

St Mary's Slaughtam Parish News



**Items Required-Handcross Pantry
Appreciating Our Local Wildlife
So The Lockdown Goes On**

September / October 2020

HANDCROSS - PEASE POTTAGE - SLAUGHAM - WARNINGLID

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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2020 LETTER

The Doldrums is a term used by sailors to describe the equatorial belt where there is no wind. In the days of sail you could become becalmed there for days at a time. Hence the expression "*in the doldrums*" meaning a period of stagnation, or being in low spirits.

In our present quiet times life has become becalmed. For some this means life has simply settled into a gentler rhythm, but for others life has lost its purpose, there is nothing to do, there is no wind.

Now some of us can treat life as a journey with little consideration of destination or direction. We sit on the banks of the river of life and watch it flow past us, fascinated but with little inclination to swim. Others need to have direction, goals to achieve, boxes to tick. For them, life is all about the destination, not the journey.

For such people, having little to do is a recipe for depression. Having no work can take away your sense of purpose and identity, as well as leaving you struggling to pay the bills. You switch into survival mode, and it can be grim. You're in the doldrums, no progress, no moving forward, no sign of change, no hope of continuing towards your destination.

Not only this, but many are now living full-time with families or partners with similar problems. Now there is no rhythm to govern our lives, no-one else to help us rebound, no reunion, no cheerful presence at the end of the day. Life becomes a struggle.

Isolation makes this worse. Other people can be a refreshing force, and often a comforting and strengthening one. We live for relationship, and find ourselves without contact, or stifled by an unrelenting contact with those we care most about - we can feel we're being sucked dry by those who are normally our rock of strength. How can we escape?

We're very lucky in the villages to have lots of wonderful open spaces, woodland and parkland, pond, lake and stream. Most of the houses around the villages have gardens - and estate agents tell us that there is a sudden surge of demand for houses with gardens. A sizeable garden can be an escape, a playground, a project. We need all these things more than ever.

We need space, purpose and relationships.

Modern technology allows us at least some contact with those we can't hug yet. Use it, count your blessings, and be there for those who are struggling to see blessings in their lives. We need each other more than ever.

God bless you all!

Jon

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Keeping Busy During Lockdown

Although certain restrictions have been lifted, life is still far from ‘normal’ for most of us. The ‘Eat out to Help Out’ Scheme was very popular (some establishments have extended the scheme) and obviously a great help for those in the catering trade, as well as those members of the public taking advantage. There have been no village activities at all this summer, and we are now at the end of the summer period and looking towards Christmas. We can’t pretend that the situation will be a lot different, but amazingly most of us have managed to adapt our lives during this very trying and unusual time with just a few changes. Those fortunate enough to have access to computers, or other types of technology, can still keep in touch with friends and family, albeit not physically. Also the libraries are now open again so access to books is very welcome for those of us who enjoy reading.

Foreign holidays for most of us have been a “no” “no” this year, but as mentioned previously in this magazine, we live in a beautiful part of the country so it is easy, for those who are able, to get out and enjoy the countryside.



Fund-Raising for St.Catherine’s Hospice

Barbara (Alderson) is still making cakes, chutneys, jams etc., for sale in aid of St.Catherine’s. Also, she is still accepting good as new clothes and items for sale in their charity shops.

Eco Church

Last autumn Becky and Viv were trying to encourage us all to reduce our use of ‘single use plastic’. Understandably through lockdown and subsequent months this is likely to have gone to the bottom of our priority list. However maybe it’s time to take up the challenge again. Next Tuesday 1st September 9.00pm on BBC 1 Hugh and Anita are continuing their programme ‘War on Plastics –the fight goes on’ – worth a watch.

Great Green Bush Cricket - Michael Blencowe -Sussex Wildlife Trust

The sound of silence

I'm a huge fan of sci-fi B-movies and they don't come any better (or worse) than 1957's *Beginning of the End*. It's the usual story; overeager government scientists intent on increasing crop yield inadvertently create giant irradiated grasshoppers the size of double decker buses, which set about destroying Chicago. There are some similar creatures lurking around Sussex. OK, they're not going to come stomping around Sompting any day soon but they're still mighty impressive. The Great Green Bush Cricket can claim to be Britain's biggest insect. Yet this Godzilla of the undergrowth is surprisingly hard to see. Its long, leaf-like body blends in amongst the brambles rendering it almost invisible. Bug eyes, impressive jaws and twirling antennae give it some monster movie credentials but there's nothing to fear from this harmless native.

