

December 2016

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## EDITORIAL

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Christmas is coming and another year is just around the corner. This one has proved to be momentous, what with Brexit, the election of Mr Trump, and growing divisions and uncertainty around the world. 'Peace on earth and good will to all men' (and women) seems more pressing a hope than ever. *The Villager* team is not in the business of forecasting what is going to happen next. Let's face it, we have had some big surprises this year. It would be a fool's errand to divine what's in store for 2017.

In the meantime, let us brace ourselves for the forthcoming Festival of Indulgence. Unless *The Villager* and its readers are exceptionally disciplined, soon we shall be on the Eat and Drink rollercoaster. We shall probably enjoy the ride, then regret it when our purses and our waistlines start to look a bit pinched. *The Villager* is free and doesn't have any calories in it although it does contain a few 'sweeties' this month. We strongly recommend Jill Hentschel's recipe for a rich and boozy fruit cake, which would make an excellent Christmas Cake for family and friends. Gill Autie has some good suggestions for those who don't do their Christmas shopping in September and are now scurrying around trying to find last-minute gifts with a difference.

As ever, we welcome some new contributions to the magazine, including one from a dog. A dog? Yes, why not. They make up the second largest proportion of village residents after all. This one hopes to write for us, occasionally, musing on the mysteries of village life. Life must look rather differently viewed from knee height. We have also included a reprint from the year 2000 – a wonderful account, written by Mel, of the celebrations that took place in the village to mark the millennium and the unveiling of the Millennium Pole. It is a lovely reminder of what villagers can do and enjoy together. Let's drink to more of that in 2017.

From all of us at *The Villager*, have a very Happy Christmas, and may the year 2017 be good to all of you.

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

## PIDDINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL 2016

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Village Hall, Piddinghoe, on Tuesday 22nd November 2016 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors, Chairman Cllr Dennis Stow, David Aicken, Debbie Mills, Angela Ridge, Nick Woolger, Julian Peterson (Clerk)  
ESCC Councillor Carla Butler  
11 Members of the public.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Vic Ient (LDC), Maria Caulfield MP

**Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2016 were AGREED by Council and signed by the Chairman.

**Disclosure of Interests:** None from Councillors.

**Public Participation:** None at this stage. It was noted that Cllr Ient sent an email to the Clerk earlier today which was sent to PPC councillors.

### AGENDA

1. Council accepted the accounts as prepared by Councillor Debbie Mills. The balances are stated below as for 22/11/2016.

Current Account .....	£12063.48
Minus Elm Trees £3246.00 invoice from ESCC (£541 VAT)	
Savings Account (Valerie Mellor's Bequest) .....	£21347.19
Plus VAT reclaim .....	£3967.00

2. Council noted a report from the RFO Councillor Debbie Mills concerning the Draft budget for the years 2107/8. In excess of £1500 will be put in a reserve account as required by law. Money has been put aside for the possibility of further removal of diseased elm trees.

3. Council agreed the draft budget and that the precept for Piddinghoe Parish Council stays the same as this year (2016/7). This is to be confirmed in the January 2017 meeting.
4. The Chairman gave a report on the unsuccessful bid from The Community Fund from Viola 106 money for those communities directly affected by the incinerator. This bid from Piddinghoe Parish Council was for the enlargement and improvement of the Village Hall.

The Chairman stated there were 20 projects applying to the Community fund. This amounted to over £1.5m., much more than was available. A scoring system was introduced to reduce the number of projects based on Need, Value For Money, and Risk.

The project Piddinghoe Parish Council applied for improvements to the Village Hall, which is managed by volunteers and has charitable status. This is the village's only valuable asset. This project was considered to be of little need, not value for money and high risk.

The Chairman expressed deep disappointment that the PPC project was rejected however there were two successful bids within the Parish that were accepted.

The two projects were from Egrets Way and The Newhaven & Seaford Sailing Club.

These projects although commendable did not meet the criteria of being affected by the incinerator as opposed to residents living in Piddinghoe.

Cllr Carla Butler stated that there were dedicated officers who can help the PPC to apply for separate funds in the future. Once the results of the bids are made public the PPC will publish them on the website. Council accepted the Chairman's report.

It was also noted that as the bid was unsuccessful that the down lights project agreed to at the last September meeting would be paid from the Valerie Mellor bequest, as previously stated.

5. Council agreed that there was no objection to the planning application SDNP/1605118/FUL at Kiln Cottage.
6. Council agreed not to contribute to the Hamilton Baillie survey. In partnership with the Polo group and ESCC highways, a map was given to Cllr Carla Butler highlighting the high risk areas along the C7 through the Parish, including the pathways and footpaths along the C7. The report will be given to the highways dept. A design of the road improvements will be given to Highways. Then funding streams will be sought after projects had been agreed.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

1. It was agreed that work would not start on the verges alongside the Village Hall driveway until the lighting project had been done as they will need to be dug up to lay cables. It was hoped this could be completed in early spring, compost would be used from the compost heap. Volunteers would be needed to help in this project.
2. The damaged bench by the play area has been removed as required by the play area health and safety reports.
3. Cllr Aicken will contact the fingerpost contractor again to finish the work to the satisfaction of the PPC.
4. Dates for the next meeting:  
 Tuesday 17th January 2017  
 Tuesday 14th March 2017  
 Tuesday 2nd May 2017  
 Tuesday 9th May 2017

*Julian Peterson, PPC Clerk*

*22/11/2016*

## **COMINGS AND GOINGS**

Homo sapiens do not appear to have been moving either in or out of the village since our last issue but a recent arrival of note is inanimate and in the form of a totem pole. Jim has been at it again and this 12' high specimen erected with the help of five strong men, a lot of cement and a glass or two of something drinkable is to be found at the roadside below 'Headland'. It is not an easy place for a close inspection but the carvings represent a number of fur and feathered friends including an amazing likeness of two much loved cats who occupied special places in the lives of James and Diana but sadly are not with them any more. What a memorial!

