photo if you can. Email your stories to editor@cuckfieldlife.co.uk

Cuckfield says "Yes" in Referendum with 96% majority

886 voted out of 2720, making a turnout of 32.6%. 833 voted Yes, 52 voted No and 1 vote was spoilt, which makes 96% in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan voting YES (50% required).

The Neighbourhood Plan therefore completes its final stage of the process and will be lodged with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to be used in all planning applications, making it the first one in the MSDC to be fully adopted and carry full weight.

The plan committee would like to thank everyone who turned out to vote in this landmark event for Cuckfield and the Mid Sussex area.

Tour of Britain rides through village

Hot on the heels of the Tour de France, the 2014 Tour of Britain cycle race will wind its way through West Sussex on Saturday 13th September, passing through Staplefield and Cuckfield!

The event, featuring some of the best professional cyclists in the world, is free for all spectators to watch.

The Sussex leg is the penultimate stage of the race and will begin in Camberley, Surrey, at 10am. The peloton is expected to enter West Sussex about an hour later and will spend almost two hours racing across the county before entering East Sussex and finishing in Brighton.

Organisers estimate the race will pass through:

Handcross – 12.14pm

Staplefield – 12.17pm

Whitemans Green, Cuckfield – 12.24pm

Haywards Heath – 12.28pm

More detailed times can be found on our blog: <http://bit.ly/1n2c9fX>

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New defibrillator for Cuckfield

By Claire Cooper

A life-saving machine has taken pride of place in Cuckfield High Street, thanks to the efforts of a group of cyclists and members of the Inspire Youth Group.

Just days after the Team Hagan cyclists returned from taking part in the gruelling Marmotte challenge (see page 32), the first of two defibrillator heart machines was fitted to the wall of the Mansell McTaggart building.

The life-saving machine was officially unveiled by Tom Hagan, son of Paul Hagan who suffered a series of heart attacks while in training in the K2 gym for the cycle ride. Paul's life was saved by a staff member using a portable defibrillator machine.

After considering dropping out of the event, thought to be Europe's toughest one day cycling event, Paul's fellow cyclists Paddy Westbury, Nick Fewtrell, Chris Renardson and Adrian Bennett decided to go ahead with it and raise money to buy one of the machines which saved Paul's life.

The original target was to raise enough to buy one machine but after youth group leader Nicky Lawrence secured a grant of £1,000 and sponsorship for the cyclists exceeded all expectations, the group has been able to buy a second machine. This will be located on Whiteman's Green and will bring the total number of machines in the village to four. The others two located at



the Queen's Hall and Warden Park School.

The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine can be used by anyone and carries full instructions. However, training sessions are being organised. The first will be held on 15th August.

The Sussex Heart Charity will be holding a 'Heart Awareness Afternoon' at the Old School on 26th September from 1pm to 6pm. The drop in event is designed to raise awareness of heart related problems and will include advice and information on looking after your heart. For more information, visit the website www.sussexheartcharity.org

Above photo from left: Dr Rachael James, consultant cardiologist and trustee of the Sussex Heart Charity, Nicky Lawrence, Cuckfield Mayor Mike Schlup, Kate Hagan and son Tom cutting the ribbon.

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Cake and Questions

By Jonathan Berry

Earlier this year Holy Trinity church started a monthly open house for anyone who is interested in conversation about life and faith. In the past many churches have run courses with an agenda. This is different. There is no agenda, just a question to start the conversation.

The starter question for 3rd September is "Why are we here?" and for 1st October "What do I need to believe to be a Christian?" You may find the conversation interesting or even surprising!

We never stop learning. Cake and Questions is not intended to provide answers but to help us grow. Things that we heard years ago may need revisiting. Sometimes we find we have new questions or old ones that become more persistent. Cake and Questions is a place to speak freely and to share joy, wonder, doubt, uncertainty and laughter.

The sessions are 8-9.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month at The Old School right here in Cuckfield.

Drop in on a session when you like for as long as you like, listen, join in the conversation or bring a question – and enjoy the cake. Why not bring a friend?

More information can be found at www.holytrinitycuckfield.org or email cakeandquestions@gmail.com or speak to me on 07854 682171.



Cuckfield singers at St Paul's

Two young singers from Cuckfield had a once-in-a-lifetime experience when they were invited to sing at the lunchtime recital in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Laura Page and Olivia Floydd are members of the Junior School Choir at Burgess Hill School for Girls where they have competed in a number of national competitions, including Music for Youth where they reached last year's 2013 final.

The choir of almost 50 girls sang an unaccompanied half hour recital under the dome of Wren's 300 year old cathedral, conducted by Julie Playford, Head of Junior School Music.

"The programme was imaginative and well balanced and the girls sang with confidence and great accomplishment, coping with the legendary, challenging acoustic which didn't faze them at all. The girls received numerous compliments from tourists, not only about the quality of their singing but also about the professional manner in which they conducted themselves," said Jill Walkinton, Head of the Additional Learning Centre & Individual Needs Coordinator.



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FROM THE MAYOR'S TABLE

By Mike Schlup

As I write, the mercury is close to 30 and summer is finally in full swing but I have dragged myself away from the BBQ to look at some more of the great causes that have benefitted from the funds raised by the Independent State of Cuckfield mayor's campaign.

Cuckfield Museum put the donation from ISOC towards various activities, including the recent WWI display and also the museum's loan boxes. These are being used by local primary schools and adult groups in order to learn more about the history of Cuckfield. For more information visit the recently built website www.cuckfieldmuseum.org or why not visit the museum?

The Cuckfield branches of the Royal British Legion and Royal British Legion Women's Section both received donations from ISOC. The funds help to pay for hosting their meetings and organising a variety of speakers to entertain the members.

The Gillian Fabb Memorial Fund was set up almost 40 years ago following the death of Gillian at just 8 years old from liver cancer. The fund is run by Gillian's mother Val who lives in Cuckfield and has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds to support cancer research. Recently the fund helped to purchase a new 'plate reader' at a cost of £10,000 for the Royal Marsden Hospital. This enables the scientists to determine which particular drug is going to kill the most cells in a particular tumour, i.e. identifying the most effective treatment for each child. Contact Val Fabb on 01444 451805 for more information.

Inspire is the youth club supported by Holy Trinity Church. Every Friday evening children from 8 to 18 years old meet for a full programme of activities, including talent shows, craft activities, table tennis, table football, pool, air hockey, cooking and film nights. The funds donated by ISOC will help the club to maintain and improve the resources and materials for future activities. If you would like to find out more, then contact Holy Trinity Church.

