

The Valley Diary

Binderton ~ Charlton ~ Chilgrove ~ East Dean ~ Singleton ~ West Dean

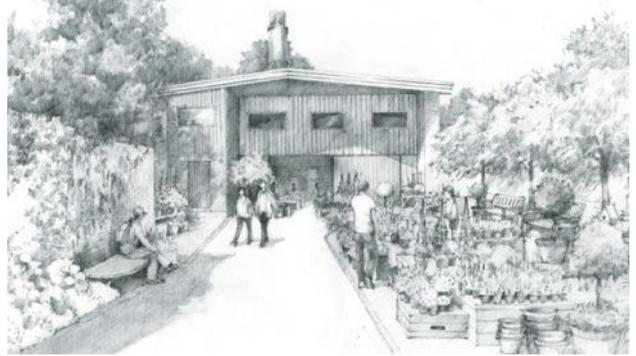
thevalleydiary.org ~ March 2026 Edition

GARDENS GATEHOUSE OPENING

WEST DEAN GARDENS - TUESDAY 10th MARCH

“As part of a range of initiatives we are launching to improve the experience we provide to the more than 80,000 guests who visit us each year, we are transforming our Gardens entrance and moving it to a **new building**, the **Gardens Gatehouse**.

Located next to our existing visitor centre, the new Gardens Gatehouse will be home to our main visitor entrance and information point, Craft Shop, Plant Nursery, Gift Shop and host our new arts and craft taster sessions. The current visitor centre will remain open in its current location until Sunday 8th March.”



BATTLING THE DELUGE: PROTECTING THE LAVANT VALLEY FROM RISING GROUNDWATER

With aquifers at breaking point, Southern Water has launched a major 24/7 operation to protect Singleton, Charlton, and the Deans from sewer flooding and environmental pollution. Residents across the Lavant Valley will have noticed an increased presence of tankers and utility crews in recent weeks. As relentless downpours push groundwater to exceptional levels, the region's chalk aquifers - which act like giant sponges - have reached capacity. This "saturated ground" is forcing water into the sewer network, putting immense pressure on local infrastructure.



To combat the rising water table, nearly 80 tankers have been deployed across 26 regional hotspots, including Charlton and Singleton. These teams are working around the clock to keep flows moving and ensure that homes, schools, and businesses remain protected from internal flooding. "We're sorry for the noise and disruption the traffic causes" says George Taylor, Southern Water's Director for Wastewater Operations "but protecting our communities and the environment is our immediate priority during some of the wettest weather we have ever seen". **(Continued on Page 4...)**

Mark Astley, MNAEA
Director

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Love Your Lavant

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18:45 - 20:45

A talk about the River Lavant and how you can
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Kate and Louise from the Western Sussex Rivers Trust will give an overview of this precious chalk stream, current and upcoming work planned for the riverscape and how you can make a difference to the river through easy lifestyle changes and volunteering.



£10 per person - payable on the door but please book your space via the QR code.

All proceeds will be shared between Lavant Parish Council Environment Team and the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

wsrt.org.uk

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six years

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Forestry England are holding the talk

The talk is at Singleton Village Hall
starting at 7pm on 11th March

Refreshments available

Tickets are just £10 Book via our website
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Sunday 19th April, 1 - 5pm
Lavant Village Green



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Meet at the WSRT stand at 1pm

Refreshments

Provided by Lavant Primary and St Anthony's School.



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Saturday 7th March
10am - 4pm

Enjoy a fantastic-value day out at your local museum with our special £5 Doorstep Day this March. It's the perfect opportunity to explore close to home for less - meet friends, wander at your own pace and soak up the atmosphere of our beautiful open-air Museum and its historic buildings.



Whether you're revisiting a favourite spot or discovering us for the first time, our Doorstep Days make it easier than ever to enjoy a relaxed and affordable day out.

Pre-booking is recommended to guarantee your visit and help us manage visitor numbers. The Museum Waterside Café opens at 9am, so you can start your day with a hearty Weald & Downland Breakfast or tea and toast! Book via tinyurl.com/2yzfdfo

- 1st... Helen & Geoff Morris, Chichester
- 2nd... Penny Spence, Singleton
- 3rd... Jill Kentell, West Dean

100 CLUB

Many congratulations to the winners of the February draw, who shared winnings of £110. The next draw will be on Sunday 2nd March when hopefully the spring flowers will be in bloom having survived the East Dean floods! **Wendy (01243 811608)**

Continued from front page...

While tankers manage the immediate crisis, a multi-million-pound engineering project is underway to provide a long-term fix. The goal is "sewer sealing" - using specialist plastic linings to reinforce ageing pipes and stop groundwater from "infiltrating" the system. Singleton, Charlton and East Dean: Crews have successfully sealed 15km of sewer pipes. West Dean: Work has now officially moved into West Dean to line an additional stretch of the network. By preventing groundwater from entering the sewers, these upgrades significantly reduce the risk of storm overflows, helping to safeguard the health of the River Lavant and Chichester Harbour.

Why the Lavant Valley?

Our local landscape is dominated by chalk aquifers. While these usually release water slowly over months, extreme rainfall can raise the water table until it forces its way into manholes and pipes. This reduces the network's capacity long after the rain has stopped, which is why tankers often remain on-site even during dry spells.

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Penultimate Quiz a Success, Despite the River!

The February quiz at the Star and Garter saw seven teams wade their way through the water that is currently the most notable feature of East Dean although the level is starting to drop, so best catch it while you can!

At the end of a lively evening Maya's Mates hung on to their unbroken record and won with 73 points, only one point ahead of The Inquizzitors on 72. But the real winners were the Friends of Chichester Hospitals as the evening raised £515, which was boosted to a total of £546 by donations from people who wanted to support the Friends, but were unable to join us on the night.

It will all go some way to buying vital life saving equipment for the hospital, although since the two items the charity have as their targets at the moment – an echocardiogram (cost £142,000) and an intubator for new born babies (£14,000) it will take a lot more fund-raising projects before they are in use at St Richard's.

With that in mind the Chairman of the Friends, Richard Stephens, made an appeal for anyone who could bring fresh ideas and energy to the cause to please step up and join them; none of these things just happen, they are all always the work of dedicated teams of volunteers coming together to make things better, and one of them could be you!

Meanwhile the final quiz of this season will be on March 22nd. The quizzes this year alone have raised thousands of pounds since October for, as well as St Richards's, St Wilfrid's, Chichester Foodbank, the Hygiene Bank and many other charities over the last few years.

This has all been thanks to the generosity of Jim and Julie who run the Star and Garter and donate all of the entry fees, taking only the wholesale cost of the ingredients to make the supper.

