

Cuckfield Life

inc. Brook St, Ansty & Staplefield

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue # 1 : Nov/Dec 2012

Free



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EDITORIAL

By David Tingley, Editor

Well, hello Cuckfield! Here is something NEW for you. It feels like I've been talking about this project for years, but it's not quite that long! Welcome to **Cuckfield Life**.

For those of you who either Claire (assistant editor) or I haven't spoken to recently, Cuckfield Life is your new **community magazine** for the residents and friends of the village. It will be delivered free every month to homes in Cuckfield, with plenty of other copies available from various shops on the High Street.

My vision for this magazine is that it scratches where the local community itch. **It's village talk, by the village.** We want to highlight local people, groups, news; anything that's important/interesting to Cuckfield. This month we chat to local poet **Nicola Wood** and find out what makes her tick in our '**village people**' feature on **page 15**.

Helly Eaton begins her regular column on **page 8**. This article will keep you up to date with village group **Cuckfield Local** and also inspire you in all things 'green'.

Many will have heard about the Parish church - **Holy Trinity** - having completed a massive interior redevelopment. Thanks to **Colin Sewell-Rutter** we can showcase this re-ordering with a bit of the story and photos of the finished work on **page 10**.

On this subject, please don't forget one of the (many) annual traditions in Cuckfield; the **Christmas Tree Festival** 7th-9th December. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the local fundraiser. With the new layout in the church and an extra day - it proves to be a different year in 2012. More information on **page 11**.

So there you have it. **Our first issue.** Grab a cuppa and have a read. Please let us know what you think. We'd love to hear from you, so do get in touch. Send an email to editor@cuckfieldlife.co.uk, follow us on Twitter or 'Like us' on Facebook. Finally can I give a plea for some great **local photography of the village** for the cover. There's a **£20 M&S gift card** in it for you! See the website for details.

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

Cuckfield retailer wins Ambassador Award

Staff at JoJo Boutique are celebrating after owner Jo Dennis won the Sussex Fashion Ambassador Award for 2012.

Jo received the award in recognition of her support for local designers, whose collections feature alongside better known brands on sale in the High Street shop.

"I'm thrilled to be Sussex Fashion Ambassador for 2012," said Jo. "For these new designers, getting an opportunity to showcase their collections and to get such a positive reaction from our customers is hugely appreciated by them and rewarding for all of us.

"A few of the brands are being recognised nationally and it is great to be part of their success."

Since opening three years ago, Jo and her staff have built a reputation for seeking out new and different designers, and giving friendly and honest advice to customers on what styles are right for them.

The store has also recently launched a new website where customers can buy online.

Last chance to see exhibition

If you haven't yet visited the 'Rest and Be Welcome' exhibition at Cuckfield Museum, then you need to get your skates on! The Museum closes for winter in mid December and the exhibition will be dismantled to make way for a new display.

'Rest and be Welcome' is a celebration of 200 years of hospitality in Cuckfield village. It's a fascinating collection of memorabilia from the pubs, tea rooms and hotels that have welcomed thousands of visitors to the village over the years.

In the past, Cuckfield has boasted two coaching inns, six other pubs, five cafes and tea rooms and two hotels. Today, hospitality is still a priority with its five pubs, three cafes, a hotel and a restaurant.

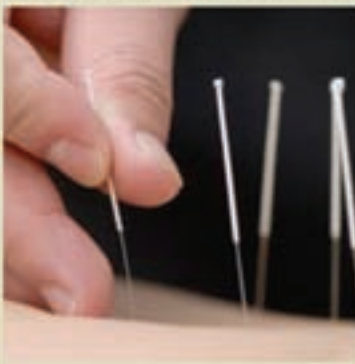
Exhibits on show include a soup plate and 1950s trade card from the Kings Head and crockery from the congregational church in Broad Street.

Photos and letters illustrate how troops celebrated VJ Nights at the White Harte and how a Hospitality Association was formed to provide free entertainment.

The historic memorabilia is enhanced by modern day exhibits which include a selection of knitted cakes!

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.



Appointments are available from 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday at The Clinic at Borde Hill and home visits can be arranged. For new patients a free 15 min phone consultation is offered. Please call 07808 248772 or email lesley@reedacupuncture.co.uk.

