

WINCHELSEA PARISH MAGAZINE

April 2024





Holy Week and Easter

Wednesday 27th

at Winchelsea Methodist Chapel

7.30pm: Reflections for Holy Week
including Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday - 28th

Benefice Service at Winchelsea

6pm: Holy Communion with
Washing of the Feet

Good Friday - 29th

Benefice Service at Icklesham

2pm: Meditation on the Cross

Easter Eve - 30th

Benefice Service at Winchelsea

8pm: Easter Vigil Service of Light

Easter Day - 31st

Clocks go forward

6.30am: Dawn Eucharist on the Beach
(at St Nicholas Chapel, Pett Level, if wet)

9.30am: Easter Eucharist at Icklesham

11am: Easter Eucharist at Winchelsea

In Gardens...



It is said that Socrates
walked round his garden, his veins
heavy with hemlock, still discoursing
'til his breath was gone -

Mendel,
in his monastery garden, grew beans
over years, fathoming the mysteries
of genetics;

Marvell
made much of green thoughts in green shades,
of his vegetable soul that grew vast
yet knew Love;

in his garden, Newton
watched the apple fall, and thought
not of Adam and Eve, or that Fall,
but of natural laws, of cause
and effect...

in the Asylum Garden
while others ranted or shouted, Vincent
simply painted: olive groves,
white orchards, mid-blue irises, grey skies,
yellow ground...

in crisis or illness, Churchill
painted too - in Provence, or on his own
terraced lawns, sweeping to the Chartwell hills -
coasts, lilies, lakes in oils simply signed
'WSC'...

in the dark days of war, Virginia's
stream-of-madness led her to a tryst
with the river at Rodmell, walking out
one spring morning through her garden, past
elms and dewpond...

in a garden near Golgotha
Mary wept one morning long ago
seeking her missing master—little did she know
then, that he had expiated Eden.

**Winchelsea
Garden Society**

Spring Show

- Flowers
- Floral Art
- Vegetables
- Pot Plants
- Cookery

**The New Hall
Winchelsea
2:00 pm Saturday
30 March 2024**



garden@winchelsea.com



An Invitation to the Winchelsea Mayoring Ceremony

The ceremony will be a public event
It will be held on Easter Monday as it has been since the foundation
of the town and you are warmly invited to attend

On that day Peter Cosstick will take up the office of Mayor
in succession to David Merrifield

The Mayor and Corporation hope you are able to attend this
celebration which reflects the unique and special story of our town

**11.am on Easter Monday, 1st April 2024
at Winchelsea Church**

The ceremony will last around 40 minutes and there will be an
informal evening drinks reception from 5.00 to 6.30 in the New Hall

All are welcome

For the evening reception, RSVP Peter Cosstick
winchelsea.tc@btinternet.com

winchelsea.com/corporation



The Corporation Year

The new Corporation year starts on Easter Monday, and in preparation, the charity's 2023 annual report was signed off at the AGM in March. [You can read the full report here](#)

There are plenty of good things to note. The Corporation continues to run the Museum with the help of a strong team of volunteers. This was open on more days and for a longer season and visitor numbers are up. The Corporation also provides the winchelsea.com website for the town and publishes the free *Discover Winchelsea* booklet for visitors.

Stewardship of the town's three medieval gates and Court Hall are a primary responsibility, making sure that they are properly insured and that necessary maintenance is carried out. Various Corporation members and volunteers take responsibility for checking that the different structures are free of weeds and debris and that the Court Hall garden is maintained. Currently there is work to do on the New Gate after a lorry hit it, and this will be covered by the offending company's insurance.

The Lower Court Hall continues to be a resource to the town for small-scale meetings and work has been done to improve the heating. WiFi has now been installed. Sadly, we lost the Post Office in September. Major works will be coming up in

2024 to restore the outer West end gable wall. This will cost in the region of £30,000 and FOAM have undertaken to provide half of the funding. The Corporation will be looking to obtain grants towards the rest. Crumbling stonework around the Court Hall door is also due to be renewed and the oak door replaced. We'd be delighted to attract more users. Rates are very reasonable!

FOAM is a vital partner to the Corporation in financing work on the Ancient Monuments, and their fundraising efforts continue to enlist the enthusiastic support of the town, as was clear at the Quiz in February. The outgoing Mayor, David Merrifield, also made a notable contribution to fundraising over his two years in office, organising the Spanish and Italian Evenings that were such a success.

The Town Sign and the Beacon are now officially owned by the Corporation, and the fundraising work of the Millennium Artefacts Society, particularly at their August Art Exhibition, continues to ensure these unique features of the town are well maintained. The Beacon will be lit in June for the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings.

As well as its practical work, the Corporation has a ceremonial role by virtue of its membership of the Cinque Ports Confederation. The Mayor and Mayoress represented Winchelsea at over 50 civic events in Confederation towns in 2023, and in May, following a tradition that dates back to 1135, the Mayor was present at the Coronation as one of the Barons of the Cinque Ports. The name of the new Lord Warden is expected to be announced soon.

New Mayors have been sworn in at the Court Hall on Easter Monday since the 1660s and the tradition will be maintained this year when Peter Cosstick takes office. Since 2022 a large part of the Mayoring Ceremony has taken place in the Church, making the event accessible to everyone who would like to come. We will be delighted if you are able to join us, and also if you are able to come to the drinks reception later in the day.

