

Cuckfield Life

Inc. Brook St, Ainsty, Staplefield & Bolnore Village

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue #39: Jan/Feb '16

Free

Independent State: First 20 years

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EDITORIAL

By David Tingley, Editor

Welcome to the January issue, and we have loads of great content for you within these pages.

Claire Cooper has put together a great feature on **page 14** which celebrates and notes the formation and first 20 years of the **Independent State of Cuckfield** - which is the organising body of the tongue-in-cheek mayoral campaigns in the village every October. This is a fascinating group and so it's a pleasure to help promote the work its members do here in this, its 50th year.

There is something for the **business owners** amongst our readership on **page 10**, where we highlight Cuckfield resident **Rebecca Jabbar** and her story and skills for website development and planning.

On **page 13 Cuckfield Parish Council** keep us up to date with what's been happening in its world and how that impacts the village.

Our **What's On** section is, as always, at the back of the magazine on **page 26**, although it's a little light this month. So, if you know of any local events taking place, do please send a note through to us in the office via editor@cuckfieldlife.co.uk before 28th of the previous month.

There is a write up on the **Cuckfield Christmas Tree Festival** on **page 17**. We keep one eye on goings on in **Bolnore Village** on **page 23**. And it's also a pleasure to bring you the newsletter of **Cuckfield European Association** on **page 20**, where you can see clearly what the group gets up to and how you can be involved.

Thanks to **Amy Hayden** for emailing in a brilliant cover photo. She is the lucky recipient of a £20 shopping voucher which she can spend right here in the village. If you have any **fab photos of Cuckfield**, do please email them in to us: photos@cuckfieldlife.co.uk - we always need more!

In the meantime, I will leave you to a cuppa and your copy of the only truly local magazine to you. Read, enjoy and do send us any feedback/ideas.

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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

Summer's coming!

It may be nine months away but now is the time to start planning your entries for this year's Summer Show.

Organisers from the Cuckfield Society have already published a list of classes for the 11th annual Village Show, which includes something for everyone – from keen gardeners to budding photographers, cooks and knitters.

Children are also encouraged to join in the fun with chances to win prizes for their wind chimes, lego bridges, gingerbread people and recycled robots!

The show will be held on Saturday 10th September at Cuckfield Park from 2pm to 4.30pm. As well as the range of exhibits on show, the event will include refreshments, a raffle, auctions and music from the Mid Sussex Brass Band.

Schedules containing rules and entry forms will be available from July at Wealden Stores, Cuckfield Post Office, Sussex Crafts and Cuckfield Pet & Country Store.

Rules, entry forms and tips will be available to download from www.cuckfield.org

Quiz teams sign up for annual event

The Cuckfield branch of the NSPCC is holding its annual quiz on Friday 4th March in the Queen's Hall.

Teams of 6 are invited to join the popular event which starts at 7.30pm. Tickets will be available shortly from Wealden Stores, Whitemans Green and cost £12 per person, to include a cold platter and delicious homemade puds. There will also be a bar and a raffle.

The tickets always go quickly, so do put the date in your diary and get your team organised!

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Frolics return in Feb

On Friday 26th and Saturday 27th February the Cuckfield Dramatic Society (CDS) presents its annual February Frolics – an evening of comic entertainment at the Queen's Hall, with food included!

Audiences will enjoy a once act play and a selection of comedy sketches performed by a cast including some of the new faces at CDS alongside familiar ones.

This year the sketches are themed on 'Exercise through the Ages' so why not jog along to Mansell McTaggart or Wealden Stores to buy your tickets?

"It's a great local night out that has proved very popular in recent years," said member Paul Davey. "The show was expanded to two nights last year – but was still sold out!"

The evening consists of a short comic play and some sketches, punctuated by a two course meal included in the ticket price. There will also be a licenced bar.

"Individual seats or whole tables can be booked, so why not go with some friends?"

Tickets cost £15 and includes a two course meal, and are also available online on the CDS website www.cuckfielddramaticsociety.com by emailing: info@cuckfielddramaticsociety.com or phoning 01444 848156.

Anyone interested in performing or helping with the show, or the full play to be presented in June 2016, please contact CDS. The society welcomes new members (with or without experience!), and is currently expanding!

Macmillan top meal

Macmillan supporters can help raise vital funds for Sussex's new Cancer Support Centre, and enjoy tasty food, fine wine and good company at an event in Cuckfield next month.

Macmillan Cancer Support Mid Sussex is holding a special fundraising evening at The Talbot on Friday 26th February at 7.30pm.

Tickets, costing £35, will include a three course dinner with coffee and chocolates, and wine (four bottles per table of 10, donated by Paul Montalto).

Money raised from the event will go directly towards the new Cancer Support Unit currently being built in Brighton. Last year the Mid Sussex branch raised a record amount of £50,000 for the centre.

Set to open later this year, the Macmillan Horizon Centre will offer cancer patients all round support from a team of specialists in a calm, welcoming and friendly environment.

Designed with input from people affected by cancer, the centre is a partnership between Macmillan, the Sussex Cancer Fund and Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, so that no-one in Sussex has to face cancer alone.

The centre will provide vital support for people living with cancer, their families and friends in Sussex. Services will include information and advice, counselling, complementary therapies, practical help, self help and support groups. To book your tickets, phone David on 415060.

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Judo success for school

Warden Park student, Thea, has won a Silver Medal in the recent 2015 British Judo Championships for Pre-Cadets (U15 age group) in Sheffield.

Thea, in Year 9, achieved three wins in the U57kg weight group with the highest scoring 'ippon' throw. In the final she couldn't quite defeat last year's national champion but took a thoroughly well-deserved silver medal. Her performance has won her a place in the England Squad and Development Programme – a fantastic result for the 13 year old who narrowly missed out on a medal at the British Schools Judo Championships in March due to a back injury.