### **LATE NEWS**

Before the next issue, we are likely to have said a reluctant goodbye to Bert and Cathy Ward who have lived amongst us since 1983. Cathy has always taken a great interest in and involved herself in both village and church affairs but latterly all her time and energy has been devoted to caring for Bert. They will be moving to a village near Canterbury and close to their daughter. Cathy and Bert you go with our thoughts and very, very best wishes.

### **BEWARE**

There are car thieves about. Recently a long wheel base Land Rover was stolen from the Sailing Club car park. This was in daylight and nobody saw it going – so, be very careful when parking and locking your car. Anyone seen acting suspiciously should be reported to the police.

### **SEAL SIGHTING**

The baby seal is very alive and well and recently spent a day in Noel West's rowing boat moored at his jetty. It was obviously resting and enjoying itself and can quite often be seen on the river bank opposite Old Cottage soaking up the sun – when it does shine!

## GRASS ROOTS

### Concerning Christmas and The Mummers Play

'All the Christmases roll down the hill towards the Welsh-speaking sea, like a snowball growing whiter and bigger and rounder, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged, fish-freezing waves, and I plunge my hands in the snow and bring out whatever I can find; holly or robins or pudding, squabbles and carols and oranges and tin whistles.'

*Dylan Thomas (Memories of Christmas)*

Christmas is a Christian holy day, but the celebration has roots in the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, the festivals of the ancient Greeks, the beliefs of the Druids, and the folk customs of Europe. The Romans held an unruly festival to mark the Winter Solstice. Saturnalia (from the god Saturn) ran for seven days from December 17. Many pagan traditions were brought to Britain by invading Roman soldiers which included covering houses in greenery... and bawdy partying.

One folk tradition in Britain that has become linked with Christmas celebrations is a particular type of storytelling and street drama known as the Mummers Play. It is a folk play popular throughout the whole of England in various forms and has a strong history and presence in Sussex today. \*

The word 'mumming' perhaps came from the Greek 'Mommo', meaning a mask, the wearing of which became popular at royal functions in the fourteenth century, the practice of such being termed as 'Momerie'. The fashion spread out of court and into the streets where it caused many problems, as revelry by night - the revellers all wearing masks - gave plenty of opportunity for crime, with some towns banning Mummery for such a reason.

I am reminded of the current problems we have with clowns scaring people in the streets.

The Mummers Plays of today started later on, through the centuries, as a form of cadging, where people dressed in masks and appropriate attire would tour the local area performing a play, often in the local Manor House, to collect money or food. The play was performed many times over the Christmas period, with a performance on Christmas Eve usually being performed in the village itself.

In West Sussex the name given to Mumming is 'Tipteering', a suggested derivation being 'Tip' meaning excellent, and 'Teer' to smear... referring to how the players would smear their faces with burnt cork.

Traditional characters in southern plays include The Turkish Knight, St. George and sometimes the Dragon, Father Christmas, The Quack Doctor, the Old Horse... usually a hobby horse with snapping jaws, Beelzebub and many other regional variations.

### Angie Ridge

\* In Ditchling on Boxing Day the local Mummers and Morris sides usually entertain large crowds outside The Bull with dancing and the performance of a local Sussex Mummers Play for large crowds. It's good fun and a great tradition. Details of the 2016 events are not published on their website yet. Keep checking.



## ART JOTTINGS

With Christmas creeping upon us, I thought I would suggest a few local Christmas Art and Craft shows. They are often great places to pick up unusual, and often very reasonably priced, pieces. On top of this, you are helping artists and craft makers in our area. I am hoping that most of these shows will be as good as I expect. My heart drops like a stone when I walk in only to be confronted by piles of Corn Dollies. If this is the case, just turn around and run! My apologies to those of you who have a fondness for these.

### ARTISTS' AND MAKERS' SHOW

**Lewes Town Hall, Saturday December 3, 10am - 5pm.**

This is one of the best Christmas Shows around and it is for one day only. I have a feeling it may have come and gone by the time you read this. In which case, make a note in next year's diary and go.

### CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH SUSSEX ART COLLECTIVE

**The Hop Gallery, Fisher Street, Lewes.  
Saturday November 26 - December 18.**

Open Tues - Sat, 10.30am - 5pm, and Sun and Mon 12am - 4pm. Organised by the delightful Phil Duncan. A mixed show which I will be taking part in this year. On show will be the work of printmakers, artists, plus jewellery, ceramics, textiles and lots of 'stocking fillers' at great prices.

### MADE IN BRIGHTON

**St. Bartholomew's Church, Ann St, Brighton BN1 4GP.  
Saturday December 10, 10.30am - 6pm.**

Contemporary craft and design Christmas fair. Featuring the work of 65 art and craft makers and designers. Entrance £4.50

## CHRISTMAS AND SANTA AT NEWHAVEN FORT

**Fort Road, Newhaven BN9 9DS.**

**Saturday & Sunday, December 10 & 11, and**

**Saturday & Sunday December 17 & 18, 10.00am - 4.00pm.**

No idea what this will be like, but worth a peek, and you can support lovely Newhaven at the same time. They tell me there will be food, gifts and crafts. Also a 1940s Tea Room, which could be fun. Let's hope it's 1940s prices. Free bus service from Newhaven Town to the Fort. Contact CTLA for timetable on 01273 517332.

