

Cuckfield Life

Inc. Brook St., Ansty & Staplefield

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue #6 : Apr/May 2013

Free

A photograph of a person hiking on a wooden staircase in a forest. The person is wearing a red shirt and a backpack, and is walking away from the camera. The forest is lush with green trees and foliage, and the sunlight filters through the canopy.

Local news and What's On

page 4

Village People: Jo cycles for charity

page 14

Baptist Church 'Contact' included

page 17

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By David Tingley, Editor

I have a confession to make; I had fully intended on taking part in the **Cuckfield Walking Race** which took place earlier in April - but I completely forgot! However, it seems that the race was certainly on - get the facts overleaf on **page 4**.

While I talk about getting involved in village life I also want to plug the annual **Cuckoo Fayre** on Bank Holiday **Monday 6th May**. Cuckfield Life will have a stall there and we'd love to see the many familiar local faces as well as lots of new ones, so do come over and have a drink and a chat with us. More about the Fayre can be found in the **Mayor's column** on **page 7**.

If the weather has warmed up sufficiently for you to consider a **recreational walk** this month, do read **Peter Lovett's** article on **page 32**. It gives a flavour and an insight into a fascinating local history-themed walk. Thanks Peter for sharing it with us.

Elsewhere in the magazine we catch up with Cuckfield mum **Jo Walker**, who is soon to be cycling through the Sri Lankan tea plantations to raise money for a cause very close to her heart. Claire Cooper explores the story of a premature birth 15 years ago and a borrowed friend's bike on **page 14**.

Along similar lines, we also feature a daring crew who **cycled across the desert** in 38 degrees for the charity setup in memory of local teenager **Angus Rowland**. Read about their exploits on **page 24**.

If you have a post-Easter conscience and you'd like to do something about it, Cuckfield Personal Training's **Lyndon Littlefair** shares some advice about **sleep and nutrition** in the first of a two-part article on **page 29** to help us change our bodies.

There is the usual listings for **What's On** found on **page 34** and a few local news stories overleaf. Plus **Cuckfield Baptist Church's 'Contact'** newsletter is featured in the **centre pages** of this month's issue.

Enjoy! See you at the Cuckoo Fayre in May.

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NEWS

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

David opens Tower Bridge



Cuckfield resident David Curtis-Brignell literally stopped the traffic in central London last month when Tower Bridge was opened especially for the official launch of English Tourism Week by Tourism Minister Hugh Robertson MP.

David (on far left) is well known in the village as organist and choir director at Holy Trinity Church but is also chairman of VisitEngland's English Tourism Week.

He was joined at the launch by Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas, Chair of London and Partners, the Minister Hugh Robertson and VisitEngland Chair Penny, Viscountess Cobham.

Some 500 events were staged across the country during the "week" which ran from 16th - 24th March.

Walking Race results



The Independent State of Cuckfield's annual Walking Race took place on a very cold morning earlier this month with over 40 entrants turning out.

Adam Cattell celebrated first resident past the post while Rob Helliwell took the Swain Cup for fastest man with a time of 52.27m. First lady to finish was taken by Sarah Adams. A time of 52.38m earned Sarah Fry fastest lady and the Bowring Cup. Jane Swain claimed the Frank Woods (veteran) Trophy.

The Wheatsheaf won first place in both and mens and ladies team categories.

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Society marks 50 years

The Cuckfield Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. From modest beginnings round a kitchen table in January 1963, the Society has become the vibrant organisation it is today.

Its constitution states that its aims are, amongst other things:

- To preserve and enhance the essential atmosphere of the parish of Cuckfield and its surrounding countryside and to improve in every way possible its appearance and amenities.
- To secure the support of and co-operate with bodies local and national whose functions or interests affect or are compatible with the objects of this Society.
- To stimulate public consciousness and appreciation of the beauty, history and character of Cuckfield and its surroundings.

To mark its Golden Anniversary, the Society has decided to fund a new piece of equipment for the popular children's playground adjacent to the recreation ground. The Society has already received a handsome legacy, a generous donation from Lindfield and Cuckfield Rotary Club and there are other possibilities of funding but there is more to do. The Society's main fundraising event will be a Strawberry Soirée with a grand auction to be held in Holy Trinity Church on Friday 14th June. Tickets (£15 each) are now on sale at Windowscene, Wealden Stores and Flâneur for what promises to be a delightful evening in a very special setting.



Great start for newly opened vintage fair

The new Cuckfield Vintage Emporium (CVE) enjoyed a successful launch last month with 25 enthusiastic stallholders transforming The Queen's Hall in to a glittering Aladdin's cave brimming with homeware, painted furniture and an array of vintage and 'pre-loved' fashions.

The event, run by Sussex duo Lucy Haywood and Darcy Shepherd, looks set to become a favourite with shoppers looking for something a little bit different.

One of Darcy's objectives for CVE is to support and sponsor Chicks, a charity that organises week-long respite adventure holidays for Britain's disadvantaged children. The idea is to encourage CVE visitors to donate to the charity and then at least match those donations with a contribution from CVE. The idea is just taking off and there are plans to raise the profile of this venture and Darcy is sure that, as her visitors become familiar with the aims, it will win strong support.

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Cuckoo Fayre

FROM THE MAYOR'S TABLE

By Lindy Elphick

It has struck me lately how much choice we have here in our village for our leisure time. Someone recently asked me how many clubs, societies and associations there are in the village... I have just counted 57 different entries on cuckfield.org vying for your attention.