With less than 3 months to go until election night (October 17th – mark it in your diary), fundraising activities are picking up. Mayoral candidate Rob Helliwell and his team of daredevil skydivers successfully completed a parachute jump from 15,000 feet. Congratulations to them all and if you want to add your support, then pop down to the Wheatsheaf where Rob will gladly accept your donations. The Wheatsheaf also happens to be the campaign headquarters for Paul Leppard, if you prefer to spread your votes between the candidates. Leanne Knapman will be taking part in the Mudderella 7 mile obstacle course challenge at the end of August and you can support her efforts by visiting the White Harte. My spies have also heard rumours of a new candidate planning a conker competition but you'd have to be nuts to take part! Watch this space for more details. Until next time, keep enjoying the weather.

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Fun for all the family in Ansty

By Brian Fletcher, Chairman- Ansty Sports & Social Club
Ansty Family Fun Day has come around again and is getting better year on year.

Our philosophy since reviving the day some 6 years ago is to give a truly family day, with plenty of things for all to engage with, not to get too commercial in our approach and to keep the emphasis on fun.

We are retaining most of the favourites and adding some new experiences to complete the day so, as well as sideshows, owls show, pony rides, classic cars, dog show and many others, we have added a couple of Punch & Judy shows, bubble football, dog agility demos and gun dog displays.

Ansty Sports & Social Club is providing the local community with a real asset with cricket, football, snooker & darts under its umbrella. The aim is to continue this and to deliver the support from greatly improved facilities. Plans of the proposed new build are on display in the club.

All profits from the day will go towards the rebuild fund so come and join us, have fun and contribute to a truly memorable village affair.

Holiday treats available at Cuckfield Rec

Following a competitive tender process with Mid Sussex District Council, Tory's Café in the Park has just reopened its Cuckfield café at the Rec, behind Queen's Hall.

The café, run by Victoria Smith, has opened at the kiosk in the park, which is owned by MSDC, for the last four summers. Earlier this year she was invited to submit a bid to open the unit - which was awarded at the end of July.

"Although there isn't much time to organise things, we will be open for all the remaining days of the school holidays when the weather is good, as we have done previously," Victoria commented.

"We are keen to reopen and build on the success of our café in the park at Victoria Park in Haywards Heath."

Tory's Café in the Park has now secured the lease for the next two years at the kiosk. The café will be serving homemade cakes, fresh coffee and ice creams to all enjoying the summer here in Cuckfield.



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Evelyn is a guest at Buckingham Palace

As a midwife Evelyn Stenning has spent her career celebrating happy events with families – but last month she enjoyed a special celebration of her own as a guest at a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

Evelyn, from Whiteman's Green, was nominated for the guest list by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, Carol Hayward, in recognition of a lifetime of service to the community of Cuckfield and Mid Sussex.

"It was a delight and a great honour to represent the village where I was born and have lived in all my life," said Evelyn who is also a steward at Cuckfield Museum and an active member of many local organisations, including the Women's Institute and Royal British Legion.

Evelyn was making her second visit to Buckingham Palace – the first was 30 years ago when she attended a garden party to commemorate 100 years of the Royal College of Midwives.

Evelyn's invitation included taking along a guest and it wasn't a difficult choice. "I invited my sister Joyce, who lives in Somerset," said Evelyn.

Once inside the Palace Gates, guests were shown through to the garden and Evelyn and Joyce soon found a seat and a welcome glass of barley water.



"There were 8,000 guests in a variety of lovely dresses, hats, suits, National Costume and uniforms of different organisations," Evelyn recalled.

The Royal Party was led by the Queen and Prince Philip, and other members of the family included Princess Anne, Princess Eugenie, Kate the Duchess of Cambridge and the Duchess of Gloucester.



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By Ginny Rogers

The Macmillan Fundraising day that was featured in the June/July issue took place on 5 July. It was a huge success and our target, after the expenses were taken out, was £500 but so far we have raised £1,753.18 and donations are still coming in on the JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/Ginny-Rogers.

I wanted to thank all local businesses for their contributions to the raffle and also their donations, especially: Stature PR, London; Sainsbury's Haywards Heath for the strawberries and cream; Boots, Haywards Heath for the tombola prizes; Wisdom Sports, Haywards Heath; Ockenden Spa, Cuckfield; The Oak Barn, Burgess Hill; The Rose & Crown, Cuckfield; The Foot

Care Centre, Haywards Heath; Tates of Sussex Garden Centre; Fellows Bakery, Ardingly; Deborah at Hairworks, Cuckfield; Moira at Sylvias, Haywards Heath; The Candy Store, Cuckfield; Flaneur, Cuckfield; Tara, Photographic Portrait Session; Camellia's Tea, London; The Pantry, Cuckfield; South Lodge, Lower Beeding; Denziloe, Lindfield; Neilson Boutique, Cuckfield; Neal's Yard Products; Jade Wallis; Gill Oldfield; Lyn Foster; Sharon Botting and Terrie Fairman.

There are many more to thank – you will know who you are – and we would all like to thank you for your support and kindness which went a long way in making the day such a success.

Fashion show for Bolney Organ Restoration Fund

Jo Dennis, owner of Jo Jo Boutique in Cuckfield, is putting her support behind an event in Bolney to raise money for the local Organ Restoration Fund.

The event is being organised by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary Magdalene Church in Bolney to raise money for the appeal which has been running for three months already.

The PCC is faced with restoring the magnificent pipe organ built by T.C Lewis and bequeathed to the church in 1902 by Henry Courage of the brewing family. Over time it has been cleaned and in 1968 was completely rebuilt when additions were made. These parts are now wearing out and need replacing.

Jo Dennis has been asked to run the fashion side of the show because of her extensive understanding of clothes to fit all sizes and ages. The show will include a preview of Autumn collections from Jo Jo's including lingerie, jewellery, shoes and both casual and smart wear. Jo explained: 'I want to continue to support local communities and activities, including the beautiful church in Bolney.'

The event is on Thursday 11th September at the church and tickets will go on sale in September. As well as wine and canapés there will also be an image consultant on hand for advice, Margaret Milne from House of Colour.

Free lunchtime concert series at Holy Trinity Church – starts Friday 5th September

Audiences at the popular lunchtime series at Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield are in for a treat when local cellist Pavlos Carvalho performs Dvorak's Cello Concerto with pianist Louisa Lam to launch the new season of concerts, starting on Friday 5th September.

Pavlos Carvalho is both a brilliant musician and teacher and has performed several times at the church with the virtuoso group Ensemble Reza.

Soup will be served from 12.30 and the concert will start at 1pm.

Concerts will continue on the first Friday of each month.

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Village allotments



As the annual Cuckfield Village Show approaches, gardeners all over the village are hard at work tending the fruit and vegetables that they hope will win one of the many prizes. For some, the joy of taking part and seeing their produce displayed on the judging table is reward enough, but for others the show is a stepping stone to bigger and better things and winning is all important. At the village allotments, off Glebe Road, gardeners have found the recent combination of rain and sunshine has provided perfect growing conditions. There's an abundance of fruit, vegetables and flowers, and the only problem will be choosing which pieces to enter. It's a nice problem to have and one that that prize-winning gardener Jim Turnbull is all too familiar with ...