## CHRISTMAS FAMILY FUN DAY

**The Hillcrest Centre, Newhaven, Sunday December 18.**

Someone I teach told me about this. She took her grandchildren there last year and said they had the BEST fun ever and all for 50p entry. They decorated biscuits, made cards and jewellery and there were lots of other activities for children to take part in, so if you have anyone small to entertain, this could be the place to head to.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and wonderful New Year!

*Gill Autie*

## ST JOHN'S CHURCH

There will be a service this year at 9.30am on Christmas Day, taken by Revd. Mary Sitwell. All welcome. Incidentally she and her husband will be moving into Cathy and Bert's house in the spring.

You will know that Charlie Goring has left us and the Diocese is actively looking for an Assistant Vicar to join Revd. Tim Mills.

## THE HOLE IN THE VILLAGE

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*The Villager* is produced largely for light reading, to help spark off sociable interaction and conversation between residents with its interesting diversity. There is, however, an ugly elephant in the room that we cannot really ignore. In fact it is not in 'the room' but right in the middle of us all: The Hole in The Village.

It probably impacts on everybody here and there cannot be anyone who regards it as anything less than a giant blot on our landscape. So we will try to keep tabs on this awkward subject and see what the future holds, although so far, information has been difficult to come by.

Most people know the background. It seems that the shamefully-neglected building site right next to the Village Hall driveway and stretching behind it as far as The Hoe, was originally wild, forest-type land owned by (the late) David and Joan Wells, occupants of Dormer House. Joan, having lost her husband a while ago, died last year soon after selling it to local builder Mr Phil Davis who, I think, owns at least one other property in Piddinghoe. I met him by chance and he confirmed his purchase, saying he would be applying to "build something the village will admire".

Early last year Fiona Williams bought Dormer House from Joan's son and daughter but soon discovered a planning application for a huge building on the land which by now had 'lost' its ancient stone wall that faced onto The Street as well as many trees – utter sacrilege for most villagers. A major attraction for Mr Davis in buying it was that Mr Wells had obtained something called 'historic planning permission' which had been periodically renewed.

It soon became apparent to many villagers that the dwelling Mr Davis proposed to erect would, if passed, constitute a major blight on the village through sheer size. A meeting with two officers from Lewes Planning was organised in the village hall and they also expressed their concerns regarding the scale

of the proposed development. Happily the plan was rejected when it came before Lewes planning committee. Since then, it is understood, Mr Davis has sold the land.

Piddinghoe Parish Councillor David Aicken told me: "PPC contacted the first developer, Mr Davis, and the Lewes Planning Office to express our concern regarding the state of the site. This did have some effect as the developer made a start on cleaning up the site and installing Fiona's new fence. We have since heard from a number of villagers that the site was sold at auction recently for approx £500k. Other than that, we have no other information. Hopefully the new owner will propose a development more in keeping with the village than the previous one. We will of course do all we can to facilitate this."

It seems that Mr Davis's son James had started work tidying up the area but it has lain idle since then and the recent stormy weather flattened the fragile-looking fencing around it, making it look an even bigger mess than ever.

It is just over a year now since Mr Davis's plan was rejected and there are no existing applications for the site on the South Downs planning website, even though Fiona is in possession of letters, clearly meant for the attention of the land's new owners but addressed to her house, from a company called 'Skandiahus' (Swedish Energy-saving Homes) regarding 'your building application'.

So the question is: where do we go from here to prevent this already long-running saga dragging on and on, leaving such an eyesore in place. People passing through the village must be shocked at its appearance. Will it have an effect on our house values? We need to discover many answers. If anybody has any ideas on the subject, please let us know at *The Villager*. And watch this space.

*Bill Pierce*



### The observations of a village dog

Dog poo is a dirty word around here. Some owners don't clean up after their dogs. Why did they invent poo bags, then? Are these people lazy or stupid? Everyone else rants about it. Posters everywhere but the poo still pops up. I've got my own views on what's going on, and I definitely blame humans. So does my owner – The Boss. She's a member of the Poo Police and always on the look out.

Dog arrives with owner. Dog trots off. Owner's back turns, and dog does what it is supposed to do when taken out. That's why they take dogs out, for goodness sake! The Boss shouts 'Excuse me! Your dog has just done a poo over there.' Followed by a smile to show she's not criticising anyone, including the dog. Owner looks suspicious but heads off in the direction of where The Boss is waving her arm. 'No, further to your left!', she shouts. I sit down at this point to watch the performance in comfort. Owner waddles to the left. Then to the right, poo bag at the ready, eyes popping. Stops. No, it's just a brown leaf! Off we go in circles again. Sometimes they even sniff! And yes, we are in a half crouching position with the poo bag covering the open hand and the arm stretched out in front, ready for the poo to jump into the bag! If it's a poo the owner doesn't think is its dog's, it gets rejected. I'm not making this up! Eventually, The Boss sighs and joins in. They both sigh. No poo to be found. Owner looks pleased and claims that dog must only have been having a pee. Oh, please! When a dog sticks its tail out horizontal and squats on its hind legs, believe you me, it's getting rid of its biscuits.