This is all part of what makes Winchelsea unique. The Corporation may have lost its local government powers long ago but we are glad still to be able to make our distinctive contribution to the life of such a remarkable community.



Reflections from the Rectory

As I write this we are nearing the end of Lent. Some of you may have endeavoured to give up some pleasure, such as alcohol or chocolate as part of a Lenten discipline. However these days we are often encouraged to support a good cause or aim to do at least one good deed a day rather than just refrain from a secret or not so secret indulgence.

I'm delighted that we have organised five separate Lent lunches in the benefice this year. Two of them have taken place at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall - being slightly frugal versions of the monthly fellowship lunch, two in Icklesham Church and one here in the Rectory at Winchelsea (above).

On each occasion we have raised funds for a nominated charity. It is so important that our churches do what they can to support those in need as well as raising money for the daily running costs and ministry that takes place. Amongst others, we have collected for the *Seaview Project* in Hastings which supports the homeless, *Caring and Sharing* and *Family Support Work*, which is run by the Diocese of Chichester and supports families who are in difficulty for a variety of reasons.

Such gatherings in different places around the benefice which attract different people are a great way of encouraging individuals to take part in and foster community.

And although it is a bit of a squash in our house it is nice to welcome people. At Winchelsea Beach gatherings connect with a wide range of residents from the community.

In Icklesham this year it has been especially encouraging that the lunches have taken place in church in the side chapel. It reminds us what a wonderful building we have. It is the oldest in our benefice with a foundation that predates the Norman Conquest and with visible architectural details from the 12th century.

If you haven't been to Icklesham Church recently it is wonderful to see what excellent work has been done in the churchyard. Large amounts of foliage and extensive growth has been cleared not only revealing a number of Victorian graves and monuments but also opening up a whole new view of the church. We are hopeful that a regular group will continue to help and manage the churchyard. There are similar groups working in Winchelsea and Pett as well to keep on top of the growth of ivy and weeds and help establish greater biodiversity.

By the time you read this, Easter will be upon us. Let us pray that our efforts to support those around us who are in need continue and bear fruit.

Bible Reading

Our informal Bible reading will continue on the first Thursday of each month at 6pm in the New Inn Winchelsea - but we will not meet on 4th April following Easter. The next gathering will be on 2nd May when we will continue to look at the gospel according to St John. It is a very rich text and for this session we will consider chapters 3 to 6, but more extensive reading is always helpful.

It is a very relaxed gathering and no prior knowledge is required: we always end around 7pm. There has been good attendance; look at it as Book Club with a difference. All are welcome. Contact Jonathan for more details or with any questions, revdjonathan@btinternet.com 01797 226254



Visit to Little Gate Farm: 25th April

Little Gate Farm is a local charity that helps train young people with learning disabilities and autism. I was privileged to visit it as a chaplain to the High Sheriff towards the end of last year. It encourages young people to engage in horticulture, woodcraft and to work in the café and help in other ways on the farm. It aims to make it possible for those in need to enter full-time in employment.

I found it a very impressive and interesting set-up. I'm planning to take a group of around 12 people for a visit, which would probably involve a tour of the farm and an opportunity to see the available activities and then have either a light lunch or coffee provided by those who are in training. The date and times will be confirmed but it is hoped that it can take place on Thursday 25th of April. Please let me know if you're interested as numbers will be limited.

I attach a link to their information video on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/5-akKZTI6JA>

Jonathan

Rogation Sunday: 5th May

As we now have three churches and a small chapel within the benefice and our neighbouring parish of Pett, we are planning to have a series of services on Rogation Sunday and walk between our churches. Timings will be confirmed in due course but the intention will be to have our usual first Sunday service of Holy Communion in Winchelsea at 8am.

The Rogation walk will start with Parish Communion in Pett probably at a slightly later time than usual. We will then walk to Icklesham for a short service of midday prayer outside the church to give thanks for the work that has been taking place in the churchyard. The plan will be to have lunch either in church or in the *Queens Head* and then walk to Winchelsea for tea and an early service of Evensong.



Rogation is a traditionally time for giving thanks for the fruits of the land and to pray for a good harvest. It was an originally an opportunity for parishes to “beat the bounds” and in medieval times it sometimes involved conflicts between neighbouring parishes. However today we intend to help forge better links with one another and enable those who are not necessarily regular churchgoers to take part in a community event. Those who prefer not to walk can join the services and I hope we will be able to organise some transport between the churches.

Further details will be confirmed. *Jonathan*



Flower Festival 2018

Au revoir Alice

Friends and neighbours gathered in the Court Hall to give Alice Kenyon a rousing send-off as she moves from Winchelsea to Goudhurst. Over twenty years, Alice has brought us consummate gardening skills, flowers, friendship and the ability to see the best in every situation. We wish her well in her new home.

Alice treated the assembled company to a farewell poem:

Well hello Winchelsea, and au revoir Winchelsea
I hope you know how much this really means to me
My thanks to you has to be in rhyme
A family trait for every special time.

This wonderful mob is surely one of those.
It'll be short. Long is boring as everyone knows
How lucky we were to find our home here,
Everything beautiful but are the people so dear?

With the odd exception (joke) our fears were assuaged
Most of you more than made the grade
What is it about this special town?
The greetings are smiles and never a frown.

