

ALCISTON BERWICK SELMESTON

# VILLAGE NEWS

FEBRUARY 2024

## ◇ VILLAGE NEWS

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**Advertising** is coordinated by Brian Calcott. Tel. 07999 788618.

**Distribution** is coordinated by Jeremy and Valerie Shaw. Tel: 01323 811567.

**The Production Team** is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

**Contributions, Photos, etc** (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin by the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month by email: [empty.sea@outlook.com](mailto:empty.sea@outlook.com)

They can also be passed to one of the coordinators:

Jane Anderson at Old Postman's Cottage, Alciston Tel: 01323 870075.

Valerie Shaw at Selmeston House, Selmeston Tel: 01323 811567.

Laurie Tinsley, Wynsford, Berwick Tel: 01323 870895.

## Donations

Financial donations to the Parish News are gratefully received.

Cheques payable to "Parish News" can be passed to: The Treasurer, Brian Calcott at 2 Railway Cottages, Station Road, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6TA.

Alternatively, electronic donations can be made to Barclays Bank - Account No. 70650625; Sort code 20-49-76.

## ◇ CHURCH CONTACTS

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### Benefice Priests

**Revd Peter Blee** Rector of Berwick and Vicar of Selmeston with Alciston

The Parsonage, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6SR

Tel: 01323 870512 Email: [peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk](mailto:peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk)

**Revd Shirley Pearce** Assistant Priest

The Vicarage, Wilmington, Polegate, BN26 5SL

Tel: 01323 318231 Email: [revshirleym@gmail.com](mailto:revshirleym@gmail.com)

Shirley Pearce's 'on duty' days are Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

### Churchwardens

**Alciston** - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623

**Berwick** - Andy Williamson Tel: 01323 870163 / Paul Lewis Tel: 01323 870927

**Selmeston** - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

### Benefice Administrator

Jane Grutchfield Email: [benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk](mailto:benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk)

## ◇ VILLAGE CONTACTS

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### Parish Council Clerks

**Alciston** - Sandy Thomas Email: [alcistonparishmeeting@gmail.com](mailto:alcistonparishmeeting@gmail.com)

**Berwick** - Alison Stevens Tel: 01323 460007 Email: [berwickparishcouncil@aol.com](mailto:berwickparishcouncil@aol.com)

**Selmeston** - Bryan Stevens Tel: 07799 862765 Email: [selmestonparishmeeting@gmail.com](mailto:selmestonparishmeeting@gmail.com)

### Village Hall / Field Hire

**Berwick Village Hall** - Thea Eastmead Tel: 01323 871218 Email: [theaeastmead77@gmail.com](mailto:theaeastmead77@gmail.com)

**Berwick Field** - Carole Vine Tel: 07341 660046 [berwickfieldhire@btinternet.com](mailto:berwickfieldhire@btinternet.com)

**Alciston and Selmeston Village Hall** Website: [www.southdownsvillagehall.org](http://www.southdownsvillagehall.org)

## **A Piece of Work – A Theatre Show with James Rowland**

*7.00 pm, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February  
at A&S Village Hall*

Tickets £12.

Suitable for ages 15+.

Show is 70 minutes no interval.

'A riveting, remarkable hour of  
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[bookings@southdownsvillagehall.org](mailto:bookings@southdownsvillagehall.org).

If you'd prefer to pay by cash or  
in person, please contact Megan  
on 07846 260350

*Rachel Lewis*

## **Home Astrophotography**

*7.00 pm Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February  
in Berwick Church*

Stunning images of the night sky  
as you've never seen it before  
taken by local amateur  
astrophotographer Jackie Ellis.

As well as describing the  
breathtaking images, such as the  
Ghost Nebula illustrated on the  
front cover of the magazine.  
Jackie will also talk about the

home equipment needed to  
capture the images.

Entry is free and refreshments  
will be served.

Donations at the end of the  
evening in aid of Alciston and  
Selmeston churches.

