

Cuckfield *Life*

Inc. Brook St, Ansty & Staplefield

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue #26 : DecJan '15

Free



Parish Council newsletter

page 26

Tony Wilson picks up MBE

page 15

Store's owners tell their story

page 10

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By David Tingley, Editor

Welcome to the issue of the magazine closest to Christmas. That's right, not long now!

A number of things change in the village at this time of year. For one, the **Cuckfield Local Food Market** takes a well-earned break – to return to the High Street on 14th February.

In fact a number of the regular events that usually take place in Cuckfield will have one or two weeks when they aren't meeting as normal, so check out our **What's On** guide on **page 34**. We think we've managed to keep it up to date for you!

We are really privileged to have a number of great stories about local people in this packed edition.

Kate Fleming brings us news that the **late Clive Rees** has been posthumously awarded the **Order of St John** United Kingdom for Organ Donation. It's a touching story of a clearly generous man. See **page 22**.

Tony Wilson was invited last month to Buckingham Palace to receive his **MBE**, where he was delighted to discover he would be meeting HM The Queen herself at the ceremony. **Page 15** holds the full story.

Cuckfield retailer's, **Dawn Hall and Janine Watts**, who have been very much in the news since the Co-op's decision to move next door, talk to Claire Cooper about life running **Wealden Stores**. They have been blown away by the support of residents. Read what they say on **page 10**.

On that matter, and as the Co-op store is now open in the former Ship Inn, James Gaydon talks to one key player in the village protest 'drink in' – **Christian Stevenson (AKA DJ BBQ)**. As a resident of Cuckfield for nearly 12 years, his story and passion for the village become clear on **page 12**.

Back to festivities, and I hope you won't have missed the spread on **page 18** with times of all **Christmas church services in Cuckfield**. I, and all the Cuckfield Life team, wish you all a lovely Christmas-time whether you are home or away.



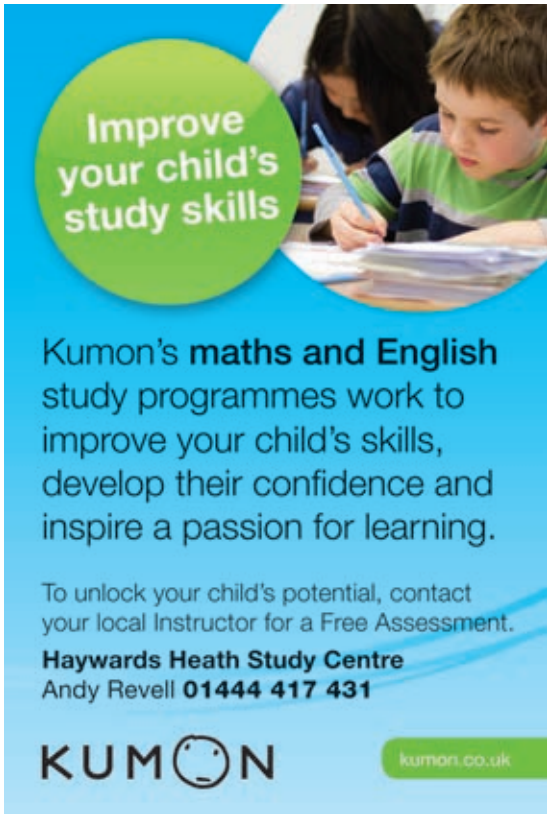
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Issue #26 – Dec/Jan 2014 – 3,400 copies printed
 Next magazine copydate: 28th December 2014
 Next magazine published: 15th January 2015

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Cuckfield Life Published by Kipper

Steve Kenward
www.stevekenward.com
 Snowy Cuckfield

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



Salon refurb complete

Hairworks, on the High Street, has recently been completely refurbished making it a bright and comfortable environment in which to relax and have your hair styled. The business, established by John Dowley, was bought by Deborah Day last June.

Deborah has more than 25 years' experience and leads a team of skilled stylists who can offer styles to meet the requirements of all clients. Many brides-to-be with their bridesmaids, visit the salon to have a coordinated theme designed for their wedding day. Deborah is also a qualified trainer and enjoys passing on her knowledge and skills to keen young apprentices.

Hairworks offers season's greetings to all of its clients and looks forward to welcoming new clients.

Coffee Morning thanks

Anna Williams, administrator at Cuckfield charity Building Heroes, wanted to thank the village: "We held our Macmillan Coffee morning earlier in December and had a great response, raising £140. We really appreciate the support for both Macmillan and Building Heroes."




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Holy Trinity Church welcomes Rev Michael Maine as new vicar



It was announced on Sunday 23rd November that the Rev Michael Maine, currently curate at St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon, Sussex, is to be the next vicar of Holy Trinity, Cuckfield.

Michael is a Cornishman by birth and as a child was a choral scholar at Truro Cathedral, where he also studied the organ. After a long career as both Organist and Director of Music at Hove Parish Church and Director of Music and Head of Lower School at St Christopher's School, Hove, Michael felt in 2008 that God was calling him to ordained ministry and he subsequently studied at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield and the University of Leeds.

Ordained in 2011 at Chichester Cathedral, Michael has served his curacy at St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon, where he led the ministry team during the year long vacancy following the departure of the Incumbent. Unmarried, Michael has the company of his dog Archie on his walks on the Downs.

It is expected that Michael will be inducted on Thursday 26th February 2015.

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Brownies fly their new flag



Brownies from Cuckfield have been flying their new flag for the very first time.

The girls, from the 2nd Cuckfield Brownies, enjoyed showing off their new flag at the recent Remembrance Sunday service.

The flag was one of two new flags bought for the Brownies, following donations from local resident Evelyn Stenning and local parents.

Brownie Guider Catherine Snashall explained: "I am in my 30th year as Brownie Guider of 3rd Cuckfield Brownies and we have always had a flag which we use on parade on Remembrance Sunday. I opened 2nd Cuckfield Brownies in 1997 and there has never been a flag for them, so they have always felt a bit left out.

"This year Evelyn Stenning, who has always lived in Cuckfield and was involved in Guiding, very kindly offered to make a substantial donation towards a new flag for each unit. The parents also donated and we are very proud of our new look bright yellow flags.

"This Remembrance Sunday, we had two very proud Brownies bearing the new flags!"

Catherine added: "As a member of the Royal British Legion Women's Section, Evelyn is a great supporter of the Brownies and visits every year to show one Brownie how to carry the flag. But this year there were two of them!"