Dazzling defenders wanted by football club

By Matt Bishop

The transfer window might have recently slammed shut but Cuckfield Cosmos is still on the look out for great Goalies, dazzling Defenders, marvellous Midfielders and star Strikers!

Since 1982, Cuckfield Cosmos FC has been giving young people, between the ages of 5 to 16 the opportunity to play the beautiful game within a fun and safe environment. All abilities are welcome and with 18 teams ranging from under 6's to under 16's and two girls teams at under 13's and under 14's level, Cosmos is a great club to begin your football career, just like former Brighton and Hove Albion and current Leyton Orient midfielder Dean Cox!

Training takes place on Saturdays at Whiteman's Green and Beech Hill Farm, while league and cup games are played on a Sunday. For more details about the club visit www.cuckfieldcosmosfc.co.uk.

Wine and Dine at Bolney



There's a lot going on at Bolney Wine Estate this autumn! They are celebrating the harvest with Harvest Supper on 15th November – a fabulous three course meal using top quality local produce and offering the opportunity to try this year's wine straight from the barrel.

Following the success of last year's Christmas Fayre, the vineyard are holding another on 1st December with lots of fantastic things to try and buy. For the younger ones – meet Santa in Santa's Grotto both at the Fayre and every Saturday in December (between 10am and 2.00pm). Why not pop into the vineyard and look round the shop – there are lots of gift ideas as well as award-winning wines and a 'wine of the week', so you will be able to try a different wine each week!

To book a ticket for the Harvest Supper or for further information call 01444 881 575 or visit the website www.bolneywineestate.co.uk.

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Lindy's landslide victory

MAYORAL ELECTIONS 2012

By Claire Cooper

New Mayor of the Independent State of Cuckfield Lindy Elphick was singing the praises of her supporters after her carefully orchestrated campaign secured her a landslide victory in the annual election last month.

Representing the Singing Allsorts, Lindy swept aside the opposition pulling in more than 80,000 votes and raising more than £8,000 for charity.

Clearly delighted to be chosen as Mayor, Lindy paid tribute to her fellow choir members: "It's been an all round team effort and I couldn't have done it without the fantastic support of my friends in the Singing Allsorts," said Lindy.

"The aim of our campaign was to put the group firmly on the Cuckfield map and I think we've certainly achieved that!"

"People think that all the candidates represent village pubs but we have proved that local groups can be just as successful.

"I'd like to encourage other groups in the village to put forward candidates in next year's election. We had so much fun, so many laughs, especially on election night when the atmosphere was amazing. And of course, more candidates means more money will be raised for charity."

Lindy's campaign, which began with meetings around her kitchen table, grew to include organic lunches, quizzes, an 80s night, second-hand clothes sale and even a campaign tea towel. "The tea towels, which featured our campaign poster, were extremely popular. We sold 250!" said Lindy.

Every pound raised bought 10 votes for Lindy. "All money raised goes to local charities and will be distributed during the coming year," said Lindy, who has lived in the village for 20 years. In total the election raised around £11,000.

Lindy's first role was to take pride of place in the Mayor's procession among a cavalcade of floats from local clubs and groups.

Looking ahead Lindy said she was looking forward to representing the village and raising the profile of the Independent State of Cuckfield.

Election results:

Lindy Elphick	£8289.78
(Singing Allsorts)	
David Spear	£1515.51
(The Talbot)	
Leanne Knapman	£1146.08
(Holy Trinity Primary School)	
Jeremy Crampton.....	£143.32
(The White Harte)	
Vicky Parke, outgoing Mayor	£60.40
(The Ship)	

Results from judging of the floats:

- 1st – Cuckfield Scouts and Cubs
- 2nd – Cuckfield Playgroup
- 3rd – Holy Trinity Primary School

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Small school – big advantages

Andy Giles, the Head of Tavistock and Summerhill School in Lindfield explains why choosing a small prep school is the key to your child's future success.