Enquiries

Michèle Boys 01323 870623 or  
email [michele.boys@live.com](mailto:michele.boys@live.com) .

*Michèle Boys*

## **Arlington's Village Market and Coffee Morning**

*10.00 am - Noon,  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February  
at Arlington Village Hall*

All are very welcome; we will be  
pleased to see you. There will be  
fresh bread, cakes, quiches, local  
eggs and other regular stalls.

Arlington's Pop-Up Museum will  
also be taking place at the same  
time. February's focus will be  
'The Arlington Chronicle' with  
Jackie Appleton.

Thank you to the many people,  
local and from further afield, who  
support this community event.  
We hope you will continue to do  
so.

Please bring your friends and if  
you have not been before you will  
be very welcome.

The January Market was very  
busy, and the hall was full of  
visitors.



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For further market information  
please contact Anne Hope:  
Tel. 01323 486219 / 07760  
424169,  
Email [anntonyhope@gmail.com](mailto:anntonyhope@gmail.com).

For further museum information  
please contact Wendy Holmes:  
Tel. 07889 689844,  
Email [talkingteapot@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:talkingteapot@yahoo.co.uk).

*Pauline Jackson*

## **Firle and Beddingham Women's Institute**

*7.30 pm Wednesday  
14<sup>th</sup> February  
at The Ram Inn, Firle*

At our January meeting we voted  
on the four different resolutions  
that have been put forward for  
the National AGM in June.  
Members had read through all  
the details, and we all voted on  
the one we felt was most  
relevant. Afterwards we enjoyed  
cheese and wine and some  
convivial conversation.

Our next meeting will be on  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February and  
will be a talk about Ronald  
MacDonald House by Sally  
Gabriel.

We shall be meeting in a room at  
The Ram Inn instead of the  
village hall. Please give me a call  
if you would like further  
information.

*Rosemary Norris  
President Tel: 07784 707016*

## **Mindfulness Workshop**

*11.00 am - 1.00 pm Saturday  
17<sup>th</sup> February in Berwick Church*

Learn some mindfulness practice  
in the beautiful space of Berwick  
Church with experienced art-  
educator and mindfulness  
teacher, Stephanie Robertshaw.  
Stephanie currently teaches  
Mindfulness for Stress/Art and  
Mindfulness courses at East  
Sussex College.

[www.stephierobertshaw.co.uk](http://www.stephierobertshaw.co.uk).

Allowing ourselves to slow down,  
we will look mindfully at the  
church murals and architecture,  
absorbing the effects of colour  
and space, opening our curiosity  
through the senses/breath, and  
noticing how this affects our  
experience.

The cost is £10 per person  
including refreshments. Numbers  
limited to a maximum of ten  
people. Please email  
[outreach@berwickchurch.org.uk](mailto:outreach@berwickchurch.org.uk)  
to find out more or to reserve  
your place.

*Catherine Marsh-Lewis  
Berwick Church Outreach Officer*

## **Village HUB**

*11.00 am to 12.30 pm  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February  
at A&S Village Hall*

Please note the new timing.

The Hub welcomes you all to  
enjoy refreshments, delicious tea  
and coffee as well as homemade  
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environment. Pop in anytime, open to everyone - bring your little ones for a run around and meet up with neighbours and friends of all ages.

Please contact any of the committee below if you have any questions or need help with transport to and from the hall.

Contact: Thea 07772 155772,  
Helen 07969 732109,  
Mairi 07582 938185 or  
Janie 07785 940915.

*Rachel Lewis*

## **Pilgrim Poetry Group**

*2.30 pm on Monday  
26<sup>th</sup> February in Berwick Church*

At our next meeting on Monday, Antony Mair has suggested that we have a writing workshop at which we can look at some of the constituent parts of a poem followed by writing exercises. Please bring pen and paper with you.

For further information please contact Antony via his email [antony@tackleway.com](mailto:antony@tackleway.com).