Thea is also current U16 Sussex champion at U52kg, and has represented Sussex in inter-county competitions. She trains 2-3 times a week at her club - Kin Ryu based at K2 in Crawley.

Photo: Thea (right) pictured with Sussex Coach, Sophie Johnstone and Sussex team mate, Kristina Pavlou.

Local schools given opportunity for community space

The Martlets Shopping Centre in Burgess Hill is delighted to announce that on Saturday 27th February it is giving local schools and colleges the opportunity to use the centre as a free community space to either raise money for charity or for their own projects.

From 11am until 4pm, schools and colleges are invited to have a stall and sell home-made or quality second-hand items in order to raise vital funds and build awareness.

Those wishing to take part simply need to email martlets@pmwcom.co.uk to register their interest.

Ian Goodridge, Centre Manager of The Martlets Shopping Centre, commented: "We are delighted to be able to offer local schools and colleges the opportunity to use our free space, whilst raising money for their chosen charity or project. It's a great way for local schools to get creative and sell their items to the general public."

Christmas Street Festival fun

Another very successful Christmas Street Festival was held and run by the Parish Council, on 11th December, which saw many residents and visitors attend to enjoy the stalls, entertainment and 'snow'. The winners of the Shop Window Display Competition were Hairsmiths (1st), David Foord-Brown Antiques (2nd) and Candy Store (3rd - pictured). The children's Fancy Dress competition saw some fantastic costumes including the 'lit' Christmas tree, the Reindeer twins, an Angel and a Star.

The Parish Council, as event organiser, would like to thank the following (not exhaustive) for their participation in making the evening so enjoyable:-

Councillor Nigel Page, overall event organiser; local residents affected by the road closure; Mayor Ken Gregory for judging our competitions and opening the event; the Candy Store and Cuckfield Society for providing prizes; Frances Laing, Ella Thomas, Cleo Moxon and team for their assistance including organising events and marshalling; Surrey and Sussex Drum and Bugle Band; Cuckfield Society for the Santa's Grotto; Mid Downs Radio; Stall holders; our local shops for opening on the evening; our support team in the Parish Office and, of course, all those who came along to support the event.





Cuckfield group helps young carers

Nine young carers helped sail the Solent in a confidence building Tall Ships Adventures weekend thanks to the Cuckfield & Lindfield Inner Wheel.

The trip was organised to give West Sussex young carers respite from their caring responsibilities, build their self-esteem and to gain friendship with one another.

All nine young people quickly rose to the challenges of seafaring, growing in confidence and ability throughout the weekend.

Rachel, one of the young carers, said: "I had an amazing time during the Tall Ships challenge. I overcame my fear of heights and ropes and am glad I had the opportunity to experience sailing.

"I would highly recommend this trip to anyone who wants to have a great time bonding and making memories. I enjoyed every minute and would love to

have this experience again."

Special weekends away for young carers rely on donations from local businesses and charitable organisations.

This event took place through local fundraising efforts by members of Cuckfield and Lindfield Inner Wheel, who raised money through an autumn fashion show.

Peter Evans, West Sussex County Council's Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life, said: "The skills these nine young carers took on board during this weekend away will help them invaluablely in the future.

"We hope that other local businesses and charitable organisations will be interested in donating to give other young carers these kinds of opportunities.

"The kind fundraising by members of Cuckfield and Lindfield Inner Wheel has given these young carers a weekend they may never forget."

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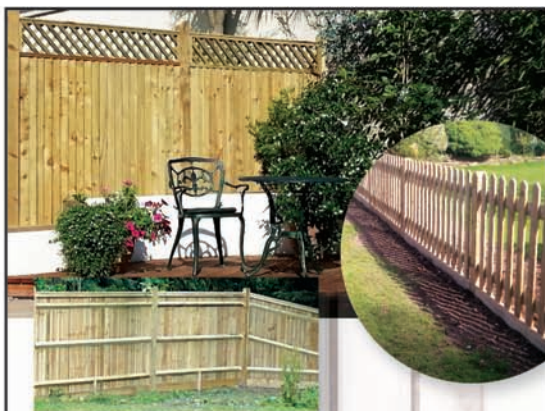
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Is your website letting you down?

SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS

If you own or manage a business of any size or shape you will certainly be aware of what a website is but, interestingly, even in 2016, you may still not actually have one set up. According to a survey carried out two years ago by a marketing company in the US, 52% of small businesses did not have a website¹. This seems a shocking statistic. Is this you?

There's a lot of talk of small business being the backbone of the UK economy but it really is true. The Federation of Small Businesses reported that 60% of all private sector employment came from Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) last year, and that figure increased by three per cent from 2014².

Cuckfield resident Rebecca Jabbar runs her own small business which helps others to grow by looking at what they say, how they say it and who to. "The biggest problem most businesses have when considering a website is 'what should it say?'," she comments. Rebecca, through her company Strategic Marcomms, helps create websites for startups and 'mumpreneurs' right through to national organisations. "But almost all begin with the same question: 'Where do I start?'," she continues.

Rebecca grew up in London and only moved down to Cuckfield two and a half years ago with her husband Mazin. His claim to fame, incidentally, is that his great-great-grandfather was editor/owner of the Manchester Guardian and took it national in the 1870s - but more of that another time!

Rebecca has worked in the communication industry for 19 years, helping hundreds of businesses to say the right things, at the right time, to the right people. Most recently she was managing a team in an agency in Brighton but she felt a strong desire to go it alone, taking the plunge 14 months ago. "I love being back in touch with the clients and being able to make a real difference

If you need advice on your website, there's an expert right here in Cuckfield...

when we are working together. This is especially true of small businesses," she explains.