The Boss and the owner shake their heads, and I hear 'weird' and 'funny, isn't it?' coming from their direction. So this is what is really going on! This is why those posters will never work. And why blame us for the poo that owners can't see? It is not our fault. We don't hide it from anyone. We do it right out in the open! We can't be more helpful than that. Humans can't even see it when they are about to step in it! Do we have to train dogs to poo, then nudge the owner over to the right spot and say, 'Here it is... Good girl!!!' Surely there should be a TV programme on this! There must be the same problem all over the country. Anyway, morning duty is over and we leave. I've done my bit for Mother Nature, and The Boss has done hers for the Poo Police. I retire to sleep for the rest of the day. The Boss checks her stock of poo bags. We musn't get caught short!

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### ARNIE GOES TO HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE

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There may be some locals who still wonder why they no longer see that frustrated chap trying to persuade the old Jack Russell terrier to take at least a short walk around the village. The answer is that Arnie has gone to his great resting-place in the sky \_ after all he was 17. Jennifer, who had him from a pup, and I still miss him badly but we know he's in a better place now. The last few months were hard as he lost most of his sight and his hearing and then his mobility.

He was never really athletic although he loved his food right to the end and wagged his tail when stroked and cuddled. He just didn't want to go anywhere even though the vet said we needed to keep his legs supple. You have to do the right thing and that was clear one fateful day when he was so uncomfortable he couldn't even lie down for the bed-rest that had become his lifestyle. Coming home from the vet's with just his old collar and lead was what we had dreaded after a few narrow escapes, but this time it was inevitable. Hopefully many in the village will remember him with affection.

*Bill Pierce*



## ALLOTMENT CORNER – WINTER

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December and January are the traditional months for placing your seed orders. Sit down with a cuppa and the seed catalogues and start planning what you'll grow. Plan a rotation system for vegetable plots to ensure the same crops are not grown in the same beds year after year, which helps prevent disease.

If you haven't done so already and the weather allows, dig over and incorporate soil improvers into vacant areas of the vegetable plot. Leave heavy soils exposed - frosts will kill pests and improve soil structure by the continual freezing and thawing of soil water. Cultivate and prepare seed beds, covering them with clear polythene, cloches or fleece to warm up the soil before sowing. If gardening on wet soil, avoid compaction by working from a plank of wood rather than treading on the beds.

It's a good time for repairing and renovating. Turn the compost heap over and ensure compost bins are covered to prevent excess rain washing the nutrients away and to keep some of the heat of decomposition in.

Use fallen leaves to make leaf mould. Build a simple leaf mould cage - just drive four stakes into the ground and staple chicken netting around to make the cage. Pile in the leaves and leave them alone for a year, then you'll have lovely leaf mould to add to potting compost or to feed your beds.

### In the greenhouse/indoors

Sow herbs such as basil, dill, chives and parsley indoors on your windowsill for winter use.

Sow winter hardy salad leaves under cover, such as lettuce 'Winter Gem' and 'Arctic King'.

Sow onion seeds to give the bulbs time to grow as big as possible.

## Outdoors

Sow hardy broad beans such as 'Aquadulce Claudia' outdoors.

Plant now for crops next summer: raspberry canes, blackberries, gooseberries and currants, strawberry plants. Add plenty of organic matter before planting rhubarb crowns, or dig up the old crowns and split from the top down with a spade into three or four. Leave them on the surface to get frosted before planting out in early spring. You can also plant bare rooted fruit trees/bushes now and prune apple and pear trees.

In January, start chitting (sprouting) first early potatoes on a windowsill indoors. Prune apples, pears, quinces and medlars, currants, gooseberries and autumn raspberries.

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By the next issue we'll have come full circle, so I don't intend to repeat the tips you've read (or skipped over!) before. I'll be covering other aspects of gardening, with an emphasis on growing your own fruit and veg. I'll be exploring the health and social benefits, as well as the challenges presented by jobs like bending and digging as we get older – and possible solutions.

If there's a garden-related subject you'd like to read about, let me know, or better still, write your own article or even a just a paragraph. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

Thanks to everyone who came along on Saturday 3rd December to our mince pies afternoon. This was organised by the Allotments Association (PAGA) for all villagers and friends. It was a great way to catch up with friends and neighbours and get ourselves in the mood for Christmas!

*Sue Massey*

sue@bankdesign.com

## TRANSFORMING – NOT EXCLUDING – THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ON LATER LIFE

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Recently, members of SEEFA (South East England Forum on Aging), digital inclusion and design experts, business leaders, and representatives of central and local government came together in Committee Room 4A in the House of Lords at the Palace of Westminster to share views on and debate how to work together for a better later life experience.

The debate was hosted by Lord Filkin CBE, Chair of the Centre for Ageing Better and chaired by David Brindle, public services editor of the Guardian.

The debate and following discussion was based around 'Does information digital technology and innovation help or hinder older people to gain the information they are looking for'.

Naturally there were those present who are unable to understand why some older people will never turn to their computer to look for information. Around 6 million people aged 65 and over do not have the internet at home. AGE UK states 'older people with lower economic wealth, living alone and those with long-term health conditions are less likely to be on line'.

Older people are often made to feel they are not in touch, are out of step and therefore losing out on this magical world at their fingertips.

But are we? Each generation of older people will use their computer for different things. Tablets are now increasingly easier to use than laptops and take up little room. E-books are easier to read and the print can be enlarged, photographs can be taken and stored – although nothing really beats flicking through a family photograph album.