Most are charities or volunteer groups run by already busy people giving their time for free. Take a moment to look around and see how many different kinds of entertainment are held in our locality – each wanting your support, your time. I ask that you keep this thought in mind when you are sitting at home deciding whether to go along or not bother... how lucky we are to have the choice and the variety – so go on, buy a ticket, support, go along, have a cuppa – you don't know where it may lead!

As mayor, I stand on the Independent State of Cuckfield committee for the twelve months of office. Like all the other groups in this community, so much time and effort goes in to make each event special. It is this unique variety that gives you – the resident – the choice of how to spend your leisure time.

By the time you read this ISOC will have held its Easter Walking Races and Easter Egg Hunt, so a huge 'Thank You' to all of those who walked, hunted and helped in any way. Within a matter of weeks we can look forward to a firm village favourite - the Cuckoo Fayre on the Recreational Ground, Monday 6th May.

The Fayre opens at noon and I will have the honour of officially opening it at 1pm – the last of my 'official' duties in my mayoral year. Each stall holder pays a small fee to the ISOC to assist with the ever rising cost of putting on this event, therefore most of the money taken by the stallholders will raise much needed funds towards the running costs of their organisation, especially needed during these lean times. In particular, maybe I could mention the ISOC stall, the 'Wheel of Fortune', as all money taken here goes to help towards the costs of the event.

The ISOC have booked plenty of entertainment to amuse all the family and fill your afternoon:

- Punch & Judy Shows
- Street Dancing (weather permitting)
- Balloon Modelling
- Circus Skills Training
- Dog Show (better bring Lottie with me!)
- Village Band
- Licensed Bar

Fingers firmly crossed for a dry, warm, sunny day – and I look forward to seeing you there. I'll be the one in the new hat!

PS: We could do with a couple more Mayoral candidates for this coming year's election – take it from one who knows – it is such a lovely thing to do.



Sleep Walk open for 2013

St Peter & St James Hospice is looking forward to hosting its annual 10k Sleep Walk around Haywards Heath and Lindfield, setting off from the Dolphin Leisure Centre at midnight on Saturday 13th July! Attracting supporters from right across the Mid Sussex area, walkers will turn out in their pyjamas raising vital funds for the Hospice.

For the first time the event is open to all ages, welcoming generations of supporters to join in with the exciting and exhilarating event.

Another first for 2013 is the Hospice's online registration. Walkers complete their details and pay their registration fee by credit or debit card by visiting www.stpeter-stjames.org.uk/event/sleep-walk-2. Early bird entry is £12 per walker and is available until Friday 10th May. So don't delay, sign up today!

Supporters can also download and print an application form from the website or pick up a form from any of the Hospice shops or from St Peter & St James' reception.



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Cuckfield iWear open

A new eye-wear store was opened by Mayor Lindy Elphick last month. The shop, under new ownership from the previously short-lived business at the High Street address, offers residents a new way of buying glasses.

There is no optometrist on the premises, so whilst they can't offer eye examinations you can choose your new pair of specs by bringing in your prescription or the team can even work out your prescription from your current glasses. Cuckfield iWear is open Tuesday to Saturday.

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Dance students celebrate success

Talented students from the BPM Dance Academy in Cuckfield picked up awards and trophies at the annual awards evening.

The dancers were presented with their awards in front of an audience of 200 guests who enjoyed a chance to celebrate their achievements over the past year.

Pupils were rewarded not just for success in their dancing but also for their confidence, commitment, hard work and development in class. Awards ranged from Most Promising, Most Improved and BPM Award in each class. There was also a trophy for the Best Newcomer and the highly anticipated 'Student Of Year', which this year was awarded to local dancer Henry Galbraith-Gibbons.

BPM is a fresh new street dance school run by Luke Bohanna and Kat Chase in Cuckfield. Both professionally trained at The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, two years ago they decided to open Cuckfield's first ever street dance classes.

Starting out in 2011 with eight children, the school is now home to over 160 students. As well as the main classes, they also run seven after school clubs.

BPM Award Winners 2013:

Mini Beginners Saturday
Most Improved - Megan Deans
Most Promising - Micah Papadopoulos
BPM Award - Matthew Aspinall

Mini Beginners Thursday
Most Improved - Jenson Charman-Gentle
Most Promising - William Mayhew
BPM Award - Jennifer Eustace

Mini Intermediates
Most Improved - Lewis Searle
Most Promising - Joshua Jooste
BPM Award - Eva Yeend

Juniors
Most Improved - Lewis Jee
Most Promising - Lilly Moffett
BPM Award - Cameron Collins

Junior Intermediates
Most Improved - Ben Eustace
Most Promising - Finlay Chalmers
BPM Award - Rebecca Clare

Seniors
Most Improved - Megan Heard
Most Promising - Connie Rutter
BPM Award - Thea Milford

Mini Best Newcomer -
Finn Cripps

Junior Best Newcomer -
Sarah Lynn-Coats

Senior Best Newcomer -
Liberty Baines-Hornsby

Student Of The Year -
Henry Galbraith-Gibbons

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VILLAGE GREEN

by Helly Eaton, Cuckfield Local

It's tough out there. While we Brits have been bravely bearing the coldest, wettest, longest winter many of us can remember, the government's chief scientific adviser warns climate change will bring even greater extremes in weather. Not good news. When I also recall Sir David Attenborough's recent comment that humans are a 'plague on earth' because of our growing population figures, it's time for a mug of tea.

And then I remember why I like living in Cuckfield. Fortunately there are many like-hearted people here who care about each other and our community. While words such as 'environment' and 'climate change' often put people off, many of us are just getting on with working together for a better future.

