

THE VILLAGER

June 2017



Piddinghoe
East Sussex

EDITORIAL

'Oh, not *another one!*' said the lady being interviewed on the TV news, on being told there was a General Election in June. Many people must have sympathised with her although we know that turning up to cast one's vote is a solemn duty we should carry out even when fed up to the back teeth with politics. Following the Referendum on the EU, have any of us known such a frenzied time of national and international politics? Perhaps a General Election is the only way to resolve whether Mrs May has the backing to carry on her own way or whether The Nation is having second thoughts. In some countries, voting is compulsory – Australia, for example – but for us, there is still a choice.

Off we trot to the polling booth, then, with some sense of occasion. Difficult to maintain that feeling in the Village Hall where all is quiet – in May, two polite ladies behind a table, one of whom was reading *The Villager* to pass the time. We hope it might have given her some sense of the village where she had volunteered to watch over the voting for hours on end. One might bump into one or two neighbours if one is lucky, and at one point, a villager appeared whose dog (non voting rights!) attempted to eat the Polling Officers' packet of biscuits. We hear of others who drifted in during the day and early evening. Somehow, it is touching to see this ritual being carried out in such small places: the call to exercise one's Citizens' Rights being enacted throughout the land, in the backwaters and the metropolitan fleshpots. We believe we are making a difference!

Then there is the aftermath. In the USA, well, what can one say? Every day brings an exciting new Twitter from the President. Mostly, the Twits are just a bit too exciting. As for France, well, they say you know you are getting old when policemen look young. How old do you feel when a 39-year-old is elected President of The Republic?

Reality will embrace them all. And us too. Oh, the disappointments, the let-downs, the emergence of feet of clay for the new lot that are as big as the feet of clay that the old lot had. One can only suppose they are doing their best even when compromise hits them in the face like a brick. The possession of intelligence has never been one of the criteria for holding public office, and sometimes it seems, it might be a handicap as one would spend too much time thinking and not enough getting things done. Things have to be done! Choices made, actions taken, plans drawn up. Not what we expected? Too late!

I suppose we would be more forgiving of anyone holding public office, if they had not wooed us with promises of making things better. But what else can they say? At least The Monster Raving Looney Party (still going!) have honestly offered us psychotic chaos. Amongst those running for public office these days, who has not promised 'to heal communities' – the current mantra that is certainly beyond the wit or ability of your average elected representative and provokes rather worrying suspicions of Delusion. At last, Christ has come amongst us!

We shall do our best to hold them to account until the next election. From the national to the local level throughout the land we shall be keeping our eye on the cost of Brexit, the functioning of the NHS and Adult Social Care, our schools, right down to planning applications and the dangers of local roads. If they can get any of that right, we shall all feel better. Not exactly 'healed' but at least someone has done something important on our behalf. Worth that short walk to the Village Hall!

The team: Sheila Redman (Chair), Gill Davies, Bill Pierce, Sue Massey, David Aicken.

PIDDINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL 2017

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Piddinghoe Parish Council 2017 held at the Village Hall, Piddinghoe, on Tuesday 2nd May 2017 at 7pm (DRAFT)

Present: Councillors Nick Woolger, David Aicken, Debbie Mills, Angela Ridge

Julian Peterson (Clerk)

2 members of the public.

1. No Apologies for Absence.
2. There were no Declarations of Interests from Councillors.
3. Election of Chairman for the year 2017-2018
Councillor Nicholas Woolger was agreed.
4. Election of Vice Chairman for the year 2017-2018
Councillor David Aicken was agreed.
5. The Chairman and Vice Chairman both signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Julian Peterson, PPC Clerk 02/05/2017

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall, Piddinghoe, on Tuesday 2nd May 2017 at 7.20pm (DRAFT)

Present: Councillors Nick Woolger, David Aicken, Debbie Mills, Angela Ridge

Julian Peterson (Clerk)

8 members of the public.

Apologies for Absence: None

Minutes: The amended minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2017 were AGREED by Council and signed by the Chairman.