So this next quiz is going to be in aid of the pub itself, specifically a generator fund. The pub kitchens (like most professional kitchens) run on gas, but for safety reasons there have to be electrically powered cut-outs to shut off the supply in the event of a fire. All very sensible, but a problem comes when there's a power cut and the safety valves shut by default, meaning none of the cookers can be used.

This has happened several times, with the result that suddenly no food is available and bookings have to be cancelled, not to mention the disappointment of customers already sitting at their tables! Quite a small generator will prevent that from happening in future, as well as ensuring that the lights stay on - so when the rest of the village is in darkness at least we can all gather together in the pub, put another log on the fire and have dinner while we're there!

I do hope everyone will make a special effort to support this one, we hear every day about the number of pubs that are closing down and I'm sure we've all been to villages that have lost their pub and with it their centre, their distinctiveness, their soul. We must not let East Dean become one of them on our watch!

Tim Weeks

(see Nikki's message on Page 10 about the sad closure of West Dean's The Selsey Arms.)



Closing on 2nd March: New Year Raffle

Win up to £1,500 while supporting local hospice care! St Wilfrid's New Year Raffle is open still inviting you to play and have a chance at winning some amazing cash prizes. Tickets are available from £1 and every ticket bought will support the expert care and compassion that St Wilfrid's provides across your local community, to those in need. **The raffle closes on 2nd March** so don't miss your chance to win! stwh.co.uk/raffle

Moonlight Walk: Walk in-memory of loved one

On **Saturday 14th June**, St Wilfrid's are holding their Moonlight Walk, inviting hundreds of walkers to take part in this much-loved in-memory walk across Chichester. The walk takes place in the evening and explore familiar places, which are exclusively decorated for this walk, including a stop at Priory Park Guildhall, where you can reflect and leave a message in memory of a loved one. This is a wonderful way to remember those important to you and by taking part and fundraising, you'll be supporting the expert care and compassion the Hospice provides to local lives. Get your tickets today stwh.co.uk/moonlight



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SAFE SPACE SUSSEX

February saw Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week. It can be a difficult and uncomfortable subject for many and particularly for those who have experienced this type of abhorrent abuse.

That's why it's important that we approach the topic with compassion, action and stand alongside all survivors.

Organisations across the UK took part in this national event, raising awareness, challenging stigma and highlighting support for survivors.

In Sussex, we provided funding to several independent organisations to ensure specialist support is available for all victim-survivors of sexual violence, of any age.

You can access free, specialist emotional and practical support, regardless of whether you choose to report the crime to the police or not. These services include Survivors Network, Life Centre, and ManKind Initiative.

You can find out more about these services and the breadth of free support available to victim-survivors of all types of crime at safespacesussex.org.uk

Winter Olympic Worries

A Poem by Francis

Something about this big event,
That I find quite amazing.
Why on Earth don't they sweep the ice,
Before they start the Curling.



Health & Independent Living Support celebrates 500,000 hot meal deliveries since launching their meals on wheels service in West Sussex

Since launching in 2022, HILS meals on wheels service have supported over 3,000 residents with a daily two-course hot meal and a caring wellbeing check.

As the population in West Sussex continues to age, meals on wheels remains a vital service ensuring those who are unable to prepare or source a hot meal can receive one.

Far more than a delivery of meals it's the friendly chats, reassurance and a feeling of being supported by a HILS Community Team Member that their clients benefit from too.

HILS will also be launching Breakfast Packs soon to their clients in the coming months, which can provide even more much needed support.

The service is available to anyone living in West Sussex. In addition to hot lunches, HILS offers a cold Tea Pack to enjoy later in the day. Choose from a selection of sandwiches or even a traditional cream tea, served with a dessert and a snack. This is delivered alongside your hot meal and popped in the fridge.

To learn more about pricing visit hils-uk.org or to refer yourself or someone else then you can use their online referral form or call their Support Team on **0330 2000 103**.

The Sussex Yeomanry Association Spring Service



**Saturday 16th May
Waymark Memorial in Charlton, starting at 11.30am**

Coffee will be available at the Fox Goes Free Pub from 10.45am should you wish to partake. All are most welcome to attend.

COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SCHEME TALK

**Singleton Village Hall
Monday 9th March
10am to 12noon**

You are warmly invited to come along to our friendly Community Cafe. There will be a talk at 11am from **West Sussex Waste Prevention Team** on the new Food Waste Collection Service, with an opportunity to ask any questions. There'll be coffee and cake too! We look forward to seeing you.

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West Dean Parish Council

January's was our first meeting of 2026 and we look forward to a new year ahead with new members on board.

Some signs on the permissive path through the woods towards Singleton have been removed or damaged. There seems to be no reason for this especially after all of the work that EJJ have put into this. Please notify us if you see any more occurrences.

Lavant would like West Dean PC to support them in a highways lower speed application. This will be investigated but as we are already applying for road safety improvements by the school we may not be wise to do another in the same time period. **We are eagerly looking forward to improvement in the weather so that our Speedwatch group can start up again.** Monitoring the road speeds is invaluable to help make the roads and school crossings safer. If anyone can spare short periods of time to help with this please contact the clerk. All it takes is a short online course and it will help keep children safe. We are grateful for any support.

The Edward James Foundation have now set up a supply of free environmental poo bags by the river so hopefully this will help the dog-fouling problem.

The patch of ground next to the bus stop will be scheduled for a tidy up after notification from a parishioner brought it to our attention.

A member of the public was present to observe the meeting and decide if they want to become a councillor. I hope we can officially announce this next month.

Any interested local people with a passion for their parish may contact the clerk if they are interested in seeing how we work, or for any other local matters.

clerk@westdeanparishcouncil.gov.uk - 07596 884847



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The meeting of the Singleton and East Dean WI was held in Singleton Village Hall on 19th February.

Our speaker this month was the incredible **Jason Howard, who rowed the Atlantic** (along with 3 friends) to raise money and awareness for Diabetes UK and Cancer Research.

Jason took us through the years of planning, training, and courses which needed to be completed before even embarking on the 3,000-mile trip. This took the 4 men just over 44 days, from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean.

They battled through Atlantic storms and 40ft waves, blisters, weight loss, not to mention the Blue Marlin attacks.

The team survived on rehydrated meals, trying to take on board 5,000 calories a day (as well as 10 litres of water each, daily) with the occasional treat from home to celebrate certain occasions; Christmas, New Year and mile points crossed.

Rowing 2 hours on and 2 hours off for 44 days was most certainly awe-inspiring, but I am not entirely sure we were inspired to apply for next year's event. If anyone has the chance to listen to Jason speak about his adventure, I highly recommend it.

Next Month's meeting is our AGM, on 19th March. A great opportunity to come along and see what we are all about if you are interested in joining the WI.