By Claire Cooper

Jim took over his allotment in 2001, bringing with him a wealth of experience from a lifetime of working on country estates.

"We spent most of our married life living in tied houses on the estates where I worked," said Jim, "but after several redundancies and moves we decided to apply for a council house." The couple were lucky to get a house in Glebe Road, which not only had a large garden, but also allotments nearby.

After filling his garden with home-grown vegetables and flowers, Jim ran out of space and applied to the council to rent an allotment – an overgrown plot!

"The first thing I had to do was to lay drainage as the soil was boggy and not suitable for growing," said Jim. "It took a couple of years to get the growing conditions just right."

Jim's hard work paid off and he is now well known in the area as a champion onion, runner bean and chrysanthemum grower, winning a string of awards including Best in Show at Edenbridge.

A member of the National Vegetable Society and the Sussex Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society, Jim is currently preparing for shows at Cuckfield and Edenbridge where he plans to enter 13 classes.

Jim has previously entered and won awards at the national show at Wisley. "Your entries have to be a high

standard or they risk being taken off display," he said.

He's won Best in Show for runner beans four times at Edenbridge and has also been asked to judge shows at Staplefield and Lindfield.

Jim carefully tends his competition entries, watching the progress and narrowing down his potential exhibits before selecting his final choices.

"Timing is everything," he says. "The judges are looking for uniformity in everything you do. It's no good entering beans of different lengths or onions of various sizes, and leeks must have straight white stems with no bulking."

Jim added that onions have to swell up to around 19 inches before they are ready to be dug up and prepared for showing, and shared the secret of getting a perfectly white onion skin. "Rub them in talc powder – doesn't matter what make! All onion growers do it - it's the zinc that makes the difference."

He also shared another tip for getting perfectly straight runner beans. "Once the beans get to around 2 or 3 inches you need to regularly straighten out the bend by hand."

Growing large vegetables doesn't mean sacrificing taste. "This is top quality stuff," said Jim. "We eat everything we grow. There's no waste." Cut flowers he gives to family and friends, while exhibits are donated and auctioned for charity.



Jim also saves seeds from some flowers and vegetables ready for planting next year.

"There's no money in allotment gardening and showing. It takes around 10 years to break even but that's never been my aim," Jim explained.

"You have to enjoy doing it and be prepared to visit the allotment every day, particularly during winter. Good and regular digging in the winter makes life a lot easier in the spring and summer."

The gardeners at Glebe Road are a friendly bunch – happy to share advice and tips with fellow allotment holders. Allotment holder Claire Mitchell found this invaluable when she took over her plot.

"When we got the allotment it was completely overgrown," she said. "Emma and I started from scratch, digging all the weeds out by hand. I would always ask for advice from some of the other allotment holders. Now I'm proud to say that I can actually give advice to newcomers."

"I try to come here every day, even if it's just for half an hour," she added. "I think getting your hands in the earth and growing things is such a healthy thing to do, not just for the body but for the mind. It's so peaceful, I think it's very healing."

"From planting the seeds, watching the plants grow and then eating the vegetables it's just awesome!"

Claire and Emma took on the allotment with two aims – to feed their families and to encourage wildlife. "I've put in wild flowers and plants specifically to attract butterflies and bees," said Claire. "This summer I planted a lavender bush and the bees arrived within minutes! Amazing!"

"There's so many birds and butterflies, and we know there's a badger because he comes and eats the carrots!"

Over the years Claire and Emma have increased the range of fruit, vegetables and flowers they grow and each seasons brings something new. "It's always a work in progress," said Claire. "At the end of each year you look at what's gone well and what you could do better next year. This year the soft fruit is fabulous, due to the wet weather and sunshine. Everyone I know will be getting a jar of home-made jam! I'm also growing celery for the first time."

In the past, Claire and Emma grew giant American pumpkins which were a Hallowe'en hit in the village!

"Every year we would grow a giant American pumpkin and in the autumn we would take it to the Holy Trinity School," said Claire. "We would then display it in the church for the harvest festival before making it into a giant Hallowe'en lantern for Bonfire Night."

Sadly the tradition came to an abrupt end when Emma turned up at the allotment one year to find the pumpkin had been stolen. "We were devastated," Claire recalled. "The thieves must have brought a wheelbarrow to take it away as there's no way you could carry it. That was the last giant pumpkin we ever grew."

The pair are well known to local schoolchildren who pass the allotment and stop to give Claire's dog Lola a pat. "Two girls even brought me strawberry plants they had grown to add to mine!"

Like Jim, Claire is also busy preparing for the village show and has previously won prizes for her vegetables. "I've also entered photos and paintings and would encourage everyone to have a go," said Claire. "It's a lot of fun and the more people who enter, the more interesting it gets!"

The Village Show will be held at Cuckfield Park on 13th September.

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TUESDAYS	NEWICK	NEWICK VILLAGE HALL	09:30-10:30
	BURGESS HILL	St. PAUL'S COLLEGE	19:00-20:00
WEDNESDAYS	LINDFIELD	KING EDWARD HALL	12:30-13:30
	HAYWARDS HEATH	HARLANDS SCHOOL	19:00-20:00
THURSDAYS	NEWICK	NEWICK VILLAGE HALL	19:00-20:00
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New Wellbeing Centre for Hospice

Supporters of St Peter and St James Hospice will be among the first to visit the new Wellbeing Centre at an Open Day on Saturday 20th September. They will be able to drop in and see for themselves the wonderful new facilities they have helped to fund.

The new Wellbeing Centre, known as Beacon View, will increase the depth and range of care and support the Hospice offers and enable twice as many patients to benefit from its daytime support.

Facilities include dedicated rooms for medical consultations, counselling and therapies, and enable quiet time alone if people wish. Patients of all ages and from all walks of life will be able to access the facility and the Hospice plans to hold weekend sessions for children of its patients, helping them to deal with and understand their parent's journey.

The Centre will create a hub for patients where they can access a wide range of therapeutic activities, including massage and aromatherapy. They'll also be able to take part in art projects, poetry writing and memory-making that can help them leave a personal gift for their loved ones.

Hospice patron Dame Vera Lynn said: "I'm delighted to see the ambitious plans for the Wellbeing Centre coming to fruition. I am very much looking forward to seeing the completed building and to the upcoming 40th anniversary of the charity."



The Hospice received a grant from NHS England which funded part of the cost of the new build but has had to launch a public appeal to fundraise for the remaining costs, which include the costs of equipment, furniture and furnishings. The appeal has already raised 75% of the funds needed but the Hospice still needs to raise £25,000 to complete the Centre in time for the opening in September.