Take Cuckfield Local Waste Watch – someone said it sounded like a new slimming club, but it's really about rethinking rubbish. We consumers buy and use so much stuff, what happens to it afterwards is a problem. Most of us recycle what we can but plastic tubs, yogurt pots, food trays and plastic cups are trickier as they don't go into the blue bins. We've been looking at ways to recycle and reuse these items, so let us know if you have any imaginative ideas or special needs. We're now collecting plastic milk bottle tops at the monthly market – second Saturday each month – so do bring your lids along (recycling symbols 02 or 04 only please).

Litter is another major concern. It may seem innocent enough to drop something on the ground or chuck it out of the car window but wherever it goes it has an impact and can cause serious damage. (One of our group was walking down the high street when a woman dropped something out of her car on to the pavement. It was politely picked up and handed back to the woman. She apologised.)

You may see new Cuckfield Local signs up around the village saying 'Please put your litter in the bin or take your rubbish home'. This is a polite request because rubbish, especially plastic and metal litter, can kill wildlife and pollute our environment – it all too easily ends up in fields, woods and waterways. Ducks and other birds can get caught up in plastic packaging (bags and plastic ring packs especially) and die slow deaths. Rabbits, hedgehogs, badgers and other animals can also be injured by cans, plastic balloons and Chinese lanterns which end up in their territory. Stream and pondlife are also badly affected by rubbish and pollution.

Sadly, the football and rugby pitches at Whitemans Green are often full of litter after matches. If people could just use the bins provided or take their rubbish home, it would make all the difference.

We may not be able single-handedly to turn around the population explosion or sort out the climate issue but we can do a lot. As the Dalai Lama says, 'If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito...'

If you'd like more information on Waste Watch or want to get involved, go to www.cuckfieldlocal.wordpress.com.

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FLÂNEUR





Jo Walker cycles for charity

VILLAGE PEOPLE

By Claire Cooper



Photos: Top, Jo Walker with Jaime getting ready for the bike ride. Above, tiny Jaime 15 years ago in the special baby unit.

A Cuckfield mum will be swapping the South Downs for the Sri Lankan tea plantations in September as she takes part in a charity bike ride.

Riding a bike borrowed from a friend, Jo Walker will be tackling the 400 mile journey to raise money for research into difficult and traumatic pregnancies – a cause close to her heart.

Fifteen years ago, Jo watched her tiny daughter struggle to survive after she was born weighing just 2lb. And hardly a day goes by without Jo thinking of other families going through a similar experience.

From her home in Ardingly Road, Jo recalled how her normal and healthy pregnancy was cut short when what appeared to be an upset stomach turned into a dramatic dash to hospital, emergency surgery and the arrival of a tiny and fragile baby girl.

"I was 28 weeks pregnant and had been working at a conference in Brighton when I started to feel unwell, first losing my appetite and then suffering with stomach pains," said Jo.

As the pains worsened Jo was rushed in to the Princess Royal Hospital with a suspected appendicitis. Jo was carefully monitored for two days but while doctors were deciding on the best course of action, her condition deteriorated and her appendix burst.

"I remember staggering out of my room before collapsing," said Jo. "I heard the doctors saying my baby was becoming distressed and that they would have to deliver her as well as removing my appendix."

Jo awoke to the news that she had given birth to daughter Jaime, weighing just 2lbs.

"She was so tiny, she looked like a little spider," said Jo.

The pair spent the first few days apart as Jaime was taken to the special baby unit at Crawley Hospital. "Jaime was two weeks old when I held her for the first time," said Jo. "I remember being absolutely terrified."

Jo soon adapted to the 24 hour hospital routine, which included learning how to feed her daughter through a tube, while baby Jaime continued to make steady progress. Three months later, when Jaime reached 5lbs, mum and daughter were allowed to go home.

Coping without the nursing staff on hand was a daunting prospect for Jo, and it wasn't made any easier when Jaime stopped breathing the day after arriving home. "It was very traumatic as the paramedics vehicle broke down on the way but by the time they

arrived Jaime was breathing again," said Jo. "I soon found that stopping breathing is not uncommon in premature babies and I learnt not to panic when I saw her turning blue!"

Jamie has continued to thrive and enjoy a happy and healthy childhood. Now a Year 10 pupil at Warden Park School, she enjoys her studies and sport and has little recollection of her traumatic start in life. For mum Jo, however, the memories are still strong.

"I will never forget the other families we met in the special care baby unit, particularly those who weren't as fortunate as us," said Jo. "We saw some harrowing things – tiny babies like Jaime fighting to stay alive, new parents losing a twin, and full term babies with problems that would never go away."

The experience also left Jo terrified of the thought of going through another pregnancy, but, with the encouragement and support of her consultant at Crawley, Jo became a mum again with Todd arriving in June 2000 and Brooke the following year. Both weighed a healthy 7lbs.

With three children (not to mention two large lively dogs and a cat!) Jo enjoys a busy and active family life in Cuckfield and, over the years, has raised both awareness and funds for charities supporting families with special care babies.

"When Jaime was five we held a family christening and asked guests to make donations to the special care baby unit instead of buying presents," said Jo. "As a result we were able to buy equipment worth £1,500."

"But I knew that at some point in my life I wanted to do something really challenging and hopefully raise several thousand pounds," she said.

Flicking through a magazine last year, Jo spotted the opportunity she had been looking for – an eight day 400 mile bike ride through Sri Lanka.

"It's organised by the Genesis Research Trust, an organisation carrying out research into premature birth and women's cancer," said Jo. "I knew when I saw the ad that this was what I had been waiting for!"