Disclosure of Interests: None from Councillors.

Public Participation: Chairman, Nick Woolger invited members of the public to ask any questions concerning items on the agenda at this point rather than during the meeting. A question was asked about Planning Application SDNP/17/01570/FUL Dormer House, Village Green, Piddinghoe. The Chairman deferred the question to an emergency item, where the application would be considered.

AGENDA

1. Council accepted the accounts as prepared by Councillor Debbie Mills, and wished to formally thank Cllr Debbie Mills for her work in preparing the Accounts.

Piddinghoe Parish Council Accounts Summary 28th April 2017

Business Current Account balance	£9,621.64
Business Savings Account (Valerie Mellor's Bequest)	£25,441.10
Business Savings Account Reserve Funds	£3,000.00
Total Funds	£38,062.74

2. It has been noted that there is incorrect information on an App by 'CycleStreets' showing a cycle route on the footpath between Newhaven and Piddinghoe. At the time of the meeting there was no official cycle track along the footpath. Cycling along a footpath is unlawful. This information was relayed to 'CycleStreets' by the Chairman and they have failed to rectify the information on their App. Council resolved to ask the clerk to write to 'CycleStreets' asking them to correct the information.
3. Council resolved to ask the Clerk to renew the PPC insurance with Zurich after obtaining a discount on their quote.
4. Council agreed to defer the Emergency Plan until a future meeting to allow more time to resolve some of the issues raised in the Draft Plan.

5. The Bus Shelter is an open design which faces south-west, open to the prevailing winds. Council resolved to consider options for providing more shelter from the elements.
6. Council considered, the Planning Application SDNP/17/01570/FUL. Land adjacent to Dormer House, Village Green, Piddinghoe as an emergency item. Council suspended standing orders so the villagers present could look at the plans and ask questions. When standing orders were reinstated, Council resolved that it had no objection to the design or materials of the building, but expressed concerns over the closeness to the Village Hall blocking light from the west facing window and the kitchen window (north window). There was also concern expressed about the width of the maintenance gap between the Village Hall, and the new building. There has to be enough room to maintain the Village Hall.

PROGRESS REPORTS

1. Report on the steps from the Hoe to the riverbank.
Council members met on site and agreed on the location and style.
Councillors are looking at the possibility of handrails either side of the steps.
Quotes are being sought by Councillors Ridge, Mills and Aicken.
Council's preference is for shallow wide steps to secure safe access.
A reply from the SDNP stated that a slope was not a legal requirement. It was preferable to have wide, shallow steps with handrail/s.
2. Progress on the boundary fences on the riverbank.
Councillors met on site and agreed requirements, and considered the relocation of a kissing gate. It was suggested that the existing kissing gates should be removed before the path is laid and retained for recycling.

3. Progress on the All Weather Footpath. The grant is progressing well.
4. Progress on the downlights along the track to the Village Hall. Councillor Aicken is waiting to meet the contractor, to discuss Council's choice of downlighting, and exact positioning of the lights.
(The lights are now installed and operating).
5. Progress on the dog poo bag dispensers. Councillors are to decide the exact location of the dispensers with close residents' properties. The initial location suggested was on the Village Green. The dispensers cost approximately £80, posts £40, brackets £10, bags £26 for 800. This is a pilot scheme that will be monitored for a reduction in dog poo left on the ground. Council will look into the possibility of obtaining a grant for this project.
6. Dates for the next meetings:
 - An extraordinary meeting on 30th May 2017
 - 8th August 2017
 - 14th November 2017
 - 9th January 2018

Julian Peterson, PPC Clerk 15/05/2017

THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING (25/05/2017)

The annual Village Meeting is an informal social gathering where villagers can chat together about matters affecting the parish.

Nick Woolger introduced the evening, thanking Dennis Stow for the time he's given to the Parish in his role as Chairman. He then spoke of the year's progress, summarised below.

- Financially the council is now sound, having built up the reserves that we are legally required to hold. We have managed to reduce some expenditure incurred on projects with grants etc. Thanks are due to Debbie Mills for her expertise managing the Parish Finances.