*Michèle Boys*

## **The Spring 'Fun, Fish & Finking' Quiz is Back**

*Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March  
at A&S Village Hall*

Bring your own team of six or we can join you up with others. Same fun format as usual with The Village Chippy providing us with fabulous, tasty food.

£15.00 per person includes the quiz entry and a fish/veggie and chips supper.

Bar and food available from 6.30pm; the quiz starts at 7.30 pm.

Tickets are limited and extremely popular so book today!

Please contact  
Mairi 07582 938185,  
Helen 07969 732109  
or Phil 07538 187552.

*Rachel Lewis*

## **Thank You**

Jean, Peggy and Linda would like to thank everyone who supported us in our fundraising in 2023. We raised £1,629.46. The organisations we supported were:

- ◆ Chalk Farm Project
- ◆ Cuckmere Bus
- ◆ Children with Cancer (Polegate)
- ◆ Berwick and Selmeston Produce Show
- ◆ Parkinsons (Hailsham Branch)

Since beginning our fundraising in 1992 we have raised £71,371.19.

Sorry, we are unable to accept items to sell at present as we have plenty of stock.

Thank you.

*Jean Bradford, Peggy Lawrence  
and Linda Boys*

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## Recycling

2024 has kicked off with the welcome news that households no longer have to pay to get rid of small-scale DIY waste at council recycling centres, boosting recycling and making it easier for people to dispose of their waste in a responsible manner. The Government has abolished the fees which around one-third of local authorities, including in East Sussex, previously charged to dispose of DIY waste at household waste recycling centres (HWRCs).

All councils in England will now treat DIY waste the same as other household waste when it meets certain conditions, such as not exceeding two 50-litre rubble bags. This change has the potential to save households hundreds of pounds, with charges that were up to £10 an item, such as a piece of plasterboard, now scrapped.

Today's changes are the latest in a string of reforms to make it simpler and easier to recycle. That includes a consultation launched to make it easier to recycle household electrical items and simpler household collection rules announced in October.

Many local residents contacted me regarding these unfair charges, and I am glad that the government has listened and acted. This will hopefully reduce

the instances of rogue traders collecting DIY waste and then fly-tipping it. This is part of the wider Government aim to tackle waste crime and fly-tipping, which is estimated to cost the economy £924m per year in England. Among other measures, grants totalling £775,000 were announced last year to help councils roll out a range of projects to crack down on fly-tipping, with an additional £1m for grants being made available this year.

*Maria Caulfield MP*

## February's Gardener's Diary

Spring is getting closer, so we need to start thinking about what to do in the vegetable garden during February.

Keep your egg boxes for chitting your seed Potatoes, which can now be placed in a cool dark place so they can start sprouting.

Broad Beans can be put into pots and then in the greenhouse, cold frame, or indoors on the windowsill. When they are strong enough plant them in the garden.

Sow Onion, Leek and Tomato seeds in trays and again put them in the greenhouse or similar to germinate.

Shallots can be planted into the garden now if you have good drainage, if not wait until it is drier; they will soon catch up.

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Rhubarb crowns should be covered to encourage early pickings.

As the weather has been kind to the garden this winter hopefully everyone has spread their compost and dug it in. A tip for early sowing, if you have an area prepared, is to cover it with black plastic to keep it drier and warmer in preparation for spring planting.

*Lisa Collington*

## **Recipe of the Month: Mary Berry's West Country Gratin**

### **Ingredients**

450 g piece of bacon

450 ml dry cider

50 g butter

2 celery sticks - thinly sliced

225 g white of leek - thinly sliced

50 g plain flour

300 ml warm milk

225 g cooked carrots - sliced

225 g cooked, peeled potatoes - cubed

Salt and pepper

50 g cheddar - grated

50 g parmesan - grated

### **Method**

In a pan with a well-fitting lid, add the bacon and pour in the cider. Bring to the boil, lower to simmering point. Then cover and cook gently for about 30 minutes

or until cooked and really tender. Remove the bacon from the pan and leave to cool.

Return the pan to the heat and boil the cider juices, if not too salty, until reduced to 300 ml. Leave on one side.