Please do drop me a note at zk.mann@icloud.com and I will be delighted to share some more information. **Zoe Mann**



This Spring in West Sussex: A Buyer-Led Market in villages and towns across the South Downs...

This spring, the West Sussex property market is settling into a more balanced phase, creating genuine opportunity for buyers - particularly in the county's sought-after villages. Increased supply, improved mortgage stability and a sharper focus on value are shaping a market that is calmer, more transparent and easier to navigate.

Across West Sussex villages, from Petworth and Midhurst to smaller South Downs and coastal communities, considerably more homes are now coming to market. With reduced competition and urgency, buyers can spend more time assessing setting, scale and long-term suitability - all critical factors in village purchases.

Mortgage rates, while still above historic lows, have eased further in recent months. This has had a positive impact on confidence, particularly for buyers making lifestyle moves into villages where price points are higher and decisions tend to be long term. Greater certainty around borrowing costs is encouraging buyers to re-engage and plan with clarity.

Pricing remains key. Properties that are accurately priced are attracting interest and progressing, while over-ambitious pricing is quickly exposed. This creates scope for informed negotiation and value-led decisions, especially when buyers are advised with detailed local insight.

For those looking to buy in a West Sussex village this spring, whether in the South Downs or along the coast, the current market rewards preparation, patience, and expert guidance. With improved choice and more attractive prices, we're seeing some fantastic opportunities for buyers seeking quality homes in well-established communities.

Jennie Hancock
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Farewell to West Dean

Recently I have had to make the decision that I have pulled my last pint and closed the doors at The Selsey Arms. I have loved my time in West Dean and have felt more at home here than anywhere else I have lived in my lifetime and I have moved around 20 times so far. The people here are so very special to me and have been so supportive, even those of you that don't use the pub wanted it to work for the good of the village. I have met some amazing people and made what I hope will be lifelong friends. During the last 6 years I have tried to build a successful business but also more importantly to create a pub where people feel at home, comfortable and have fun and can switch off from their problems for an hour or so.

My goal has always been that customers are happier when they leave as opposed to when they arrived ...then my job is done. Nobody knows what has happened in someone's life, day, week before they visited the Selsey Arms. But we could make sure that they have a good time whilst they were here and hopefully forget some of their worries or share their good news. I have enjoyed many stories, laughter and tears during my time here. It has been one of the most enjoyable times of my life and that is thanks to my amazing staff and residents of West Dean Parish, but with the combination of taking on a failing business then going into lockdown within the first 3 months and now facing the difficult economic climate I found myself in a difficult financial position, with a very difficult decision to make.

I am sorry that I wasn't able to say goodbye to you all personally so I want to thank you all for the support I have received during my time in West Dean. Everyone of you that walked through the doors has contributed to making the pub what it was. I hope that a new landlord/lady will be in-situ at The Selsey Arms very soon and they will be very lucky to live here. I would just like to say if you are considering where to spend your hard earned money, whether you would like a nice meal or a beer and a friendly chat with like minded people please think of your local pub because with 3 pubs are now closing every week. The traditional British pub hospitality will soon be a distant memory and part of our history not our present and our future and that breaks my heart. **A fond farewell from a very sad pub landlady & Dog, Ruby. Nikki xxx**

James Lillywhite 1842-1929

At the Full Council Meeting at CDC on the 20th January the programme for the continuing Infrastructure Business Plan was discussed and within this Plan is a proposal to refurbish or completely rebuild the Cricket Pavilion, in Priory Park, referred to as the White Building. Council agreed the sum of £561,000 to be set aside from the Asset Replacement Fund to cover the costs. An Architect has been appointed to design the future building.

Until 1918 Priory Park in Chichester was owned by The Duke of Richmond's Estate at Goodwood and it was here that Goodwood Cricket Club played their matches. The Park was handed over to the District Council in memory of the lives lost in The Great War.

Among the players there was **James Lillywhite**, a familiar name to those who live in the Valley, though James was born in Westhampnett in 1842. He was employed by the Estate and soon joined the Cricket team as an accomplished bowler.

He also played for Sussex, became a member of the England Team and captained the first England Test Match against Australia at the Adelaide Oval on 16th November 1876. It is understood that a couple of prosperous businessmen in Chichester financed James's trip to the antipodes!

The first "rules" for the game of Cricket were formulated at Goodwood in 1727, though the first game recorded there was actually in 1702.

These "rules" are held in the Archives at Goodwood and to commemorate the first Test Match of 1876 the Duke of Richmond is hoping to have these "rules" shipped to Australia next year. He is also very supportive of the idea of naming the restored Pavilion in Priory Park as the **James Lillywhite Pavilion**.

Descendants of James, Clive and Simon Lillywhite have memorabilia of their great Grandfather. One item I know of is a painting of James in cricket 'whites' with Halnaker Windmill in the background. A true reminder of Cricket at Goodwood and Priory Park. Finally, and incidentally, the 4th Duke of Richmond lent **Thomas Lord** the money to buy a piece of land in Middlesex where Lords Cricket ground the home of Marylebone Cricket Club sits - and the colour of the Lords tie was taken from the Duke's Racing Colours, Red and Yellow. **Henry Potter**

CHICHESTER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Illustrated Talk by Michael Blencowe on **Sharks, Tigers, Carpets and Kittens - The Marvellous Moths of Great Britain** at The Pallant Suite, Masonic Hall, South Pallant, Chichester at 7.30pm on **Wednesday 4th March**. Entrance members free visitors £3, 01243 786079, wheelchair access

RSPB

Illustrated Talk by Michael Copleton, head of RSPB England at The Pallant Suite, Masonic Hall, South Pallant, Chichester on **Thursday 26th March** at 7.30pm. Entrance members free/visitors £3, 07402 375257, wheelchair access

Maria Wildman

01243 306655

thewildthings2@outlook.com

Petworth House & Park nationaltrust.org.uk/Petworth

Hop into the wild **Family Trail until 8th March**. Inspired by Disney and Pixar's **Hoppers** in cinemas from 6th March with storytelling and outdoor play. Collect your discovery passport, explore the animal kingdoms and most importantly, unleash your wild side! Normal admission charges apply, no booking required.

Spring Family Trail from Saturday 28th March to Sunday 12th April. Families can pick up a free **Tilly Plants a Tree** trail map to follow the buggy-friendly paths of the Pleasure Garden and discover fun games and activities along the way. The trail is free but normal admission applies. No booking required.



The Valley Parish

Find out more on the 'A church near you' website

www.facebook.com/ValleyParish



Sunday 29th March

3pm – 5pm

East Dean Village Hall

Join us for family fun, craft activities, great food and worship.

(All children must be accompanied by an adult)

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. It commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. The crowds welcomed him and laid palm branches and cloaks on the road before him, shouting "Hosanna," praising him as a king. The event fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy which spoke of a king coming in peace, riding on a donkey rather than a war horse.