The council has managed to keep the precept for Council tax unchanged for the second year in a row.

The felling of trees due to Dutch elm disease was a large expense but we were assisted with a healthy contribution from East Sussex County Council. Unfortunately this will be a recurring problem due to the number of elms in the village.

- The residents' wish list compiled at the Village Planning Meeting has been addressed, the top project being the village hall road improvement which allows not only vehicles but easier wheelchair and disabled access to the hall. Low level lighting – movement and timer controlled – will be installed soon.
- The Councillors have attended many meetings on behalf of the parish, with various organisations – POLO, OVCN and C7 Safety to name but a few.
- Highways have been pressured to deal with our potholes and road repairs, improving the south exit slip road, and to cut back hedges intruding onto the road, along with verge maintenance.
- The village finger posts were replaced. Unfortunately the ESCC approved contractor we chose ignored a request for site meetings prior to installation and went ahead and completed the job. ESCC were fully consulted as they were paying half and although maybe we didn't get the quality job we were

anticipating, we felt that it was cheap enough to settle the bill.

- Renovation of the path from the boat house was an item lower down on the list. Noel started a project for an 'all weather path', and applied for a grant from the Newhaven Community Fund. To obtain the grant it was necessary for the final stage application to be submitted by a bona fide organisation with credit history and accounts etc. The Parish Council took over the project application, but we are grateful to Noel for continuing to manage the project on our behalf.
- Egrets Way progress continues and we understand that permission has been obtained to run the path up to the Parish boundary at the Newhaven end. It's anticipated that a ramp will be provided for access up to the river bank where the cyclists can push their bikes along the renovated footpath section on Parish and private land, along with other users. It's important to stay aware of the plans of the cycle path organisations to ensure that residents' views are represented. Parish Councillors meet with OVCN, SDNP and ESCC etc to keep regular communication ongoing.
- Related to but separate from the footpath, the Parish Council are currently working on repairing boundary fences on the river bank with replacement gates and fencing, (SDNP have offered to supply two gates free of charge). We're in the process of providing some easy stepped access from the Hoe to the bank to suit walkers, pushchairs etc.
- The play area continues to need ongoing maintenance and regular reports are received from the council inspector. Councillor David Aicken attends to points raised in the reports and carries out maintenance tasks.
- The village hall has been used for various functions this past year but it would be great to see more well-attended events to help increase the sense of community pride in our village. Any ideas and the essential volunteers to carry them out are most welcome.

Nick Woolger and David Aicken

WELCOME TO VILLAGE NEWCOMERS

Isla and Mary Sitwell and two much loved cats have moved into the garden of '**Chambles**' on The Green. Conditions in their borrowed caravan are exceedingly tight and there's certainly no room to swing the cats. They hope to move into the house shortly when the builders move out.

They have moved from Seaford via a few months in Swanborough. Isla is a very active retired GP whilst Mary is very busy taking services in various Valley churches as well as our own St John's – that's when she's not playing tennis. We are looking forward to welcoming them both as members of the Tennis Club.

Mary will celebrate Holy Communion at St John's at 8.00am on the second Sunday in each month beginning on 11th June: more information on the Church Noticeboard.

Sheila Redman

New at **3 Oak Cottages** are **Tom and Jasmine** who have been there since the end of February. Tom, who hails from Crowborough, is Stage Manager at Glyndebourne Opera House, a role he's had since 2009, while Jasmine has recently graduated from Bristol University where she majored in English Literature. Both say they are keen to become involved in village activities.

Two will soon become three at **18 Brookside** where **Elisa and Peter** have been resident since October and been busy lately indoors in anticipation of their first-born daughter, expected in July. They moved from Ringmer and Peter is an antique dealer/restorer with shops in Lewes, Kemp Town and Hove. Elisa, half-French, is a driving instructor working out of home with the trade-name 'Ladydrive'.