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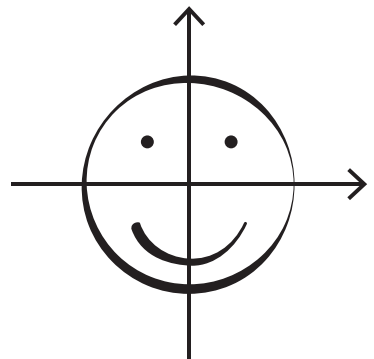


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Woodcraft Folk

Bug hunting, scarecrow building and making 'upside down' fires are just some of the activities enjoyed by members of Cuckfield's newest youth group.

The Woodcraft Folk group started earlier this year with an Elfin group for children aged from 5 to 8. Woodcraft Folk is a children's and young people's organisation with groups across the UK meeting weekly during term time and going camping in the holidays to learn about big ideas and participate in activities like craft, singing and games.

Over the past few weeks the Elfins (known as Iguanodon Elfins) and Leaders have enjoyed a range of activities, including bug hunts, building scarecrows, making up plays and songs, building upside-down fires, making woodland creatures and going Geo-caching! The group also held its first camp with another Woodcraft group from Steyning and spent hours exploring the woods – day and night!

The group is now moving to the larger venue of Holy Trinity School, where there are extensive grounds, including woods, as well as inside space. This extra space means the group can expand and recruit more Elfins (Year groups 2 or 3 in September).

Sessions run on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:45pm during term time and cost £2 per session. Woodcraft Folk is very inclusive and Elfins are both boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities. The group is also



community focused and parents or carers are asked to help out, if possible, at one session per term, allowing them to join in the fun too!

Places are very limited, so please get in touch soon if you are interested. Call Nicola on 01444 459249 or email: nicola@roryhunt.net or Susie on 01444 473493 or email: soozhall@gmail.com

www.woodcraft.org.uk

Pets' Blessing Service at Holy Trinity Church

Fifteen dogs, a hamster in a cage and even a couple of goldfish were among the congregation at Holy Trinity Church last month. The animals took centre stage at a special Pets' Blessing Service conducted by curate Sandra Hall.

"I love animals, so this is something I've been wanting to do for a very long time," said Sandra. Everyone in the village was invited. "People love their pets, whether they are churchgoers or not," said Sandra. "This was a great opportunity for them to come to church and have their pets blessed."

She added that some villagers brought photographs of their pets, both living and deceased, to be blessed.

"It went amazingly well. The service was informal and the pets were all very well behaved," said Sandra. "The sun shone and everyone stayed on afterwards to enjoy refreshments which, of course, included treats for the animals!"



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Monica Bayliss

VILLAGE PEOPLE

Caring for babies and young children is demanding and often stressful, and many parents are glad when the days of sleepless nights, endless nappies and toddler tantrums are behind them. But Cuckfield foster carer Monica Bayliss is more than happy to revolve her life around the demands of young children and looks forward to every new arrival. Since becoming a foster carer in 1990, Monica has looked after more than 70 babies and young children, aged from just a few days old to 11 years. In the hallway of the Bayliss home in Wheatsheaf Lane, a baby buggy awaits its next occupant as Monica never knows when the phone will ring and another child will arrive.

By Claire Cooper

Monica explained how it all started. "I'd always wanted more children of my own but that didn't happen, so I decided the next best thing was to look after other people's!" she said. "My own three children were growing up, one had left home and I had a spare room."

Monica applied to become a foster carer through West Sussex County Council and, after completing the selection process and training, was approved to look after children aged from 0 to 6. The selection process included all family members being interviewed separately, to ensure everyone understood how fostering children can affect a family.

Fortunately, Monica has always had the full support of husband Bob and children John, Antonia and Stephen. "We all muck in and enjoy it," she said.

After being approved, it wasn't long before the first children arrived. "They were a family of three who arrived for a week while their mother received respite care," said Monica.

"The first time was quite stressful, the second less so, but by the third I was starting to enjoy it more and more."

Children can arrive at the family home at any hour of the day or night, often at very short notice.

"In the early days, I had several children who were travelling with adults who had been detained at Gatwick Airport," said Monica. "The children were taken into care immediately after flying into the country and detained by immigration. The first one I looked after was a little Polish girl who had flown in with her father.

"I've had others from Jamaica and from Africa. The children stay with me until social services make inquiries in their backgrounds and arrange for them to be flown back to their home countries and met at the other end," Monica added.

"I remember handing over a 3 year old child to the air hostess who would accompany him on his journey back home. She looked a little po-faced when I mentioned putting a nappy on him if he went to sleep!"

In another case, two children were removed from a plane bound for Mauritius, after police stopped their father who was attempting to abduct them. The pair stayed overnight with Monica before being reunited with their mother.

"It's all very frightening and confusing for the children, and all I can offer is the comfort of being in a family home."

Monica has lost count of the number of children she has fostered but it's well over 70. The most she's had at one time is four and the longest time a child has stayed with the family is two and a half years. "I collected the little boy when he was just three months old and he stayed until he was finally adopted."

Surely that child must have felt like one of her own? "No – it's always at the back of your mind that children will eventually be leaving and going to a permanent home," said Monica. "As a foster carer you are just part of the journey towards a secure future – whether it's adoption or being reunited with their birth family."

"It's more difficult for the children than for me," added

Monica. "I know they are going but they are unaware that at some time they will be handed to somebody else. It's important to recognise that you have come into that child's life and not the other way round."

The law often dictates whether a child goes into foster care and how long they stay. "Social services will always look at the child's family and friends to see if there is a suitable relative who can care for the child," Monica explained. "Foster care is often the last resort."

"When a child is taken into care, social services have 40 weeks in which to make a decision about the best way forward - that's not long to decide on the future of a child."

Whenever possible, foster carers work with children's birth families and get to know them. "It's important that family members can continue to be part of a child's life while they are in foster care and that grandparents and siblings can visit if appropriate," she added. One child saw their parent five days a week.

"It's important to recognise that the parents of children taken into care are not ogres. Most of them would be perfectly capable of caring for their children if they didn't have other problems which need addressing."

Some children are easier to care for than others.

"When you get a child who has had a difficult background, you never quite know how they are going to react and behave," said Monica. "Many have developmental and learning difficulties, so you may be told you are getting a four year old but developmentally they may be more like a two year old."

"I've been bitten, scratched, had hair pulled out and my glasses pulled off my face and thrown into the road."

"It's also important to be realistic about sharing your home - you can't be too house proud or too fussy."

Foster carers can be asked to do anything a parent would do. "I've looked after sick children and learnt how to put in a gastric tube, and have also collected newborn babies from hospital," said Monica.

"I've had children who don't understand or speak English and one child who refused to sleep in a bed, preferring the floor. Some come with nothing except the clothes they are wearing, Luckily, I have a good supply here!"