Palm Sunday is both joyful and solemn. While it celebrates Jesus' arrival as king, it also begins the journey toward Good Friday and the crucifixion. The day is a reminder of the contrast between the cheering crowds and the suffering that would soon follow, inviting reflection on faith, humility, and the meaning of true kingship.

Services and Events

1 st March	10am	Holy Communion With Choir East Dean
8 th March	10am	Holy Communion Singleton
15 th March Mothering Sunday	10am	Holy Communion West Dean
22 nd March	10am	Holy Communion West Dean
29 th March Palm Sunday	10am	Holy Communion from The BCP East Dean
	3pm	Messy Church ED Village Hall

Contacts

Parish Priest

Rev Sarah Manouch

priestvalleyparish@gmail.com

07468 854864

(Principal working days are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Not available on Thursday)

Churchwardens

Sarah John - 07769 887546 / sarance@btinternet.com

John Holt – 07787 567140 / john@drokefarm.co.uk

PCC Secretary

Susie Holmes - pccsecretaryvalleyparish@gmail.com

The Diary

Here's a quick overview of what's actually going on, in and around the villages of the Lavant Valley in the coming months. Do please let us know if we've missed anything and we'll add it next time for the benefit of all.

www.thevalleydiary.org

March 2026

Sat 7th Weald & Downland Museum: £5 Doorstep Day: 10am - 4pm
Mon 9th Singleton Community Cafe (Food Waste Collection Scheme Talk): 10am - 12noon: Singleton Village Hall
Tue 10th West Dean Gardens Gatehouse Opening: 10am
Tue 10th Ladies Night, Star & Garter, East Dean, 7pm
Wed 11th White Tailed Eagle Talk: Singleton Village Hall: 7pm
Thu 19th Singleton & East Dean WI: Singleton Village Hall: Annual Meeting: 7pm
Sat 21st Clay Shoot: The Fox Goes Free
Sun 22nd Season Finale Pub Quiz: Star & Garter: 7pm
Mon 23rd The Valley Diary Copy Deadline: 12noon
Wed 25th Public Consultation Meeting: Singleton Village Hall: 7pm

April 2026

Fri 3rd - Mon 6th Bank Holiday Weekend
Mon 13th Singleton Community Cafe: 10.30am - 12noon: Singleton Village Hall
Sat 18th Call My Bluff Evening: Star & Garter
Sat 25th Clay Shoot: The Fox Goes Free
Sat 25th & Sun 26th The Toll House Reimagined: Weald & Downland Museum

May 2026

Fri 1st & Sat 2nd Goodwood Horseracing
Sat 9th & Sun 10th Try a Trade: Weald & Downland Museum
Mon 11th Singleton Community Cafe: 10.30am - 12noon: Singleton Village Hall
Sat 16th Sussex Yeomary Spring Service: Waymark Memorial, Charton: 11.30am
Sat 16th & Sun 17th Goodwoof!

Wed 20th Singleton and Charlton Parish Council Meeting and AGM, 7pm, Singleton Cricket Club
Fri 22nd & Sat 23rd Goodwood Horseracing
Sat 23rd - Mon 25th Victorian Showtime: Weald & Downland Museum

June 2026

Fri 5th Goodwood's Three Friday Nights
Sun 7th Goodwood Horseracing
Mon 8th Singleton Community Cafe: 10.30am - 12noon: Singleton Village Hall
Fri 12th Goodwood's Three Friday Nights
Sat 13th & Sun 14th Midsummer Fayre: Weald & Downland Museum
Fri 19th Goodwood's Three Friday Nights

July 2026

Tue 7th Selsey Shantymen at The Star & Garter
Thu 9th - Sun 12th Goodwood's Festival of Speed
Mon 13th Singleton Community Cafe: 10.30am - 12noon: Singleton Village Hall

Got something to add to the Diary?

Please let us know...

Lots more dates and events can be found in the Diary Online at...

thevalleydiary.org/diary

Deadline for the...

April 2026 Edition

All information for to arrive by **12.00hrs (noon)** please on...

Monday 23rd March

editor@valleydiary.org

*Submissions, news, reviews, event information, photos and anything you have to share with your community should arrive **as soon as possible**.*

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Useful Telephone Numbers

CDC Councillor, Henry Potter	07792 857973
East Dean Football Club	07944 036709
East Dean PC Clerk	07710 098512
East Dean Village Hall	07785 740625
Goodwood Security	07909 876823
Lavant Road Doctors Surgery	01243 527264
Lavant Road Pharmacy	01243 380185
Local Police	101
Singleton & East Dean WI	07770 822067
Singleton Fete	01243 818037
Singleton Parish Clerk	07702 240126
Singleton School	01243 811679
Singleton Tearooms	01243 811899
Singleton Village Hall	07711 573276
Weald & Downland Museum: Office	01243 811363
Weald & Downland Museum: Shop	01243 811020
West Dean College	01243 818300
West Dean Gardens	01243 818318
West Dean PC Clerk	07596 884847
West Dean School	01243 811247
West Dean Stores	01243 818222

Lineage Ads.

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Albert says...



A bucket full of rainwater,
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 Last night we had heavy rain.

Register of Local...

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B&B - Ring Sophie on 01243 811465
Harper's Cottage, East Lavant. Ring Caroline 01243 278659
Flint Cottage, 47 Mid Lavant, Lavant Road, PO18 0AA: Sue Kemble 01243
 785883 / 07814903541
The Shepherds Barn, Chilgrove: Lucy 07775 934999
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**Sussex
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Two fraud caseworker roles at Victim Support Sussex follow up on referrals from Operation Signature - Sussex Police's pioneering response to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud.

The caseworkers deliver one-to-one support to victims like Tamsin. Through their two-year relationship 'Mike' constantly lied to Tamsin. She paid out more than £50,000 throughout the relationship. She is still trying to comprehend how someone she thought was so nice turned out to be so callous.

Victim Support Sussex supported Tamsin for a year after she fell victim to romance fraud. Victim Support worked with Tamsin to help rebuild her emotional resilience and appeal for the return of her financial losses. Tamsin is now in a far stronger financial position and feels increasingly confident about her future.

Anyone can experience this type of fraud and it's on the rise. Romance fraud is particularly cruel and, in cases like Tamsin's, victims are left emotionally and financially devastated, grieving for a relationship they believed was genuine and loving.

From Stagecoach to Stagecoach - 300 Years of Travel in the Lavant Valley

This illustrated talk by local historian Alan Green explores the importance of the Lavant Valley as a

transport link north from Chichester towards London - from the rough route over the Trundle, through stagecoach services over the turnpike, and a short lived railway to the modern Stagecoach buses.