Bill Pierce

GRASS ROOTS

Concerning The Legend of the Devil's Dyke

I have this very fragile old pamphlet, published by ... AUTHORITY, relating the well known local legend. I have shortened and adapted it, but tried to retain the dramatic quality of the piece.

“Vainly hast thou essayed to count the churches in the Sussex Weald,” quoth the Devil to Saint Cuthman of Steyning, “and thou hath glorified Heaven because of the number of the worshippers gathered within those fanes. They are but an abomination to me. Before tomorrow morn, that vast district – far as thine eye can stretch – even to the foot of yon distant Surrey Hills – the whole Weald of Sussex, with its many churches, its churchmen, and its congregations, shall be overwhelmed by the sea.”

“And thinkest thou thy evil work will be permitted?” cried the Saint, shaking his head.

“Thou at least cannot prevent it” rejoined the fiend with a bitter laugh. “I will take my chance of other hindrance.”

“And thy present feat is to be performed before to-morrow, thou sayest?” demanded the Saint.

“Between sunset and sunrise, most saintly sir. With the implements which I hold in my hand, I will cut such a Dyke through this hill, and through the hills lying between it and Hove, as shall let in the waters of the deep, so that all dwelling within yonder plain shall be drowned by them.’

The Saint then visited the sick Sister Ursula, whose cell is situated on the Downs.

“Fear nothing”, said Saint Cuthman, “The Prince of Darkness will not trouble you, he will be engaged in terrible work, but, with Heaven's aid, good Sister, yours will be the hand to confound him! When the sun hath gone down, turn this hour-glass, and let the sand run out six times. Next light this taper; set it within the bars of that little grated window looking towards the east; and pray that its glimmer may be as the first grey light of dawn.”

The Saint then blessed the candle, reminded the Sister that a thousand lives depended on her vigilance.

He went on and after a while, reached the lofty headland overlooking Poynings. Here as he expected he beheld the Arch-fiend at work. Every stroke of his terrible pick-axe shook the hill to its centre. The Fiend worked away with might and main, the concussion produced by his tremendous strokes was incessant and terrible, echoing far over the Weald like the rattling of a dreadful thunderstorm.

But the sand ran out, and Sister Ursula turned her glass for the first time. He toiled on without intermission, filling the chasm with flame from his fiery nostrils, complaining of lumbago and passing seizures. Eventually Sister Ursula turned the glass for the last time.

“Look towards the east! cried the Saint after another hour. “The streaks of light grow rapidly wider and brighter, the shades of night are fleeing fast away. The larks are beginning to rise - and hark! dost thou not hear the cocks crowing in Poynings?”

“Cocks crowing at Poynings!” yelled the Fiend. “It must be dawn. But the sun shall not behold my discomforture.”

“Hide thy head in darkness, accursed being!” exclaimed the Saint, raising his staff.

“Hence with thee! And return not to this hill. The dwellers within the Sussex Weald are saved from thy malice, and may henceforth worship without fear. Get thee hence, I say.”

The Demon fled. Howling with rage, like a wild beast robbed of its prey he unfolded his sable pinions, and soared over the Weald, alighting on Leith Hill.

Just as he took flight, Sister Ursula's taper went out. And just as the consecrated taper expired, she passed away and her many troubles were over.

Angie Ridge

SUMMER INTERVAL FOR VILLAGE HALL FILM NIGHTS AFTER BOB CAT DRAWS A CROWD

Film Night is taking a bit of a rest for the summer and I hope everybody can wait patiently for the next big-screen presentation in the Village Hall which will be late September, by which time I'm sure there will be many more exciting choices to be made.

A night at the flicks is not everybody's cup of tea, understandably, but it is heartening when a good-sized audience turns up and that was certainly the case for 'A Streetcat Named Bob' on Friday April 28. I knew it would go down well, with its attributes of a happy ending, boy-meets-girl (as well as cat) storyline, familiar faces starring and a general feelgood factor.

Just a pity that, for the first time for a long time, it was beset by poor-quality picture for a chunk of the first half. I was envisaging several things that might have gone wrong: the dvd player getting old, the projector lamp burning out, some wires needing to be replaced or, quite simply, a flawed copy having been purchased.