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Affordable luxury

One Cuckfield retail business is making waves in the popular market of second-hand luxury fashion items with the launch of a new website.

Edit Boutique has a shop on the High Street but its online platform - www.editsecondhand.com - allows shoppers to sell or buy pre-owned luxury goods.

The e-commerce platform was devised by founder Rebekah Musik as a way for the discerning shopper to be able to own coveted fashion pieces for a fraction of the price and shipped to their doorstep within a matter of days.

"I wanted to allow savvy shoppers to have a place in which they can get a fair price for their designer items that are of value. But more importantly I wanted to offer customers a place to be able to buy designer items at an affordable price," said Rebekah.



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Playmeadow update

By Flis Irving

Mid Sussex District Council has approved plans to develop the Play Meadow.

Having been intimately involved over the past 22 years in trying to preserve The Play Meadow as open space for local people, I am extremely disappointed at the outcome but, sadly, not surprised.

It struck me that the sale of this informal playing field for development was politically driven by MSDC over the last 18 months or so, with real disregard for local feelings, as expressed in the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, and local efforts, exemplified in the community's bid to purchase it.

The good planning reasons why The Play Meadow should not be built upon have been repeatedly expressed at the many Council meetings leading to this last one and were put forward again on Thursday night by those who challenged the proposal. These arguments have fallen on deaf ears.

I am now actively considering with my solicitors whether there are grounds for a judicial review.

News of schools

By Councillor Pete Bradbury

Schools Expansion

The recent consultation on the provision of primary school places has now been completed. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to participate. The proposals, which include a possible expansion of Holy Trinity, are being considered. I'd be happy to hear any further views on this.

Mid Sussex Science Week

My initiative to get primary school children more interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) subjects has taken a significant step forward with the official launch at Court Meadow recently. Several local primary schools, including Holy Trinity and St Marks, have signed up for the inaugural event which will culminate in a Big Bang @ Mid Sussex science fair next summer.



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Dawn Hall & Janine Watts

VILLAGE PEOPLE

The controversial sale of The Ship and opening of the new Co-op store has been the talking point of the village for the last few months. And while many villagers have been lamenting the loss of the pub, their biggest concern has been the future of the much loved Wealden Stores.

But rest assured – store owners Dawn Hall and Janine Watts have no intention of shutting up shop. On the contrary the pair are fighting back with exciting new products and plans for the future, spurred on by the support and good wishes of the village community.

By Claire Cooper

Dawn and Janine came to Cuckfield from Colchester in September 2000, buying the Wealden Stores and moving into the adjoining house with their five young children.

"We shared a dream of moving to a village and running two 'lifestyle' businesses," said Dawn. "We began looking in Sussex and when we came to Cuckfield we fell in love with the location. The Wealden Stores had everything we were looking for – two businesses (the post office and shop) and huge accommodation with seven bedrooms - plenty of space for our two growing families."

Despite having no experience in running a shop, the pair took the plunge. "It was a very steep learning curve and we relied on the existing staff to show us the ropes," said Janine.

Initially Dawn and Janine kept the shop as it was, focusing on getting up to speed with running the business. Then it was time for a few cosmetic changes. "The shop was a little run down and tired, sort of shabby without the chic!" said Dawn. "We spruced it up and then began to change and increase the stock."

Then there were the early starts to get used to! Dawn and Janine's day starts at 5.30am when the daily papers are delivered and sorted. The doors open at 7am, to

catch the early morning trade, closing at 5.30pm. The store is open every day, including Sunday from 8am to 12 noon. "What we originally thought was a lifestyle business actually took over our lives but it's been worth it!" said Dawn.

Over the years the pair have changed direction in the store, focusing on locally sourced, fair trade and organic produce and seeking out high quality suppliers. Meat is from Clive Miller butchers in Hurstpierpoint, bread from Fellows in Ardingly, home-made curries from Chuala in Lewes, High Weald Dairy cheeses, fruit and veg from Paul's in Lindfield and there's a range of products from Infinity Foods.

"We just use our judgement and pick out things we like," said Janine. "We are happy to source and order products for customers and are always open to ideas from new suppliers."

Best sellers includes cakes, pastries and pies. "We get a lot of lunchtime trade, particularly 'builder breaks' from local tradespeople, including the builders working on the Ship!"

The latest supplier to the Wealden Stores is 'Cook' – producers of home-made frozen meals, already a firm favourite with Haywards Heath shoppers. Dawn and Janine are about to take delivery of two new freezers packed with a range of meals. "It's really exciting for us

and we think our customers will love it!" said Janine.

There are also plans to spruce up the store with new shelving. "We intend to carry on with what we're doing but be more aware of what's going well and what isn't."

When the pair first heard of the plans to convert The Ship into a convenience store, their first thoughts were not the threat to their business but the loss of their local. "We feel it's been stolen from us and we'd like it back," said Janine. "It was great living next door to a pub and we enjoyed being part of the weekly quiz nights, book club and mah-jong evenings.

"We shared a dream of moving to a village and running two 'lifestyle' businesses ... when we came to Cuckfield we fell in love with the location. The Wealden Stores had everything we were looking for ..."

"When people started asking if we were closing we were really surprised as it hadn't crossed our minds!

"It's amazing that a little shop can generate such strength of feeling and huge support."

But Cuckfield residents have a tradition of supporting the Wealden Stores long before Dawn and Janine took over – at one stage digging into their wallets to buy shop bonds to get the store back on its feet after financial difficulties.

And when Dawn and Janine were victims of a robbery in the store in 2003, villagers rallied round. "There were bunches of flowers and offers of help arriving daily – people were really shocked, as if it had happened to them," said Janine.

Knowing that residents are behind them has given Dawn and Janine the confidence to plan for the future.

"Once we knew that the Co-op was definitely going to open it was a turning point - we knew exactly where we stood and could plan ahead and just get on with it," said Dawn.

"The support has been overwhelming and we've been very touched and very humbled by all the good wishes from all our customers."

The support has included an Action Group set up by a team of loyal customers, whose campaign had included compiling and distributing promotional leaflets to advertise the store, and drum up new business. "They've been really fantastic," said Janine. "We've has so much support that we're actually feeling quite positive about the future now and feel we can co-exist alongside the Co-op quite happily.

"We've still got the post office, pay point and lottery, which will always draw people in.

"Wealden Stores is not a convenience store but a good old-fashioned village shop and that's how we want it to stay!" added Dawn. "And at the end of the day people will vote with their feet!"