It's important that children in foster care are kept at the same school, which can mean several journeys dropping and picking them up. "I once had four children and two of them were at different schools, and the other two at different playgroups. That was tricky!" said Monica.

Children can leave foster care as quickly as they arrive. "You can get a sudden call asking you to take a child to another setting at very short notice. Sometimes I don't have time to wash their clothes and pack properly."

"Every time a child goes you lose contact with people," added Monica. "For example, you may have been taking that child to a playgroup or school and got to know the other mums. Luckily there's a good network of foster carers who meet up regularly."

The foster carer has an important role in the transition from foster care to adoption and helping new

parents learn about their child.

"Many adoptive parents don't have very much experience caring for children and you know that their lives and homes are about to be turned upside down in ways they could never have imagined!" said Monica. "It's quite an experience."

Monica's huge brown teddy bear Bjorn has become a firm favourite with many of her foster children. "I looked after a brother and sister who were so fond of Bjorn that I went out and bought a similar bear for them to take with them when they were adopted," Monica recalled. "Unfortunately, the new parents let one of the children take Bjorn to bed at night- something I hadn't allowed. This resulted in the second child getting upset and the parents buying a second identical bear. They ended up adopting two children and two large bears!"

In most cases, when a child is adopted it's the last time Monica sees them as the new family often want to forget about the time the children spent in foster care.

"But there's a real sense of achievement when you successfully hand a child to someone else, whether it's back to a parent or relative or to a new family."

In between caring for foster children, Monica takes the opportunity to catch up with friends and household chores but she never knows when the phone is going to ring with news of a new arrival. But whether it's today, tomorrow or in a few months' time - Monica and Bjorn are ready and waiting!

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Summer at Wakehurst

Being so fortunate to have one of the world's leading botanic gardens and conservation centres on our doorstep, we perhaps take the Wakehurst estate for granted; but now it needs our help more than ever to survive a funding crisis.

The 465-acre estate is home to an incredible range of plants from across the globe as well as the internationally important Millennium Seed Bank. Leased by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew since the former owners left Wakehurst to the nation (through the National Trust), now is the time to support the vitally important work underway at Ardingly to save and preserve plant species for future generations. Despite scores of National Trust visitors being admitted free under the terms of Kew's lease, NT members' subscriptions do not help Kew maintain the gardens.

Thousands of regular visitors have bought in to Wakehurst's annual season ticket which, at just £25 by direct debit (that's just 50 pence a week), offers incredible value for money as the gardens are open 363 days a year and every visit offers a different experience. The annual pass gives free entry, free car parking, discounts in the well-stocked gift shop and plant centre, exclusive member-only open evenings and a free adult ticket to Kew Gardens. With Wakehurst admitting all under 17s free, the adult season ticket offers great value while supporting Kew's conservation initiatives on the world's most threatened plants.

Summer fun for all

A packed programme of activities will see all the family catered for at Wakehurst this summer as Wakehurst devotes the season to celebrating Magical Meadows, a severely depleted feature of the UK landscape. Hot on the heels of their first Scything and Cider festival which took place in mid-July, August is full of things to do.

Huxley's famous birds of prey flying displays take place on 6th, 13th, 20th, 24th and 27th August with expert talks at 11am and 2pm and displays at 12.30pm and 3.30pm. Over the weekend of 9th and 10th August, Wakehurst celebrates Bringing in the Hay with a display of traditional harvesting skills. On Sunday 24th August and Bank Holiday Monday 25th August, heavy horses will be working in Bloomers Valley as hooves harrow the hay meadow. It's a chance to get close to the gentle giants and see how much they enjoy working the land.



For younger visitors

During the long school holidays Wakehurst has a series of fun activities for younger visitors to enjoy. Priced at just £2 a go, no advanced booking is required and children come away with what they make as a memento of their day at Kew in the country.

Among the fab activities, Fields of Flowers sees youngsters making a lucky-dip meadow stick and using it to explore Wakehurst's wonderful meadows (1st-3rd, 15th-17th and 29th-31st Aug between 1-4pm). Meadow Minibeasts is a chance to make a 'minibeast mover' and fly around the gardens spotting beasts (8th-10th, 22nd-24th Aug between 1-4pm). Children can enjoy creating a woven friendship bracelet using hay harvested from Wakehurst's own meadows (7th, 14th, 21st and 28th Aug) between 10am and 4pm.

There's lots more to do this summer at Wakehurst – including free guided tours each morning and afternoon, devouring freshly-baked bread and cakes from the garden's own bakery, award-winning catering to sample, including a picnic service to be enjoyed across the gardens, woodland and meadows. Full details online at www.kew.org/wakehurst or by calling 01444 894066.



CUCKFIELD EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2014

www.cuckeuro.co.uk



Cuckfield Official visit to Aumale

In July our eight intrepid visitors crossed the channel at Newhaven to be picked up at Dieppe by our friends from Aumale, our twin town of 22 years' standing. First a reception by the mayor, Virginie Avril-Lucost, still the youngest mayor in France, some speeches and exchange of gifts; from Cuckfield an original painting of Cuckfield Church by Don Cranefield and six bottles of Ridgeview's finest sparkling wines. From Aumale came a selection of their finest wines and cheeses.

The first day was another 'glass' day with three visits to different locations. One to see the manufacture on an industrial scale of high quality tubing for a multitude of industrial uses. For this we were fully kitted out to top EU health and safety levels. Then on to a single entrepreneur who made a range of items from solid steel brake pads for Eurostar trains to small glass phials for calvados. Finally to see some ornamental glass blown and shaped in a furnace at 1,500 degrees.

Sunday was spent in Rouen and Honfleur, where we were able to walk about and enjoy the scenery and shops. Monday was National Day and started with a band-led procession, with the firemen in their best uniforms and shiny helmets, more speeches, awards and the Marsellaise. The Union Jack was very much in evidence and our National Anthem was played in our honour. After a multi-course lunch there was little time before the evening barbecue, music and dancing, ending with some spectacular fireworks. Some of us did not get home until the early hours!

The final day was spent shopping in Dieppe and finding a quayside fish restaurant to round off our visit.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable, if tiring, occasion but our hosts had put in a lot of effort to ensure our stay was varied and busy, enhanced by the mayor's presence for much of the time. We look forward to the return fixture in 2016.



Photos: Top, Andrew Symonds presenting original painting of Cuckfield.

Above, Chairman consults with Janine as to where we shall walk in the formal procession. Rene Deblangy, chairman of the Aumale twinning committee is in the light suit on the left.

Left, morning coffee with a shot of calvados in phials we saw being made in Aumale.

Sound like fun? Join CEA today....