Small School-Big Advantages

With class sizes guaranteed to be no greater than 16 pupils, Tavistock and Summerhill School in Lindfield is an inherently small school where it is genuinely possible for your child to get the individual attention they need to succeed. "The secret is quite simple," Andy Giles the Head explains, "all members of the staffroom know every child in the school, every pupil knows every other and the teachers have an open dialogue with all the parents. Staff meetings focus on the children, their learning, their social interactions and their personal development. This is the key to the outstanding success that I firmly believe only smaller schools like Tavistock and Summerhill can achieve. I have always chosen to work within smaller schools for this very reason and I have seen the amazing results that can be delivered." Andy Giles previously led Lathallan School to become one of the most successful Independent Schools in Scotland, topping examination results tables there.

Traditional Values

"I am a great fan of children learning traditional values within a modern approach," Andy tells us "Timeless values of kindness, politeness, caring and respect for others are high on the agenda and indeed are often remarked upon by visitors." According to Ofsted "Behaviour of the pupils is outstanding...with a high level of engagement in all learning activities."

Academic Excellence

Andy Giles continues, "Our dedicated teachers are the key to Tavistock and Summerhill's unrivalled academic success as a prep school." Pupils in Year Three and above are taught by specialist teachers in fully equipped rooms specific to that subject. Typically, 50% of pupils achieve



Tavistock and Summerhill is an intentionally small school where it is genuinely possible for your child to get the individual attention they need to succeed. Our new mini bus service makes the School more accessible to children in surrounding villages.

academic awards and every child achieves a place at their senior school of choice.

Opportunities For All

Tavistock and Summerhill School provides its children with a broad experience of education, blending classroom activities with Music, Drama, Sport and Outdoor Education. This enables pupils to become resourceful, respectful and resilient learners. Andy Giles tells us, "At Tavistock and Summerhill every child gets to play competitive sport, sing in the choir and perform in School productions. These are important, confidence-boosting experiences which larger schools can struggle to deliver for everyone."

Come And See What Makes Us Special!

Tavistock and Summerhill offers a unique educational experience for young people aged 3-13 years. To find out more, why not visit for a private tour? For further details of visits or our mini bus service, telephone the Registrar, Deborah Charrington, on 01444 450256 or email: admissions@tavistockandsummerhill.co.uk

The Walled Garden Nursery

The School's Nursery boasts an idyllic setting in the original walled garden within the school grounds, providing a safe space to explore and learn through play. The Nursery enjoys access to the specialist teachers of the school for French, Music and PE and access to the school's swimming pool. Within easy reach of the centres of Haywards Heath and Lindfield, the Nursery has recently extended its services to provide year round care from 8am until 6pm daily to assist working parents.

Power of community

VILLAGE GREEN

by Helly Eaton, Cuckfield Local

One of the great things about living in Cuckfield is the strength of our community. You've only got to look around to see it everywhere. We already take for granted things like our thriving local monthly market; the new community allotments at Warden Park where more and more locals are growing their own veg; not to mention the stylish cotton and jute reusable bags we carry to cut down on plastic bags when we're out shopping.

These are just three of the projects started up by a few local people who got chatting over a cup of tea three years ago. Known as Cuckfield Local (CL) these same people, along with many others who've joined in with their own ideas, are still at it making Cuckfield a happy and sustainable place to live in our quickly changing times.

The market, probably CL's highest profile regular event, has embedded itself into village life. On the second Saturday morning of each month, the Talbot Inn courtyard becomes a busy, bustling hub full of people enjoying good local produce and chatting with friends. Over the last three years it's done a lot to boost the idea of 'food metres' instead of 'food miles', cutting our carbon footprint at the same time as giving us tasty fresh foods. The organisation of the market, like all the other CL projects, is done voluntarily in people's own time.

It's this power of commitment by ordinary folk, volunteering time and energy to make great things happen, that makes Cuckfield the special place it is. As with many things in life, it's often those with the least time who give the most. Nothing Cuckfield Local does is designed around making profits – it's far more about having fun and, at the same time, creating a better environment for us and our children into the future.

Many organisations in Cuckfield have the same ethos. Look how hard the mayoral candidates worked to make money for charities in order to be crowned Mayor of the Independent State of Cuckfield. Incidentally, new mayor Lindy Elphick has herself played a huge part in CL's Plastic Bag-free Cuckfield project, encouraging local traders to get behind the campaign.