There have been ups and downs as happens to all
But never a moment there was no one to call.
I have laughed and cried and learnt so much,
Including the art of using a crutch.

I will never forget the last twenty years
Please forgive me for shedding some tears
She's going at last I can hear you all say,
But I'll be back to haunt you in some sort of way!

I hope you will visit my amazing new abode
It's not very far, only down the rd.
You'll always be welcome whenever I'm there
So do come and see the old girl in her lair.

I'm leaving The Well House in such loving care,
Which makes it all much easier to bear.
Whoops I am rambling its high time to end
As you just may have gathered I'm a bit overwhelmed.

A huge enormous thank you for all you have done
Organisers supreme and all who have come.
I'm not sure how to end this I don't do goodbyes
So maybe my love and kisses would be the most wise.





Bowls Club Open Day

Winchelsea Bowls Club would like to invite you to their Open Day being held on Saturday 27th April from 12 to 4 pm.

There will be an opportunity to try your hand at playing bowls (please wear flat shoes), meet the members and enjoy some tea and cake.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jeannette Read
WBC Club Secretary
07484 120470

winchelseabowlsclub.co.uk



Auction raises over £4,000

As most of you will know, the New Hall held a fun Auction of Promises on Saturday 9th March.

Our “promises” or lots include afternoon tea at the Ritz, gardening, a medieval banquet in a Winchelsea cellar, a trip in a vintage VW camper with afternoon tea and fizz as well as yoga, bridge and bowls lessons and a Times cryptic crossword masterclass. We also have cookery sessions, art classes, a personalised handmade Christmas stocking, an evening of stargazing, a bird watching walk, cakes, marmalade, mince pies and a year’s supply of fresh sourdough bread plus many more.

Due to the expertise of our auctioneer, the Revd Jonathan Meyer, all 50 of our donated lots were sold and we raised an amazing £4,069 after all expenditure. As well as a fantastic fundraiser to help pay for the renovation of our gents’ toilets, it was a really fun evening and a great community event with over 100 residents in the audience.

Many people have complimented Jonathan for making the evening so hilarious (you missed your calling Jonathan as a stand-up comedian.)

As well as a huge thank you to Jonathan, we would also like to thank all our generous donors, all the successful bidders and everyone who bought tickets. A further thanks also goes

to all our helpers on the night and our fantastic crew of canape makers. Thank you all!

100 Club

The winner for March was number 45. Thanks to Anu, a guest of Richard Plumb for selecting our winner this month.

New Hall Management Committee - Rosemarie, Sergio, Graham, Rob and Ali.



Summer Fete and Fun Dog Show

Winchelsea Cricket Club are delighted to be hosting the Winchelsea Summer Fete 2024, which will, as usual, take place on the cricket field (weather permitting). All the usual favourites, including Crick Hooper's wonderful, fun dog show on Saturday 10th August at 12 noon. The Club are in the process of contacting all local societies and potential stallholders about their possible participation, but if you'd like more information please contact Mike Stoneham - miketstoneham@gmail.com



The Winchelsea Cutting

The drastic removal of trees from the bend on the A259 coming up into Winchelsea has drawn everyone's attention to a geological feature most of us drive past without noticing. The slope has a name - 'Winchelsea Cutting' - and it has been a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since 1990.

Cuttings and quarries are important to geologists because they provide cross sections of strata that are otherwise buried and impossible to study. Though probably incomprehensible to most of us, the SSSI citation reads as follows.

'This roadside exposure of the Hastings Beds Group shows 2m of the upper Ashdown Sand Formation and 4m of the lower Wadhurst Clay Formation. Above the Top Ashdown Pebble Bed (with extrabasinal chert and quartz pebbles, and Jurassic glauconite grains), 0.5m of dark basal Wadhurst Clay with ironstone nodules is overlain erosively by 4m of the lower division (pro-fandelta) of the Cliff End Sandstone Member.' The formation dates back around 140 million years.

It looks very much as if the sand formation has been damaged by the tree felling, with fresh sandstone boulders now lying at the roadside.



Church Annual Meeting

The Parish Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Saturday 27th April at 10am at St Thomas's.

The Parish Meeting is held to elect Churchwardens and anyone on the electoral roll in the parish is entitled to attend and vote. This is different from those on the Church Electoral Roll, which usually includes communicant members of the congregation. If you wish to be in the Church Electoral Roll, you should contact Jeremy Naylor. Names cannot be added after the closing date, published in the church porch.

The Parish Meeting is immediately followed by the APCM. Everyone who is on the Church Electoral Roll of the parish is entitled to attend. This is an opportunity for members of the congregation to receive an annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council during the previous twelve months including financial statements, the maintenance of the church building, its artefacts and the churchyard and any other matters of concern about the parish. Those attending will also learn of broad plans for the current year.

It is at this meeting that members of the Parochial Church Council are elected for the forthcoming year and those present are able to ask any questions. Papers related to the business of the meeting will be circulated two weeks prior to the meeting. It is hoped that as many members as possible of St Thomas who are on the electoral roll will attend.



Churchyard Working Party

Thanks to all those who turned up on a bright but chilly morning, we had a very successful working party. The photograph shows the “new” look Remembrance Garden following serious pruning, digging out of blighted box hedges, weeding and edging. Special mention goes to Judith, Ant, John, David, Gavin and Jonathan. Further plans will mean the garden has more light coming in, and a variety of plants will be added.