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A classic winter BBQ

By James Gaydon

I'd like to introduce you to Christian Stevenson aka DJ BBQ.

Christian has been a local resident in Cuckfield for 11 years. He was raised in Maryland, America and spent some time in Colorado before moving to the UK. Christian and his wife Naya were looking for a warm friendly community with green surroundings and once they visited Cuckfield they knew they had found the place to plant their roots and make a home for themselves and future Stevensons (there are now three more!).

Sitting in The Talbot with Christian it is clear to see his appeal. With bucket loads of charisma, Christian makes everyone feel like an old friend and a part of what is going on. It is this Stevenson American charm that has made him an obvious 'face' to lead the Save The Ship campaign which has hit the local and national news. Christian, Jo Roche and the whole Cuckfield community have been doing all they can to preserve the local amenities and highlight the PR errors made by the Co-op in this latest acquisition. The campaigners did their best, battling to keep the village and its services accessible to all and keep the Co-op where it is. Christian said: "We feel totally cheated; we were lied to. Clearly the Co-op doesn't care about our community." Indeed the talk of the pub while I sat with him revolved around this ongoing situation. Everyone I spoke to seems concerned for the future of Cuckfield's High Street but they are trying to remain positive.

Christian has always been quite focused on the

Cuckfield community and is keen to get stuck in. You might have heard of Christian some years ago when he pushed through the project to build a skatepark (The Bowl) at Whitemans Green. Some local mums had recognised the need for kids to have somewhere to skate and made an appeal in the Parish news requesting further expertise. Christian – a skater/BMX rider and surfer since childhood – had just finished a BAFTA award-winning series called Rad for Channel 5 at the time. Some might say a perfect match! He was happy to step in and pull some strings to make it happen. After some design work, negotiation and some friendly arm-twisting, Christian presented the skatepark that still (seven years later) gets used by 5-50 year olds. I suggested that, in my experience, of skateparks there can sometimes be young troublemakers making the place intimidating. Christian joked saying that problem has never been an issue as the troublemakers don't like to stray far from fried chicken so tend to stay in Haywards Heath! The facility still looks good as new, despite being used by local skaters both large and small. Apparently the park is occasionally visited by dads who refuse to think they have 'lost it' desperately trying to teach their unimpressed seven year old son how an 'Ollie' should be done on an antique skateboard... so I am told!

Annoyingly, Christian (unlike me) can still grind, catch air and fakie with the best of them.

So who is this DJ BBQ character? This name sums up Christian's persona perfectly. Christian worked as a music video director for several famous acts, such



as Jamiroquai and Reef, and he met Naya on the set of an Oasis music video. Sony spotted his talent and signed him to direct and produce further music videos. Afterwards, Christian committed to doing a two year stint at Kerrang radio, where he became a popular DJ, and won two Sony awards including the prestigious 'Best Radio Station'. Missing his family, he quit while on top and worked around the country DJ-ing at festivals and all the while using any opportunity to showcase his other passion – food, or more specifically: BBQ food.

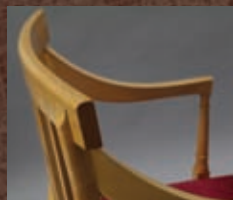
It wasn't long before this charismatic character came to the attention of Jamie Oliver and DJ BBQ was born. Jamie was impressed by Christian's ability to enthuse people about the food he made and the style in which he presented his food and himself! Christian is a big fan of 'spandex' (or, as we say, Lycra) and certainly makes an impression! Jamie soon had Christian in the studio filming a pilot show and when the camera stopped rolling Jules Oliver requested a lesson in how to mix a record. A fair exchange Christian thought. Jamie then started Food Tube, an emerging digital food channel, and he called upon Christian to be part of the Food Tube family which now boasts a cool million (plus) subscribers. Food Tube has quickly become the largest digital channel in Europe and the third largest in the World.

Christian humbly acknowledges the part that Jamie has had in promoting his cooking, and classes Jamie as a friend who has helped and inspired him in equal measure. With Jamie's backing, Christian has released his first book which went straight to number one on Amazon knocking Jamie's book off the top spot. Apparently Jamie took it well, partly I think because Jamie's other book was sitting comfortably at number three.

Christian still works alongside major names in the catering and entertainment industry, and unsurprisingly Christian describes his industry as Catertainment. A fair enough description I guess.

Far too quickly I have reached my word count limit. No time to tell you about his wonderful family, The World Domino Championships, The Uncle Bens campaign to get families to cook together, Red Bull Extreme Fighters or Christians connection to the Gemini Astronauts. There is so much more...

Christians next move is to open a pop-up restaurant. Watch this space. I will definitely be ordering The Ultimate Cheeseburger... or shall I have the Turkey Super Club Sandwich... ah, man, I dunno, they are all too good!



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Tony Wilson honoured with an MBE

A Cuckfield man who led a £135 million project to extend the British Museum, and create state of the art research facilities, has been rewarded with an MBE.

Tony Wilson, of Ledgers Meadow, travelled to Buckingham Palace last month to receive his award from Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by his wife Mandy and sons Eoin, 16 and Ben, 13.

"It was quite surreal," said Tony. "I have spent so much of my working life driving past the Palace without ever thinking I'd have the opportunity to go inside, and there we were, walking in through the front gates, with tourists taking photos of us wondering who we were!"

"It was a great experience and one we will all remember for a very long time."

Tony recalled how the honour came as a complete surprise. "I remember sitting on the edge of the bed staring at the letter and wondering who was having a joke at my expense!"

"I never thought anything like this would come my way."

The ceremony took place on 11th November - Remembrance Day. "We travelled to London the day before and went to see the poppies at the Tower of London, which certainly added significance to the day," said Tony.

Recipients don't find out until the morning of the ceremony which member of the Royal family will present the honours, so Tony was delighted to hear that he would be meeting the Queen.

"We had a brief chat and I spoke about my work with the British Museum over the past 7 years," said Tony, who also enjoyed chatting to other honours recipients and their families, who included Stephen Sutton's mother. "She's a really lovely person and it was great to meet her. The ceremony must have been a bitter-sweet moment for her, as she received the award on behalf of

her late son who had inspired the nation by raising so much money for charity in spite of his terminal illness.

Tony was nominated for the honour by the director and deputy director of the British Museum for his role as Project Director for the development of the £135 million World Conservation and Exhibition Centre.

Work started on the project early in 2008, and the building opened earlier this year. The work involved creating a new temporary exhibition space, complete with state of the art workshops and laboratories for the research team which includes 25 scientists.