Joined by five friends, Jo will be cycling around 50 miles a day. "It will be hot and humid and heavy going as we will be travelling inland on difficult terrain through tea plantation country but I'm incredibly excited and can't wait to go!" she said.

Riding a bike she borrowed from a friend, Jo is now in training with regular 15 mile rides on the South Downs.

To secure her place on the expedition, Jo has pledged to raise £1,600 by May and a further £1,600 by September. With funds currently standing at around £1,000 Jo is holding a series of fundraising events.

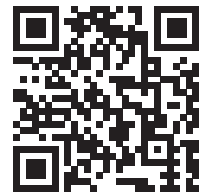
They include a charity evening with Dr Barbara Mariposa on 18th April, followed by a morning session on 25th April and a beauty day with Jan Groombridge on 30th April. For more information and to book your ticket contact Jo on 07546 115006.

"I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who has already sponsored me, from friends and family to local businesses including Cuckfield Botanics, Neilson boutique, Edit, Little Bud, Mansell McTaggart, Nova Direct and The Pet and Garden Warehouse," said Jo. "Every time I get a new donation or a message of support it means so much to me."

To sponsor Jo, visit www.justgiving.com/Jo-Walker4. For more information about the charity events email Jo at support.research@live.com

"Jaime was two weeks old when I held her for the first time. I was absolutely terrified."

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Cuckfield Life



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SPRING 2013

Cuckfield Baptist Church



Life

The Wow Factor



Recently my three-year old granddaughter looked up and saw a real rainbow for the first time. "Oh wow!" she said. "Mum, how did you make THAT?!"

Rainbows inspire me too. Exquisite colours! Perfect formation! The whole spectrum displayed across the sky for all to see!

Like any child I learned the order of colours (Richard of York/red orange yellow etc), and puzzled over pots of gold. It was only later I got to grips with the science and the significance of rainbows.

The optical phenomenon is all to do with light and water. Raindrops act like tiny prisms that break up white light from the sun and send the various colours back to your eyes as a rainbow. Interestingly, all rainbows are actually circles, though usually just a section of them is seen, most often in the early morning or early evening.

The true significance of rainbows I discovered in the Bible. The rainbow was an unforgettable sign that there would never again be a worldwide flood. God had been right to be angry, for the world was full of evil, but he also showed great mercy in preserving life.

I too deserve God's judgment. But, by his grace, I have eternal life because his full wrath against my wrong-doing and wrong-being was borne by Jesus on the cross, the ultimate place where God's love and justice met. Nothing is more amazing than THAT!

Alison Hooper



A new life beginning

The birth of every baby is a miracle! This struck me as I delivered my first baby during my training to be a midwife and the process of birth always fascinates me.

With a background in nursing I had been taught about the intricate design and functions of the human body, how cleverly our bodies have been designed to fit together and how they work from day to day.

As a midwife, I also had the joy of caring for women during the antenatal period as their babies grew and developed inside them.

As a believer in God, I could match up what I was seeing in the medical profession with what I believed to be true about God; he designed, created and made all things. Psalm 139 in the Bible, written by a King called David, says 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'

When you really stop and think about yourself and the design of your body, or see a newborn baby, does it make you think what an amazing and clever creation we are?

Every human life, in all its variety, has been designed and created. I wonder who we will praise for it? Does it lead you to want to know your creator?

Keturah Howard

Life

Knowing God makes every day thrilling. Living in the world he made, seeing his fingerprints everywhere, his brilliant design, his lavish colours is amazing but it is also humbling. What is most breath-taking is not that God made me but that God loves me. One of the songs in the Bible captures it like this:

When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?¹

Sometimes we imagine that God owes us. When things go wrong we say "how dare you let this happen to me?" The truth is we do not deserve anything good from God but wonderfully he does still care for us. Jesus, the Son of God lived in this world. He came so we can know God personally - even though it cost Jesus his life. It is no coincidence that Jesus says that Life equals knowing God. He said "I have come that they may have Life, and have it to the full."² Such Life means we get to enjoy the world as it was meant to be enjoyed, have peace to endure the suffering that reflects the brokenness of the world and look forward to being with God forever in a world which is paradise. Now that is Life, life to the full.

David Sprouse

1. Psalm 8, verses 3 & 4
2. John chapter 10, verse 10

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Seasonal soups

ON YOUR TABLE

Jacob's Spiced Parsnip Soup

Parsnips aren't everyone's favourite vegetable but this soup really shows off their best asset, a rich sweetness that works fantastically well with a curry twist. (6 servings)

Ingredients

3 onions finely chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 large parsnips peeled and chopped into small pieces
6 cloves of garlic finely chopped
1 litre of vegetable stock (homemade is great, otherwise Marigold Bouillon is a great substitute)
75g creamed coconut block, grated
4 tablespoons of mild curry paste
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. In a large saucepan fry the onions in the vegetable oil over a medium heat until beginning to turn golden.
2. Add the garlic and parsnip pieces. Stir and fry for a further 5 mins
3. Add your vegetable stock and simmer for 5 more minutes.
4. Into the pan go your grated creamed coconut and curry paste.
5. Stir thoroughly and simmer for a further 20 mins or until the parsnip pieces are fully softened. Taste and season as necessary.
6. Allow to cool and blend, using a liquidizer or a hand blender. If you don't have either you can mash using a potato masher.

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By Caroline Whiteman

During a spell of wintery weather the mind and tastebuds turn to nourishing and warming foods. For cheap and tasty meals you really can't beat soups. They are quick to prepare, freeze brilliantly, use up garden gluts and can brighten up the dullest and chilliest of days.