If you like the sound of what we get up to, why not join us? We'd love to hear from you. Membership is just £10 per year. Contact Janine Watts by email at janine.watts@gmail.com. Or visit the website: www.cuckeuro.co.uk



Visiting St Omer

By Kenneth and Candy Hood

It's early morning and the sun is up more than I am. Candy and I are unsure about our first outing with the CEA. No worries, almost before the dawn chorus we are ready to rock and roll. A cheery group of adventurers are off on a coach trip to St Omer in the Pas de Calais. All aboard Mr David's coach and next stop is coffee at the Eurotunnel terminal.

Then our only mishap; an overzealous lady lowers the barrier on the coach as we are passing. A missed train and paperwork later and we are on our way.

Our first glimpse of France is an encouraging sunlit pastoral scene, just as it should be. In no time at all we are in St Omer, where (by design?) it's market day! Great, soon we are in a queue at the patisserie, stocking up on edible delights. Then round the market and into the Cathedral (pictured above), which lived up to its billing but was 'a bit chilly'. Off to a bar for an apero and on to lunch.

Next to the main event, the glass works at Arques. A great tour followed, with insights into the infernal mixing of sand and gas flames to make thousands of glass products, some mundane, some very pleasing. Then followed the only shopping opportunity; the tour must have been planned by a man. Bravo, Christian!

Back on the coach and before we knew it back in Kent, our last coffee break. The drive back to Cuckfield was uneventful arriving exactly on time.

When can we sign up for the next trip? Thanks to all involved in the organisation for such a great day out.

Dates for your diary

Karlstadt visit

We are invited to Karlstadt to celebrate, amongst other things, their wine festival. 5th-8th September. Book your own flights from Heathrow and share lifts in cars there and back. Friday: Lufthansa 901 at 0930 or BA 906 at 0820. Monday: Lufthansa 936 at 1815 or BA 0911 at 1840. Please let Andrew Symonds know when you have booked.

Boules

We shall have a one day tournament on Saturday 4th October at Marshalls as before.

Start at 1.30pm and finish before dark. Cash bar and nibbles provided. £3 per entrant and visitors free. Ensure you are registered to play with Roy and Rosemary Gooderham by 27th September. Royleongacre@aol.com or phone 457560.

Remember you can warm up every first and third Monday of the month at Beech Hurst 6-8 pm.

Novemberfest

This is a German/French lunch with sausages, cheeses and wines from both our twin towns on Saturday 15th November at 12 noon in the Jacobean Hall on the first floor of the Old School. Cost £15 per head, under 16s £8 each. Book your place with Andrew Symonds by 1st November: andrew.ajims@gmail.com or 412409. Visitors expected from both towns, so accommodation may be required. This will be a first when we have entertained both twin towns at the same time in Cuckfield.

Christmas event

We return to Borde Hill again on Saturday 13th December at 7.30 for 8pm. Local entertainment and splendid canapés as before. Cost £16 per head. Book the date in your diary now.

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Surprise, surprise!

VILLAGE GREEN

By Margaret Tyzack More, Cuckfield Local

Thank you to everyone who so mindfully brings their milk bottle tops and hard plastic lids to our table at the Cuckfield Local Monthly Market. These all go to be recycled, as you know. How inspiring to see so many of us are doing our bit for our environment; tiny brush strokes in the bigger picture.

'Thereby hangs a tale' as my old father used to say. One warm, sunny Sunday morning there was a knock on my door and who should be standing there but two Cuckfield Local buddies. With much laughter, they said that they had something for me. Eyes covered, I was taken to the boot of their car. What could it be? When the hands were removed from my eyes, what did I see? Four large black sacks filled with milk bottle tops – 19.6kg to be precise! To say that I was surprised was an understatement. How this came about is intriguingly synchronous. It happened like this; Pete and Sarah had been taking items to the Recycling Facility in Burgess Hill. It seems that there was a gentleman asking in which tip to put a bag of milk bottle tops that had been collected for recycling. True to the ethos of Renew, Repair, Recycle my trusty colleagues immediately jumped in with "Can we take those?" The gentleman was delighted and told them that he had four bags in all. As his car was parked next to theirs the transfer was speedily achieved and the rest, as they say, is history.

The happy ending to this tale is that all the tops collected by that initiative will, in future, find their way to the Cuckfield Local Market.

The next one will be on 13th September 9.30am – 12.30pm, so do come and find us in the lovely courtyard behind Mansell McTaggart Estate Agents opposite the Co-Op. This is only a few steps from our old venue at the Talbot.

There is a timeless feel to local food producers selling together just a stone's throw away from where the Market was held in the days of the hustle and bustle of stage coaches coming and going. A time thread through history keeping our traditions in a changing world. The Talbot is still a hostelry, whilst The Kings Head released its status some time ago. In A Chronicle of Cuckfield, Maisie Wright tells us that 'In 1255 King Henry III granted to John, Earl Warenne, a charter giving him the sole right to hold a market and collect his dues in Cuckfield on Tuesdays, and to hold a fair on the feast and the morrow of the Nativity of St. Mary (8th & 9th September)'. This year the Cuckfield Show and the Market are being held on 13th September bringing both our historic traditions together.

If you have recently moved to the village, wanting to know more about Cuckfield Local and all that we do, email Margaret at makaet@yahoo.co.uk.

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Feature walls

DESIGN AT HOME

By Fiona Evans, Limited Editions

If you are tired of your beige sitting room or your bedroom fades into whiteness, an easy solution is to blast your interior with an accent wall to give it life and personality. There are many ways to do this successfully. Decide which wall you would like to draw attention to, such as a chimney breast, a wall behind the dining table, the wall behind the bedhead or an alcove, any of which would be noticed as soon as you enter the room or turn a corner.

In addition to being decorative, a feature wall can be used to alter the shape of your interior by shortening or widening the space. Generally speaking warm colours such as red, orange and yellow advance, making the wall appear closer so shortening the area, and cool colours such as green, blue and purple do the opposite, so the wall seems further away, but watch out as dark tones also advance and pale tones recede.

Injecting colour into a white interior creates depth and focus and speaks individuality but if you would rather stick with white or cream try adding different textures to the mix to add depth. A raised wallpaper or patterned in neutral greys on one wall for example, along with fabrics using a selection of textures, will encourage shadows and a more lively interior. Embracing a new look by painting a bold colour on one wall and using accessories in accent creates a dramatic effect and by using opposing colours on the colour wheel such as red and green generates maximum impact. Taking the idea a step further, use two or more paint colours and paint the wall in stripes or blocks. Alternatively, be creative and use stencils to decorate your wall in a bespoke design.

Wallpaper can be used very successfully to decorate an accent wall; choose a large statement design for impact or a theme such as a vintage chintz, one with a texture, something with a bit of sparkle, a raised design or even a pleated paper. If it's eye catching or unusual it will generate a 'wow'!