A variety of tasks such as grave tidying (Charlotte Praeger), removing ivy from walls (Gillian and Colin), pruning and weeding around the base of the lime trees (Cecile and Sergio), and the cutting down and ultimate removal of a

bramble and ivy stump (John Rodley and Alfred) meant that everyone worked hard for well-deserved coffee/ tea, biscuits, buns and sandwiches provided by Charlotte Beecroft and Shirley.

Churchyard maintenance is an ongoing task and we will be following up with, hopefully, another two sessions during the year. It is good fun and quite rewarding so watch out for the next date notification and come and join us.

As a quick update on the Flower Circle project, we are seeing the bulbs featuring now, blue Muscari and purple Fritillaries. The yellow rattle is germinating after the cold spell it needs to shock it into life. A mixture of Ox Eye daisies, Knapweed, Plantain and Achillea have bulked up and we look forward to their development over the next couple of months.

Shirley Meyer

Church Market

The next Church Markets will be held at St Thomas's from 10.30am till 12 noon on

Saturday 6th April

Saturday 4th May

Donations of home-made and home-grown produce will be gratefully received for church funds. Savoury bakes:

quiches, pasties, pies, are particularly welcome.

The March Market raised £ £294.

Coffee, tea and good company. All welcome!

Fellowship Lunch on Good Friday

St Richard's Fellowship Lunch will be on Friday 29th March which is Good Friday. For this month only it will be at 12 for 12.30 to enable people to leave early to go to the service in Icklesham at 2pm if they want to. As it will still be Lent the main course will be soup and bread. Anybody who would like to come should contact Mary on 07957 107678.



Garden Openings on 20th April

Four Winchelsea gardens will open for the National Garden Scheme on Saturday 20th April from midday to 4pm. They are *South Mariteau*, *Cleveland Place*, *King's Leap* and, for the first time, the communal garden at *Kent Close* (above). Admission costs £5.

The Friends of the Conquest Hospital will be serving teas in the New Hall to raise funds for their projects.

There's also an opportunity to visit Winchelsea's Historic Methodist Chapel - Wesley's Chapel - which will be open at the same time as the gardens.

Funds raised from these garden visits will go to a range of charities supported by the NGS, including Marie Curie, Macmillan Cancer Support, Hospice UK, The Queen's Nursing Institute, Carers Trust and Parkinson's UK. In 2023, nationwide, over £2.3 million was donated.

In June, gardens at Winchelsea Beach open for St Michael's Hospice and seven Winchelsea gardens will open for the NGS, including the ones that are opening in April. Six will also open for the Friends of the Memorial Hospital, Rye.



Small Jewels of Winchelsea

Shirley Meyer writes: My idea behind the writing of this short series was to look at some of the wild plants that can be seen around the town, as opposed to being in the churchyard flower circles.

The day after I had written about the Navelwort last month, I met three ladies scouring the walls of Winchelsea for a particular little plant called Whitlowgrass (*Erophila verna*). Its leaves are like little spoons radiating from the centre from which sprout the tiny white flowers.

It is a species of plant in the cabbage family, a small spring-flowering annual which is widely dispersed around the world and is found on walls, pavements and patches of bare ground. Because it flowers so early on, it is a good source of nectar and pollen for wild bees, honeybees and other insects when the choices they have for foraging are limited. Papery white seedheads similar to Honesty follow the flowers.

The common name relates to the species being used by herbalists in the past to treat whitlows, which are infections of the fingers caused by herpes simplex viruses.

I have to say I had never noticed it before but now I keep seeing it everywhere; keep a look out for it! Our walls are home to some lovely plants, all there for a reason. Happy hunting!



WINCHELSEA FILM NIGHT

Winchelsea Residents Association in conjunction with Winchelsea New Hall

Baz Luhrmann's

1992 cult

hit film

Strictly



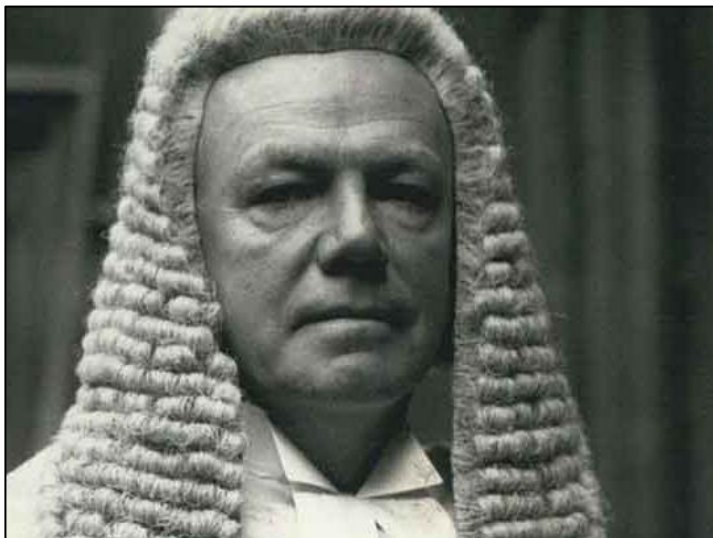
Ballroom

SATURDAY April 20th 6.30 for 7.30 SCREENING

Admission Free

Refreshments, Pay Bar.