As we wave goodbye to winter we can celebrate the last of the root vegetables in a range of soups which capture the flavours of some of our classic crops. Cook up a batch of something delicious and savour with crusty bread or take in a thermos for the ultimate healthy packed 'liquid lunch'!



Classic Leek and Potato Soup

Ingredients:

1 onion
30g/1 oz butter
2 medium potatoes
2 large leeks
1.2 litres vegetable stock or
boiling water and
2 stock cubes or
2 teaspoons bouillon powder
Salt and pepper
4 tablespoons single cream
(optional)

Recipe serves 4 generously

1. Peel and chop the onion. Melt the butter and fry the onion over a low heat for 8–10 minutes. Don't let the onion turn brown.
2. Peel and chop the potatoes and stir into the pan. Gently fry with the onions for a couple of minutes.
3. Trim off any bruised or dry parts of leeks but leave the green. Using a sharp knife and board, cut lengthways through the green section of the leek. Holding the leek upside down, run cold water between the layers to ensure that all the mud and grit washes away. Then slice the leeks thinly crosswise and add to the pan. Stir and fry for a further few minutes.
4. Dissolve the stock cubes or bouillon in the water and put into the pan. Turn up the heat, bring to the boil, then turn heat to low and cover the pan. Simmer until the potatoes are soft – about 10 minutes.
5. Taste and add seasoning if necessary
6. Remove the pan from the heat and allow it to cool slightly. Blend the soup, using a stick blender or liquidiser, or mash using a potato masher. Reheat gently and mix in the cream if you are using it – or you can add a little swirl to each bowl if you prefer.

TOP TOP: For a more chunky texture, leave some of the soup unprocessed.

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From the Dead Sea to the Red Sea

ANGUS ROWLAND FORGET-ME-NOT FUND

From the Dead Sea to the Red Sea – a trio of cyclists have pedalled across the desert in memory of Staplefield teenager Angus Rowland.

Jonathan Rowland and Paul Hunter from Staplefield flew to Jordan to join their friend Angus Wells and to complete the 242km desert ride, raising more than £1,500 for the Angus Rowland Forget-me-not Fund.

The charity was set up in memory of Angus Rowland from Staplefield who died two years ago, aged 14, from Acute Myeloid Leukaemia

The trio, which included Angus’ dad Jonathan, decided to join the annual Dead Sea to Red Sea bike race after successfully completing the Olympic Road race route at the Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research Bikeathon in September.

Jonathan explained: “Angus, who has been my friend since junior school, is in the RAF and currently working in Jordan. A keen athlete, he discovered ‘Dead to Red’ which started as a running event but has grown to include cyclists.”

“As Angus had flown over to join us for the London ride, we decided to reciprocate by joining him in Jordan.”

The race started at 4am in the morning from the shores of the Dead Sea at an altitude of 415m below sea level. “We expected it to be cold but it was around 18 degrees,” said Paul. “However, it was also extremely dark and, as many of the 60 bikes on the starting line had no lights, it was very chaotic!”

Most of the relay team members rode one at a time but Jonathan, Paul and Angus chose to ride in pairs to keep each other company and so they could all complete 100 miles. They were accompanied by a back up team of Julie Wells and Steve Nutt, who carried food, water, emergency equipment and the third cyclist!

“Julie and Steve were fantastic and provided everything we needed to get us though the journey – from bottles of water to tuna sandwiches,” said Paul.

The route took the cyclists through the Wadi Araba desert with large sand dune mountains and grazing camels, to an altitude of 120m above sea level before descending towards the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba at sea level.

“The journey went remarkably smoothly, the only problems being the force 5 headwinds, temperatures of 38°C and just one puncture,” said Jonathan.

“We did struggle a little with boredom as the roads are long and straight and the landscape very bleak,” added Paul, who took to counting camels to pass the time! “Paul sponsored the fund a pound for every camel we counted. I’m pleased to say we spotted 73!” said Jonathan.

Travelling south in the sun also meant the cyclists returned home with sun tans – but only down the left-hand side of their bodies!

Crossing the finishing line in an impressive fourth place (among the teams of three) in a time of 9 hrs 32 minutes, the trio were all delighted to receive medals. “But the real treat was a cool beer on the beach!” said Jonathan.

Since the cyclists have returned home to Staplefield donations have continued to flood in. “We’d like to thank everyone who has supported us and been so generous,” said Jonathan. “There are so many friends, family, work colleagues and neighbours in Staplefield who support everything we do and we are extremely grateful to them all.”

Since Angus died in May 2011, supporters of the Forget-me-not Fund have raised more than £80,000 to fund research into Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) which is very difficult to treat in teenagers.

Events planned for later this year include Mermaid Sailing off the Isle of Wight in June, the LLR London Bikeathon in September and the annual sponsored walk and run around Staplefield and Cuckfield on 6th October.

To make a donation, visit www.justgiving.com/Angus-Rowland-ForgetMeNot-FundD2R.

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Playgroup need to raise funds

By Nicola Brewerton, Volunteer Playgroup Treasurer and mum to Lyra and Mia.

In the heart of the village in an understated building is a wonderful playgroup which has been caring for generations of Cuckfield's under-fives. Established in 1969, Cuckfield Pre-School Playgroup is run by 11 fabulous, fully trained and experienced women who, collectively, have worked at Playgroup for over 100 years. They are so good at what they do that Playgroup has held the coveted 'outstanding' Ofsted status since 2007. As a charity we are administered by a committee of dedicated mums – myself included.