Heat the butter in a large pan and stir in celery and leek and fry for a minute. Cover and cook gently for 10 minutes.

Sprinkle in the flour, stir and take the pan off the heat before gradually stirring in the milk followed by the reduced cider. Bring to the boil stirring. Simmer for 1 to 2 minutes and then fold in the cooked vegetables and cook for a minute to heat through.

Pre-heat the grill to medium. Cut off the rind and excess fat from the bacon and cut the meat into sugar cube sized pieces. Fold these into the sauce. Season with salt and pepper.

Pour the mixture into a shallow oven-proof dish and sprinkle with the cheeses. Place under the grill until golden brown and piping hot throughout.

*Valerie Shaw*

## **Family Support Work (FSW)**

We are looking forward with hope to what we might achieve in the coming year. With over 400 families currently active on our caseload, and over 700 families supported in total during 2023,



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there is no sign of the need for our work slowing down. We are doing what we can to maintain this level of support, whilst also being conscious that the continuing financial crisis will impact on our ability to raise funds (all our income is voluntary with no statutory support from local or national government).

With the retirement of our Hastings practitioner at the end of last year we have been reorganising our teams to make sure that we can continue to provide a service throughout Sussex without placing too much strain or unrealistic expectations on any of our staff. As a result, we are currently recruiting new

staff to keep this support at the necessary level. Do please pray that the right people are found.

Our events diary for the year is filling up fast, with three supporters (including Spencer from our office!) taking part in the Brighton 10k run in early April, as well as our skydive on 26<sup>th</sup> April and the busy Open Garden season. All our events are on the events page of our website so do look there for further information, in particular regarding the opportunity to join our skydive. If you are planning any fundraising events for us, then do let the fundraising team know so that they can help you to promote the event for maximum success.



## **BERWICK POST OFFICE**

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## FSW Skydive

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fundraising@familysupportwork.org.uk for more information



Contact them by email  
[fundraising@familysupportwork.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@familysupportwork.org.uk)  
or phone 01273 041401.

### December's work in numbers

- ◆ 333 individual visits and 1183 calls with families supporting 330 adults and 298 children
- ◆ 30 supported meetings with other agencies
- ◆ 56 group sessions held supporting 798 parents and

497 children, plus Christmas parties and trips to the pantomime

- ◆ 194 food deliveries made, and 180 Christmas hampers delivered

### Prayer points

- ◆ Pray that the right applicants will be found to fill our practitioner vacancies
- ◆ Give thanks for good news regarding funding applications at the start of January
- ◆ Pray for all those families who are struggling with isolation and find it difficult to access community support

*Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing*

## Toad-in-the-Hole



Once upon a time, the British people were divided. Impassioned debates raged throughout the land, truth and common sense became distorted, and the public rose up and demanded an answer. How did that toad get inside that rock?

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In 1898, two burly workmen in a chalk quarry near Lewes cracked open a hollow chunk of flint. The solid rock, formed 85 million years ago, split open to reveal an airtight cavity at its core. To the quarrymen's amazement, entombed within the ancient flint was a dead toad.

'Toad-in-the-hole' hysteria soon hit the headlines. It seemed like every month the newspapers reported how someone had split open a rock and found a toad inside. Some of these toads had already croaked but others would inexplicably still be alive and hopping. The Victorian world was thrown into theological and philosophical panic. Clergymen preached that the Creator had placed the eternal amphibians in rocks at the dawn of time. Subscribers to Darwin's new theory of evolution were perplexed. Charles Dickens wrote of his bewilderment, while others believed it was simply sorcery. Scientists began burying living toads in sealed boxes to investigate the unfortunate animal's longevity.