Come early, enjoy a drink or two.



Sir Melford Stevenson

Winchelsea has hosted painters and writers with a national reputation, and two senior judges: Robert Younger, who lived at *Greyfriars* and commissioned the organ and stained glass for the Church, and Melford Stevenson (1902-1987) who, in retirement, lived at *Truncheons*.

He unsuccessfully defended Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in England, and presided over the trial of the Kray twins whom he sentenced to life imprisonment in 1969.

Though the reputation was not entirely justified, Stevenson was noted for his severity and, when three of his judgments were overturned by the Court of Appeal in a single day (a record) he commented, "a lot of my colleagues are just constipated Methodists".

To a man acquitted of rape he commented, "I see you come from Slough. It is a terrible place. You can go back there". During a divorce hearing he described the fact that the husband lived in Manchester as a "wholly incomprehensible choice for any free man to make".

He was not gay-friendly. Standing unsuccessfully for Parliament against Labour's Tom Driberg in 1945, he declared that he would make no allusions to the "alleged

homosexuality" of his opponent. He was rebuked by the Lord Chancellor for denouncing decriminalisation legislation in 1967 as "a bugger's charter".

Visited by a locum GP who asked him what area of law he was particularly interested in, Stevenson shot back, 'medical negligence'. Surveyed by some visiting students who asked him whether there were any facilities that Winchelsea lacked, he replied, 'A gibbet'.

Given his severe reputation it was widely assumed that he had named *Truncheons* himself. Sadly this is not the case; the plot had been named long before. The study at *Truncheons* is lined with panelling from the Old Bailey which he obtained when the courtrooms were remodelled.

There is a cushion, cross-stitched for the Church, in his memory. Ironically or not, it's the one the priest at St Thomas's sits on when presiding at Communion.





Unsung Heroes

Natasha Robinson writes: The great Medieval Cathedrals of Europe are widely regarded as masterpieces; but does that make them aesthetically pleasing? These buildings are quite extraordinary on many levels. Their sheer scale, for a start, has to be admired; the materials, the design, the workmanship, the level of detail, all undeniable.

Last month, Imogen Corrigan returned to the Second Wednesday Society. In her light, humorous and deeply knowledgeable way, she regaled us with tales of the unsung heroes behind these buildings.

Popular wisdom lurches violently between "We did things better in the old days" to "I don't know how anything ever got done before computers". As usual the truth lies somewhere in between.

The Master Masons were the medieval building stars who created the landscape of Christian Europe and therefore the vernacular of our culture. Part craftsman, designer, draughtsman and architect; part manager, logistician and diplomat, they were the corporate giants of their day.

They travelled extensively, garnering knowledge and pitching for contracts. Once engaged they brought their workforce with them, to the anger of local people and as the costs spiralled out of control, looked for ways to make savings by automating the process. Sound familiar? They didn't invent the wheel, but spearheaded the use of a brand new, vastly more efficient and cost effective piece of kit, the wheel barrow.

And this is why all these buildings are so disparate, random and unfinished. They are products of hubris, spiralling costs, many lifetimes of work and input, changing tastes, exhaustion of materials and architectural experimentation. On this side of the Channel, Salisbury is the only finished Cathedral we have; in Milan, the Duomo was only declared complete 15 years ago. These extraordinary men left their mark if not their name.

Unsung heroes are the reoccurring theme of April's Second Wednesday talk. Again we welcome back a popular speaker, our friend and neighbour, Richard Feast. If Hugh Dowding, isn't a well-known name to you already, he will be after the 10th. He's been portrayed on screen several time, once by Laurence Olivier in *Battle of Britain*. Starting to ring bells? If I give him his full title, you'll realise how important he was in our history and why it might be interesting to come and find out more; Air Chief Marshall of Royal Air Force Fighter Command.

Once again you'll be amazed by what you learn, particularly as a good deal will be locally relevant, not just nationally. So come and join us in the New Hall, to enjoy the talk, the tea, the cake and the company. Winchelsea really is quite wonderful.

Second Wednesday Society
10th April at 2.15 for 2.30 in the New Hall

2024 subscription now due £15 BACS preferred 09-01-55
43784800 Ref: Your name. Cash accepted. Visitors £5.
Homemade tea £2.

2ndWeds@gmail.com



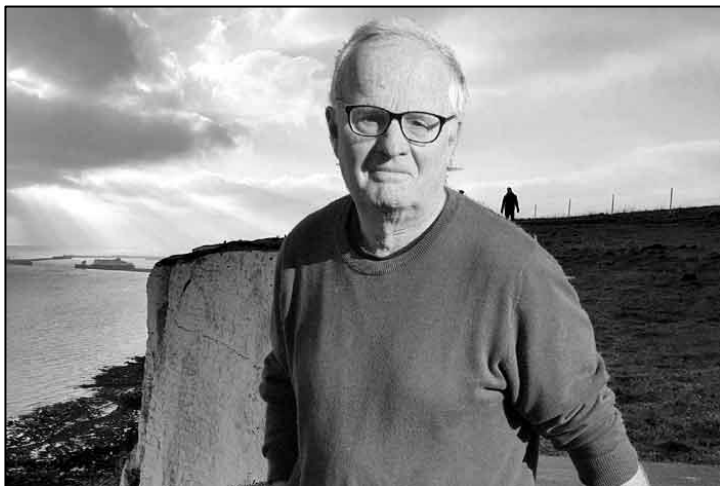
The Lossenham Project

On Saturday 13th April , Dr Andrew Richardson will talk to Winchelsea Archaeological Society about the Lossenham Project. The meeting will take place in the New Hall. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served from 11am and the talk will start at 11.15.