Strategic Marcomms can help your business in a number of ways. This article is about website copy and creation but Rebecca could also be the perfect partner for you in writing press releases, adverts and blog posts, and creating email marketing campaigns for you to send out to your customers and prospects.

"When businesses create a website it is often a great time to decide exactly how to describe what they do," Rebecca explains. "A website is a good hub for presenting your business to the world." Who are you expecting to look at your site? What will the people be searching for, who you want to land on your website? The structure of the site needs to be simple and easy for those people to navigate and find the information they require.

In the past it has been the physical creation of the web pages which has often held people back from building their own website. However, right now, there are dozens of reliable and nice looking website builder platforms which make it simple to create a website with none of the technical know-how that was once required.

"There are also loads of website designers out there who will do that part for you, but not many work with you to write the words and messages on your site. That's

Rebecca's top tips for your website...

what I do," Rebecca continues. "Having talked to you about your business and the sorts of customers you are looking for, I get to work to communicate in the right way to reach that audience."

Of course many businesses do already have a website.

"A lot of small businesses come to me when they have outgrown the website which their friend or relative put together for them as a favour." In a survey of 500 businesses nearly 28% of them admitted to entrusting their website creation to someone with no specialist skills whatsoever!¹ Very often sites like this can give the wrong impression of the company. Not only wording but images and colours can all negatively affect the personality presented. Does your website make you look credible to your potential customers? This is important as over three quarters of internet users conduct research online before they call or buy⁴.

Perhaps your business has an already established website which you gave due thought and consideration to in the past. Does it get the traffic you expected? Are you regularly receiving new enquiries from your online presence? Is it Search Engine Optimised (SEO) - in other words, is it coming up when users search for your product/service? Do you check on a regular basis? This is a really good idea as this can change over time. To perform this test it's a good idea to sign out of your own Google account and use the search terms that matter to you. Where does your website come in the rankings? At Strategic Marcomms Rebecca will automatically and intelligently apply important search criteria when writing and building your website.

Another aspect to the website which does help with its search engine ranking is the creation of a blog. A blog is simply an area of the site which holds a number of stories related to your business. If you have a blog it should be regularly updated and added to. This can be written by you, a member of your team, or Rebecca can help here too!

So there you have it, some advice and words of wisdom from a local specialist on how you can improve or start your website in 2016. Rebecca Jabbar has shared her top ten website tips on this page too. So there's no excuse for inaction in the New Year!

If you would like Rebecca's expert help with your website to support your business growth then the first step is a simple one. Call her on 01444 301302 or send her an email to rebecca.jabbar@strategicmarcomms.com and she'll get back to you to have a no obligation 30 minute chat about your requirements.

*1 Yodle market research, New York 2013, www.yodle.com. *2 Small Business Statistics 2015 from www.fsb.org.uk. *3 Smart Little Web with OnePoll survey of 500 businesses. *4 -78% according to Hubspot Blog 2011, blog.hubspot.com

1. A home page should help a visitor to quickly understand your business and realise you're relevant to them

Include: Who you are; What is it that you do/provide; What the benefits are that your business offers; Who your typical customers are; A Call to Action

2. Have a 'Call to Action' on each page

Guide visitors to know exactly what it is you want them to do next (call for a quote, sign-up for a discount, email for a call back, complete a contact form, sign-up to a newsletter etc.)

3. Images make or break a site

Make sure all images are high-res; Include images of you and your team; Include images of the environment your customers can expect if they visit you; If using generic images choose those that really help to describe what your business is.

4. Include your address and a map

Most important for local businesses with local clients. Help them to find you easily.

5. Provide as much of your personality through words and tone as possible

This helps to differentiate you from another business with a similar offer.

6. Include logos of awards, associations, qualifications, partners and/or suppliers

This helps with credibility and reassurance regardless of what stage your business is in.

7. Include testimonials

A customer providing their view of working with you can be powerful. Use video if possible.

8. Include an About Us Page

Sharing the background of you, your team and the business itself can help with differentiation and add reassurance of your expertise.

9. Include a price page

Even if it just contains examples or explains through how you price your services.

10. Include links to social media channels

Help visitors to know where and how else they can engage with you.

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Cuckfield PARISH COUNCIL

News from
Cuckfield Parish
Council

January 2016

New Parish Office Staff

Following a successful recruitment campaign, the Parish Council welcomes Samantha (Sam) Heynes as part-time Assistant Clerk who joins Annette and Jane in the Parish Office team. Sam lives in the local area and has business and project background. Sam will assist in day to day administration and projects covering the many existing and new assets owned and run by the Parish Council and additional responsibilities it has taken on. You will see under our contact details we have also increased the Parish Office opening hours to expand service to residents.

Roads & Traffic

High Street Pavement

The Parish Council met with West Sussex County Council Highways Department and the County Councillor last November to progress repairs and a longer term solution to the unsatisfactory condition of the pavement between Leyton Lea and the entrance to the Recreation Ground. The Highways Department, at that meeting, gave a commitment to progress works to install bollards and repair the pavement and quotations were being sort. The Parish Council await an update on progress but will continue to pursue a resolution.

Traffic Calming Schemes

The London Road Pelican Crossing was successfully installed during the October half term and is operational. Following on with its traffic calming schemes, the Parish Council has now approved a project to take forward proposals for traffic calming measures in London Lane. Forming part of the Central Mid-Sussex Infrastructure Programme, the project will look at a detailed design based on earlier scheme proposals incorporating build outs and speed cushions along London Lane. Initial consultation with Sussex Police is taking place and further information can be obtained from the Parish Office. Updates will be given at Roads and Traffic Committee meetings and in future newsletters.