It turned out in the end to be just a loose connection which David Aicken spotted and fixed in the interval. People who couldn't be there at all on the night and have since borrowed the dvd from me for home viewing have not mentioned any problem with the it so hopefully it was just the loose connection that caused the problem.

So it was all good fun. We made nearly £100 for Village Hall funds on the night and I now look forward to your suggestions for showing in the autumn. Meanwhile look out for the Film Festival which I hope a small group of villagers are successful in presenting later in the year. It will need support. Thanks to all who have helped with Film Night.

Bill Pierce

VILLAGE HALL EVENTS

PAST:

April 22nd

The Two Old Men (TOM) and their guitars with the add-on of Ali on her double bass proved to be a hugely successful evening. Colin, only recently discharged from hospital manfully strummed and sang his own compositions encouraged and accompanied by Lance who also had his solo moments.

In the interval, jacket potatoes with chilli were very popular and the bar added to the jollity of the evening.

For those who were unlucky enough to miss this very enjoyable occasion, there are plans for a repeat performance after an appropriate gap.

FORTHCOMING:

Saturday 8th July

The Big Barbecue is back!

As last year, on a lovely sunny day on the Hoe there will be tables groaning with salads and puddings and a help yourself Barbie. Of course there will be a bar.

Needless to say we will again be begging for lots of help to provide those delectable salads and puddings and also for muscle power for humping furniture, moving the barbecue etc. The flyer enclosed in this *Villager* gives lots more details. We have to limit the numbers to 50 (just in case it has to be Plan B) so early booking is essential.



CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY (OPD)

Planning is well advanced across East Sussex with the annual celebration on October 1st of International Older People's Day.

For ten years ESCC have supported the eight Senior Forums across the county to put on some sort of event in their locality to bring older (50+) people together to have fun, learn something new and to make new friends.

Gradually over the years, more and more voluntary, statutory and business groups have asked if they can also join in the fun.

Last year over 13,000 booklets were distributed and over a hundred activities were on offer.

ESSA – East Sussex Seniors Association – emphasised from the beginning that the programme of entertainment should be seen as taster sessions so as to encourage people to continue with the activities they enjoyed throughout the year. Wave Leisure runs a three-week programme at a reduced rate; some of the senior forums arrange outings which continue throughout the year; coffee mornings open to the public have sprung up in Care Homes; more and more Community Choirs are popping up; and there has been a positive outburst of ukulele bands!

The books are ready for distribution at the beginning of August. Forum members receive copies through the post. Forums take copies to local Day Clubs, Lunch Clubs, Coffee Morning venues and to Care Homes and Park Homes.

The Meridian Forum (Newhaven to East Saltdean and the surrounding villages) has in the past put on three events – two in Newhaven and one in Piddinghoe. The Newhaven events are already planned and booked. There will be a Musical Extravaganza at the Hillcrest Centre and a cinema matinee also at the Hillcrest Centre. The attendance at Piddinghoe has always

been so poor that it is unlikely there will be one this year, which is very sad. I hope that Villagers will take the opportunity to join in events in Newhaven, and if you want to know more, please contact me.

Kate Davies

Chair of ESSA and Chair of the Meridian Forum

The Chair of Lewes District Council recently hosted a tea party to recognise the contribution volunteers made to their local communities under the heading 'Awards For Unsung Heroes'. Kate was one of the recipients of a certificate as a campaigner for older people in Sussex. Well done and congratulations Kate.

COFFEE MORNING FOR THE FOOD BANK

Many, many thanks to everyone who supported our coffee morning at the Village Hall on May 12 and helped raise much needed funds and food donations for the Newhaven Food Bank.

We raised £190 on the day, with a further £100 to come in donations, as well as being given a considerable amount of food (enough for two car trips).

Your generosity is really very much appreciated.