The building also includes the largest lorry lift of its type - big enough to carry a 45 tonne articulated lorry (the biggest on the roads today). "It's the equivalent of a 580 person lift," said Tony. "The installation of the lift means the museum can now move the largest of the objects in the collection with relative ease, which minimises the risk of damage in the process."

The new six storey building was slotted into a gap between two wings in the museum's north-west corner. "The biggest challenge was not to disrupt the day to day running of the museum, or damage any of the priceless objects in the surrounding buildings," said Tony. "As most of the building is underground, and we had to dig down four floors, it was quite an achievement. I think the award was mainly for not breaking anything!"

Tony feels the MBE really belongs to the team he led.

"I was extremely surprised to be singled out in this way, as the award is really a reflection of what we achieved as a team," he said. "Every member of the team deserves recognition. But it's nice to think that my sons can now get married at St Paul's Cathedral!"

Tony has now moved onto his next, equally prestigious project - the redevelopment of facilities at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

Celebrations

VILLAGE GREEN

By Margaret Tyzack More, Cuckfield Local

Well, here we are again thinking food, presents, tinsel and holly for the season of good cheer, making merry and general celebration. How lucky we are to live in this unique village of Cuckfield. That's truly a cause for celebration. Just think of the beautiful countryside around us. The smaller communities within the greater, from nimble knitters to the Cuckfield Cosmos Youth Football Club with everything in between, that come together at our Christmas Tree Festival showing just how much heart there is here on our patch.

At the Cuckfield Local Monthly Market we bring local food to the village and many of you come to buy. Just a thought, can we make a new habit of looking for local food where we can? There's lots of lovely produce grown in Sussex, so you could make Cuckfield the center of your food circle, the first ring being Sussex grown then widening to the South of England then on to the rest of the UK. From the supermarket labels you can see just where what you are buying comes from. This is very important now that much of our food-producing land in Sussex is going under the concrete carpet, destroying wild life and losing biodiversity for ever. As Tony Whitbread, CEO of our Wildlife Trust, said in a recent blog: "So we get back to the old 'your money or your life' approach of balancing the economy against the environment."

When it comes to wrapping our presents the sparkly, shiny metallic paper is most appealing but can it be recycled? Probably not. Had you thought about good old brown paper? "Boring!" Not when you decorate the parcel yourself with pictures of, say, footballs for the footy fans, princesses for your Belle or Rapunzel and so on. It shows that you are aware of the receiver's interests, which in turn marks your interest in them. This goes for birthdays, too, at any time of year. Scraps of bright material make good parcels too.

After all the rush is over, the decorations put carefully away, it's time for the New Year Resolutions. Is this an idea, a tradition that we follow or, in truth, just another passing thought? I wonder. However, it's never too late as they say. Could you take a moment to reflect on the powerful difference you could make by deciding to do just one thing differently from now on? Buying local food as often as possible? Welcoming a newcomer to our village? Collecting your milk bottle tops if you don't already? Talking of tops, the Market will not be held in January as usual but we shall be up and running again in February (14th). We look forward to seeing you there to buy the goodies and bring your tops and lids for recycling.

Until then, 'May Peace and Plenty be the first to lift the latch on your door and Happiness be guided to your home by the candle of Christmas.' Irish Blessing.

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Christmas services at Holy Trinity Church

Sunday 14th December

8am Holy Communion
9.45am Parish Communion – address
from Bridget Pepper of KSS Air
Ambulance
6pm Christmas Tree Festival Carol
Service

Sunday 21st December

8am Holy Communion
9.45am Family Carol Service
6pm Service of Lessons & Carols

24th December Christmas Eve

2.30pm Crib Service in Church
4.30pm Crib Service in Church
4.30pm Stable Service in The Old School
(These services are ticketed (free)
available from the Church Office during
office hours Monday to Friday 9am to
12 noon)
11.15pm Midnight Eucharist of the
Nativity

25th December Christmas Day

9.45am Parish Communion for Christmas

Sunday 28th December

8am Holy Communion
9.45am Parish Communion
6pm Evening Prayer



“For unto you is born this day
in the city of David a **Saviour**,
who is **Christ the Lord.**”

Luke 2 v 11

Sunday 21st December @ 4pm

carols round the tree with a short service
and seasonal refreshments

meet at the top of Polestub Lane

Thursday 25th December @ 10.30am

Christmas Day Service



Cuckfield Baptist Church, Polestub Lane, RH17 5GP
for more info contact 01444 473531 or
david@cuckfieldbaptistchurch.co.uk

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Clive Rees: generosity in life and death

By Kate Fleming

In 2010 Clive Rees won the Cuckfield Village Hero Award for his generosity, care and concern, his heroic behaviour towards his friends and neighbours in the High Street and beyond. In 2014 he was, posthumously, awarded the Order of St John United Kingdom Award for Organ Donation, presented by Jonathan Lucus High Sheriff of West Sussex to his widow Annie Rees on 29th October during a ceremony at St John's Ambulance Headquarters in Brighton. Two significant honours presented in life and death to a man with a wealth of rich human qualities which managed to affect us all.

December is a special month when we celebrate a Christian festival in a variety of ways. Irrespective of our religious beliefs we still manage to indulge – eat, drink, spend, party too much – work, sleep, exercise, earn too little. Most of the time we love it but can be heard to moan about commercialism, materialism, children's outrageous expectations... We were lucky if we got an orange, a handful of nuts and a jigsaw puzzle... we reminisce, but, in spite of this, giving and receiving remain an integral part of our Yuletides. So the truly wonderful example of Clive Rees's decision in life to donate his organs in death provides an appropriate opportunity to reflect and consider at this time of the year.

When Clive tragically and suddenly died in April last year he was put on a life support machine for twenty four hours. Not, sadly, because his life would be restored but in order to keep his organs in working order before they were removed to continue to work for others. A precious time for his widow and family who had time to be with him and say their goodbyes. In medical situations such as Clive's you are only put on life support if you are a donor.

Since this tragedy the benefits to others have slowly been revealed.

A 22 year old man has Clive's liver and can now look forward to a normal healthy life.

A 56 year old woman has no signs of rejection from his kidneys, which are functioning extremely well for her. Anonymously she says: "I can now travel to go and see my grandchildren who I've never met before, as I was unable to travel due to my dialysis commitment four times a day for the past five years ... Saying thank you



just doesn't seem like enough when what somebody does is basically save your life" (One extremely grateful woman. Letter to the Donor Family. 23/8/13)

Clive would have thought 'thank you' was quite enough! His attitude to organ transplantation was unusual as it is not part of our cultural thinking or practice. However, three people die every day waiting for organs that we all have to give in death whatever age or gender we might be.