Parish Council meetings

JANUARY - MARCH

28th January	Planning	7.30pm
	Environment	8.15pm
11th February	Full Council	8.15pm
18th February	Planning	7.30pm
	Roads & Traffic	8.15pm
10th March	Planning	7.30pm
	Finance	8.15pm
17th March	Annual Parish Meeting	7.30pm
31st March	Planning	7.30pm
	Community Bldg.	8.15pm



YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

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Vice-Chairman

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New 2016 extended* Parish Council

Office opening hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am – 4pm

*Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 2pm

MOBILE CIVIC AMENITY COLLECTIONS

The following collections have been arranged at Broad Street Car Park, Cuckfield:
10am-12pm SUNDAY 13th March

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The first 20 years

ISOC HISTORY

2016 is an important year for Cuckfield as the village celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Independent State and the Annual Mayoral Elections.

Still at the heart of village life, today's Independent State of Cuckfield, or ISOC, remains the village's main fundraising organisation, and has provided a lifeline for many local groups and charities. Over the next few issues of Cuckfield Life we will look at how the organisation has evolved, including significant stories from the past 50 years and recollections from some of the former Mayors. We will also tell you how you can get involved in this year's celebrations and elections.

By Claire Cooper

With its corrupt election process and blatant vote rigging, the annual elections for the Mayor of the Independent State of Cuckfield are a light-hearted and somewhat frivolous affair. But when the organisation was formed back in 1966 it was no laughing matter as the village was locked in a serious dispute with the local council.

The dispute centred around the Cuckfield Donkey Racing club, set up in 1951 by Peter and Phyl Bowring and George Hall, which had traditionally held Donkey races on Easter Monday, first at Park Barn Farm (where Warden Park now stands) and later at Mill Hall Farm at Whitemans Green.

However, in 1966, the land at Mill Hall was compulsorily purchased by the local authority as recreation land and permission to stage the event was refused as it was thought that the donkey's hoofs would damage the newly laid out rugby pitches.

"We were completely flabbergasted," Peter Bowring later recalled. "Not only did many local good causes rely on our annual contribution to their funds, the events had already been advertised and expenses had been incurred. We had to think quickly of some other means of raising the money.

"At the time Rhodesia had recently declared UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) and so it was a short step for us to declare our own independence to demonstrate our annoyance with the local council for not allowing us to use our own fields for good causes. We would show the world that the Independent State of Cuckfield cared for the old, the handicapped and the needy within its boundaries even if the local council did not!"

On 2nd May 1966 the village declared independence.

"The Government have failed, the County Council has

failed and the urban District Council is a complete flop!" declared the first ISOC committee.

The first elections for Mayor of the newly formed State invited 'the whole world' to take part and each vote cost sixpence. (In 1971, following decimalisation, votes cost 2½p.) There were no limits to how many times each elector could vote and, like today, the candidate with the most votes (raising the most for charity) was declared Mayor of Cuckfield. In the early days candidates were either landlords of local public houses – 'publicans', or residents from the village – 'sinners'.

Residents could also support the ISOC by buying Passports for five shillings. Benefits included reduced tickets to the Mayor's Ball and free admission to the Bank Holiday Donkey races. During the first year 500 passports were sold.

Cuckfield's first Mayor was Joe Mitchell, landlord of the White Harte Inn. With 2,945 votes, it was a victory for the Publican party over the Sinners. In second place, and picking up the title of Mayor's Alderman, was 'Sinner' Mike Bowring and in third was publican Teddy Johnson who became Mace Bearer.

The Mayoral election raised £250, while the Donkey Fair and Masquerade and Tramps Ball in the evening brought in a further £600. The money was divided between the Cuckfield Old Folk's Fund and the Cuckfield Youth Club Premises Appeal Fund.

The 'robing of the Mayor' ceremony was performed by actor Wilfrid Hyde White, who was appearing in Lady Windermere's Fan at Brighton's Theatre Royal, and the chain of office was placed around his neck by Miss Cuckfield, 16 year old Jennifer Woods.

The Donkey Fair, the first to be held with no donkey races, included many of the events familiar to today's

THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CUCKFIELD
invites all citizens to view or join in its second

LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

WET or FINE

as featured on Southern Television

His Worship **MIKE BOWRING**
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2.30 P.M. SATURDAY OCT. 21st
IN AID OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Have You Got Your Passport?



Many thanks to Cuckfield Museum for loaning the ISOC memorabilia and photographs

Cuckoo Fair, with the exception of a 'piano smashing' competition in which contestants had to demolish a piano into pieces small enough to post through a letter box! The contest was won by the team from Cuckfield Youth Club smashing and posting the piano in just under 16 minutes!

Cuckfield's second mayor was Mike Bowring, son of the election's returning officer Peter Bowring. The local paper reported that this led to the result being announced by Cuckfield's 'Minister for External Affairs and Lord Chancellor' Laurie Cox.

On Mayor-making Day 'foreign' motorists unable to produce passports were held to ransom in a bid to raise extra funds.

Those attending the celebrations also heard how the Cuckfield 'Foreign Secretary' George Stevenson had written to the Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Deputy George Brown, and opposition leader Edward Heath inviting them to attend the celebrations. Replies from all three, congratulating the State and wishing the 'ancient town' every success for the Lord Mayor's Show, were read out on Radio Cuckfield.

The Mayor's Show took place a week after the elections and, like today, included a procession through the village and featured the State's own Fire Brigade with vintage fire engine.