This is a good time of year to stay put. Early in December the village will be buzzing – CL's Christmas food market on 8th December (10am–1pm) promises to be bigger and better than ever. New and traditional stalls groaning under the weight of food and drink delights will be filling the Talbot courtyard, offering great quality daily staples as well as special festive foods and gift ideas.

And you could walk from there down to the church for the beautiful Christmas Tree Festival and choir singing. Again, this is a time when locals give their time and creative efforts to help charitable causes. It's one of Cuckfield's most stunning and inspiring events – not to be missed.

So, if you fancy getting any new local projects underway and need a bit of help, you're in the right place. See www.cuckfieldlocal.wordpress.com for more info or to get involved, follow us on Twitter @Cuckfield_Local or come and meet us at the market. Enjoy...

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Photograph by Catherine Hodgson

Cuckfield trek raises £4k

By Claire Cooper

Hundreds of hikers and dozens of dogs have enjoyed a 6.5 mile countryside trek around Staplefield and Cuckfield in memory of a local teenager.

The walkers hope to have raised more than £4,000 for the Angus Rowland Forget-Me-Not Fund for research into leukaemia and lymphoma.

The charity was set up in memory of 14 year old Angus Rowland from Staplefield, who died last year.

Angus' Mum Elizabeth, who organised the walk along with family and friends, said she was delighted with the turnout and particularly the numbers of young walkers. "It was wonderful to see so many teenagers out walking on a Sunday morning and once again we were blessed with fantastic weather," she said.

"The following day was a different story when we got drenched while walking the route and taking the signs down!"

Walkers were treated to drinks and homemade cakes at two refreshment stops along the way. "We are extremely grateful to Chris and Simon at Ditton Place

and Debbie and Lee at Sidnye Cottages, who once again gave their time to support us by manning the refreshment stops and to all our wonderful friends who provided the cakes and helped at the village hall and with marshalling," said Elizabeth.

She added that villager Pat Bendall also added more than £170 to the day's total by selling her handmade greetings cards.

The event was organised following the success of the first Angus Rowland memorial walk last year and preparations are in hand for next year's event.

"It's a great opportunity to raise money and to remember our son," said Elizabeth.

In just under a year the charity has raised almost £80,000 for research into teenage leukaemia, with many events organised by Angus' friends from St Paul's Catholic College and Warden Park School.

For more information about the charity, search for Angus Rowland Fund on Facebook.

December Food Market
Sat 8th 10am-1pm
 Talbot Courtyard

Our usual stallholders will have lots of Christmas goodies for you, so come and forage for the ideal foodie gift!

For market updates follow us on Twitter @Cuckfield_Local www.cuckfieldlocal.wordpress.com



New world order

By Claire Cooper

The sight of families flocking to church is no longer just a Sunday morning ritual in Cuckfield.

Visitors from around the world have been dropping in to see what is already being acclaimed as one of the best and most sensitive church reordering projects undertaken.

Without doubt the best loved building in the village, Cuckfield folk have been turning up in increasing numbers for church services at Holy Trinity and to attend one or more of the events that have been taking place in the village's newest community space. Harvest Festival this year took the form of a barn dance and supper in the church building and big music events have provided a great evening out in a lovely setting.

It's all part of an ambitious £600,000 project which has seen the building sympathetically restored but also enhanced to become a church for the 21st century and an improved hub for the local community.

Seeing the dream become reality is hugely rewarding for Colin Sewell-Rutter, who has lived and breathed the project for the past three years. "Holy Trinity is first and foremost a place of Christian worship – which it has been for nearly 1,000 years - and it is great that more and more people are learning to love this beautiful and refreshed building," he said. "Some of the comments in the visitor's book have been mind blowing."

Project director Colin explained how the Parochial Church Council reached the mammoth decision to undertake the renovation project which closed the church for five months earlier this year.

"We knew that substantial repairs were urgently needed - the floor was sinking and there were problems with the walls," he said. "We had reached a point where 'patching up' just wasn't an option, so we decided to bite the bullet, dig up and replace the floor and, while we

were at it, carry out a major internal refurbishment or 'reordering.'

"The principal purpose of the proposals was to make the church a vibrant place of worship for the Cuckfield community in the 21st century but in doing so to provide opportunities for greater community use."