Smart phones, the latest wonder gadget, will be out of reach for the same group of people presently excluded from computers.

Technology is moving so rapidly that really you have to ask yourself does it actually matter? Do I want to join the Dodo race in that pool of tears?

If anyone would like help with their digital problems, they will be interested to hear that the Meridian Forum is running workshops on the first Monday of every month, at Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven. If you want to know more, please get in touch with Bill Kocher who runs these groups. His email address is: bill@bn9.co.uk

*Kate Davies*

(Willing and longing to be digitally excluded when she eventually steps down from her voluntary work, although loving her Tablet.)

## VILLAGE HALL EVENTS

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### PAST

For some it was a trip down Memory Lane, but for everybody it was a fascinating illustrated talk by Ian Everest on the history of the Ouse Valley covering an area from Lewes Racecourse out to the sea at Tide Mills. In shots of old Piddinghoe, Ian made reference to the help he had received from our well-remembered village historian, Valerie Mellor.

### FORTHCOMING

There can be few more prolific artists than Ken Cheeseman. In the Barn barely more than a few inches of wall space remain undecorated. Ken has been persuaded to show us some of his works over a cup of tea and home made cake on **Sunday, 22nd January**. Many of them depict his ideas on modern life which continuously gives him inspiration. Do drop into the Hall between 3 and 5 pm.

On **Saturday, 18th February** there will be a lunchtime 'Winter Warmer' with soup and mulled wine. More about this in the next issue.

## PIDDINGHOE PEOPLE

### Stephen Yeoman and devoted companion Hector

Stephen was born in Troon, Ayrshire and during his early youth, the family moved to South Africa where they lived in Durban for four years. His abiding memory of his stay there is of leaning too far over a balcony to look at a very large poisonous snake, losing his balance, and falling to the ground close to it. Fortunately, the snake slithered away uninterested – a bigger boy would have made a better supper. After four years the family moved back to Edinburgh.

When old enough, Stephen joined the army – the ‘Gunners’ and spent time training at the Royal School of Artillery. Somehow parachute jumping became part of this active life and on a visit to America, he completed twenty jumps. Whilst being attached to the Royal School of Artillery, he was sent as an instructor to Kaduna in Nigeria to train Nigerian troops.

Later in his army career, he was posted to Germany and was amongst the first soldiers to be sent to liberate the concentration camp at Belsen. It was a horrific experience – pits full of dead bodies, and in the office of one of the women guards, was a lampshade made of human skin. After Germany, Stephen was sent to Staff College and from there on to the War Office. After leaving the army, he worked for Shell Oil in their central heating division for seventeen years. Then it was back to the War Office until retirement.

About fourteen years ago, fairly soon after he moved permanently into the village, Hector, as a young bundle of black fur with very large feet, became an important and demanding part of his life.

Obviously with such huge feet, Hector was going to grow up to be a very big boy. It was not long before his love of water and swimming became apparent. Walkies meant a lot of waiting for him to be persuaded to emerge from the river or the pond. Eventually, the waits turned into hours as nothing but nothing could entice him out. Although those large brown eyes and his friendliness made him many friends, he also made enemies amongst the fishermen. He regularly stole and ate either their bait or their sandwiches – often both.

There was a time when Stephen and Hector together were a familiar sight around the village. Unfortunately, Stephen seldom leaves the house now and Hector suffers being taken for short outings but cannot wait to get back to his home comforts and beloved master and friend.

*Sheila Redman*

### DRINKING GLASS

I am a drinking glass.

I don't like the stuff they pour in me.

I don't like it going POP.

It tastes far too fizzy!

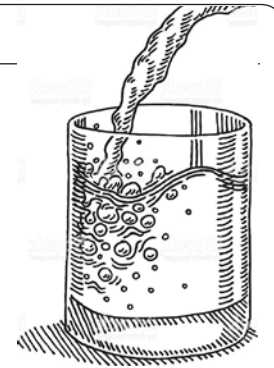
It makes me feel dizzy.

When they pour coke in me

I can't wait to get washed and feel snug and warm,

Sitting on my draining board sofa.

*Kelsey*



## NO QUESTION ABOUT IT... QUIZ NIGHT WAS A WINNER

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Six teams turned out for the annual Piddinghoe Village Hall Charity Quiz Night on November 11 and although that doesn't sound very many it meant that, with four players in each team and six people organizing and running the evening there were 30 of us having a fun night in the Hall at one time – and that doesn't happen too often.

The winners – and deservedly so – were John and Claire Cornish of Brookside whose quartet was completed by Rachel and Dave. This team – called the No-Eyed Deers, a clever name when you think of it phonetically, answered over half the 80 questions right while individual success was achieved by Kelly from The Hoddernists who correctly named over half the celebrity/historical figures displayed on the 'Who The Hell Are They?' picture-board. Forgive me, I can't recall the actual scores but I don't believe anyone else can.

Hoddernists? Another great name (not quite 'hedonists' but people from Hoddern having a good time – geddit?) They came second (or was it third?).

We think it was the first visit to the Hall by this family who are now living next door to where Andy and Susan Hill and the children used to be ('up the hill') By the way, I'm told Andy is now happily resettled in Denton. That's great news – even though we still miss them all, especially on these sort of occasions where Andy was such an asset. The newcomers certainly seemed to enjoy the contest, though, and Paul promised they want to come back for future events.