The pomp and ceremony saw the Mayor arrive in a 'state coach' accompanied by a household cavalry of donkeys and Mace bearer Ron Knight knocking on the door of the Talbot three times saying: "I call on the Alderman to produce the keys of this ancient town and bring refreshments for His Worship the Mayor".

Outgoing mayor Joe Mitchell came out carrying the key on a crimson cushion accompanied by Edgar Dudley with a pint of beer. It's a tradition still followed and much enjoyed today!

The Mayor's procession was later accompanied by Cromwellian and Royalist troops from the Sealed Knot Society, of which Mayor George Stevenson was a member. This also led to the group starting the battle of Cuckfield in 1971.

By 1969 the ISOC was issuing its own stamps and banknotes. Designed by George Stevenson, the stamps were used in addition to normal postage stamps and featured a cuckoo with a gold crown above its head and the words Greetings from Cuckfield. The bank notes were worth five cuckoos – equal to 5p – and were valid in the village shops.

Other merchandise included ties, cuff links and brooches all featuring the cuckoo motif.

In the years that followed, the mayoral election raised money for many village charities, including Cuckfield Cottage Homes for the Elderly, Old People's Christmas Dinner Fund, scouts, guides, churches and sports clubs, Orchard House, Cuckfield Hospital and Mill Hall School for Deaf Children.

The State also collected 96,000 Green Shield Stamps (75 books) to trade for to a television set and two kettles for the village's Cottage Homes.

Elections have always been corrupt. In 1972 Geordie Jack Swain snatched victory from Phyl Bowring, who was aiming to become the first woman Mayor, when seconds before the deadline a supporter produced a cheque for £30 – enough to secure victory.

However, Phyl was victorious the following year winning with a clear margin of 344 votes. She also broke another tradition by replacing the customary Mayor's pint of beer with cider!

In 1975, Cuckfield saw the first Mayoral marriage when reigning mayor and manager of the Kings Head Hotel, Ted Murphy married his fiancée Christine.

In 1977, the Queen's Silver Jubilee year, the cost of votes was reduced to a penny and candidates appealed to voters with a series of poems, with winning candidate retired postmaster Frank Christopher polling 7,254 votes.

In 1978 records were broken when 75 year old retired GP Dr "Cocky" Farr managed to rig 16,321 votes to become Mayor, almost 6,000 votes ahead of his nearest rival.

The record was swept aside in 1979 when Ansty Cross landlord Mr Keith Randall collected 63,000 votes – more than twice the population of the village! The event raised £1,500 for charities.

Ways of raising money and buying votes gradually became more inventive, from raffling whisky to selling Cuckfield passports in America, and in 1982 Leslie Fleming won by nearly 100,000 votes.

By 1986, the 20th anniversary of the Mayoral election, the Independent State raised more than £11,000 which benefitted more than 55 local good causes and was firmly established as Cuckfield's biggest and most publicised annual event.

Next month we will feature highlights from the next 30 years of the Independent State of Cuckfield, including recollections from some of the former Mayors.



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Tree Festival a huge success



Organisers of this year's Cuckfield Christmas Tree Festival are celebrating the most successful year yet, raising more than £11,000 for charity.

The event, now in its 13th year, was supported by 79 local organisations, clubs and societies each decorating and lighting a tree in Holy Trinity Church.

"As happens every year, there were some really inventive themes and we are grateful to all those who worked really hard on their trees to make a spectacular display," said organiser Robin Goldsmith.

He added that this year's three day event attracted 3,500 visitors from Sussex and beyond. "There were frequent gasps of delight as both adults and children came through the door of the church," said Robin.

Entertainment was provided by choirs, soloists, organists and instrumentalists including The Singing Allsorts, Cuckoo Choir, U3A, Bolnore Village and Holy Trinity Primary School choirs, Father Michael Maine and the choir and music group from Holy Trinity Church.

Funds were boosted with generous donations from many of the tree decorators, including P & S Gallagher which sponsored the festival programme.

"This, coupled with the popularity of the refreshments provided throughout the weekend, enabled Holy Trinity Church to present a cheque to the Chestnut Tree House Children's hospice for £6,460, while the Church itself benefited to the tune of £5,083," Robin explained.

Since the first Christmas Tree Festival was held back in 2003 more than £56,000 has been donated to charities.



Bats and boxes

VILLAGE GREEN

By Margaret Tyzack More, Cuckfield Local

As I looked around at my Christmas cards this year I noticed how many robins were showing their cheery red breasts from table, window sill, bookcase and kitchen shelf. In past years it was angels of all shapes and sizes looking out from these same perches. In difficult times the robin buoys us up with his song and friendly presence and I am wondering if there is an unconscious need stirring in us to come closer to nature. Just a thought.

There is some really good news to share with you, not about robins but swifts and bats. You may remember the new houses being built in north Cuckfield referred to as the Ardingly Road development. Now officially Horsefield Green, the houses are almost finished and one or two are already occupied. Chatting to the site foreman he told me that all the houses have swift and bat boxes as standard. How about that for good news! 'Giving nature a home' in the words of the RSPB.

The good news doesn't stop there. It seems that there was consultation with ecologists before the building began. Bat boxes are also being installed in a wooded area in a corner of the site. Whether the ecologists were connected with the construction company I don't know. It may be that our own Cuckfield nature supporters David Mortimer and John Dickie, who undertook the biodiversity survey for the Neighbourhood Plan, were involved. The Parish Council too, of course. These boxes will help make a 'bridge' between the bat colonies in Millennium Wood and our own New England Wood. Well done everyone!