Alan Green is by profession a chartered civil engineer, but in retirement he has fulfilled a long ambition, that of writing and lecturing on his passions for local history, transport and the art and architecture of Georgian Britain.

He serves on the committees of Chichester Local History Society and Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society and for 15 years was Chairman of the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee on which he also represented the Georgian Group.

Published works include nine full-length books and several shorter monographs on the history of his native Chichester.

The talk will be held at West Sussex Record Office in Chichester (and online) on Monday 23 March 2026 at 3pm. Booking essential on www.wsro.org.uk/events



LAVANT FRIENDLY CLUB

First Wednesday afternoon of every month, 2-4pm, Lavant Hall. All welcome. Minibus collection.

Wednesday 4th March David The Magician. A change from Musical entertainment. Entry 50p. Bingo. Raffle.

CHICHESTER COUNTRY MUSIC

Concert every second Friday evening of the month. 7.30-10.30pm, Lavant Hall. Live Music from around the UK. Country Western at it's best! **Friday 13th March - Rick Storm** from Essex. Lovely Listening atmosphere. £10. Bar etc.

Freestyle Dance at North Mundham Village Hall every fourth Saturday evening of the month, 7.30-10.30pm. **Saturday 28th March - Ian Hyland.** Four-piece Band. Singles welcome. Guarantee you a Dance! Friendly atmosphere. No Bar - BYO!

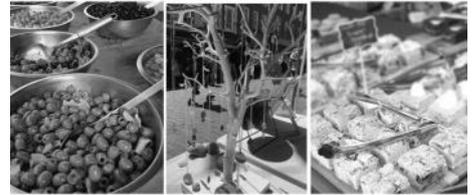
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Tennis Talk a Great Success

East Dean Village Hall was packed on Thursday 12th February to hear Alan Chalmers talk about his 40 years as Chief Steward at Wimbledon, from 1976-2015. Although he only had time to cover the highlights of those four decades, what highlights they were!

His job was to handle the players (some more difficult than others) their families (some more demanding than others) as well as V.I.P. guests (and some people who weren't quite as I.P. as they thought they were)! And he did all that with the decorousness and diplomacy that one might expect of the oldest Lawn Tennis Club in the world.

There were some surprising insights: Alan actually had great affection for John McEnroe who, despite his "Superbrat" reputation, was very good company off court, intelligent and amusing. On court the precision with which he could hit a ball exactly where he wanted it was astounding to watch (he demonstrated that to Alan privately on one occasion) and was no doubt the cause of his frustration with line judges not appreciating just how precise his delivery was! Alan also described how McEnroe, when doing demonstration matches in his post-professional career, was contracted to have a 'tantrum', an interesting example of how sport and showbusiness coincide.

Getting 80 people to the hall on a wet Thursday in February with the village waterlogged was quite an achievement, and thanks go to Helen Scott for designing the publicity (including a QR code for online booking), Justin Pollard for publicising it at the Chichester Tennis Club, Helen Geddes for organising and running the raffle, Annie Guy, Miranda Andrews and Sara Hutton-Potts for setting out the chairs, dressing the stage and serving tea and coffee, Max Davies for lending us 20 extra chairs to accommodate all the ticketholders, Des and Jamie for delivering and collecting them and West Dean Primary School for lending us the stage blocks to form the stage that Alan sat on.

The evening made a profit of £528.57, not a bad start to what we intend to be a regular programme of talks on various different subjects, details of which will be announced as the speakers are confirmed. Meanwhile suggestions and offers are very welcome. If you know someone who has (or had) an interesting career, or indeed if you have one yourself, do get in touch - EDVH is a community asset and we're keen to offer something for everyone.

With that in mind, on **Saturday 18th April** we're going to have a **Call My Bluff evening**, hopefully involving a team from Singleton (although at the time of writing they have yet to confirm). Looking ahead to **July 7th** we're going to host a performance by the **Selsey Shantymen** (who recently sold out two nights at the Minerva) and in between those dates we're going to turn the place into an art gallery for the **East Dean Art Fair**, timed to coincide with the **Chichester Art Trail** over the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May. There'll be more details on that in next month's edition of The Valley Diary, but basically it will be an opportunity for local artists to exhibit their work. It's not something we've ever done before - so all the more reason to give it a go! **Tim Weeks**

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Standing the Test of Time Appeal Where Are We Now?

Our aim was to care for all three Valley Parish church buildings, so they remain safe, welcoming and usable for future generations. Real progress has now been made.

At St Mary's, Singleton, the unsafe window was repaired, we have also replaced the heating system and upgraded the lighting and electrical wiring. The church is warmer, brighter and far easier to use throughout the year. **At All Saints, East Dean**, initial safety work has also taken place, with loose external render removed to prevent falling material and protect visitors.

Our attention has now turned to **the towers at East Dean and West Dean**. Our architect advised that St Andrew's, West Dean is the most urgent priority and this will be our next project.

We received a grant from The Benefact Trust and we also have an application with the Historic Churches Trust, who are expected to announce their decision at the end of March. We have adjusted our timetable slightly and the tower work is now being planned to begin in September.

Meanwhile, at **All Saints, East Dean**, we are planning interior improvements, including replacing the heating and lighting and then redecorating. As this work is independent of the tower repairs, we hope it can go ahead sooner. It will be funded from money already donated for this purpose. We have made a strong start and secured some grants, but they cover only part of the cost. There is still more to raise if we are to complete all the projects.

Without additional funds, projects will have to be postponed and postponement risks further damage, higher future costs, and potentially restrictions on how the churches can be used.

Every donation, however small, helps us move forward. Donations, fundraising ideas, events, sponsorship, or simply spreading the word all make a real difference.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the appeal so far. With continued help from the community, we can finish what we have started and ensure our churches truly continue standing the test of time.

The Dynamic Duo

A Poem by Francis

A new celebrity duo,
Like you've never seen,
Will soon be everywhere,
On your television screen.

And whilst I am a fan,
As you are I suspect.
We do see rather a lot,
Of good old Ant n Dec.

But this new pair of presenters,
Will take you by surprise.
For they are in fact not human,
You won't believe your eyes.

Yes, a tiny ant and a mallard,
Are going to try their luck.
So please put your hands together,
And welcome..... Ant and Duck!

Singleton Village Hall



The Results are in!

Thank you for the fantastic response from the Singleton and Charlton community to the recent Village Hall survey. Please come to our...

**Public Consultation Meeting
Wednesday 25th March
7pm (Drinks and Nibbles
from 6.30pm
All parish residents welcome**

We will be presenting all the survey results plus proposed plans and events from the excellent suggestions received. We look forward to seeing you.