So at this wonderful, magical, tinselled time of the year, when we give and receive with gratitude and love, perhaps you could give a thought to the supreme act of generosity that Clive Rees showed in life and death, and hopefully embark on 2015 with the resolution that you will sign up for organ donation and really embrace the true meaning of the Christmas spirit in the knowledge that through organ transplantation people can be re-born, their lives transformed and Christmas welcomed and enjoyed.

Not unlike Mr Scrooge 172 years ago this month in A Christmas Carol, we could even take a leaf out of the reformed Scrooge's book. He was better than his word, like Clive Rees, he did it all, and infinitely more.

Concluding this great festive novel Charles Dickens celebrates Scrooge's rebirth, his new generous life:

'and it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us. And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, Everyone.'

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Christmas Lunch

FROM THE MAYOR'S TABLE



By Rob Helliwell

On Friday 5th December The Independent State of Cuckfield hosted the Senior Citizen's Annual Christmas Lunch, and I, once again, donned my robes for this unique village event.

The Queen's Hall was the venue and a delicious seasonal lunch was provided for the 88 pensioners, plus Christmas crackers, wine, and presents delivered by the one and only Father Christmas. Waitresses dressed in the colours of Christmas, sporting Santa hats, reindeer horns and shining stars on their heads served the food, and the wine flowed...

As the coffee arrived entertainment was started by the Holy Trinity Primary School Choir. The children sang carols for the guests, enchanted us with their beautiful voices, and allowed Christmas to really begin for both young and old. Then it was time for the Singing Allsorts and the Cuckoo Choir to join forces and mingle throughout the hall, and with the help of Tony Elphick, in twinkling bow tie, to lead the 'Sing Along'.

We sang our hearts out to 'I'm dreaming of a White Christmas' and participated enthusiastically in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. Perhaps this was, I reflected, a reminder that the art of entertaining ourselves has not been entirely extinguished.

As always on occasions like this many people had worked hard to provide such a splendid community feast. So I would like to thank, on behalf of The Independent State of Cuckfield, Annie Rees, Lesley Horne and their amazing culinary and supporting teams on this their swansong Christmas lunch. Also the drivers who drove the diners, the choirs who entertained, and Year 10 Warden Park pupils who welcomed and assisted with such charm and maturity. Sainsbury's who generously supplied the bread and rolls, and everyone who made such a significant contribution to a memorable Cuckfield afternoon.

'I could have danced all night' we sang to conclude the festivities, as 90 year old Peggy Swain waltzed graciously round with her partner.

How tempting that would be I thought, but I needed to get back to The Wheatsheaf and take off the robes in readiness for my next official appearance.

Happy Christmas and a peaceful rewarding 2015 to everyone.



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Dedicate a light to someone special with St Catherine's Hospice

St Catherine's Hospice's annual Tree of Light remembrance services are taking place during the first three weeks in December.

Tree of Light is a collection of remembrance services held around Sussex and Surrey that are organised by St Catherine's Hospice. The largest service is held at K2 Leisure Centre in Crawley and features readings and songs, giving the chance to honour the memory of someone who has passed away.

Anyone can attend, regardless of whether they have lost someone recently or some time ago and whether that person was cared for by St Catherine's or elsewhere. Losing someone is one of the hardest things we have to face and many people find comfort in attending Tree of Light for the chance to pause, reflect and remember the life of someone special as Christmas approaches. Every year the St Catherine's Hospice Tree of Light services honour around 3,000 people.

Karen Norman, Patient & Family Support Team Manager at St Catherine's, said: "Many people find a lot of comfort in being able to take a moment to remember those who will not be with them this Christmas. The sense of support that comes from attending the service with people who have experienced a similar loss is incredibly important. Our Tree of Light services are open



to everyone and, if you would prefer not to attend our largest service in Crawley, there are others taking place across Sussex and Surrey."



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BPM showcase dance at wellness event

Dancers from the popular Cuckfield-based dance school - BPM - will be showcasing their talent at a forthcoming health event in Haywards Heath.

The Heart of Sussex Health & Wellness Expo 2015 is being held on Thursday 22nd January at Clair Hall, and is the brain-child of local business owners Christian Bates and Maxine Hayes. The event's keynote speaker will be Ray Edwards MBE, a quad amputee who has an inspirational story of come-back since his operation in 1987. Ray now heads up Limbcare - a charity offering hope, advice and peer support to the limb impaired and those affected around them. All proceeds from the night will be donated to Limbcare.

Maxine Hayes, of Potential Personal Training, comments: "Ray's story is an amazing one. When we talk about health and wellness it always starts with what we've got. Ray will share how he made a decision to 'fight' in order to get fit and move on with the rest of his life. It will be emotional, highly charged and a great start to anyone's 2015!"

The event starts at 7pm and all attendees will get a VIP Goody Bag. BPM Dance Academy will have all three crews at the event to provide some high energy entertainment. For tickets and information see: www.midsussexwellness.co.uk

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Cuckfield

PARISH COUNCIL

News from Cuckfield Parish Council

WINTER 2014

Cuckfield's new Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

In October we unfortunately had to say 'goodbye' to Nicky Sage, who decided to step down as Parish Clerk & RFO to pursue new opportunities. Following a recruitment campaign, the Parish Council is pleased to welcome the appointment of Annette Jones as our new Clerk. Many of you will already know Annette as, although now based in East Sussex, she lived in Cuckfield for nearly 24 years. We are confident that her business background as a Company Secretary will give her a valuable insight into the complexities of the Parish Clerk's role. You need only to look elsewhere in this report at the accounts of the Council's recent activities to see how wide-ranging the Clerk's responsibilities are, from legal, financial and staff management to day to day administration.

Free Senior Railcards

If you are eligible for a free bus pass but do not require one, you may choose instead to have a free Senior Railcard. The form is available at the Parish Office or it can be downloaded from: www.westsussex.gov.uk/buses. To renew a free Senior Railcard, telephone the West Sussex Bus Pass Information Line: 0845 075 1018 (local rate) for a promotional code which will be sent in the post. Then either go to www.senior-railcard.co.uk or telephone 08448 714036 to complete the transaction.