The robin's red breast reminds me of a question I have for you about the old red phone box in the courtyard of The Talbot. Cuckfield Local feels that this could be a good resource for the village. As you lovely readers are part of the village, get your thinking caps on as to what we can do with it. The necessary permissions for us to do this have been given, so over to you. Suggestions so far are that it could be used as a book exchange centre after the necessary shelving has been built or that local groups could use it for a month at a time to promote events, campaigns and competitions. We already have a defibrillator in the village so no need to install one there. If you have any suggestions please email cuckfieldlocal@gmail.com, tweet @cuckfieldlocal or find us on Facebook.

Some of you will have noticed that there was no Cuckfield Local Food Market this month. 'January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow'. Winter winds can be most unkind. Not a question of hold on to your hats but rather grab the gazebos as blustery gusts try to take them to pastures new.

Our next Market is on Saturday 13th February in the courtyard of The Talbot 9.30am-12.30pm and we look forward to seeing you there.



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Festive outings

FROM THE MAYOR'S TABLE



By Ken Gregory

As we look forward to the new year I would just like to give you all a round up about the Christmas festivities that I attended.

Firstly was the Senior Citizens Lunch when I welcomed ninety six guests who enjoyed a three course lunch with carols sung by pupils from the primary school and a community sing song and Father Christmas making a guest appearance.

The following Friday I was invited to open this year's Christmas Festival in the High Street. This appears to get better each year, with many stalls raising funds for their charities. This year there was an added attraction with a children's fancy dress competition along with the best shop window display, both well supported, for which I was asked to judge both.

The weekend was complete with the Christmas Tree Festival held in the church with 79 trees this year. Let's hope it raised a good amount for charity.

I made a donation, on behalf of the Independent State of Cuckfield, to Cuckfield Museum of £250 at the Trustee's coffee morning in the Old School. This is the first of this year's donations and the rest will be published when complete.



CUCKFIELD EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2016

www.cuckfield.org



Cuckfield European Association had a very busy and exciting 2015. Here are some highlights from the last quarter.

Boules – 3rd October 2015

The final of the Pétanque competition took place at Marshalls on Saturday 3rd October. The weather was fine and the 16 teams, all in great spirits, started an afternoon of excellent playing. During the break pâté, cheese and baguette accompanied by wine and soft drinks were served. The competition was won, after an exciting finish, by Christian and Sheila Grêlé who are now holders of the Cup and Medal until next year. Thank you to Stephen and Judith Cockburn for being wonderful hosts.

Visit to Karlstadt, Germany – 10-14th December 2015

Following the memorable and much enjoyed visit by friends from Karlstadt to Cuckfield in May 2015, ten Cuckfield residents, including three members who had not been to Germany before, enjoyed a wonderful weekend trip, mainly visiting the magical German Christmas markets in and around Karlstadt. A special German Christmas Biscuit Baking Session was organised for the Cuckfield visitors. Traditionally, at this time of year, households bake large quantities of different types of biscuits in preparation for the festive season. Everyone had a fun time practising their baking skills and came back with a tin full of goodies! On the Saturday there was an excellent guided tour of a very interesting ivory museum in Erbach, followed by a walk around the atmospheric Christmas market at nearby Michelstadt. Of course, it was compulsory to drink a glass or two of Gluhwein and to sample the festive goodies! On the remaining days there were visits to other markets in historic towns, an informative walk around Karlstadt's old town and sampling of typical food from the area. It was a great trip for getting in the Christmas mood, and everyone was extremely grateful to their hosts for their wonderful hospitality.



Sounds like fun? Join CEA today....

If you like the sound of what we get up to, why not join us? We'd love to hear from you. Membership is just £10 per year. Contact Janine Watts by email at janine.watts@gmail.com. Or visit the website: www.cuckfield.org



Christmas Event – 19th December 2015

The Christmas event was switched at the last moment to the existing Baptist Chapel as the new building, disappointingly, was not quite finished in time. We had some wonderful singing from soloists Rebecca Milford and Philip Diamond and the usual slick and professional performance of 'No Strings Attached'. There was lots of community singing of carols and the chaotic singing of The Twelve Days of Christmas. More comments of appreciation and thanks were received after the event by those who attended than in previous years!



Membership Fees 2016

Annual CEA membership fees are £10 per individual or £20 per household of two or more people. Have you updated your Standing Order to ensure the correct amount will be paid in 2016?

Novemberfest – 28th November 2015

On the occasion of our annual Novemberfest, we invited our friends from Aumale to come to Cuckfield and enjoy the festivities with us. Three of them, Rene Deblangy, President of the Comite de Jumelage, his wife Liliane and Francis, vice-president and Treasurer, arrived in Newhaven late on Friday. On Saturday, lunch was organised at the Old School and around 40 Cuckfield members attended and enjoyed the company of our French friends. In the afternoon the French delegation was taken to Brighton, where they were battered by rain and very strong winds. The day concluded with an excellent dinner at the Talbot. Our Aumale visitors left early for Newhaven on Sunday morning. The bad weather was still raging and their crossing to Dieppe took six hours instead of the usual four. All in all it was a very good weekend for all those who attended.

Preliminary Programme for 2016

13th February

AGM, Reid House, Mill Hall, Whitemans Green at 7.30pm. A good opportunity to catch up with each other after the festive break.

16th April

Day coach trip to the old walled town of Montreuil sur Mer. This will include a guided tour of the old town, where Victor Hugo wrote Les Miserables, some splendid restaurants to suit every taste and of course a visit to a supermarket. Date to be confirmed.

June

We look forward to welcoming an official visit from Aumale in early June to coincide with the Ardingly Show. Some Cuckfield residents' hospitality will be required.

Cuckfield European Association would like to wish members and residents a prosperous and exciting 2016!