The Lossenham Project is a community heritage and research project to investigate the archaeology, history, and landscape of Lossenham in Newenden. It focuses on the lands of Lossenham Farm where the project has three main excavation sites: the Carmelite church of St Mary; Castle Toll, the large earthwork complex that lies at the end of the Lossenham ridge; and a third site, an iron bloomery, comprising a furnace with associated slag-filled gully.

Andrew has also been selected by the National Trust to lead the archaeological investigations required to support the change in land management at Winchelsea. He wishes to continue with his approach used at Newenden involving local volunteers.

It is premature to discuss what might happen in Winchelsea as updated and detailed proposals for the changes in land management by the National Trust are not yet available. But this very relevant talk will demonstrate how similar archaeological studies continue to be carried out locally.



Gawain Douglas at Literary Society

Lord Gawain Douglas returns to Literary Society on Friday 19th April to read from and talk about T S Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*.

"April is the cruellest month
Breeding lilacs out of the dead land
Mixing memory and desire...."

"I am willing to admit that my own retrospect is touched by a sentimental sunset, the memory of a friend coming across the Luxembourg gardens in the late afternoon waving a branch of lilac, a friend who was later (so far as I could find out) mixed with the mud of Gallipoli." T.S. Eliot

Eliot refers to the friendship of his life, with Jean Verdenal, who he met when they were both students in Paris in 1910. Jean died a hero's death in the Gallipoli in May 1915, rescuing wounded soldiers from the sea. Eliot never forgot him.

The apparently obscure, impersonal and difficult poem, *The Waste Land*, assumes an intimate and movingly accessible character when seen as an elegy to his dead friend.

7pm for 7.30 at the Court Hall.

Members free, non-members £5

literarysoc.winchelsea.secretary@gmail.com



Normal Service

As some of the Lit. Soc.'s more devoted Shakespeareans crept rather tentatively into the New Hall on the Ides of March they were reassured by the avuncular presence of Peter James Carroll, who, under the somewhat Bunyanesque soubriquet of *Henry Normal*, had taken a first few pilgrim steps to progress from his Fairlight home to slake the collective literary thirst of his Winchelsea neighbours.

This intriguing alter ego had emerged from a remarkable professional rebirth entailing a switch from his previous incarnation as a script writer for wildly successful comedy staples like *Mrs. Merton*, *The Royle Family* and Steve Coogan to plunge into, what we have been learning, is the exploding poetry scene whose miscellaneous components include *performance*, *short form*, *list* and *slam*. In this instance we were to hear about his recently published, locally centred volume of poetry, *The Fire Hills*.

In a quickfire opening our speaker immediately engaged his audience with "*Some People*", a snappy piece anticipating potential audience reactions via a series of questions he had previously fielded about his work. There followed a reworking of Dr Foster's unfortunate episode of immersion in Gloucester with a topical reference to the durability and

chronicity of the current plague of potholes, some in Fairlight now apparently enjoying Grade II listing!

Henry then recalled an encounter with the now deceased local comedian, Spike Milligan, whose grave in Winchelsea churchyard remains a magnet for tourists. Reading Milligan's volume of short, witty poems "*Small Dreams of a Scorpion*" had been the seminal event in his Comedy safari and he had met the Goon when he was holding a book signing for a line of devoted fans.

Spike's injunction to each of these admirers to indulge in sexual intercourse and experience long distance travel was received without any resentment but rather a shake of the head, a forgiving smile and an acknowledgement that Spike was "*a real character*". Having sent his satisfied fans happily on their way, Milligan then looked our speaker up and down before delivering a final verdict - "You are a fascinating man.", leaving Henry to consider at what point on the spectrum of meaning truth gives way to satire.

Local highlights from the readings included an evocative description of St. Thomas's Church in Winchelsea, "*Nature in Cinemascope*" conjuring up the view through the window of one of the hides at our local Nature Reserve and "*Drinking Chocolate with Gary*", an empathetic response to the display of a photo of a prematurely deceased youth seen on a bench at Pett Level. Any potential accusations that the speaker's spectacles might have a rose tint were refuted in advance in the epigrammatic "*Dinsdale Sewer*" and another piece describing wild swimming in sewage effluent.

In a comprehensive, scatological riff on bird excrement Henry purged himself of a lifetime's accumulated animosity before giving us sympathetic accounts of the unconventional but telling insights his adult autistic son brought to the family's life. The talk concluded with some amusing anecdotes of last-minute script writing brainstorming sessions with Caroline Aherne ("Mrs. Merton") and Steve Coogan as they tried to complete their assignments, leaving the audience with the realisation that compulsory fun could equate to hard labour.

Bill Doherty



Winchelsea to Compostela

Friends of the Ancient Monuments and Winchelsea Arts are delighted to have invited celebrated London chamber choir *Pegasus* to present a celebration of the links between Winchelsea and Santiago de Compostela in words and music

The route to Santiago was one of the greatest pilgrimages in the medieval world. The remains of the apostle Saint James are believed to repose in an urn, in a tomb, in a crypt, in the looming medieval cathedral of the city named after him.