Cuckfield Pre-School Playgroup offers all village children a chance to learn, laugh and play, indoors and outdoors. The variety of activities the staff come up with is incredible. My oldest daughter (the crafty one) used to come home laden with all sorts of artworks, from plastic bottle elephants to cut out people-chains to jam tarts. It's a truly nurturing environment for little ones to take their first steps into education and a really good place to meet other parents for mums and dads. However, despite always being full and despite the Government's commitment to offer free childcare for children over three, Playgroup, like many other similar community groups, is finding it increasingly hard to balance the books. Playgroup currently receives funding of £3.77 per child per hour but most playgroup leaders agree that to be able to run with Government funding alone it would need to increase to at least £4.77. But with funding having been frozen for three years (and our operating costs continuing to rise) and

with no hint of an increase on the horizon this scenario is highly unlikely. In the face of this problem, however, we are determined to continue to offer the option of absolutely free Playgroup sessions to all children in the village, including those with special needs.

Which can only mean one thing – fundraising and lots of it!

The Playgroup Committee has a long history of local fundraising events – you'll see us at Christmas in Cuckfield, the Cuckoo Fayre, school fete, the Mayor's procession and our bi-annual jumble sales to name a few. But now we need to up the ante. We have a target to raise £5000 this year, which may not sound like much to you but believe me it's an awful lot of fairy cakes.

Later in the year you'll be seeing posters for a Cricket day and a Race night, but our first big fundraiser is a James Bond Casino Night on 11th May. We are planning a great Saturday night at the Queen's Hall with a casino, including black jack and roulette, Bond cocktails, bar, canapés and nibbles and a disco till 11.30pm. Everyone is welcome to join us for this night out – tickets are £12.50 and available at Wealden Stores, Playgroup or phone 01444 457042. Please dress to kill!

If you would like to give a donation to help keep Cuckfield Playgroup the very special place it is, go to <http://bit.ly/Ymv2Cu> or send a cheque to Cuckfield Pre-School Playgroup, Cuckfield Youth Club, London Lane, Cuckfield, RH17 5BD.

If you fancy doing a sponsored event on our behalf or if you have any fundraising ideas, please email me at nicola@roryhunt.net

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Change your body – change your lifestyle

By Lyndon Littlefair, Cuckfield Personal Training

If you are not happy with your body, then you need to change something about your lifestyle. Most people think it is a highly complicated formula and it is impossible to do anything about it but with a few lifestyle modifications you can have the body you want.

The first thing you need to do is look at your current lifestyle and work out where there is room for improvement. Lifestyle takes in everything that you do from sleep to nutrition, exercise and stress. By looking at all of these areas and determining where you can improve, you can then see the changes in your body.

This is a two part article on lifestyle. This month we will look at sleep and nutrition and next month we will cover exercise and stress.

Let's start with sleep. We can break sleep into two components, quality of sleep and quantity of sleep. You should be getting to sleep by 10.30pm and waking by about 6.30am. I can imagine a lot of you thinking... no chance of that! With your body's natural recovery mode you are getting your physiological recovery between 10.30pm and 2.30am. This is when your body is recovering physically. Between 2.30am and 6.30am is when you are getting your psychological recovery. This your REM sleep and it is when you are recovering mentally. For those people who always get up early (myself included... I am writing this on the 5.39am train to London) then physically you will feel fine, however you may feel mentally tired. That's my excuse anyway...

Both of these will have an effect on what you can do throughout your day and how healthy the body is both short term and long term. Does this sound like you?

Nutrition. Just by saying the word opens a very large can of worms. Next time you go into a bookstore, just take a look at the nutrition section. It is huge! It is my personal and professional opinion is that no one diet provides a solution for everyone. Just as we are all different on the outside, we are also different on the inside. It is a matter of finding out what combinations of food work for you personally. My professional approach is based on metabolic typing. But that is for another article.

A great way to start with nutrition is to determine where you are right now. Keep a food diary for two weeks and write down everything you eat and when you eat it. This list should also include water, cigarettes, alcohol and anything else that you put into your body. Just by writing it down creates an awareness of what you are actually eating and then you can start to cut out the rubbish. Here's a few examples of what most people start by cutting out: sugar, cows milk, soy, alcohol and GM foods.

If you aim to eat non-processed, organic, wholesome foods you are half-way there. Also, water is essential. Most people do not drink nearly enough water. A general guide is: your weight in kilograms x 0.033 = your daily water consumption in litres.

So now you have a few things to think about! Part Two coming up next month.



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Acupuncture - an holistic way to health

The use of acupuncture as a treatment has been documented over several thousand years. The core belief is that the balance of energy within the body relates to an individual's health and acupuncture can influence this flow. Lesley Reed has been treating people with acupuncture for a variety of symptoms over the last two years. She has a BSc (Hons) degree in acupuncture and is a full member of the British Acupuncture Council (BACc), abiding by their strict code of practice and hygiene. She also has additional qualifications in massage and reflexology.



Incorporating Traditional Chinese Medicine with Five Element and Stems and Branches theory into her acupuncture treatments, Lesley has been particularly recommended by others for her reassuring, calm manner and her professionalism - especially when dealing with nervous clients or those with special needs.

Lesley has experience in using acupuncture to treat many conditions, but she has a special interest in pain management, panic/anxiety, fertility and facial revitalisation acupuncture.