Simple kitchens

DESIGN AT HOME

By Fiona Evans, interior designer

We visited Standen House in East Grinstead just before Christmas. The Christmas trees enhancing the warm and cosy Arts and Crafts interiors adding to the lived-in look, glancing back to the past. Every time we visit a grand old house through the National Trust I always enjoy looking at the kitchen. Their simple interiors exude an air of warmth and tranquillity with their soft lines, utilitarian free-standing furnishings and plain décor. Scrubbed wooden tables, painted dressers, magnificent built-in cooking ranges, displays of pans, collections of copper jelly moulds and tableware. Life below stairs must have been hard work for the staff in that bygone age.

On this occasion the perhaps more humble kitchen at Standen made me think how different life is today with sparkly, open plan modern kitchens being the heart of the home, where guests gravitate to at parties, families relax, children play and there is an absence of staff.

What will 2016 bring for new trends in kitchen design? A safe, well organised space with plenty of storage is the way to go, with plenty of natural light and eco friendly fittings where possible. Green choices include units made from reclaimed wood, salvaged wooden panelling, recycled glass splashbacks and work surfaces, bamboo work surfaces, chairs made from recycled plastic and second-hand furnishings.

If a vintage kitchen is your choice, you might find original free-standing units to fit in with your scheme either online or at an antiques fair. Original pieces from the 50s, 60s or 70s will make a fantastic statement and with reclaimed stained glass windows, from your chosen era, made into wall cupboards the result is a unique kitchen.

A trend for modern kitchens in 2016 is to become more minimal. After de-cluttering, the remaining kitchen necessities are stored behind glossy cupboard doors, achieving clean lines and a sleek appearance. White quartz work surfaces are free from all appliances and the splashback clearly visible without objects in the way. Sometimes it is so minimal that it looks like no-one lives



there! Add to the look with open shelves displaying only useful objects such as matching cups, the same white as the wall to fade into the background. Light the shelves from behind with LEDs.

Mixing metals in the kitchen is also forecast to be on trend for 2016 and will enhance an industrial space. Incorporate copper taps, pans or a fantastic beaten copper statement hood over a steel cooker and steel appliances. Wooden seating and flooring with industrial origins add character and the different textures in exposed brickwork and concrete work surfaces contribute to the look.

Lighting is of major importance in any space. Place statement pendant lamps in groups or individually over a peninsula worktop or island to enhance the focal point and LED lamps to light task areas. Copper lamp shades that have a filigree stencilled pattern throw fantastic shadows across the ceiling.

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Lotto biggest payout

The growth in the number of people taking part in the Bolnore Lotto means that this year's rollover Christmas draw saw the largest payout since the Bolnore Lotto started with cash prizes totaling nearly £500.

The winners of the first prize (£311.02) in the draw, which took place after the Christmas Carols at the Woodside on Sunday 13th December, were Jenni and Clive Thomas (pictured). The second prize (£119.63) went to Alison Armstrong and the third prize (£47.85) went to Sarah McGill.

Since its launch in June 2014 the Bolnore Lotto, a small lottery that's regulated and licensed by Mid Sussex District Council, has raised around £5000 to help get the Woodside up and running and to provide equipment to enable the broadest possible range of users to benefit from Bolnore's modern new community building, which is run by the Bolnore Village Community Partnership, a registered charity set up by residents to ensure the success of local facilities.

The Bolnore Lotto now has close to 100 participants, all in with a chance of winning a monthly first prize of around £130 (or smaller second and third prizes) or a slice of the much larger Christmas prize pool.

You can join from as little as £5 per month paying monthly by credit/debit card, Direct Debit or by cheque, cash or standing order. For more details of how to join please visit www.bolnore.org.uk or call 01444 628323.



BPM moves to Bolnore School



One of the areas most popular dance schools, BPM Dance Academy, has recently moved all its Saturday classes to Bolnore Village Primary School.

The groups Wednesday Senior classes have been operating at Bolnore since 2011 but a need for extra space encouraged the move.


Business co-owner Luke Bohana said: "Our new contemporary classes needed more space and moving to the school in Bolnore has enabled get our waiting lists moving again, taking on an extra 20 students.

"We've always had a great relationship with Bolnore Village Primary School. It was there that we launched our first ever BPM After School Club back in April 2011 (before our main classes even started) and it's still running today."

For those interested, BPM's beginner classes still have a waiting list but it's much shorter now. Register interest at www.bpmdanceacademy.co.uk

Bolnore AGM 20th Jan

The Bolnore Village Community Partnership will hold its Annual General Meeting at the Woodside, 120 Middle Village, Bolnore at 7.30pm on Wednesday 20th January. All residents and interested parties are cordially invited along.

A person wearing a pink hoodie and dark leggings stands on a sandy beach with their back to the camera, arms raised in a celebratory gesture. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the ocean waves. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange.

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Sport Relief is on the way...

Sport Relief is calling on the people of the South East to step away from the stuffing, reject those spare sprouts and start the New Year as they mean to go on by signing up for the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games, taking place on 18th-20th March.

People all over the South East from a variety of ages and fitness levels are encouraged to go fit themselves as they get ready to walk, run, swim or cycle themselves proud by signing up to the Sport Relief Games.

With hundreds of local events taking place across the region there is bound to be one near you. It's the ideal incentive to get the gang back together and help each other stick to those New Year's fitness resolutions. Maintaining that motivation until March will be a walk in the park.

However people choose to take part, it's going to be one incredible weekend, and the money raised will help to transform lives.

Half of all the money raised by the public is used to make a difference right here at home in the UK, with the other half used to fund projects in the world's poorest communities.