Santiago de Compostela was built around the saint's burial site, as revealed to a shepherd by a guiding star almost a

millennium after the body was carried there by stone boat from Jerusalem, with angels guiding the way. Or so the story goes. It has since led more than 1000 years' worth of pilgrims to this convergence point of myth and history, via the network of cross-country trails known as the Camino de Santiago. In 2022, a record 438,000 people walked the route.

Winchelsea was a departure point for pilgrims from England to journey to Santiago de Compostela following the Way of St James from medieval times until the Reformation, evidenced by graffiti left by these religious visitors still visible on the medieval fabric of St Thomas's Church. Following a short stay in pilgrim hostels within the town walls and visits to the many wine shops in the town where pilgrims met to plan their onward journey, with the aim of reducing their time in purgatory, many took ships to Bordeaux to begin the pilgrim trail and seek absolution.

This historic relationship will be celebrated in words and music presented by local readers and members of *Pegasus Chamber Choir* in a medieval town cellar. With music by English and Spanish composers from the medieval and renaissance periods performed alongside carefully curated readings this promises to be a fascinating snapshot of the town's history.

Winchelsea Arts is delighted to have joined forces with Friends of the Ancient Monuments to present this event.

This unique one day only set of tours and concerts will be held on 11th May 2024. Only 25 tickets per show.

[Click here to find out more and to book](#)

The FOAM AGM took place on 23rd March. A summary of the year's activities is [posted here](#)

You can sign on as a member of FOAM by going to <https://membermojo.co.uk/foam>
Individual membership costs £10 a year or £15 for a household.



Winchelsea Goes to Bollywood

Join us for a taste of India on Saturday 8th June.
The details of this entertaining evening are still being planned but we can already promise you an authentic vegetarian tasting menu, lots of colour, and Bollywood music and dancing of course.

Look out for tickets coming on sale in early May and save the date. All proceeds to the New Hall. Psst....And it is rumoured that Dev Patel and Deepika Padukone will be coming...

Jane Archutowska, David Dickson, Delane Shingadia and Hilary Roome - and with huge thanks to our special consultant - Delane's Mum.

The Winchelsea Millennium Artefacts Society

invite you to the

Beacon Lighting

to Commemorate



80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

on

Thursday June 6th 2024

at

The New Hall
Winchelsea

Reception 7.15 p.m.
Beacon Lighting 9.15 p.m.





Pregnant doe rabbit lining her burrow *Paul Lindley*

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve in April

Tuesday 2nd (10am - 12pm) - Easter Bunny Hop

Come on our Easter bunny hop around the nature reserve to solve the wildlife egg hunt challenge! We aren't just looking for bird eggs... what other eggs and creatures will we find?

Everyone who completes the challenge wins a small nest of mini eggs to enjoy over the Easter break. Suitable for accompanied 5-12 year olds. Booking necessary - £7 per child (accompanying adults free).

Tuesday 9th (10am - 12pm)

Wonderful Waders for Pre-schoolers

A morning of spring celebrations with babies and toddlers accompanied by an adult. Learn all about the wading birds that come to the nature reserve in spring and create an egg to match your favourite. We will learn about our wonderful waders with challenges, songs and games. Booking necessary

Wednesday 10th (2pm - 5pm) Castle Water Wildlife

Rye Harbour's 465 hectares have international wildlife designations. Join us for a circular walk of approximately 6km, starting out from Brede Lock. We'll follow the River Brede across the sheep fields to Henry VIII's Camber Castle, taking the opportunity to observe the wildlife we find on route. We'll then head to the birdwatching hide overlooking

Castle Water to look at some of the wetland birds present. Meet at Brede Lock, 50m from the junction of Harbour Road and Winchelsea Road, TN31 7UG. Car parking available nearby, on the A259 (Winchelsea Road). what3words location - *lavished.tile.fish* No booking necessary.

**Saturday 27th (2pm - 3pm) - Heritage Crime Talk:
The Threats to our shared Heritage**

Join us for a talk by Daryl Holter our local Heritage Crime Officer from Sussex Police. Synopsis by Officer Holter: "We have a choice to defend our heritage, past, present and future. Some take our past heritage for granted; some forget it is amongst our present. Our future generations should have the opportunity to rediscover, experience and interpret the old and the new. When it falls victim to abuse it is the moral responsibility, of all of us, to protect our past and we must do this together. Together, as a group or family, we become a community. Communities watch over our heritage and likeminded communities stand together. Together we can preserve our past." Free event - booking essential as places are limited.

**Sunday 28th (9am - 1pm) - Friends of Rye Harbour
Nature Reserve: A walk with Friends**

Join the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for a longer walk out to Castle Water. It is a circular route of 7.5km as far as the Halpin Hide and will take approximately 4 hours. It will start from Rye Harbour village car park TN31 7TY (donations welcome) with at least two leaders accompanying each walk. Please note that once we leave the village there are no toilet facilities, however the route is clear if participants need to return earlier. No booking necessary. Free to members of the Friends; non-members welcome but donations appreciated.

To find out more about any of these events, or to make a booking, please visit sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/whatson



St Michael's Hospice

St Michael's Hospice's Board of Trustees has announced its intention to build a brand-new hospice to provide enhanced end-of-life care and support to the community of Hastings and Rother.