Murals add atmosphere by adding another world to the corner of your room or alcove behind your sofa. A sunset, a lakeside view, beautiful trees or even classical columns, there are many to choose from, or papers with a theme such as shelves of books or a map of the world.

It doesn't have to be paint or wallpaper. An accent wall can be created using other materials such as wooden panelling or planks laid vertically or horizontally. Fabric walling can add another dimension, as can mirrors or collections of things. Consider the way the light falls on to the wall to help your choice. Exposed brickwork might work for you in the right environment or for those lovers of industrial style who are brave enough, how about a small area panelled in corrugated iron or wire mesh?



Cuckfield at war

By Jacob Abbasi

Despite it being a century since the First World War, it is still being relived through a huge range of captivating exhibits at museums around the globe.

Our small village of Cuckfield played a vital role in this war and where better to find the tales of valour hidden on our doorstep than the village History Museum itself. The museum is currently holding an exhibition, A Small Town at War, in which a variety of displays help uncover the true effects of the war on Cuckfield. Visit the museum for the background to intriguing stories, such as how Percy Brooker used merely bread and a mess tin to illegally smuggle a pair of German Field Glasses back to his family in England!

Furthermore, belongings of a soldier, Fred Manwell, are on display, giving an insight into this Cuckfield resident who, against all odds, survived the war after 3 serious injuries, including a gassing! If you're more interested in art, then the captivating sketches found in a local artist's sketch book will intrigue you, as they did me. Geoffrey Squire's sketchbook is filled with great depictions that will help you visualise the conditions of life at war on the front lines; such thought-provoking images as 'The Hour of Solace' are displayed alongside a clock, belonging to the artist, made out of a propeller of a WWI Wolseley plane!

In my opinion, what sets Cuckfield Museum apart from other museums is the community aspect; benefit greatly from residents loaning and donating the curious and remarkable exhibits that you will find throughout the exhibition. Even whilst visiting I witnessed an ex-soldier offering to loan some of his many WWI, II and Korean War medals assembled from various places over the years. It is clear that the museum has a give and take relationship



with Cuckfield, as it equally shares its insight into the village's past and at the same time requires the village itself to have the interesting history it most definitely has!

Main image: Red Cross 'Dorothy' bag; and top, right: detail of the Dorothy bag label with the name FR Manwell written on.

Top left: Percy Brooker; below: WWI German field glasses, smuggled home by Percy Brooker.

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Cycling the Marmotte Granfondo

Congratulations to the four Cuckfield dads who braved the gruelling Marmotte Granfondo to raise money to buy a portable defibrillator machine for the village. Now safely back home, Paddy Westbury (inset above) gives his account of the ride – heralded as the toughest one day cycle event in Europe.

By Paddy Westbury

In the past I've run a number of marathons and I've cycled from John O'Groats to Land's End and from London to Paris in 24 hours in the pouring rain, but they were nothing compared to a mere 100 miles in the Alps!

The Col du Telegraphe and Galibier combine at over 7,000ft of vertical ascent in 20 miles, so that's about 20 times up Ditchling Beacon. But in reality it's nothing like that – if only it were that easy!

On my journey to the airport, my jolly cabbie asked me what I had in the enormous bag and where I was going. When I explained, he told me a cyclist had died in an accident on Alp d'Huez the day before. I was already nervous and that did nothing for my confidence!

Driving to the resort I got my first experience of the famous Alp D'Huez climb. Unfeasibly steep, especially at the base, and busy with traffic and cyclists, it made me feel sick and want to go home! This was nothing like I had imagined and so hot too.

Our hosts said it was better from a bike, so, upon arrival I spun about half way down and back up to ease my fears. It proved there is nothing in southern England or the UK that can prepare you for the Alps. I now understand why all the Pros live in southern Europe!

To get a feel for the area, we cycled on the balcony road that runs around the cliff about 3000ft above the valley. The whole place was buzzing, Nine thousand serious cyclists from all over the world descending on one small alpine village. The atmosphere was electric.

After a tense and sleepless night and an early breakfast, we made our way to the start in the valley below Alp D'Huez.

In common with all big European cycle events, the elite riders went off first with a cavalcade of cars and support vehicles, then those with good previous times, then the rest, including us!

With a cut off time of 10 hours to complete the 100 miles and 16,000ft of climb and get back to the foot to qualify for the final mountain climb, we were keen to get started. For the first 10 miles, down the valley toward Grenoble, we stayed in our group. With huge groups of riders whizzing past full of adrenalin and flag waving crowds we felt like Pros.

Then it's a sharp right towards the Col du Glandon. The main climb was about 4,000ft of vertical ascent in 12 miles, with familiar wooded Wealden-style climbing at first.

At these low speeds you don't generate any wind and it was already getting very hot. I stopped in a village to dunk my head in a fountain of ice cold alpine water!

We started to spread out, with Adrian and Chris pulling away and Nick and I trying to conserve energy.

We climbed to the top of Glandon – too hot and shocked to enjoy the vista, eyes fixed on what I hoped was the top and invariably wasn't.

At the top of Glandon we stopped for food. Now for the bit I was fearing most - the infamous descent of The Glandon. This part of the route has claimed many victims over the years and leaving the top you are reminded, in 4 languages, about the dangers of the next 10 miles. It was every bit as notorious as its reputation suggests and we soon came across the emergency services attending some poor soul who'd just ridden off the mountain.



Chris is an amazing and fearless descender and he quickly left the rest of us. Adrian and Nick followed, with me bringing up the rear. The descent was long and dangerous, heavily wooded on one side with steep ravines the other and lots of blind bends and drops. As we travelled on we passed all too many accidents. My hands and forearms ached with pain from braking and just hanging on – I certainly hadn't trained for this!

Next was a 15 mile drag along the Murrienne Valley to Saint Michelle de Murrienne and the start of the Col du Telegraphe. It's pretty flat but we still climbed over 1,000 feet.

Combined the Col Du Telegraphe/Galibier total more than 20 miles at an average gradient of 7% - that's steeper than Ditchling Beacon. We stopped for food about halfway at Valloire. By this time I was getting cold and started to cramp. I knew it was time to get back on my bike and warm up my muscles.

Cramp hit me a couple more times as I climbed steadily to the head of the valley. I passed a sign saying 10km and it suddenly dawned on me that this meant almost an hour and 45 minutes of climbing at my current pace!

I was almost at the head of the valley when I noticed the ramp on my right. It's a monster – horrible all the way to the top. From now on it was just ramps, blind turns, twists and more torture. People were walking, one chap threw his bike down.

I was at a low when a cheery group of Irish chaps from the next chalet passed me shouting "Hello Paddy, fancy seeing you!" Amazingly my spirits lifted; I battled on.

About 5km from the top, on a desolate plateau, I passed a cheese shop and spent the next half hour wondering who wrote their business plan? Passing trade and the internet probably didn't figure in it but it was open! The last miles to the top of Galibier were beyond cruel and included the 300ft steep tunnel used on the Tour de France.