*Christine, Vanessa, Rosie, Lee, Jane, Mel, Sally,
Sussex Community Development Association*



ART JOTTINGS

On a beautiful sunny day in March, Rita, Sheila, Ben and I spent a jolly day in Chichester. After an excellent lunch in the Cathedral we went to Pallant House to see the Sidney Nolan exhibition. Australian born Nolan is most recognised for his work depicting the Australian outlaw Ned Kelly. However, he was the most prolific of artists and it is thought that he produced over 30,000 pieces of work in different mediums in his life time. These also included many sets and costumes for opera. I found this collection of work interesting more for the techniques he used than the images he made. He started work as a commercial artist in Melbourne and was encouraged to experiment with new materials coming onto the market. He used household paints (before Jackson Pollock!) and alkyd paints (the first synthetic paint to be developed) and also oil based enamels. At this time, in the 1940s it was pretty radical. In the 1980s his preferred medium was spray paint. Even into his old age he remained an experimental artist.

Now to the Turner Prize. In recent years I have found it hard to get excited about this event. There was one year when one of our graduates, the wonderful Chris Ofili won. I will tell you more about this charming lad and his elephant dung in the future! This year I am excited again – hurrah. The Turner prize has extended the age limit which has always been capped at 50. This, I suppose, was rather ageist, however it was set up so that the older, established artists made way for the younger talent who often struggle to showcase their work. This year an artist called Lubaina Himid in her early 60s is in the running. Her works are slightly larger than life cut out figures and highly decorated.

Born in Zanzibar but brought up in Britain, her theatrical large-scale works depict women in scorching, over baked colours – colours of Zanzibar in fact. Her work reminds me of Chris Ofili's huge African portraits: same colour palette and details (but without Elephant dung!). Oh I hope she wins.

Gill Autie

A GARDENER'S DELIGHT

When it is time,
I think I will return to the soil
and compost some neighbouring plot.
Anonymously if possible,
not taking personal credit for improving the growth
of potatoes
or something more exotic,
like chicory.

I suppose the worms will do their part
and spread me thinly,
digested and excreted,
molecule by savoury molecule.

I will rapidly transform,
released within the earth,
to travel as slowly as tectonic time,
as quickly as sunlight,
synthesizing, radiant,
expanding forever,
a happy part of the whole.

And if I have done my work well,
the flowers too may look
all the better, for me having passed.
A life lived well.



PREPARING FOR DROUGHT? A COMMON SENSE GUIDE

“Households in southern England are being urged to save water after the driest winter period in 20 years... followed by less than half the average rainfall for April. The south-east has been worst affected and one water company has advised its customers to take action now to prevent restrictions being imposed later this year.”

The Guardian, 5 May 2017

While drought impacts most seriously on farmers, no gardener relishes the thought of a hose-pipe ban, so it makes sense to use water wisely and conserve it where we can. Water butts are the most obvious solution but with so little rainfall, the supply from these can soon run out.

There are several water saving measures, some of which are just common sense: put saucers under containers to catch runoff, remove all weeds (they compete for water) and use ‘grey water’ where possible. Here are some more tips:

Grey water

Grey water should be used with care, but can be useful for short-term use during times of water shortage. Plants can be watered with shower, bath, kitchen and washing machine water (from rinse cycles). It may contain contaminants such as soap and detergent, although soil and potting composts are effective at filtering them out. Softened tap water and dishwasher water are less useful as the salts used in them can damage soil structure.

Grey water is best applied by watering can and should only be saved up to 24 hours to minimise bacterial growth. Due to the risk of contamination from pathogens in the water, use on edible crops is not advisable.

Mulching

Spread a layer of mulch (e.g. bark chippings or leaf mould) on the soil to lock in moisture. This can be done at any time of the year,

but are best after planting in the autumn or after tidying beds in spring – preferably when the soil is moist.

Effective watering

Water in the morning or the evening, allowing plants to soak up moisture before the hottest part of the day.

Watering plants less frequently, but more thoroughly helps them to develop deep root systems to seek out moisture in the soil.