Starting work in a recession may seem risky but there were also clear benefits. "Although raising funds is much more difficult, building costs were low and we avoided the impending 20% VAT on church building works," said Colin. "It made sense to have the work done in one go rather than 'drip feed' over a number of years."

The biggest part of the work was digging up the floor, installing sustainable underfloor heating and installing a new floor with beautiful limestone tiles full of fascinating fossils.



"We've extended the Chancel to create a more adaptable space and installed moveable choir stalls and altar – all designed by great British craftsmen," said Colin.

"We took out the pews and replaced them with traditionally-made oak chairs, which people say are



remarkably comfortable, and re-decorated for the first time in 50 years. People particularly like the new children's area, complete with little chairs made to match those of mum and dad."

New modern additions include a sound system and cinema screen. "The screen is already being used during services for films showing the work of the church and words for songs," said Colin. "We are also in the process of setting up a church film club."

The original font has been lowered and put back into its 13th century position and space created for everyone to gather round while baptisms take place. "Everyone comments on the 1844 baptismal floor which is one of the earliest examples of Chamberlain Worcester encaustic tiling in Britain but was in a very bad state after being laid without foundations," Colin explained. "We carefully numbered all the tiles, lifted, restored and saved as many as we could, and had traditional copies made where that was not possible. The result is a really beautiful floor as good as when it was originally laid."

Despite such a massive undertaking which would dramatically change the church interior, parishioners were hugely supportive of the plans and there were no formal objections from the community to the faculty (planning permission) that the church had to get. "Communication was key – we had a huge consultation and did our best to keep everyone informed," said Colin. "Residents seem to have appreciated that and have told us they felt involved in every stage."

"Many people think the church remains unchanged since it was built but in fact it has been re-ordered a number of times. The Victorians swept everything away inside the church and completely changed the interior.

"I like to describe our changes as traditional with a nod towards contemporary – I'm really gratified that people remark that we have retained the character, the feel and the sense of peace in the space," he added. "And of course I'm delighted the project was completed on time and under budget."

Despite the recession, over £300,000 has already been raised. "It's wonderful that people have been so generous at a time when many are experiencing hardship," said Colin. "We hope that over coming months people will be able to match their giving, which will enable us to pay off a temporary loan.

"People are extremely pleased with what has been done in allowing new and different styles of worship and other things to happen in church. Whether people are churchgoers or not they seem to love this building."

The next community event will see the church rocking to the sounds of Gospel rapper Guvna B, while a whole series of classical concerts are planned for the new year. "We're delighted that the Sussex Symphony Orchestra has relocated its chamber orchestra from Brighton to Holy Trinity and will be holding regular concerts here throughout 2013," said Colin.

If you'd like to make a donation to the reordering fund or discuss hiring Holy Trinity for your event please contact Colin on 01444 459400.

Christmas Tree Festival celebrates with extra day

The TENTH annual Christmas Tree Festival will be staged in Holy Trinity Church Cuckfield for three days from Friday 7th to Sunday 9th December. Adults £3, children free. Full programme of live music and refreshments available. Proceeds to HemiHelp and Holy TrinityChurch. For entry times please see www.cuckfieldctf.org.uk

Ashdown Singers wow Cuckfield audience

By Carolyn Burgess

On a Saturday evening last month, Holy Trinity Church hosted a most enjoyable concert by the Ashdown Singers which raised over £500 for the Holy Trinity Repair, Restoration and Reordering Appeal.

A chamber choir of thirty voices, the Ashdown Singers, under their director Terence Steele, have been performing major choral works and more intimate motets, madrigals and part-songs for some 36 years. Supporting charitable causes has always been an essential part of the choir's ethos.

The concert opened spectacularly with a powerful rendition of Haydn's "Inसानae et Vanae Curae", the choir's energy matched by the skilful organ accompaniment of Nick Houghton. A complete change of mood followed with two thoughtful a cappella pieces – "If ye love me" by Thomas Tallis and "In Remembrance" from the Requiem of modern Canadian composer Eleanor Daley.

An eloquent performance of J S Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" was made even more enjoyable by the artful oboe accompaniment of Nick Wetherall, the vicar of Holy Trinity.