At the top I got off my bike cold, tired, alone and emotional. I took a few photos and thought about Paul Hagan. I wish he'd been with us. We had planned to write his name in paint on Alp D'Huez but a huge storm had

prevented this, so I wrote it in the snow at the top of Galibier and resolved that someday Chris, Nick, Adrian and I will get him up there.

The road leaving the summit is like cycling off a 8,500ft high diving board and quite frankly I didn't fancy taking the plunge and very nearly called it a day.

I'm pleased I didn't, the descent was amazing – dramatic switchbacks at the top and long sweeping descents that disappeared round corners revealing new valleys and roads that wind into the distance.

On the long run back to Bourg d'Oisans the only hazards were the tunnels – most are Napoleonic and they don't seem to have been resurfaced since, with poor lighting too! The last bit of the return journey took us through what I described as 'Avatar Valley' with towering cliffs, amazing waterfalls and vivid greenery.

I reached the drinks station dazed by the hubbub of activity, people and traffic, to hear Chris confirm what I'd feared – three of us missed the cut time at the base of the Alp by just 14 minutes and hadn't qualified to complete the final climb.

After 100 miles, 16,000ft of climbing and 10½ hours in the saddle, 14 minutes separated success and failure. Part of me was annoyed – another part relieved.

We were all too shattered to talk, apart from offering the odd words of support and consolation. Even though I didn't know if I could face another 8 miles and 3,000ft of climbing in the blistering heat, once it had been taken away I felt cheated.

But more than 30% of starters don't finish, so we had company!

We were enjoying well-earned beer when the phone rang. It was Adrian who we hadn't seen since he left us around 58 miles from the finish. True to form he'd made the cut and had ridden the final Alp to claim a Silver medal in a time of 10 hours and 16 minutes!

The experience has taught me so much – especially how to value the things that are really important, so it's been worth it

Some of the chaps are already planning next year's assault on the Marmotte. Will I join them? Not next year but I'll never say never ...

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Make your own bread

ON YOUR TABLE

Focaccia bread

Ingredients

- 1.5kg/3lb 5oz strong white bread flour
- 1 x 7g/¼oz dried yeast
- 50ml/2fl oz, rape seed oil plus a little extra for oiling
- A pinch of salt
- 570ml/20fl oz/1 pint warm water

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By Simon Dennis, head chef at The Rose & Crown

A simple bread recipe you can enjoy with any meal. We make the bread daily, changing the flavours as the seasons change. We love sundried tomatoes and olives or a lovely fennel seed bread – it's always fun to play around with new flavours.



Method

1. Combine the flour, yeast, olive oil or rape seed oil and salt in a mixer with a dough hook.
2. Add the water to make a soft dough and knead in the mixer until smooth.
3. Transfer to an oiled bowl, cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place for about an hour until well risen.
4. Tip the mix out onto a floured surface and knead to knock out any air pockets. Roll the dough into an oval-like shape about 2cm/3/4in thick. Transfer to an oiled baking tray.
5. Firmly press your fingers into the surface to 'pit' the surface. For the topping, drizzle with olive oil or rape seed oil and lightly grind sea salt over the top.
6. Put a small sprig of rosemary into each pit.
7. Cover with a tea towel and set the loaf aside for another 20 minutes.
8. Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
9. Transfer the loaf to the middle shelf of the oven and cook for about 15 minutes until golden brown.
10. Let it cool on a cooling rack for 15 minutes before serving.



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What's on this month

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AND ELSEWHERE

Regular weekly classes (many are drop-in classes):

Monday

- 11am **Weigh In – Weigh Out**
12.30pm **Stretch Class**
4pm **Irish Dance**
7.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society – Dog Training**

Tuesday

- 9am **Tiny Soccerstars** for 18 months to 5 years (starts 2nd September after summer holidays)
9am **Tinkerbells** - music classes for 6 months to 4 years (starts 16th September after summer holidays)
3pm **Codanza** (starts 16th September after summer holidays)
7pm **Pilates**
6.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society – Dog Training**

Wednesday

- 10am **Stroke Communications Group**
12.30pm **Zumba Dance**
1.30pm **Modern Line Dancing** (Live Wire School of Dance)
4pm **Codanza** (starts 2nd September after summer holidays)
8pm **Best of Ballroom Cuckfield Dance Club**

Thursday

- 9am **Tumbletots**
9.30am **Pilates**
7.30pm **Social Ballroom and Latin American**

Friday

- 9am **Tinkerbells** - music classes (starts 16th September after summer holidays)

August

- 21st **Cuckfield Parish Meeting**
7.30pm Planning / 8pm Roads and Traffic

September

- 12th **Cuckfield Evening Flower Club**
Demonstrations by our own Members 7.30pm
19th **Craft Fair** 9.30am–1pm
19th **Cuckfield Evening Flower Club** 7.30pm
(Maureen Surrey 01444 482353)

August

- 30th– **Cuckfield Royal Observer Corps** nuclear bunker
31st open weekend (to visit this secret Cold War site call Phillipa Malins on 01444 452307)

September

- 5th **Free lunchtime concert** at Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield – soup will be served from 12.30 and the concert will start at 1pm. Cellist Pavlos Carvalho will perform Dvorak's Cello Concerto with pianist Louisa Lam
11th **Cuckfield Museum talk** – the Council Chamber 8pm: Charles II and His Escape Through Sussex by Helen Poole (advance booking essential: please call Mike Nicholson on 457448)
13th **Cuckfield Local Food Market** – 9.30am – 12.30pm in the Courtyard behind Mansell McTaggart Estate Agents opposite the Co-Op. Locally produced food and yummy cakes!
13th **Tour of Britain** bike race passes through Staplefield, Cuckfield & Haywards Heath 12noon–12.45pm (more info: <http://bit.ly/1zkSa4l>)
13th **Cuckfield Royal Observer Corps** nuclear bunker open day (to visit this secret Cold War site call Phillipa Malins on 01444 452307)
13th **Haywards Heath Town Day**, Victoria Park
17th **Mid-Sussex Decorative and Fine Arts Society Lecture**, Clair Hall, Haywards Heath 10.15am for 10.45am. Behind the Scenes: Curating the Art Museum by Anna Harnden (www.mid-sussexdfas.org.uk)
27th **Hopfest** by Dark Star Brewery
&28th (www.darkstarbrewing.co.uk/hopfest)

Intern sought for local association

Local business owners Peter Desmond and Jacqui Smith, who sit on the Haywards Heath & District Business Association committee, are looking for interns. The HHDBA internship programme is designed to help young people gain some practical experience working with local companies. It's a fantastic opportunity and previous HHDBA interns have progressed to successful careers with local businesses.

For further information please contact Jacqui on jacqui@homesmiths.co.uk

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