Target the part of the plant that needs water. Water the area of the soil above the roots without saturating to prevent water evaporating or running off. To help funnel water directly to the roots, sink a flower pot or an upside down plastic bottle with the bottom cut off into the soil next to plants and water into those rather than onto the soil.

Lawns

Raise lawnmower blades to a higher level and mow less often. Longer grass deals better with drought as it becomes deeper rooted and less moisture is lost through evaporation from the soil. Don't waste precious water on your lawn - any brown patches will recover with autumn rainfall.

Container gardening

Add water-retaining gel to compost in containers or buy compost with granules already included - this is particularly effective in hanging baskets.

Top up containers with a decorative mulch, such as polished pebbles or tumbled glass chippings to reduce moisture loss. As most water is lost through plant leaves careful watering will still be needed. Grouping pots for mutual shade and humidity will also help.

Having said all this, I do hope I haven't tempted fate and prompted a long wet summer. It rained hard for several days immediately after I wrote the article!

Sue Massey

PIDDINGHOE PEOPLE

John Brookbanks of Harping Hill House

John was born in Auckland to a Scottish mother who was travelling on a gap year when she met John's father and there her travels stopped. Dad built boats in his back garden and was also Commodore of the local yacht club. No surprise therefore that John had his own boat at the age of five. Schooling and a short spell at university were not very fulfilling and the grass seemed to be greener in Australia. It was not and so he returned to New Zealand to study civil engineering.

He met another civil engineer who was building a 50-ft concrete boat in preparation for sailing around the world. John became a partner in the project which also entailed buying the sails and, at the same time, working in a design office but being office-bound was not appealing and it was with great relief that they cast off and set sail for Australia.

They had no money so they stopped off in Brisbane for six months to earn some. Then, as a crew of four, they set sail again – through the Barrier Reef and on to Darwin. During a stop-over, a crew member shot a wild pig which had been foraging in a mangrove swamp and tried to cook it. Sadly, it was disgusting and they suffered a stinking swampy smell in the boat for many days.

From Darwin, it was on to Bali and then back to Perth which was memorable for the incredible cleanliness of the river. They stayed there for a while and worked on another concrete boat. The great advantage of boat-building in concrete is the easy and cheap maintenance. Any damage and you just buy another bag of concrete (there might be just a little more to it than that!).

Then they set sail again, stopping off at an uninhabited island where they managed to catch a wild chicken which had been feeding solely on coconuts. This was also an experiment not to

be repeated. Then it was on to Reunion, followed by Mauritius, the Seychelles, Tanzania, Kenya and to another stop-over at Aden which was full of bullet holes following the 1978 uprising.

At Suez they had to negotiate permission to enter the Canal. This took 3 weeks. It might have been shorter had they been prepared to offer bigger bribes. Then on to Tel Aviv, Cyprus, Turkey and the Greek Islands. Here John abandoned ship, which the remaining crew sailed on to England. He met a fanciable girl who persuaded him to work their passage on a charter ship to the Caribbean, she working below decks and he as bosun.

Whilst there, John met an American couple who persuaded him to navigate them to Belize from where he flew to England – but not to stay. After several trips back and forth to the Greek Islands for seasonal work, he was eventually reunited in England with his original boat and so began the long haul back to New Zealand via the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti and Fiji. Once back home, John became interested in windsurfing and so began another career building raceboards.

In 1984, the itchy feet syndrome struck again and he returned to England and started making sailboards in Devon. From Devon, he headed east to Chichester where he met Moya. He continued making sailboards and also joined a firm making buoyancy ‘forms’ for reconnaissance vehicles equipped with underwater cameras, which he still continues to do from home. He also put his civil engineering qualifications to good use when working as a senior site manager for Eastbourne Harbour and Glyndebourne, amongst other places.

John and Moya settled in Piddinghoe in 2006. Whilst John continues his work in his ‘man shed’, Moya is very involved with her children and grandchildren and her very large and very wonderful garden.

Sheila Redman

NO I'M NOT FRACKING!!