SVH committee

Guided Running at Cowdray

We're excited to announce our new partnership with Emily, an incredibly experienced and passionate local runner who has spent the last 20 years exploring the trails, hills and hidden corners of the South Downs. Guided running is a fantastic way to discover Cowdray's stunning and varied landscape, from rolling downland and ancient woodland to winding off-road trails.

Emily says... "I have been running in and around the South Downs for the last 20 years or so! We live in such a wonderful part of Sussex. My passion is being outside and helping others to explore and find adventure in our wonderful local area too. I have competed in many different distances and disciplines, from 5km to ultramarathons, triathlons and mountain bikes races and the off-road triathlon world championships in Hawaii. I hold an England athletics coaching licence. I have 2 children and 2 collies and love being outside with them all!"

**First Guided Run with Emily
Saturday 14th March
10am - 11am**

Join Emily for the first guided run which will take you through avenues of wonderful mature trees as well as past ancient oaks and majestic limes. The route, which is on public trails and privately owned land, puts you in touch with nature, leaving you feeling calm, refreshed and invigorated. At 5km long, and with 362 feet of climbing, it will be a challenge, but you will be guided throughout in a small group.

Spaces are limited, to secure your spot via tinyurl.com/285er4kl

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We have had an unusual start to the year, with the recent heavy rainfall causing flooding on many roads to Brent Lodge in Sidlesham.



Despite this, our team has remained busy caring for our existing patients, admitting new arrivals where possible and helping kind rescuers reach their nearest vets when travel to us hasn't been possible. Thankfully, conditions are now seeming to ease, and we are very grateful for everyone's patience and kindness. Thank you to all who continue to look out for local wildlife; we are always just a phone call away if you need help or advice.

World Wildlife Day is on 3rd March and a great opportunity for us to pause to reflect on how brilliant and fascinating our wildlife are, as well as think of what we can all do to help our local wildlife thrive. Birds are now beginning to pair up and begin nesting, making March the last safe opportunity to clean out nest boxes. During this busy period, birds will also be very grateful for any high-energy foods such as suet pellets or sunflower hearts, as natural food sources remain limited. It is also strongly advised to avoid cutting hedgerows from now until the end of August, as damaging or destroying an active bird's nest is illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Many of our wild species are breeding or emerging from hibernation at this time, so being alert and keeping garden maintenance to a minimum is especially beneficial for local wildlife this month.

As always, please call us anytime if you need advice/assistance with wildlife enquiries or wish to know how you can support us. Thank you!
brentlodge.org - 01243 641672

THE GRIFFIN BAR & GRILL Dining at Cowdray Golf Club

Enjoy delicious food, refreshing drinks and beautiful views at Cowdray Golf Clubhouse - no golfing or membership required. Breakfast and lunch are served seven days a week. Start your day with favourites including the Cowdray Full English or lighter options such as avocado on toasted bloomer, served daily from 7:30am to 12pm.

At lunchtime, enjoy British classics including scampi and chips, the Cowdray beef burger and a selection of sandwiches - perfect for a relaxed midday meal.

Sit back with a refreshing drink on the terrace and take in the beautiful views across the Par Three Course towards Cowdray Ruins and the South Downs. For something extra special, join us for our popular Sunday carvery.

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Food Served

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Sunday: 7:30am – 4pm

Clubhouse Open

Monday - Sat 7.30 – 6pm

Sunday: 7am – 6pm

We recommend booking ahead to avoid disappointment as space is limited. Walk-ins are welcome when available.

To book your table...

01730 813599

golf@cowdray.co.uk

(...see our Ad. on Page 6)

And a Merry Pawpins to You.

A Poem by Francis

I helped out on the set,
When they filmed Mary Poppins.
Often helping Julie and Dick,
With a little bit of daily shopping.

Julie Andrews was easy to deal with,
Always clear and straightforward.
But understanding Dick's accent,
Was always very awkward.

He stayed in character all day,
Did that Dick Van Dyke.
Practicing the accent on Mary,
But cockney? Nuffink loyke!

On the day they started filming,
Who could the title role be?
Was it Murray Poopans?
It was a total mystery to me.

I misunderstood him a lot,
When getting ready to shop.
Often buying the wrong thing,
Then having to go back to swap.

It's a shame when a brilliant actor,
So funny and full of talent.
Goes down in history,
For wrecking the cockney accent.

His 'cockney' voice once shouted,
"Don't forget Mary's paper!"
He got a bag of spuds on my return,
Yes you guessed it, Maris Piper!

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Visit the National Garden Scheme garden at The Old Vicarage in Washington and banish winter blues!

If you have had enough of our dreary winter weather and you need to get out into the fresh air this March, a visit to the stunning garden at the Old Vicarage Washington to walk amongst the colourful displays of spring bulbs, will certainly lift the spirits.



With something to enjoy at every turn, this 3½ acre garden set around an 1832 Regency house (not open) has uninterrupted views of the North Downs, enhanced by various specimen and mature trees and many pockets of interest. The garden first opened for the National Garden Scheme in 2010. The front garden is formally laid out with topiary, mixed seasonal borders and a contemporary water sculpture.

The rear garden features a lead roofed Italianate gazebo with green oak columns, many imaginatively planted borders, a Japanese garden with waterfall, pond and tea house and a large copse with a tree house that has become a nature viewing platform looking out on to the surrounding woodland, stream and architectural stumpery.

There is also a working kitchen garden with glasshouses, fruit cages, orchard, vegetables and bee hives. Each year some 4000 spring bulbs are planted including snowdrops, daffodils, tulips, fritillaria, camassia and bluebells. The garden has many carefully placed areas to sit and contemplate the stunning scenery including the gazebo and the tree house, both complete with wood burning stoves, often lit on cold days. Another favourite stopping place for visitors is the conservatory where self-service refreshments are available whatever the weather.

The Old Vicarage The Street, Washington, RH20 4AS. Open Every Thursday from 5th February to 1st October (10am-4pm).

Admission is £10, children free. Pre-booking is essential, please visit ngs.org.uk.

Self-service light refreshments are available in the conservatory (cash only).



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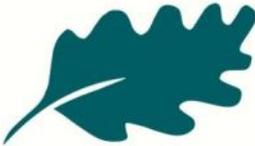
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Clothes Swap at Graylingwell Chapel

Join us for a clothes swap shop on **Friday 20th March** in partnership with West Sussex Recycles.

Bring up to 10 items of good quality clothes, shoes or accessories which you no longer want and swap them for something else you'd prefer instead.