The finale was Benjamin Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb". Britten selected some of the finest passages from Christopher Smart's 18th century poem "Jubilate Agno". The underlying theme is that all creation



worships God in its own way. Whilst contemporary in form, the musical composition is both accessible and beautifully crafted to match the varying mood of the words. The Ashdown Singers showed both feeling and accomplishment in tackling the score of one of Britten's finest works. This gloriously concluded a lovely evening in which the rich tapestry of choral singing truly reflected the beauty of the building in which it was performed.

Future Ashdown Singers performances can be found on their website: www.ashdownsingers.org.uk.



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On target for a successful launch

YE CUCKFIELD BOWMEN

By Claire Cooper

The success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the achievements of British athletes have inspired people from all over the country to take up a new sport.

In particular, sports where age and disability are no barrier to success and athletes of all abilities can compete side by side are seeing a growth spurt as new clubs are springing up.

Now one Cuckfield resident has decided it's time to resurrect a club that he formed 46 years ago.

Former deerstalker Roy Viccari is re-launching 'Ye Cuckfield Bowman' archery club. The club will bring together able bodied and people with disabilities to compete in one of the country's oldest sports.

Roy recalled how he founded the original Bowmen in 1966.

"I'd been helping out with the local scouts, teaching them how to make their own bows and arrows and basic archery skills," said Roy. "When I finally packed up, I was left wondering what to do with all these bows and arrows.

"I thought I'd see if there was any interest in forming an archery club in Cuckfield, so placed a small ad in the local paper. I was amazed when 60 people replied!"

Ye Cuckfield Bowmen enjoyed a successful time at Whiteman's Green before relocating. "The old club never really disbanded. It just moved to Burgess Hill, then to Ditchling and was eventually re-named the Ditchling Bowmen," said Roy.

With Olympic archery re-kindling an interest in the sport, Roy felt the time was right for Ye Cuckfield Bowmen to make a comeback.

To help promote the club to people with disabilities Roy enlisted the support of his friend John Barlow. "I have an interest in working with people with learning

disabilities and am involved with the charity Headway, so when Roy mentioned getting involved I was very happy to help," he said.

"Archery is a great sport for people with disabilities and can help to get people off their wheels and back onto their feet."

The pair have already held the first meetings at the Dolphin Centre in Haywards Heath and have been delighted at the turnout.

"There is a good deal of interest from those wanting to sign up and they include an ex-policemen who became disabled following an accident and is qualified archery instructor," said John.

Roy was also contacted by an enthusiast from Hassocks who has donated a bow and arrows to the club.

Weekly meetings are now being set up to include talks from experienced archers, and a chance to gather information, ask questions and to meet fellow enthusiasts.

The club will be open to members of all ages. The inaugural meeting was held in early November and there are over 20 names on the books already. Roy hopes that before long members will be competing locally.

"I'm delighted to say that we've been offered space to train at our original venue at Whiteman's Green," said Roy. "We now need to start finding sponsorship to buy the equipment we need to get up and running."

Roy and John are now in the process of setting up a committee.

To find out more about Ye Cuckfield Bowmen, contact Roy at Roy@Viccari.plus.com or John at jwbarlow@googlemail.com

Nicola Wood

VILLAGE PEOPLE



Reading poetry from a plinth in Trafalgar Square on a rainy Sunday morning may seem an unconventional way to introduce your work to the world - but for Cuckfield poet Nicola Wood it was the opportunity of a lifetime. Nicola was one of 2,400 'living sculptures' chosen to perform from the 20 foot high plinth as part of the One and Other project.

"It was wonderful to read my poems in such an unusual setting," she said. "With bells ringing, pigeons flapping and rain falling it was quite an experience."

Three years on, Nicola has now taken a more traditional route and is celebrating the publication of her first book. 'Singular Voices: The Poetry in Your Stars' is a collection of poems exploring Nicola's passion for astrology. "The book combines my interest in astrology with my love of creative writing," she said. "The book was published in June and is on sale through Amazon as well as www.troubador.co.uk. Getting published was a steep learning curve and I've had to learn a lot about marketing and how to promote myself," said Nicola. "Writing was the easy bit!"