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The latest trends

DESIGN AT HOME

By Fiona Evans, Limited Editions

Each year Design Week inspires us with an amazing array of furnishings and finishes; stunning fabrics, statement lighting, fabulous rugs, carpets, beautiful tiles, really everything that is required to add the finishing touches to complete an interior design project. It's an exciting time if you're interested in interiors and the latest trends. If you would like something a bit different or unusual for your home, then the look of the moment and trends for 2013 should be right up your street.

Texture, texture, texture in rugs, carpets, tiles and wallpaper is big, bold and creative. Carpets, bean bags and foot stools that look as if they have been knitted using giant needles. Carpets and ceramic tiles which are corrugated like cardboard or have a huge woven appearance are making an impact. Incredible sculpted rugs in 3D designs that you just want to stroke would look equally at home mounted on the wall as artwork as they are cascading across the floor.

Patchwork designs have been in vogue for a while now and the idea has now spread to ceramic tiles. Each tile a different design, a homage to craft and vintage handmade design and an eye-catching alternative to rugs. Select black and white patterns to acknowledge an emerging trend! The handmade look and up-cycling of second-hand pieces of furniture reflects the trend in eco friendly products, recycling objects to make them your own at a fraction of the cost of new and helping the environment at the same time. Retro pieces of furniture and accessories from the 1950s/60s and 70s are all the 'thing' and there are many fabric designs supporting the fashion. Charity shops and car boot sales are an inexpensive source.

Do you like zebras? There is a strong African influence in design out there; hot and bright with animal prints, bold spicy colours, animal images, tribal pieces and antique rugs. At the moment such a scheme would warm up the interior and chase away winter!

You are very trendy if you've had a striped carpet fitted recently. Stripes running up the stairs create a more animated look, whizzing away creating a pathway. A striped rug or blind makes a striking focal point and striped cushions could be grouped together. Stripes often come textured as well, so ticking two boxes at once!

Not usually encouraged, but wall writing and graphic images are super trendy at the moment. Not just limited to walls, ceilings are decorated in the same way. Poetry, bits of philosophy, quotes – an urban answer to making your space your own. Sticky text can be purchased, so you don't have to grapple with a paint brush.

Lastly, give your home an extra 'zing' by using metallic finishes, particularly bronze for 2013. Metal accessories, lamp bases, bowls, metal effect tiles, especially mosaic tiles, wallpaper and fabrics, glistening away in a super trendy interior.

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Cuckfield historical walk

OUT AND ABOUT

We live in hope of the weather warming up. When it does, what better way to appreciate Cuckfield's position in Sussex than by walking through some of its history? Peter Lovett is a public speaker and walk leader who has lived in Cuckfield for more than 25 years. Here he takes us on an 11 mile circular walk – sharing various historic notes on the way round.

See www.peterlovettwalks.eu and www.peterlovetttalks.co.uk

By Peter Lovett

Inspired by "A Chronicle of Cuckfield" by Maisie Wright (available from Cuckfield Museum in The Queen's Hall, Cuckfield) this walk starts from Broad Street to the Old School and on to Staplefield.



The earliest known written record of a school here is the will of Edmund Flower, dated 6th July 1521, citizen and merchant taylor of London. The money was invested in land but the proceeds proved insufficient and in 1529 the Rev William Spicer, Rector of Balcombe, gave further endowments and a new constitution requiring teaching on the lines of Eton. Many years later, Eton's archives were destroyed by fire and they requested the loan of the Cuckfield school curriculum. The oldest part of the current building is from 1632. This walk passes the former home of Rev. William Spicer.

To follow the route you will need two Ordnance Survey maps (134 Crawley & Horsham and 135 Ashdown Forest).

As you ascend Cuckfield High Street there are lovely views of Wolstonbury Hill. The earthworks there are early Iron Age from the 6th to 5th century BC.



The route joins the High Weald Landscape to Sparks Lane, where it leaves this long distance trail and turns north past Collin's Farm to Sidnye Farm. All dogs must be on leads for this section. From Sidnye Farm head east past Sidnye Cottages to Cherry Lane, where you turn left to head northwards with views of Pilstye Farm to the right.

In 1830 impoverished and landless agricultural labourers staged a widespread uprising in the arable south and east of England. They sought to halt reductions in their wages and to put a stop to the introduction of the new threshing machines that threatened their livelihoods. Many Sussex men were hanged on the gallows on Ditchling Common, the penalty for firing a rick.



In Cuckfield a rick was burnt at Pilstye Farm and a rick ladder destroyed at Borde Hill. In Cuckfield, letters were traced to an apprentice named Padgen, who was arrested and brought before the magistrates sitting in the Court Room at "The Talbot". He was committed for trial in Lewes.

Climbing the hill along Cherry Lane, turn left by the pond and head east passing Spicer's Farm and the White House to Staplefield, where you are spoilt for choice for refreshments at The Victory Inn or The Jolly Tanners, an old coaching Inn.



In 1761 the first direct road was made from Cuckfield to London and the route from Brighthelmstone (Brighton), which had gone via Lewes and East Grinstead, was shortened by 8 miles. By 1790 an advert for the Cuckfield stagecoach route claimed it was patronised by the highest nobility.

The Prince of Wales, later George IV, used to stop at the coaching inns. Others travellers through here included the Prince of Orange and the Russian Ambassador in 1813 and, in 1814, Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess of Oldenbugh (sister of the Emperor of Russia).

In Cuckfield, the modest alehouse "The Hound" was enlarged and by 1800 renamed "The Talbot", a superior breed of hunting dog.