This event is free to attend and all are welcome. **Swap from 2 - 4.30pm**

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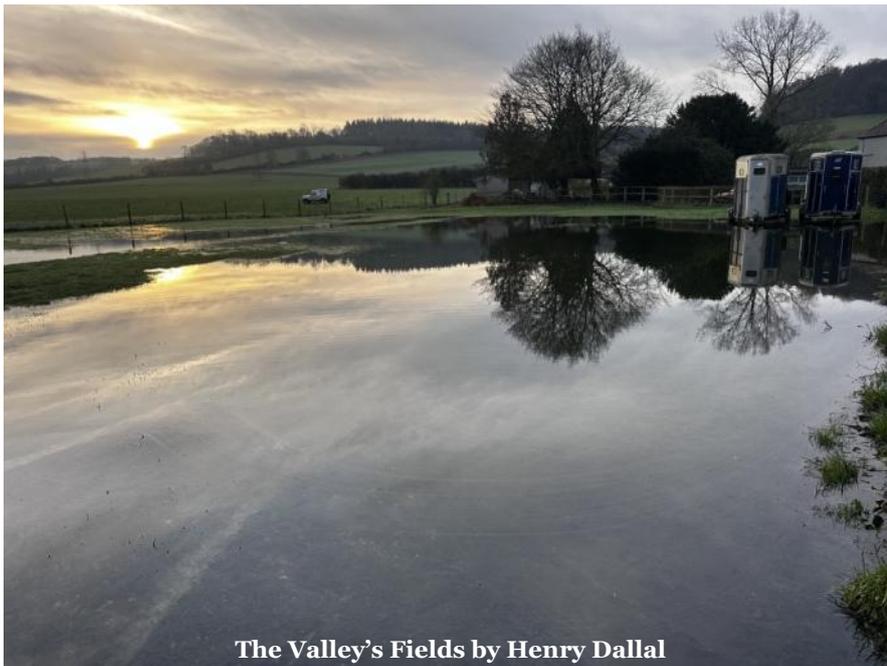
4Sight Vision Support Launches Major Fundraising Appeal

4Sight Vision Support (4SVS) is a registered charity supporting blind and partially sighted children and adults, their families and carers, across West Sussex. Its free services help clients maintain independence with advice on accessible technology, education, employment, obtaining financial assistance, social activities, and health and wellbeing.

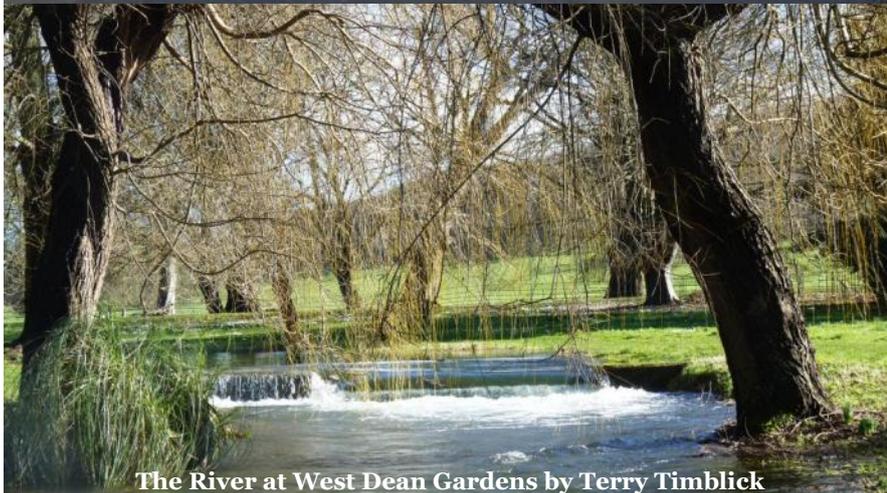
Despite receiving client referrals from West Sussex County Council, it receives no council funding in the face of growing demand: it relies heavily on donations, legacies, and community fundraising – which is increasingly challenging in today’s climate.

Fundraising Intern Philip shares his story of how 4SVS can really make a difference. “I lived a busy life building a career I loved: I was diagnosed with Glaucoma in my early 30’s and suddenly everything changed and a haze descended. My sight deteriorated, and it felt overwhelming. I lost my job and my family dynamic changed: I felt I was a liability, I couldn't even do the washing up or cook. My brother pointed me to 4Sight Vision Support where a Vision Support Advisor advised me about my sight loss, and introduced me to magnifiers and reading tools. I could read newspaper sized print for the first time in two years! It gave me a spark of hope, things changed, and I now work at 4SVS helping others living with sight loss while rebuilding my independence, confidence, and life.”

Your donation, however small, could help provide support that helps change lives. You can donate online at www.4sight.org.uk or call the Fundraising Team on 01243 828555 or email fundraising@4sight.org.uk



The Valley’s Fields by Henry Dallal



The River at West Dean Gardens by Terry Timblick

Lavant Horticultural Society

**Wednesday 11th March
7.30pm
Lavant Village Hall**

Julia Parker will tell us about **Veg on the Ledge - and a whole lot more.** Julia is an entertaining speaker and will judge the Spring Flower Competition before her talk. Refreshments at 7pm. Members free, guests £3.

Visit lavanthortsoc.org.uk for more details and gardening tips



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CHICHESTER GOES ‘ALL IN’ FOR READING, AS CITY JOINS 2026 NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

Chichester is set to become a leading regional voice in the Government’s National Year of Reading 2026 ‘Go All In’ campaign, with a city-wide programme encouraging people of all ages to reconnect with the joy, power and opportunity of reading.

Chichester’s Year of Reading is led by charity Children’s BookFest alongside partners Chichester Festival Theatre and Chichester BID. The campaign aims to bring together the work that many organisations already deliver, creating a joined-up programme of activity through 2026 that supports reading for pleasure, storytelling, literacy confidence and community connection.

Activities will include author events at schools, book donations to foodbanks, creative writing competitions, storytelling sessions and a city trail inspired by Chichester Festival Theatre’s production of *The BFG*.

A major early highlight will be Chichester Festival Theatre’s production of **Roald Dahl’s *The BFG*** (9th March – 11th April). The Theatre will also explore opportunities across its learning, community and education programme to strengthen children’s reading confidence - including supporting children who are increasingly reluctant to read aloud - and reinforcing the connection between books, scripts and performance.

The Theatre’s **Festival Fridays** programme (supporting Year 5 & 6 pupils who spend one school day each week at the Theatre) will also collaborate with West Sussex County Council

Libraries to create a short film in support of the National Year of Reading. Chichester BID will help bring the Year of Reading into the heart of the city centre by championing **local bookshops and booksellers** as well as running a family-friendly, **BFG inspired trail** taking place over the Easter holidays. The new **Canopy performance space on Crane Street** will also host storytelling sessions and events that attract families and visitors into the city centre.

Children’s BookFest will continue to deliver its **twice-yearly festivals in Chichester and Bognor**, alongside targeted outreach initiatives that respond directly to the reading crisis – this includes work supporting families reached via foodbanks, collaborations with Chichester Cathedral and Pallant House Gallery, and a partnership with

Chichester Cinema to tap into people’s passion for film and storytelling.