Statement from Co-op

On 26 November 2014 the Parish Council received the following news from The Co-operative Food who has responded to residents, businesses and Parish Council requests, deciding the existing store in the High Street will remain open, at least for a while. You will note The Co-operative Food will 'revisit the decision in the months ahead' and so it is now up to Cuckfield and surrounding areas to continue to generate demand so that, hopefully, the High Street store can exist in unison with the new store at Whitemans Green.

The Co-Operative to serve Cuckfield and Whitemans Green

The Co-operative Food has announced that it is to continue to serve the residents of Cuckfield and Whitemans Green by keeping its High Street store open alongside its new store on the site of the former Ship public house.

Samantha Moore, Regional Acquisitions Manager for The Co-operative Food, said: "Over recent weeks we have been contacted by a number of residents and businesses regarding our plans for Cuckfield, and we have also been in liaison with the Parish Council. In addition, representatives of The Co-operative Food were in the village recently to reassess the feasibility of keeping the two stores open.

"We have concluded that keeping both branches open is the best course of action for the village at this time. We will monitor progress carefully and revisit this decision in the months ahead.

"As a community retailer we are committed to supporting the communities in which we operate, and we hope that this illustrates that we are listening to feedback from residents.

"In addition to our existing store, our new store on Whitemans Green – which is due to open on 4 December – will include a bakery, an excellent fresh food department including meat, fruit and vegetables, and a community information area. This will greatly improve the shopping experience for the people of the village."



Street Lighting

All street lighting and illuminated road signs within Cuckfield are currently being replaced as part of a government funded project to ensure all lighting columns conform to current safety and energy efficiency standards.

The Parish Council saw an opportunity to maintain the heritage of the village and bring uniformity back to some of the light fittings previously replaced on a piecemeal basis. As a result, we are funding some of the columns so that all Conservation Areas will have heritage style columns and the main through routes (London Road, London Lane, Ardingly Road, and South Street south of the Conservation Area) will have a combination of heritage columns and 'swan neck' brackets. All side roads will have standard columns.

Currently new columns are being installed with the standard type due to a shortage of Heritage fittings. Where appropriate, they will be refitted with the Heritage embellishments at a later date.

Please note that West Sussex County Council policy is that all residential lighting will now switch off at the midpoint of night, approximately midnight, and remain off for five and a half hours, switching on again at around 5.30am if still dark. The main through routes will be on all night but will 'dim' after midnight to 60% of normal level.

Ardingly Road Zebra Crossings

The two crossing points in Ardingly Road, one near to Bylanes Close and the other at Longacre Crescent, are being replaced by zebra crossings. The scheme has gone through a lengthy process from design stage through to approval from WSCC. Unfortunately, there have been a number of setbacks along the way that the Parish Council have had to deal with, the latest being an objection to the scheme during the public consultation period. The issue raised has now been resolved and on 26th November we received the final Highways sign off. This now means the scheme can go ahead and a date to book the highway space is being sought.

Youth Centre – London Lane

As reported previously, the Parish Council successfully registered the Youth Centre as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and was successful in its bid to purchase the land and building for £200,000 to protect it for the community. The Centre hosts the Cuckfield Pre-School Playgroup and provides space for young people with learning difficulties and other youth groups for the Parish and wider District. With the loan in place, we are now in final contract negotiations with WSCC and working hard to proceed to completion in the coming weeks. Costs of maintaining the current building are likely to be high and, in the short term, the Parish will run the building in its current condition. However, the plan is to look at providing a new building, which will require significant funds, and we anticipate seeking a mix of grants and fundraising for such a major community project.

The Youth Centre will be available for hire, and facilities include sports hall, social room, small outside area and kitchen. Please contact the Parish Clerk for further details.

Planning

After all the hard work and tremendous effort which went in to getting a Neighbourhood Plan in place for Cuckfield, it was formally 'made' by the Secretary of State on 1 October 2014. We have seen how it is having an impact on the shape of the village with decisions on a number of prospective developments made where Plan policies have been a critical factor in the outcome. These include a proposal for 20 new houses on the open field along Broad Street and two garden 'infill' properties in Bylanes and Ardingly Road which have been refused by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). However, work does not stop there and our attention now turns to monitoring the Plan, including evaluating progress towards delivering its spatial vision and assessing the extent to which policies are implemented. Monitoring Indicators and Targets, which can be anything from the number of trees, hedges and ponds affected by development to the number and location of properties built, will enable some measurement of its implementation.

The Ship Inn

The community was shocked and disappointed to learn of the proposal to convert the Public House to a convenience store in September. Residents and the Parish Council fought to protect the public house in Whitemans Green Conservation Area and the potential harm to other local businesses. Due to the relaxation in 'Change of Use' under Permitted Development rights and despite significant pressure from the Parish Council, our District Councillor and tremendous efforts of 'Save the Ship' campaigners to get MSDC to apply an Article 4 Direction (acting to remove permitted development rights), planning permission was granted for associated works in the conversion.

The Parish Council are seeking Article 4 Directions on our remaining public houses to remove permitted development rights in the first instance, meaning planning applications would need to be made for change of use, and will be submitting these requests to MSDC for a decision.

Mantell Park - Bylanes Close

The last properties are nearing completion and the Council and residents have been working with the main contractor Taylor Wimpey to minimise the disruption during the construction phase. Issues remain with the original access scheme and surface water drainage scheme at the rear of the development and Taylor Wimpey have agreed to revisit the proposal for a raised table at the entrance to reduce traffic speed and improve safety for pedestrians using the Twitten. A final (Stage 3) Safety Audit will be undertaken by WSCC. The surface water scheme continues to suffer bank slippage which we are very concerned about and continue to put pressure on MSDC and Taylor Wimpey for this to be addressed.

Courtmead Road, Play Meadow

We were very disappointed to see that, despite very strong arguments by the Parish Council and our community, MSDC's Planning Committee will grant permission (subject to, at the time of writing, any new evidence coming forward) for one house on the land at the end of Courtmead Road.

Permission is being based on the District's lack of a five year housing land supply and limited harm the proposal would have, together with the point that outline permission had been achieved.

Environment

Worsley Memorial Recreation Ground

Iguanodon update – the sculpture destined for the children's play area is now in clay form ready for casting. Some of our Councillors went along to see progress recently and were very pleased with the results. A progress meeting is being held in December by MSDC, where we hope to have a date for completion for the new playground equipment.



Photo: David Thunder

Winter Advice

The Parish Council would like to ask residents to look after their neighbours and to check on any frail or vulnerable neighbours to make sure they are keeping warm and have all the essentials. We would also ask that, if safe to do so, residents clear the snow from the pavements in front of their homes. Government advice is as follows:-

'Clear snow from a road, path or cycleway - You can clear snow and ice from pavements yourself. It's unlikely that you'll be sued or held responsible if someone is injured on a path or pavement if you've cleared it carefully.'