There are about 35 species of crickets and grasshoppers (Orthoptera) in Britain. Crickets differ from grasshoppers by having much longer, thread-like antennae and they 'sing' by rubbing their wings together (while grasshoppers rub their legs against their wings). This song, or stridulation, is the male's way of romancing a female – who, if interested, will reply. The best chance of finding the Great Green Bush Cricket is to head out on a warm August evening and listen for their down-land duets – a loud, incessant rattle. Imagine an enthusiastic maraca player.

I recently went for a walk through the flower-rich meadows of Sussex Wildlife Trust's Southerham reserve. I was blown away by the wall of sound created by hundreds of crickets and grasshoppers but it became apparent that not everyone could hear this orthopteran orchestra. The sad truth is that as we get older our ears can't tune in to the higher frequencies produced by these insects and species by species they fall silent. I have a compilation CD of the chirps and buzzes of Britain's crickets and grasshoppers – a sort of 'Now That's What I Call Stridulation'. I played it this morning and track 24 had gone. It was there a few years ago but now... silence. I've started to lose my crickets. The beginning of the end. It isn't just me who will be hearing less wildlife in the future. Our countryside is becoming quieter as crickets, bees and birds vanish. Wildflower meadows, the home to crickets and grasshoppers, have been lost and the wildlife that depends on them have silently disappeared. The 'Silent Spring' predicted by Rachel Carson in 1962 has seeped across every season. This August, get out and listen to the sounds of summer before they fade.





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~~~~~  
**Handcross Community Pantry**

Do you have a couple of hours to spare on Thursday mornings to help Barbara (Butfoy) with shopping for the pantry? You will need a car as there is usually too much shopping for one car boot. If there is more than one person available, then the shopping could be done on a rota basis. Please contact Barbara on her mobile 07853 228605 – thank you. If you would like to contribute to the Pantry over the coming weeks, you (or someone who isn't self-isolating) can deliver cash to the Hardware shop (marked PANTRY) by Friday each week. Someone who is allowed out will then shop for the Pantry. If you are still able to shop we would value some more of the following items:-

Instant Coffee

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Cleaning products

Washing up liquid

Long life milk (semi-skimmed)

Tinned meat

Tinned pies

Salad cream

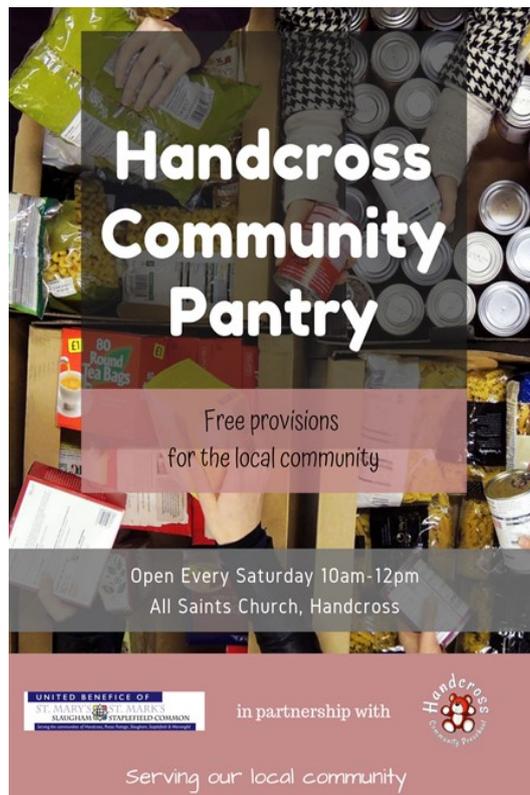
Ketchup

Mayonnaise

Boxes of Tissues

Sugar

Kitchen towels



## **September garden notes**

What a scorcher the first two weeks of August were with temperatures in the 30C's. Lawns brown, hydrangeas, laurels and other shrubs looking very droopy and, premature leaf drop on trees particularly shallow rooted beech trees, leaving a carpet of green and brown beneath. Some fruit trees have also suffered stress with apples and pears dropping off early. Thunderstorms thankfully brought welcome and much needed rain so plants are perking up and temperatures back to the low 20C's.