With a degree in drama and literature, performing comes naturally to Nicola who relishes the opportunity to read her poems to an audience. "That's why the Trafalgar Square project was so appealing," she said. "I saw the project advertised on the website and applied, along with thousands of others. I was amazed when I got chosen and very pleasantly surprised to get a good time - 10am in the morning. I'm not sure I would have been quite so keen to go at 2am in the morning! I'm not over keen on heights so being lifted up by the crane was a little unsettling but once I was up there I was fine."

Family and friends were among those who gathered at the foot of the plinth to hear Nicola read her poems. "As it was Sunday morning it started off fairly quietly, but by 11am I had drawn a small crowd."

Nicola's next performance/talk will be at the at the Mind Body Spirit show at Hove Town Hall on 25th November, where she will also be selling copies of her book. She feels that performing will bring the poems to life and encourage sales. The book has two distinct sections - the first features 12 poems inspired by each star sign, while the second section, a collection of poems influenced by aspects of astrology, goes a little further. "I hope my poetry will encourage more people to take an interest in astrology," said Nicola. "It's a different way of putting it across expressively, another way in."

Cuckfield born and bred, Nicola attended Warden Park School before travelling north to study for her degree. She now lives in Whiteman's Green and works as part of the medical records team at the Princess Royal Hospital. Writing ability clearly runs in the family as Nicola's father was a well known journalist and author. "I've been writing since childhood and have always enjoyed drama," said Nicola, who has performed at the Mid Sussex and Brighton Festivals. In 1999 she was awarded third place, from thousands of entries, and won £500 in a writing competition judged by Penelope Lively and Martin Bashir.

Looking to the future, Nicola will continue to explore creative ways to encourage others to become interested in astrology and is currently working on her first novel.

"Whatever I do, astrology will be the driving force and motivation," she said.

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Chilly winter days

ON YOUR TABLE

Quick leek and potato soup

- finely sliced greens of 4 leeks
- finely sliced whites of 2 leeks
- 1 1/2 potatoes, diced
- third of a block of butter
- 1/2 litre of milk
- 1/2 litre of water
- a little chicken stock

Melt the butter and sweat down the whites of the leek and potato in it until the leek is soft without browning. Add the liquids then bring to the boil.

Once the liquids have come to the boil, simmer until the potato is cooked.

Once cooked, add the greens of the leek. Boil for only two minutes and blitz. Adding the greens at the very last minute will give the rich green colour.

Once smooth, season to taste with salt and sugar.

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On a chilly winter day there's nothing more comforting than a bowl of steaming home made soup and a chunk of crusty bread. We asked Jack Armstrong, apprentice chef at Ockenden Manor, to share three of his favourite recipes.

French onion soup

4 large/spanish white onions finely sliced
A ramekin of plain flour
Large knob of butter about 50g
1 litre fresh chicken stock

Firstly place the flour on a tray then put under a grill to brown the flour. When the top layer is a golden to dark brown remove from the grill and stir it in. Repeat this until the majority of flour is browned. Melt the butter in a large based pan, add the onions and sweat without colouring.

Once the onions are soft, turn up the heat and start to brown them. Once they are quite coloured stir through the flour. This will need stirring in really well. Once all the onion is coated in flour add a splash of white wine to de-glaze the pan, then add the stock. Cook until it starts to boil then remove from the heat and season to taste!

Curried parsnip soup

10 parsnips, peeled and finely chopped
500ml milk
Large knob of butter about 50g
2 tbsp curry powder
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp ginger, grated
100 ml double cream

Put the parsnips in a large based pan, cover with the milk then top up with water to cover the parsnips, bring to the boil and simmer until soft.

Once the parsnips are soft, melt the butter in another pan. Once melted, stir through the curry powder and heat for 2-4 minutes. Then add the ginger and garlic cook for another 2 minutes. Add this paste to the parsnip and milk, stir well, then bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Blend the soup until smooth, stir in the cream and season to taste!