How to clear snow and ice - when you clear snow and ice:

- do it early in the day - it's easier to move fresh, loose snow
- don't use water - it might refreeze and turn to black ice
- use salt if possible - it will melt the ice or snow and stop it from refreezing overnight (but don't use the salt from salting bins as this is used to keep roads clear)
- you can use ash and sand if you don't have enough salt - it will provide grip underfoot
- pay extra attention when clearing steps and steep pathways - using more salt may help

Calling all last year's Winter Volunteers and any new ones!

Thank you to last year's volunteers who were at the ready to help clear snow and ice from the pavements and we hope you will continue to be a volunteer this year with kits at the ready! If anyone else is interested in joining the scheme, please contact the Parish Office for further information.

Do you own a 4x4 vehicle and are you prepared to help if needed, perhaps taking an elderly person to hospital? Please contact the Parish Office with your telephone number so we can build up a list of people to contact in an emergency.

And finally...

The Parish Council would like to wish all residents and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Parish Council meetings

January - March

8th January	Planning Youth Centre (Community Building)	7.30pm 8pm
29th January	Planning Environment	7.30pm 8pm
12th February	Council	8pm
19th February	Planning Roads & Traffic	7.30pm 8pm
5th March	Annual Parish Meeting	7.30pm
12th March	Planning Finance	7.30pm 8pm
26th March	Planning Queen's Hall	7.30pm 8pm



YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

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Vice-Chairman

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The Parish Council Office in the Queen's Hall is open from 10 am–4 pm each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The Holly and the Ivy

DESIGN AT HOME

By Fiona Evans, Limited Editions

It's that time of year again! Christmas is on the way and the decorations are being unpacked and displayed. Glittery, sparkly lights, festoons of paper chains, magnificent lanterns, baubles in all shapes and sizes, musical snowmen, stylish garlands and elegant candles. Some decorations home-made by you or the kids, some collected over the years waiting to dress the Christmas tree, others bought only yesterday, then there is the holly and ivy you have just collected in order to make a wreath to hang on the front door.

Traditionally holly is associated with Christmas and its use has an interesting history. In Northern Europe it has been used in festivals for hundreds of years celebrating many beliefs; it is an important plant to Pagans with their close association to nature and Druids used it in their ceremonial headgear believing it to have magical powers as the Sun's favoured plant. In Norse mythology, beliefs associated with Thor, the god of thunder, said that the prickly green leaves prevented thunder, while in Roman mythology holly was given to the god Saturn during Saturnalia, a festival celebrating the Winter solstice. It then became important to Christians, symbolising the crown of thorns that Christ wore on the cross and the red berries the blood produced from the

thorns. Hanging holly on doors was believed to ward off evil spirits during holy days.

Ivy has been used as decoration in winter for thousands of years, the leaves symbolising eternal life and regeneration in Spring. Pagans believed it to have magical powers as the leaves stay green during winter, while the Ancient Romans used ivy to make garlands for Bacchus, the god of wine and fertility. Eventually ivy was also incorporated into Christian festivals, the heart shaped leaf symbolising eternal love.

Mistletoe is also an important greenery to have at Christmas. It has long been believed by many cultures to have the special powers of fertility. According to many, kissing under the mistletoe ensured fertility with the removal of one of the berries after each kiss. So after many kisses and the picking of all the berries, the magical powers in that particular sprig would be gone!

Making a wreath might not be on your to-do list but, if it is, there are many demonstrations on YouTube on how to make them. Briefly: attach moss to a wire frame or bent wire coat hanger, wrap wire around the moss attaching it firmly to the frame. Back the wreath with plastic to protect the area you are hanging it against, using wreath plastic or plastic from a bin liner, and attach pieces of greenery using wire pins. The wire frame and pins should be available from a florist or craft shop.

More modern examples of wreaths using all sorts of quirky items are at www.woohome.com
Happy Christmas everyone.

Historical information: www.christmasholly.net/ www.altogetherchristmas.com



**No market in January...
Next market: Sat February 14th
09:30 - 12:30 Talbot Courtyard**

Cuckfield Local would like to wish all of their customers and stallholders a very happy Christmas!

For market updates follow us on Twitter @Cuckfield Local

www.cuckfieldlocal.wordpress.com

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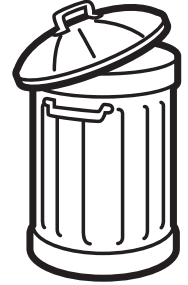
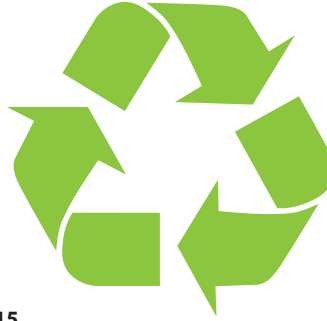
Changes to Christmas and New Year rubbish and recycling collections 2014/2015

Due collection date

Monday 22nd December
Tuesday 23rd December
Wednesday 24th December
Thursday 25th December
Friday 26th December
Monday 29th December
Tuesday 30th December
Wednesday 31st December
Thursday 1st January 2015
Friday 2nd January 2015

New collection date

Saturday 20th December
Monday 22nd December
Tuesday 23rd December
Weds 24th December
Saturday 27th December
Monday 29th December
Tuesday 30th December
Weds 31st December
Friday 2nd January 2015
Saturday 3rd January 2015



Collections go back to normal from Monday 5th January 2015

Garden Waste Collections

There are no garden waste collections 22nd December 2014 and 4th January 2015 (inclusive).
Collection calendars are available online or by contacting MSDC. Tel: 01444 477440
or email: wastematters@midsussex.gov.uk Web: www.midsussex.gov.uk/recycling

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The Weald Theatre Group's panto coming up

By Anne Skinner

Robin Hood and The Babes in the Wood will take place on 13th-17th January 2015 at Clair Hall, Haywards Heath with tickets (£5 upwards) available from Clair Hall (01444 455440). This is the 72nd panto for The Weald Theatre Group and we have raised thousands of pounds for local charities in this time. Our cast is made up of children and adults from the local area, including Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Cuckfield and Lindfield.