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10.30am **Fluid Physio** for Injured/Beginners/Improvers
11am **Weigh In – Work Out**
1.30pm **Join the Line**
7.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society** – Ring Craft

Tuesday

- 9am **Tiny Soccerstars**
9.30am **Tinkerbells** - music classes for children
3pm **Codanza**
6.30pm **Haywards Heath & District Canine Society** – Obedience Class

7pm Pilates

Wednesday

- 9.30am **Tinkerbells**
10am **Stroke Communications Group**
12.30pm **Zumba Dance Fitness**
1.30pm **Modern Line Dancing**
4pm **Codanza**
8pm **Best of Ballroom Cuckfield Dance Club**

Thursday

- 9.30am **Tumbletots**
9.30am **Tinkerbells**
10am **Pilates**
7.30pm **Social Ballroom and Latin American Dance**

Friday

- 7.30pm **Evening Flower Club** (2nd Friday/month)

There is now a list of regular activities and classes on the Notice Board that includes contact details.

February

- 26th- **Cuckfield Dramatic Society presents**
27th **February Frolics** – an evening of comic entertainment and food! (Tickets £15 from Mansell McTaggart and Wealden Stores)

March

- 4th **NSPCC (Cuckfield Branch) Annual Quiz** – 7.30pm Teams of 6. Tickets will be available shortly from Wealden Stores, Whitemans Green at £12 per person to include a cold platter and delicious homemade puds. There will be a bar and a raffle.

January

- 20th **Mid-Sussex Decorative and Fine Arts Society**
10.15am, Clair Hall – Paula Rego: Tales of the Unexpected – Talk by Linda Smith
Visitors welcome £7
- 27th **Suffragette (12A) Film Show** – 5.30pm/8pm
Clair Hall, Haywards Heath
(Tickets from £5.50 from 01444 455440)
- 30th **Mid Sussex Ramblers morning walk** preceding the Sussex Area AGM – 10am, The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Road, Shoreham-on-Sea BN43 5WU
This 8km leisurely circular walk from the Shoreham Centre which will be open for picnickers to use before the AGM (www.midsussexramblers.co.uk)
- 31st **Ensemble Reza Concert** – 3pm, Holy Trinity Church (Tickets from Pepperbox & Wealden Stores)

February

- 5th **Sussex Mineral and Lapidary Society**
8pm, Redwood Centre, Perrymount Road, HH
Illustrated talk 'What makes a good and valuable mineral specimen?' by Nick Hawes (Chairman)
Refreshments, raffle and sales. All welcome, entrance free. (For more information please ring 01444 483041 or see: www.smls.org.uk)
- 13th **Cuckfield Museum** reopens at 10am
- 13th **Cuckfield European Association**
Annual General Meeting for members
7.30pm, Reid House, Mill Hall, Whitemans Green
- 17th **Mid-Sussex Decorative and Fine Arts Society**
10.15am, Clair Hall. 'The Elgin Marbles' Talk by Dr Stephen Kershaw. Visitors welcome £7
- 26th **Macmillan Fundraising Dinner**
7.30pm, The Talbot
(Tickets from David call 01444 415060 or email elsda@btinternet.com)

Pavement Warning

Cuckfield resident Stephen Cockburn would like to make those walking on the High Street of a potential danger outside his property Marshalls Manor. The pavement surface had been uneven in the area for some time - despite ongoing requests to fix it.

There has now been some remedial work in the area by contractors, however water is still coming up from the ground underneath. He is concerned that this could pose a real danger to pedestrians walking near Lloyds Pharmacy when its cold and the water freezes.

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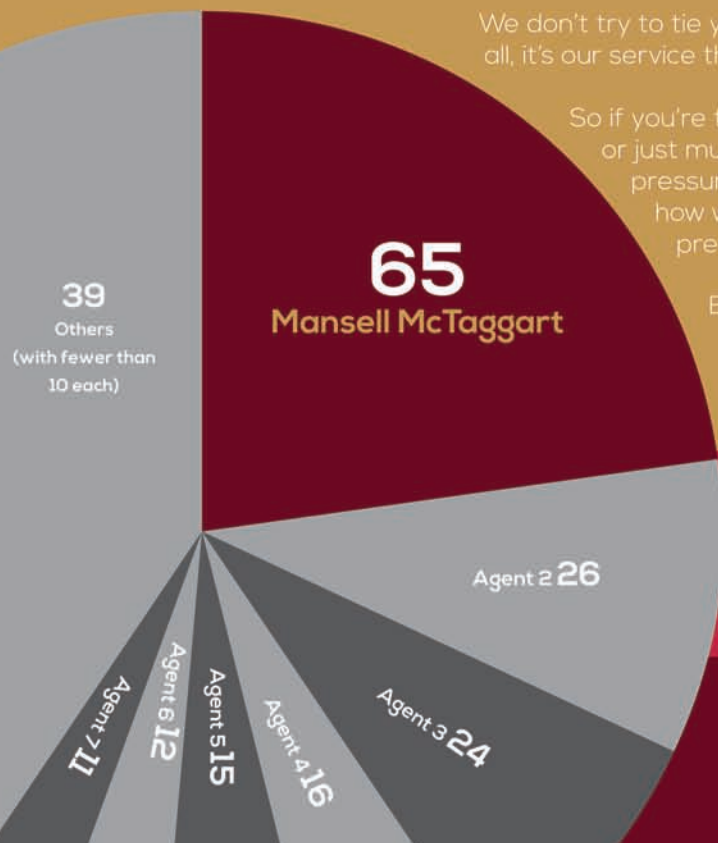
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*Source: rightmove.co.uk, all residential sales agreed in RH17 in the year to 16 Sep 2015



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