Until this week, I did not realise that my house was built on a rubbish heap. I have discovered that what lies beneath my (not!) perfectly weeded front drive is an old sink, some Crittall Windows and a very big hole. Hardly Sutton Hoo but these treasures were unearthed during the borehole drilling which has now thankfully finished and I apologise to all who have been affected by the process.

“Why are you doing it?” I hear you ask. Well, the short answer is that I want to try a more sustainable way of heating my home. We all know that stripping the planet of its fossil fuels is increasingly harmful and unholistic, not only because of the emissions but also because of the process. In recent years, campaigning to prevent Fracking in this country has been such an education that I thought it was time to put my money where my mouth is. My oil boiler is on its last legs and will soon need replacing so I looked into alternatives, eventually deciding to go for a Ground Source Heat Pump. I have to confess that I don't fully understand how it works but basically two boreholes have been sunk 110metres into the ground. These will be connected by big pipes to a sort of back-to-front fridge in my garage which in turn will pipe heat into the radiators and hot water cylinder in my house. The heat comes out of the ground (because it is always warm down there especially when there is water) and is circulated through the pipes in a mixture of anti-freeze and water. I think there is a bit more to it than that but you could always google it for more details. Apart from the benefits to the planet, I am told I will personally save several hundred pounds a year on my energy bills. It is a bit of a gamble for me but I trust the information I have been given and the local company Greener Alternatives seem to know what they are doing. Fingers crossed. I will let you know whether it works....or not.

As for the hole, (no, not the one in my purse which hopefully will be filled by a government grant for installing a Ground Source Heat Pump), I mean the one in the garden. Everything in nature

is in such a delicate and subtle balance and apparently there is a massive river flowing through the chalk, 30 metres under my driveway and creating types of caverns. I think the pressure of the equipment and the compressor the men used slightly disturbed the natural equilibrium down there, causing a sink hole on the surface. The same thing happened earlier in the year at the end of the Village Hall driveway. It's one of the many risks that is highlighted when the oil companies start fracking. Oh the irony!

Fiona Williams
Dormer House

NEW ARRIVAL

I'm delighted to announce the arrival of baby Josephine (Josie) Chubb. Josie is my sixth grandchild (three of each now) and was born on Saturday 22nd April at 00.29, weighing 7lb 1oz. Youngest daughter Charlotte and her husband James are the proud parents.

Marilyn Gould

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO 'THE VILLAGER'?

Articles, letters, snippets are all welcome. If you want to contribute an article, please try to make it about 550 words or less. Due to space and time restrictions we can't guarantee inclusion in the magazine, but we'll do our best to accommodate everybody.

If possible please send articles as Word documents, attached to an email addressed to either piercewilliam991@gmail.com or davies.gill@btinternet.com

The deadline for contributions to the next Villager is 15 August.



THE GREAT PIDDINGHOE BAKE OFF



This recipe from Jill Hentschel makes 12 tartlets.

RHUBARB AND COCONUT TARTLETS

6 oz short crust pastry – bought or homemade.

(I make quick shortcrust pastry by mixing:

6 oz of SR flour with 3 oz of grated fat (1 oz of grated butter + 2 oz of grated Cookeen or lard), and the juice of half a lemon. If you want your pastry to be sweeter, add 1 oz of icing sugar.)

1 good-sized stick of rhubarb

1 large egg

1 oz dessicated coconut

3 oz caster sugar and 1 oz of brown sugar

3 oz SR flour

3 oz soft margarine or butter

¼ teaspoon of lemon juice

1. Roll out pastry and line patty tins or a pie dish if you want a single tart.
2. Chop rhubarb and put into pastry tarts. Sprinkle with 1 oz brown sugar.
3. Mix together 3 oz SR flour, 1 oz dessicated coconut, 3 oz caster sugar. Rub in 3 oz soft margarine or butter.
4. Beat in 1 large egg and lemon juice. Spoon mixture over the rhubarb.
5. Bake in preheated oven 170°C for 20 minutes, or 25-30 minutes for a single tart.

Using brown sugar and lemon juice stops that ‘furry mouth’ associated with rhubarb.