From Cuckfield we have Peter Bowman playing the evil Sheriff of Nottingham and Paul Ruse a lovable Will Scarlet. Our lovely leading ladies are Beth Bryant as Robin Hood and Sarah Milton as Maid Marion. Together they have performed in over 30 pantos over the years.

The show is written and directed by Lance Milton, who has been involved with the group for the last decade both on and off the stage. This year Lance and Sarah's eldest daughter Emily has her chance to tread the boards as one of the children in the chorus. More than 50 children turned up at auditions and they are split into two teams, taking it in turns to perform on alternate nights. The kids really love rehearsals and performing but are also mindful that they are raising funds for children less fortunate than themselves whilst having a great time. This year we donated £3,500 to three local charities – the Early Birth Association, Chestnut Tree Hospice and the Kangaroo Group. We welcome suggestions from the public for nominations for the forthcoming panto. So if you have a favourite children's charity let us know. Please email anneskinner0@gmail.com



Photo by Lance Milton



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Cuckfield Bonfire



Persistent rain put the dampers on this year's Cuckfield Bonfire, and despite more than 2,000 people braving the atrocious weather to enjoy the spectacular firework display, the event still looks set to make a loss.

Normally the event, held in Cuckfield Park, attracts around 7,000 people and raises thousands of pounds for charity but this year's event has left the committee contemplating the future.

Jem Lee, chairman of the society, explained: "On a normal year we would expect to take in excess of £15,000 profit, £20,000 if you include the groups selling food, but sadly this year we were beaten by atrocious weather.

"The skies opened at the worst possible time, 1.5 hrs before the fireworks were due to go up. People obviously saw the torrential, unending rain from 5:30pm and chose not to attend."

He added that the event needs to attract around 3,000 people through the gates to break even. "It's always a risk but for the last 10 years we have always beaten the weather, albeit by a narrow margin."

He estimated that the event looks set to have made a loss of around £3,000.

"We have no financial backers, so money has to be found in order to stage another Cuckfield bonfire," said Jem. "We now aim to take a fresh look at the whole event early in the new year and decide if it is viable to continue. Costs are spiralling, no-one wants to pay any more at the gate and we as a committee are personally responsible for the safety and any financial losses.

"On a brighter note, it was a fantastic choreographed

display and seems to get better every year."

The first Cuckfield Bonfire was lit 28 years ago with the aim of raising funds for the old village school. Sue and Bryan Mayou, owners of Cuckfield Park have continued to offer the use of their grounds ever since. Several years later, Richard Totman joined the bonfire team providing professional pyrotechnics set to music, and this theme continues today. "We are different from many local displays as it is all timed to high quality music," said Jem.

Today the bonfire tradition is continued by the Cuckfield Bonfire Society, a committee of 23 members whose sole aim is to organise the event. Members are mostly past and present parents of children at Holy Trinity School.

The cost of staging the event is high but charging for entry means money is raised for local charities. Profits taken from the gate go to Holy Trinity School, Woodlands Mead (formerly Court Meadow Special Needs School and Newick House Special Needs School in Burgess Hill), Kangaroos (who provide care and support for special needs children in Mid Sussex) and other local charities such as Cuckfield pre-school playgroup, Cuckfield Museum and Cuckfield Archers.

Profits from food and merchandise stalls benefit local groups and raise much needed income. This year the groups included the 1st Cuckfield Scouts, Cubs & Beavers, Friends of Warden Park School and Holy Trinity School PTA.

For more information visit their website: www.cuckfieldbonfire.co.uk

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What's on this month

AT QUEEN'S HALL

AND ELSEWHERE

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

Monday

- 9.10am **Stretch Tone**
11am **Weigh In – Weigh Out**
4pm **Irish Dance**
7.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society – Dog Training**

Tuesday

- 9am **Tiny Soccerstars** for 18 months to 5 years
9.30am **Tinkerbells** - music classes for 6 months to 4 years
3pm **Codanza**
6.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society – Dog Training**
7pm **Pilates**

Wednesday

- 9.30am **Tinkerbells** - music classes for 6 months to 4 years
10am **Stroke Communications Group**
12.30pm **Zumba Dance Fitness®**
(Live Wire School of Dance)
1.30pm **Modern Line Dancing**
(Live Wire School of Dance)
4pm **Codanza**
8pm **Best of Ballroom Cuckfield Dance Club**

Thursday

- 9am **Tumbletots**
9.30am **Tinkerbells** - music classes for 6 months to 4 years
10am **Pilates**
7.30pm **Social Ballroom and Latin American Dance**
(Live Wire School of Dance)

Friday

- 7.30pm **Evening Flower Club**
(second Friday of the month)

January

- 9th **Cuckfield Evening Flower Club** 7–10pm
16th **Historic Vehicles Preservation Trust**
7.30–10.15pm

December

- 16th **Cuckfield Evening WI Christmas Party**
Old School 8pm
21st **Family Carol Service, Holy Trinity Church** 9.45am
Service of Lessons and Carols
Holy Trinity Church 6pm
21st **Carols around the Tree** with a short service and seasonal refreshments, Cuckfield Baptist Church 4pm (01444 47353)
24th **Crib Service, Holy Trinity Church** 2.30pm
Crib Service, Holy Trinity Church 4.30pm
Stable Service, Old School 4.30pm
(entry to both Crib and Stable Services with tickets only, available free from the Church Office)
Midnight Mass, Holy Trinity Church 11.15pm
25th **Parish Communion, Holy Trinity Church** 9.45am
25th **Christmas Day Service, Cuckfield Baptist Church** 10.30am (01444 47353)

January

- 6th **Little Ones Service, Holy Trinity Church** 11am,
Come and hear a story with Fluffy the cat, sing a song and a drink and a biscuit
13th–17th **Weald Theatre Group pantomime: Robin Hood and The Babes in the Wood, Clair Hall, Haywards Heath.** Tickets (£5 upwards) available from Clair Hall (01444 455440)
20th **U3A Open Meeting, Clair Hall, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath** 2–4.30pm. A talk on THE CAMELIA BOTNAR FOUNDATION that provides training and work experience to young people in need to help them to embark on a useful career path
24th **Burns Night Celebration, Cottesmore Golf and Country Club, Horsham.** Traditional event, organised by the Mid Sussex Caledonian Society – dinner of Scottish fare (neeps and tatties and haggis, and a tot!), speeches and easy Scottish dances (contact Secretary for details and tickets 01403 713 719)

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Holy Trinity Church	18
Cuckfield Baptist Church.....	19
Cuckfield Local Food Market.....	30
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*Wishing all our clients past and present
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