The Lewes Toad of 1898 is the world's only surviving artefact of the entombed toad craze. It now resides in Brighton's incredible Booth Museum of Natural History - one of my favourite places in the whole world. Amongst the many awe-inspiring exhibits at The Booth, you'll find a special

cabinet dedicated to curiosities. In it, lying reverentially on a bed of maroon felt, there is 'Probably the most famous toad in the world'. Admittedly when it comes to world-famous toads it's not a particularly crowded field, with only Toad of Toad Hall to contest the title. Alongside the original oval of cleft flint sits the shrivelled body of the infamous amphibian. The whole surreal exhibit is like a Kinder Surprise designed by Hieronymus Bosch.

But this cracked up flint isn't all it's cracked up to be. The Lewes toad was originally presented to the Brighton and Hove Natural History and Philosophical Society by Charles Dawson. That's the same Charles Dawson who would soon be sticking some Orangutan teeth on a human skull and declaring he had discovered the 'missing link' at Piltdown, near Uckfield. In 1953, Dawson would be unmasked as a fraudster and the whole 'toad-in-the-hole' phenomenon would come crashing down, dismissed as poppycock.

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*Michael Blencowe*

*Photo: Common Toad*

*© Dave Kilbey*

*Sussex Wildlife Trust*

## **From the Parsonage**

Lent starts early this year with Ash Wednesday falling on the same day as St. Valentine's Day, 14<sup>th</sup> February. A reminder that whilst Lent begins with worshippers at this service being marked with ashes made from the burning of last year's Palm Sunday crosses, that for all its austerity, it is above everything else, about love. As a cross is made on the forehead of worshippers it is accompanied by the priest saying the words 'remember that you are but dust turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ'. This touching of the head communicates the grace of God which is given to a believer and a necessary gift without which they cannot remain disciples.

'Ash Wednesday' by T. S. Eliot is one of the great poems of the 20th Century, written during his 1927 conversion to Christianity. This year our Poet in Residence, Antony Mair, will be introducing

people unfamiliar with the poem to its content. These open sessions will be on 6th, 13th, 20th March (Venue to be confirmed). And in Holy Week, the week before Easter, the actor Charles Sharman-Cox will be performing the poem in Berwick Church. He offered to do this because of the connection with Bishop Bell under whose portrait in the church he will be performing. Bishop Bell commissioned Eliot to write 'Murder in The Cathedral' for performance in Canterbury Cathedral.

T.S. Eliot's conversion to Christianity was a profound moment, one which put him at odds with his Bloomsbury contemporaries, they simply couldn't understand it. The poem conveys a deep experience that Eliot's wrestles to express in words. Conversion, that inexplicable experience of change, continues to surprise individuals at unexpected moments in life.

Lent this year will be set against the backdrop of climate change. Lent is the season of simplicity and an expression of a desire to change or to use a line from Eliot's poem 'And pray to God to have mercy on us'. On Ash Wednesday, on Valentine's Day we might ask ourselves, 'Do we love the world enough to save it'?

*Peter Blee*





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## CHURCH SERVICES AND MORNING PRAYER

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### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February

09:30 Selmeston Holy Communion  
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion  
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February

09:30 Alciston Holy Communion (BCP)  
09:30 Arlington Holy Communion  
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion  
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February

19:00 Wilmington Ash Wednesday Service

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February

09:30 Selmeston Holy Communion  
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion  
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February

09:30 Alciston Holy Communion (BCP)  
09:30 Arlington Holy Communion  
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion  
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

### Prayer

9.30 am each Wednesday  
at Berwick church.  
(On the first Wednesday of the month there is Holy Communion (BCP) instead.)  
5.00 pm each Thursday  
at Wilmington church.

To receive a weekly notification about services (the Sunday Link) please email the Benefice Administrator at [benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk](mailto:benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk)

### Pastoral Prayer or Talk

Peter Blee and Shirley Pearce are available to speak to people on the phone and are also able to pray with people on request in church at Morning Prayer and to offer help in any way possible.  
Telephone: 01323 870512, 01323 318231 or  
Email [peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk](mailto:peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk),  
or [revshirleym@gmail.com](mailto:revshirleym@gmail.com)

Please visit the benefice websites to check on services and times:  
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