Children’s BookFest is now inviting organisations across Chichester to join the programme as partners, encouraging them to weave reading into what they already do - whether hosting an official Children’s BookFest donation point, offering space for reading activity, or collaborating on events.

Organisations interested in becoming involved can contact Children’s BookFest at...

GoAllIn@childrensbookfest.org

A dedicated campaign page will also provide updates, partner announcements and activity highlights throughout the year - childrensbookfest.com/national-year-of-reading

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KIRKS AND QUIRKS by SALLY RIEDER

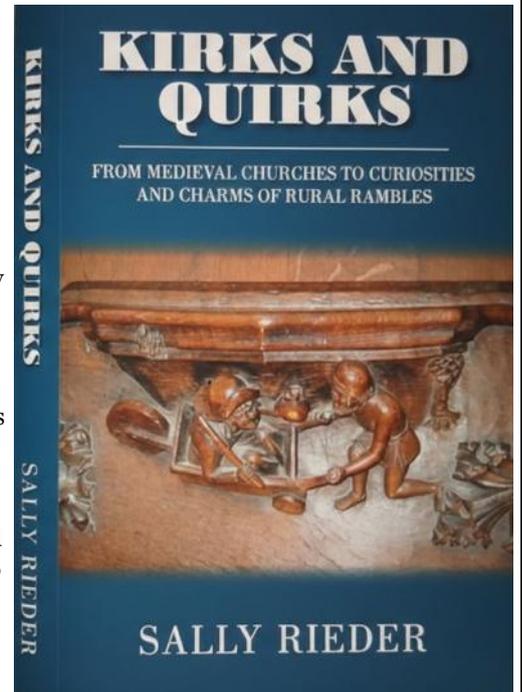
Prior to settling in West Sussex most of my life had been spent overseas. I was more familiar with parts of southern Africa than the counties of England. Curious to explore and get to know the country in which I was born I needed a purpose, a route to follow.

I had been considering castles, gardens or stately homes until I remembered Simon Jenkins' book, England's Thousand Best Churches, a gift from my son who remembered my boast, winning a school essay competition on the unlikely subject of graveyards! Rather than the great and grand I was drawn to the charm, curiosity and interest to be found in mostly medieval, little rural churches.

However, I did not expect those meanders to be so much fun. Every church was different, told its own story. I particularly enjoyed the odd exchange or conversation with a local person resulting in 'meeting' Slasher Jim, Brusher Mills, Ivor's chickens, an 'eff-cropper', Dorset vernacular for forager. Any earnest intention I may have had to learn all about the architectural and period properties of chapels, churches, minsters and abbeys soon took second place to other delights - medieval windmill or dovecote, wild cattle - which is not to say I was immune to the spiritual, so memorably experienced as sitting on a bench before a plain white painted church entirely surrounded by water, facing out to sea, quite alone. However isolated or tiny the church or chapel, almost invariably someone had signed the visitors' book the very day before me.

This compilation of scribbles noted on my wanders around England, Wales and Scotland just sort of happened, a continuation of that school essay! It is for this reason I would like to share the delights of my wanderings and hopefully encourage others to continue visiting, supporting these not-to-be forgotten little gems and be entertained along the way. The first six chapters are county specific as I explored west and east from where I live. A later chapter refers to London churches, Western Highgate and Old Brompton Cemeteries and Postman's Park. Other chapters cover various meanders through several counties.

Kirks and Quirks can be ordered from Waterstones, independent bookshops and Amazon.



West Dean Gardens' Craft Shop

Previously located within the Main House, the Craft Shop is moving to the Gardens Gatehouse (see front page), which means you can now pop in whenever inspiration strikes and explore high-quality craft supplies, materials, and creative essentials.

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Please note, applications can only be considered from people and groups from Singleton and Charlton.

Any individual or group wishing to be considered for a grant should contact the trustees at trusteehenrysmithsc@gmail.com

THE PERFECT FAMILY GIFT



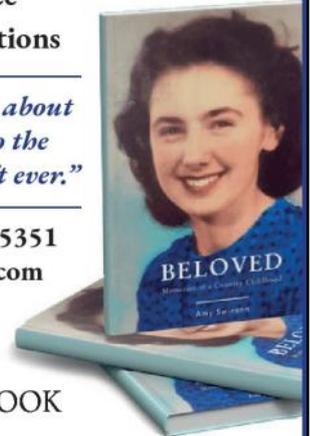
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All Rain and No Play at The Dean

A frustrating February at the club this month with the continuing rain flooding the pitch. The springs are up and over half the pitch is flooded. We were scheduled two games at home but unfortunately both were cancelled, as was our away trip to Bosham. The boys have continued to train well and also held a minute's silence in February in memory of Tim Calloway as it's been a year since we lost the great man. At the time of writing this we have arranged an extra friendly and hopefully reverse our game to Midhurst this coming weekend. I'm sure we will be back and running again soon and Ben and the boys will be ready to put in a strong finish to the season.

Peter Kearvell



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You will find these defibrillators locally at **Singleton Village Hall** (PO18 OHA), the **Phone Box at Charlton** (Foxhall Lane, PO18 OHX), **behind East Dean Village Hall** (PO18 OJG) and on the front of **West Dean Stores**.



Once activated, the device will talk you through how to use it. A defibrillator gives a high energy shock to the heart of anyone who's in cardiac arrest.

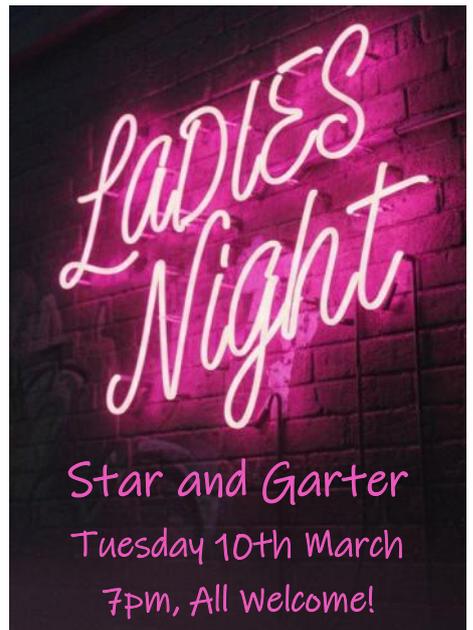
Antique No Show

A Poem by Francis

He sat with an antiques expert,
On that tv auction show.
He had queued up all morning,
And at last it was now his go.

He thought it was an old parchment,
Sat in his attic for years.
"I'd like someone else to have it,
To whom it will bring great cheer."

The expert's face was a picture
As he said, full of frustration.
"Not much of a market out there,
For old sheets of roof insulation!"



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