This decision comes after careful consideration of the increasing need for hospice services and the challenges of operating from the current aging facility, which wasn't designed for modern palliative care. At this very early stage, the Hospice are exploring the possibility of developing the current site, as well as considering other locations.

Susan Munroe, Chair of Trustees, says "Our duty is to the community we serve, and we believe that our community deserves their care to be provided in the best possible environment. We are very excited at the prospect of creating a new facility that the whole community can take pride in; a welcoming and comfortable place for people when they need it."

To learn more about this news, please visit stmichaelshospice.com/newsroom. If you have any comments or questions, please email info@stmichaelshospice.com.



Rye Food Bank

You can find out more about Rye Food Bank and ways you can offer support, here: ryefoodbank.com

Martin Owen, still standing in for Cam, will be doing the next monthly doorstep collection from those of you who are regular donors on the morning of Tuesday 16th April.

If you'd like to be added to the list of donors, please let Martin know by email mojowen@outlook.com or phone 01797 226968.

Winchelsea Church and Town Calendar

April 2024

Weds 27th March	7.30pm: Reflections for Holy Week at Wesley's Chapel
Thurs 28th March	6pm: Maundy Thursday Eucharist at Winchelsea
Fri 29th March	Fellowship Lunch - WB Community Hall - 12.pm for 12.30 2pm: Good Friday Meditation at Icklesham
Sat 30th March	Garden Society Spring Show - New Hall - 2pm 8pm: Easter Vigil Service of Light at Winchelsea
Sun 31st March <i>Easter</i>	<i>Clocks go forward</i> 6.30am: Dawn Eucharist on the Beach 9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Icklesham 11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea
Monday 1st	Mayoring Ceremony - St Thomas's - 11am Mayor's Drinks Reception for the Town - New Hall - 5pm - 6.30
Saturday 6th	Church Market at St Thomas's - 10.30am till 12
Sunday 7th	8am: BCP Holy Communion at Winchelsea 9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Pett 11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea
Wednesday 10th	Second Wednesday Society - New Hall - 2.30pm
Saturday 13th	Archaeological Society Meeting - New Hall - 11am
Sunday 14th	8.30am: BCP Holy Communion at Pett Level 9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Icklesham 11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea
Friday 19th	Literary Society - Court Hall - 7pm for 7.30
Saturday 20th	Conservation Society AGM - Court Hall - 10am Winchelsea's Spring Gardens - NGS opening - 12-4pm Film Night - New Hall - 6.30 for 7.30pm
Sunday 21st	9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Pett 11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea
Saturday 27th	Church Annual Meeting - 10am Residents Association Members Meeting - New Hall Bowls Club Open Day - 12 till 4pm Winchelsea Arts Season Launch
Sunday 28th	9.30am: Parish Eucharist at Icklesham 11am: Parish Eucharist at Winchelsea
Sat 4th May	Church Market at St Thomas's - 10.30am till 12

Further ahead

Sat 11th May	FOAM Winchelsea to Compostela event
Sat 18th May	Winchelsea Arts Concert
Thurs 6th June	D Day Anniversary Beacon lighting
Sat 8th June	Bollywood Evening



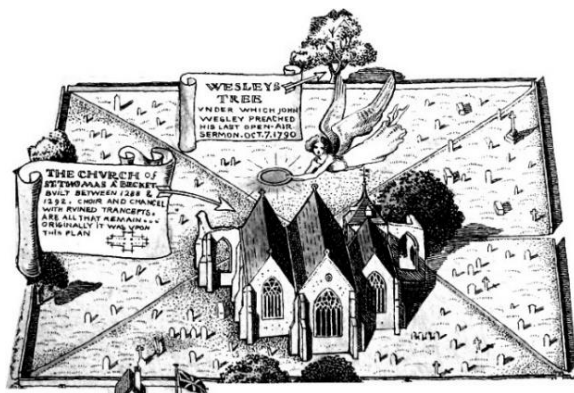
**Please send copy for the May Magazine to
ryeview@gmail.com
before Monday 29th April**

For Winchelsea Beach information go to
winchelseabeachcommunityassociation.co.uk

For Winchelsea information go to
winchelsea.com

For more information about the Church go to
winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk

For weekly news from the local area go to
ryenews.org.uk



Rector of Winchelsea and Icklesham and Priest in Charge of Pett

The Revd Jonathan Meyer
The Rectory, St Thomas Street, Winchelsea TN36 4EB
01797 226254 revdjonathan@btinternet.com
The Rector's day off is Monday

Churchwardens

Charlotte Beecroft
Burrin House, North St TN36 4HX
01797 223159 ccmburrin@gmail.com
Celia King
Stargazer, Morlais Place TN36 4LG
01797 227858 kingcelia54@gmail.com

St Thomas' Primary School

Headteacher Carol Gardiner
Friars Road TN36 4ED 01797 226479
office@st-thomas-winchelsea.e-sussex.sch.uk

Friends of Winchelsea Church

Chairman Ben Chishick
Tower Cottage, Barrack Square TN36 4EA
01797 226653 towercottage@btinternet.com
Treasurer Stephen King
Stargazer, Morlais Place TN36 4LG
01797 227858 stephenking408@btinternet.com

Parish Magazine

Editor David Page
4 Kent Close TN36 4EX
01797 226524 rueview@gmail.com