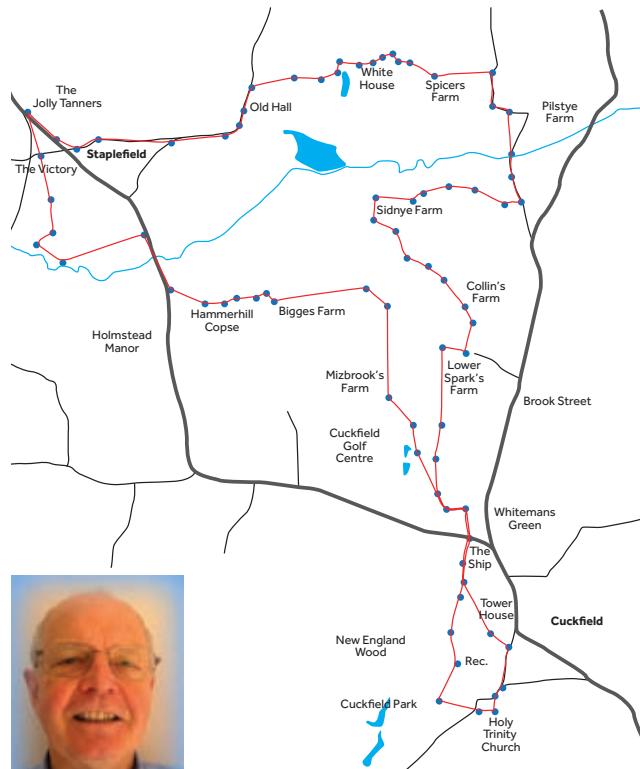
From Staplefield cricket ground take the footpath southwards. At a T junction of paths turn right along a permissive path which follows the banks of the river Ouse for a while before you join the Cuckfield road, where a high visibility vest is advisable to warn car drivers. You have to walk about 450m along this road over Hammerhill Bridge, then left on the footpath to Hammerhill copse. Hammer Hill aptly describes the noise of the forge which was by the river here centuries ago. The air would have been polluted with smoke from numerous charcoal kilns to feed the iron furnaces and forges.



You pass Bigges Farm, heading east before turning south again. The view to the south is where the first V1 flying bomb to hit England exploded in 1944. After following the edge of the golf course, take the public footpath south-east across the course keeping strictly to the public path and showing courtesy to golfers. You re-join the High Weald Landscape Trail and have a choice of footpaths to return to your starting point.

The walk to Staplefield is six miles with 552 feet of ascent and 584 feet of descent. The total eleven miles walk gives wonderful views of the landscape and history of Cuckfield and the High Weald. Many more pictures of this walk than could be shown here can be seen on Peter's blog <http://bit.ly/13Gt9EU>

With almost 1,000 feet of ascent and descent, it does require a good level of fitness.



All photos by Peter Lovett

What's on this month

AT QUEEN'S HALL

April

26th **Craft Fair** – 9.30am - 1pm
Monthly market held in the Queens Hall – an eclectic mix of traditional crafts, home produce, cakes, jams and chutneys with design led home interior stalls

26th **Charity silent auction** including ploughman's supper and glass of wine in aid of the Stroke Communication group

May

10th **Vintage Emporium** 11am – 4pm. Admission £1.

11th **James Bond Casino Night**
A fabulous evening fundraiser for Cuckfield Pre-School Playgroup. Tickets are £12.50 per person with a welcome drink and nibbles.
Bar with James Bond cocktails, Casino, quiz and disco. All are welcome. Dress to Kill.
Tickets from Wealden Store, Playgroup or phone 01444 457042. 7.30pm - 11.30pm

17th **Cuckfield Crafts and Market** 9.30am-1pm

AND ELSEWHERE

April

19th First meeting of the **Senior Singing Club** at The Old School. Calling All Senior Singers - You are NEVER too old to sing and have fun.
For more information and to join please call Sarah Cheesmur on 01444 455156 or sarahcheesmur@hotmail.com

20th **Visit to Calais Museum of Fine Arts and Lace**
Cuckfield European Association day trip to the Calais Museum of Fine Arts & Lace. Booking: please contact Julie Bransden on 01444 413066

20th **Mid Sussex National Trust Association Spring Coffee Morning** at Methodist Hall in Perrymount Road, HH 10-11.30am. A chance to socialise with new and current members and raise money towards our local National Trust properties

May

3rd **Sussex Mineral and Lapidary Society Illustrated talk.** 'Recent discoveries at Parys Mountain' by Tom Cotterell. Mineral of the month – Anglesite. 7.30 for 8pm Redwood Centre, Clair Hall, Haywards Heath www.smls.org.uk. 01444 483041

6th **Cuckoo Fair** on Cuckfield Recreation Ground

11th **Cuckfield Local Market**
Talbot Inn Courtyard 9.30am-12.30pm

11th **Ansty Garden Club Coffee Morning and Plant Sale**
10am-12noon at Ansty Village Hall, Deaks Lane, Ansty

18th **NSPCC Plant Sale** 10.15am - 1.30pm
A large selection of perennials, patio and vegetable plants. Light refreshments. Entrance is FREE. Held at Brinkley Lodge, London Road, Cuckfield




25th **Sussex Chorus 'A Spring Celebration'** HAYDN: 'The Creation' – a Brighton Festival Concert at 7.30pm in St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton
Tickets: £15, concessions £12, students & children under 16 £5
Available from: Sussex Chorus Ticket Manager 01444 412579, Website www.sussexchorus.org www.brightonfringe.org or 01273 912727 & WeGotTickets.com

29th **Ansty Garden Club Evening visit to Rushfield** with a talk on Roses

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