Anyway, back to the results of the Quiz... and it seems over £200 was raised which translated to nearly £90 once expenses for the bar, license, cooking, shopping etc were accounted. And thanks to Debbie's ingenuity, the local Barclays Bank matched us £1 for £1 on the £200-plus figure to be given to charitable causes. So job done.

The Quiz? Easy-ish questions were promised and, for instance, surely everybody knows what type of creature a Mouthbrooder is? It is a fish, of course and you knew that didn't you? You do now. The picture-board? Obviously, you would recognize Mark Carney or Pete Burn if you met them in the public bar of The Royal Oak wouldn't you? Easy, see .....

The best thing was that it was nip-and-tuck all night and the result in reasonable doubt right to the finish. The pay-bar was well patronized, as we knew it would be, and Mel did a great job buying, preparing and even serving the luxury nibbles.

Thanks as well to the two Daves, one who ran the bar the other the assistant (and scorer) to the Quizmaster. Angie weighed in with her usual generous contribution and breathless Deb arrived just in time to help at front of house after already setting up the most important thing – the cash pledge. If I've missed anybody out then I'm sorry, please forgive me but I often can't get all the answers right even with them in front of me in black and white!

*Quizmaster Bill*

## PHILIP STILL GETTING ON FINE AT CLAYDON

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*The Villager* reported in its August edition that Philip Merfield, one of our senior residents at the age of 93, had moved to the Claydon Nursing Home in Wallands Crescent, Lewes following a couple of nasty falls at home. Now we have a happy update. He is still there and the staff say he is enjoying the occasional outing while remaining in generally good spirits. It seems like a good place. He would welcome a visit from former neighbours but the advice is to ring first (0808 223 5418) before setting out.

Meanwhile his son and two daughters have rented out Philip's former home 'Southburn' to Cara and Richard who are keen to meet a wider selection of their new neighbours and explore some of the village's social events.

*Bill Pierce*

## EX-SPRINGWATCH SPEAKER WHO GAVE UP THE DAY-JOB TO SHARE LOCAL NATURAL WONDERS

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After enthusiastic promotion the village hall was full to brimming one late September evening for 'The Living Shoreline', a talk given by Steve Homewood a local naturalist, forager, photographer, author and guide.

Natural wonders between Newhaven and Seaford Head, at the interface between land, sea and air were entertainingly woven with something of his intriguing personal story, the affinity and expertise having been passed-on by a grandfather who learned about being in nature from nomadic tribesmen who found him lost and injured in Africa during World War II.

Steve appeared on BBC Television's *Springwatch* earlier this year, shedding light on a once-a-year spectacle which was a spa with miraculous healing powers for a thousand seal-bitten fungal-ridden mullet (with the occasional lampray attached) at the junction of a freshwater stream and tidal Ouse.

Since then he has taken the plunge and given up the day job as a dental technician to impart knowledge and skills learned in the field. This was one of a series of light hearted illustrated talks and photographic displays largely he presents which are orientated around our Ouse valley, Sussex Downs and seashore. Let's invite him back for another instalment next year.

*Jonathan Hammond*

## SPIES NEXT AFTER FILM NIGHT RETURNS TO LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

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Eddie the Eagle has asked me where everybody went on Friday October 21 when an all-time record LOW audience of just eight people turned up at Piddinghoe Village Hall Film Night to watch the movie about the comical Olympic ski-jumper.

It was quite a funny film but it just proved to me again how difficult it is to predict what will be a popular choice for villagers to come and see. Is it something about Fridays? I can't do Saturdays because I am working on that day but I would welcome anybody else taking over, even as a one-off. Is it the fear of having to sit on the new Village Hall chairs for up to two hours? Actually I find them quite comfortable. Is it the cheap(ish) plonk we hand out in the interval? Just like the chairs (and possibly cushions) you can always bring your own.

Happily, there was a much better response to the witty and beautifully-acted costume comedy-drama, *Love and Friendship* which showed on November 25. Three times the previous audience came in despite a few coughs, colds and more serious ailments floating around the village.

I had my own problems again - having to attend two Rotary Club events plus a friend's book-launch on the same day - but thanks to David Hallett and David Wilkinson stepping in to set it up before my belated arrival, all was well. Thanks to them - as well as to Sheila and Vanessa - for helping Jennifer clear away in the kitchen afterwards.

At the end of the film I heard the remark "Good, but definitely a ladies' film" so please note that next up on our Big Screen is *Bridge of Spies* on Friday December 16, starring Tom Hanks, Mark Rylance and Amy Ryan - a cold-war espionage thriller with an interwoven family-crisis theme. All this plus free tea, coffee etc for £3 and the opportunity to donate to Hall funds via a glass of wine or two. Even Eddie the Eagle might turn up for that.

*Bill Pierce*

## NO GOOD BEING A FAIR-WEATHER FARMER BUT GARDENING IS A BREEZE

Having worked on a farm for 20 years, with livestock ever-present, one learned to tolerate and survive whatever the weather threw at you. Spring and Summer were great as it was daylight and, hopefully, there would be some sunshine in the window enticing one out of bed to cope with our four-legged friends outside. Pigs needed feeding – or else there was never any peace. Poultry needed to be let out of fox-proof housing and fed.

Then there were the cows. During the Spring and Summer months grass was in abundance and they felt no real urge to come in twice a day for milking. I had to go out to the field they were grazing in and, with the help of a dog, round them up and drive them towards the milking parlour where they were relieved of their burden and then released to pastures new. Come the Autumn, when the rate of grass growth had slowed, they were happier to come in and eat supplemented concentrate feeds while they were being milked.