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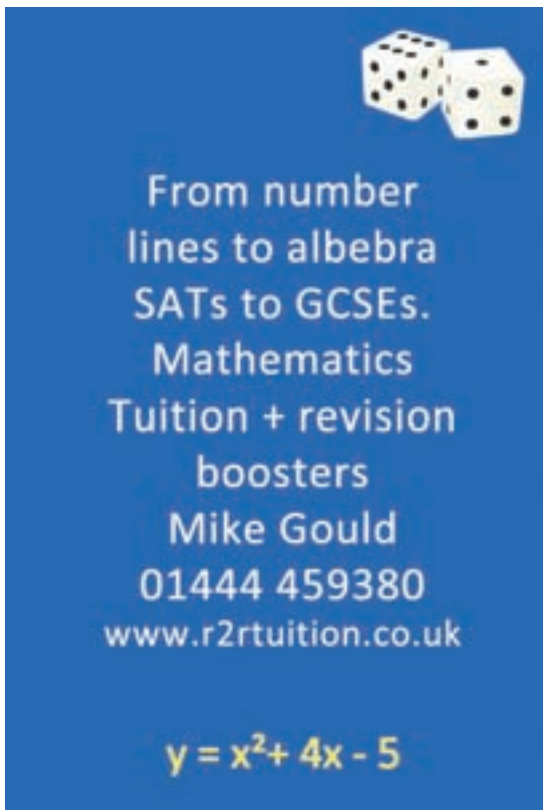
What's on this month

AT THE VILLAGE HALLS

- 17th Nov – Old School
Christmas Craft and Gift Fair (2pm to 5.30pm)
Admission Free. More than 30 different stalls selling a wide range of locally produced crafts and gifts that will make ideal Christmas presents. Father Christmas will be visiting during the afternoon and there will also be refreshments available.
- 30th Nov – Queens Hall
Independent State of Cuckfield Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch
Over 65 ? Contact Jim Ayling at the White Harte Inn on 01444 413454 or email independent_state_of_cuckfield@hotmail.com to be included on the invitation list for this festive event of traditional Christmas fayre.
- 14th Dec – Queens Hall
Cuckfield Crafts and Market
Monthly market. Friday mornings 9.30am-1.00pm.

AND ELSEWHERE

- 16th Nov – Wivelsfield Green Village Hall
Rotary Club of Cuckfield & Lindfield's Multimedia Quiz, supper, raffle and bar. All proceeds in aid of those in need. 7pm. Chris Bosker: 01444 483501
- 17th Nov – Holy Trinity Church
Guvna B in concert. Supported by local band, Thieves & Shadows, 7pm. Tickets £5. Call 01444 413597 for tickets or more details.
- 17th Nov – Balcombe Station car park
Mid Sussex Ramblers. Balcombe to Staplefield and back. 7 miles. Meet 10.30am. 01342 311632
- 24th Nov – Warden Park Academy
Mid Sussex Food, Drink & Gift Fair (10am-4pm)
Now in its fourth year, organised by Friends of Warden Park Academy. Gillian Green 01444 233213
- 2nd Dec – The Triangle, Burgess Hill
That'll be the Day Christmas Show
with support band The Last Carnival. 8pm (support band 6.30pm).
Box office: www.itsmagic.org.uk 01444 800045
- 7th - 9th Dec – Holy Trinity Church
Christmas Tree Festival (11.30am - 7.30pm)
- 7th Dec – Cuckfield High Street
Cuckfield Christmas Shopping Evening (6-8pm)
Annual Christmas Shopping Event with a selection of local stalls and charities offering a wide selection of gifts, food and drinks. Plus entertainment from local groups with carol singing, dancing and music ... and announcing the winner of the Cuckfield Christmas Window Display Competition. For more information, please contact Jo on <jobriault@mac.com>
- 8th Dec – Talbot Courtyard
Cuckfield Local December Food Market (10am-1pm). Lots of Christmas Foodie Goodies.
- 9th Dec – Broad Street Car Park
Mobile Waste Collection – save yourself that trip to the tip. 10am - midday.



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New for Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve, one of the busiest days of the year for Holy Trinity Church, looks set to get even busier!

Due to the huge popularity of the afternoon Crib and Stable services for families and young children, there are now to be two afternoon services at 2.30pm and 4.30pm.

Everyone is asked to note that all these services will now be ticketed – the tickets are free – and can be obtained in advance from the Church Office in The Old School.

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