Later, Winter would arrive and from November 5th (because of the fireworks) the cows would be kept in on straw-bedded yards with roofing to keep them warm and dry. Adult youngstock and sheep stayed outside. Regular thawing of water supplies was part of the daily Winter routine as well as feeding hay and concentrates when necessary. Cooked breakfasts followed by toast and coffee were to treasure.

These glorious days continued until I was a back-seat passenger in a car accident which involved me breaking my back. The orthopaedic surgeon said my practical farming days were over and I must look for something else, career-wise.

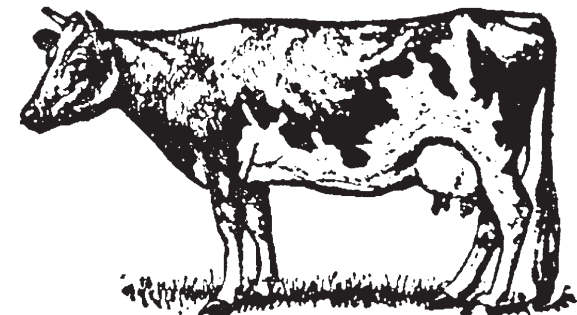
One of my mother's best friends, who lived at The Old Forge, offered me a job looking after her garden as her then gardener, Ted Warren was coming to the end of his active career. Ann Freeman was the owner in question and she did so many good

things for the village. She helped organise countless social functions as well as supervising many charitable events which kept the church profitable in its day-to-day running.

After accepting her offer the position of churchyard grasscutter also soon came up and I gladly accepted. Other village residents saw what I could do and offered me various additional contracts. One of the first was Eileen Howard who not only took me on as her gardener but also offered me storage space in her garage for lawn mowers and other equipment.

In the early days I used to get stressed when the weather was bad and I couldn't work. Eileen tried to explain to me it was no good me getting in a state over the conditions as there was nothing I could do about it. As I got older I heeded her wise words. I learned to accept weather conditions and live on a lower income during the Winter months. In my 30s and 40s I fought against the bad weather and tried to persevere with my day to day routine. Now in my mid sixties I can no longer fight the weather if its too cold or wet. My advice? At the end of the day enjoy the perks of Spring and Summer, and hibernate during the unwelcome Winter months.

*Richard Way*



## EXTRACT FROM THE VILLAGER

Issue 23, January 2000

### THE PIDDINGHOE MILLENNIUM EXPERIENCE

What are you going to do for the millennium, friends at work had asked me before Christmas? Going to the pub or perhaps to the Steyne in Brighton?

'Oh no, not me', I explained, I live in Piddinghoe. I would be helping out behind a bar in my village hall for an hour in the evening and not long after 11 p.m. I'd be joining my neighbours in a noisy torch-lit procession, banging a wood spoon against a saucepan lid. At midnight, I added, I aimed to be in a field (the Hoe) whatever the weather, sipping champagne, standing next to a bonfire and watching fireworks! When I went on to explain that on New Year's Day, there would be further village celebrations and the unveiling of a Millennium Beacon designed by a villager and financially contributed to by many of the village, they looked a little bemused. Needless to say, this was not the response that they had anticipated.

The millennium celebrations started for real on New Year's eve with the opening of the Royal Oak Survivors bar in the village hall. The hall was decorated in a fashion never seen before, with the bar taking up the far end of the hall and a string net overflowing with purple balloons hanging over our heads, a tantalisingly full bowl of party poppers strategically placed on a table in the middle of the room. The mood was jolly, as I staffed the bar between 10 p.m. until 11.15 p.m. when villagers were reluctantly ushered out of the hall to gather at their mustering positions at either end of the village.

We returned home to collect our sleepy 7 year old Australian nephew who, we had promised, would be woken up in time for the procession and the gathering on the Hoe. Fortunately, my sister-in-law had fallen asleep whilst waiting for us to return from the village hall, so the remaining three adults did not have to argue

about who would have to stay behind and baby-sit the two children fast asleep upstairs.

Jac, the 7 year old was barely awake and dressed when we heard a cacophony of noise approaching outside. At least 50 people, including a number of children, led by Brian (muster chief) were approaching. They appeared to have come out of nowhere (they had not all been in the village hall) and were accompanied by an array of instruments, whistles, torches and candles. Hurriedly pulling on muddy boots and grabbing a pair of maracas (the only musical instrument in the house and a step up from the wooden spoon and saucepan lid) at the front door, we joined the back of the procession walking in high spirits towards the village hall.

Miraculously, Valerie (other muster chief) and her group were there at the same time and everyone made their way to the Hoe. Once there, sparkling wine was handed around as people watched the bonfire and awaited midnight expectantly.

As Big Ben struck, Piddinghoe's fireworks were lit amidst "oohs" and "aahs" and the night sky all around echoed with the sound of fireworks from other celebrations. Gradually people, especially those with children, returned to their homes while others returned to their drinks and warmth of the village hall where the balloons were released and the poppers popped until after 1.00 a.m.

On New Year's Day the bar in the village hall opened again before lunch and the die-hards returned. The children in our house were sent out to play on the swings to allow the adults to clear up from the night before and get ready for the next party (get over their hang-overs). At 12.30 p.m. we walked to the triangle of grass below the Buck's house, to witness the unveiling of the Millennium Beacon (aka Ken's erection). It seemed as though as many people that turned up for the

procession last night, were here again. Mulled wine and chestnuts were consumed while we waited for Sammy Buck and Claire Barker to unveil the Beacon. With a little

assistance from Hannah Gould, the cloth fell away to reveal what we had all heard about but were dying to see. Everyone clapped as the cloth revealed the Beacon with "Piddinghoe" in gold letters encircling the wrought iron structure and what Ken described as a happy pregnant fish above. Brief words by Ken, words from Mary Woolger and John Simmonds, and a blessing by Rev. Ian Paton Hunter set the scene. For a couple of minutes loud patriotic music filled the air giving some the opportunity to sing a rendition of Auld Lang Syne. The younger members of the village busied themselves watching Dave Hentschel as the time capsule containing a copy of Piddinghoe 2000 was sealed in a cavity in the Beacon's foundations.

Gradually we dispersed and re-gathered back at the village hall for yet another drink and welcoming bowls of hot soup. The look on my Australian nephew's face said it all. He had never experienced anything like this weekend but he is certainly never going to forget where he was and what he did to mark the Millennium. Some may say that the Millennium was all hype, but that is certainly not the case in Piddinghoe and I feel privileged to have been able to take part. Certainly, the Piddinghoe Beacon will provide us all with a constant reminder of a unique occasion. Thanks must go to all those who planned and worked so hard to make the weekend such a success but especially to Ken Cheeseman for his inspiration and determination. THANK YOU !

Melanie, Jasmine cottage

## FIRST AID TIPS

As the Parish Council has at this time, and rightly in my opinion, decided against a defibrillator in the village I have been asked for a few basic First Aid tips.

In the unfortunate event of you witnessing or finding a casualty who appears unconscious, remember the ABC.

- 1. Airway.** Clear the mouth of any obstructions, including a possibly swallowed tongue or teeth, by a quick sweep of the mouth with the fingers.
- 2. Breathing.** Are they breathing? If so roll them onto the side to keep the airway clear.
- 3. Circulation.** Is there a pulse? Check in the neck just below the angle of the jaw. This is the carotid artery and the easiest to feel.

If there are no obvious signs of recovery, call for help – an ambulance – or get someone else to call for one.

Carry out CPR – one quick breath into the casualty's mouth with the head tilted back to clear the airway. Then lace two hands together, palms down and commence pressure on the lower centre of the chest. Firm pressure – you should feel about two inches of movement under your palms – and continue to repeat at about 100 per minute ('Nellie the Elephant' is a good rhythm to use). Continue until help arrives. If the casualty is a child, use fingers only and give occasional breaths into the lungs.

Of necessity this is very brief and basic advice, but it could make a vital difference. If you want further help or advice, both the St John's Ambulance and the British Red Cross run regular courses in First Aid locally.

*Dr Mike Draisey*





## THE GREAT PIDDINGHOE BAKE OFF



*A recipe for Christmas from Jill Hentschel*

### FRUIT CAKE (my version)

Use an 8 inch greased and floured loose bottom cake tin or equivalent.

Ahead of doing the recipe, soak the fruits overnight in the liquid. Soaking the cherries with the other fruits stops them sticking to the bottom of the mix.

1 lb S.R. flour; 1 tsp baking powder and 1 tsp mixed spice,  
sieved together

8 oz butter or sunflower spread

8 oz sugar – mix of granulated and brown

2 oz ground almonds

4 oz glace cherries

12 oz mixed dried fruit (I use a mix with apricots and dates)

2 tbs marmalade

5 large eggs, lightly beaten

½ pint whisky/sherry/cider/stout or orange juice

(Optional: skinned almonds/ground nutmeg and demerara sugar)

1. Rub fat into the flour and spice
2. Add the ground almonds and sugar
3. Mix in the fruits and marmalade
4. Add the lightly beaten eggs; it will then seem quite a soft mix.
5. Put into cake tin and smooth over gently. Arrange almonds on top if liked or sprinkle with a little nutmeg and sugar.
6. Bake at 150/160° C for 1 hour, then push a metal skewer into centre and cook for further 30 minutes, or until skewer pulls out clean. If not then ready, cover with a piece of cardboard (clean!) and continue. This stops the almonds burning and the cake browning too much.
7. Allow to cool for about 20 minutes before turning out.



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO 'THE VILLAGER'?

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Articles, letters, snippets are all welcome. Or you might want to discuss an idea with one of *The Villager* team. The names of the team are given on the first page of the magazine. You can always stop and talk to us about contributions. And, remember that Sheila Redman is our 'News Hound', and wants to make sure that *The Villager* is fully up to date with what is going on. There are three important things to mention.

1. If you want to contribute an article, please try not to make it longer than about 550 words. You don't have to write as much as that, of course. We can accept far less! We have to set a limit in order to make sure that we have enough space to include everything that regularly goes into the magazine, plus room for contributions. Unfortunately, the magazine, because of technical reasons, plus costs, can't be ever expanding!
2. We will always set a deadline for contributions. See below. If you send in your contribution right on the deadline we can't guarantee inclusion in the magazine. It would be very helpful if you could send your article in with some time to spare.
3. We really would appreciate having your articles as Word docs, attached to an email. It makes it easier for all of us working on the magazine.

Two of us – Bill Pierce and Gill Davies – are very happy to be involved in discussions with anyone who wants to write something, or to provide a helping hand if needed. As well as talking to them, you can contact them through email.

Bill's email address is: piercewilliam991@gmail.com

Gill's is: davies.gill@btinternet.com

*The deadline for contributions to the next Villager is  
January 24th.*