September is hedge cutting month - yew, holly, beech, privet, hawthorn, leylandii and mixed ones, since the birds have stopped nesting and there will be minimal regrowth so hedges will stay neat and tidy over the winter.

Continue with dead heading in herbaceous borders and pruning of shrubs such as Escallonia, Spirea, Weigelia, Olearia, Ceanothus and others after flowering. Also prune back Buddleias by a third to half to reduce wind damage in the autumn/ winter. Tie in and prune climbing/rambling roses, also Jasmine, Clematis and Honeysuckle before the autumn winds blow.

Bulbs are out now so buy and hope the ground softens considerably before planting unless you're putting them in pots/tubs. Empty and clean out pots and tubs when summer bedding has gone past it's best before planting autumn/ winter bedding and bulbs. September can be warm and dry too so don't rush out to buy new shrubs, wait till October when the ground temperatures are still high enough to allow plants to establish a little before winter. If you do water shrubs, direct it straight to the roots rather than on or around the leaves. Divide herbaceous plants if you wish more plants elsewhere in the garden or rejuvenate by throwing away the older middle sections, retaining the outer parts. Crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, beetroot, onions, brassicas and potatoes have been good with the super summer we've had. There are plenty of blackberries in the hedgerows so enjoy the free fruit whilst it's there.

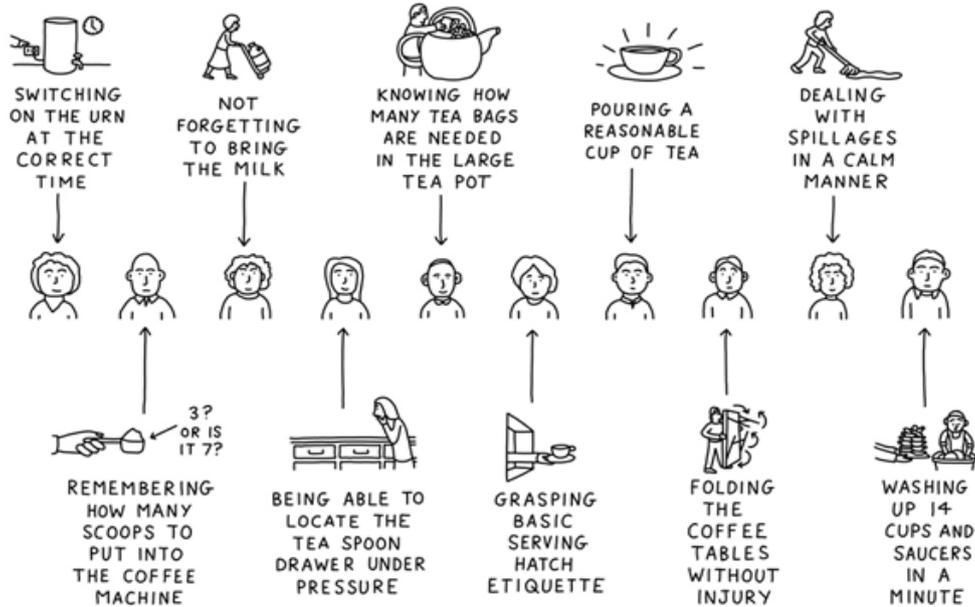
Harvest pumpkins, squashes, marrows and any potatoes remaining in the ground before the end of the month and likewise apples and pears. Place nets over ponds to catch falling leaves before autumn sets in.

Enjoy the autumn colours as they begin.



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## A Different Poem!

Eye halve a spelling chequer  
 It came with my pea sea  
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 Miss steaks eye kan knot sea.

Eye strike a quay and type a word  
 And weight four it two say  
 Weather eye am wrong oar write  
 It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist-ache is maid  
 It nose bee four two long  
 And eye can put the error rite  
 Its rarelea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it  
 I am shore your pleased two no  
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 My chequer tolled me sew.

.....*Courtesy of Parish Window*

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*(Patrick, Sandy & Matthew Gallagher)*

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**Tawny Owl** - Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust  
*Not what they seem*

Once upon a time, we were terrified of Tawny Owls. They were a portent of evil in fairy tales, folklore and just about every scary story, film or poem that needed a creepy cliché, but in today's crowded marketplace of international terrorism, climate change and saturated fats the owl's powers to scare us are fading. Recently, it appears this spokesman of the supernatural has got itself a new publicist. Its modern image is one of a cuddly pin-up, more Harry Potter than Hammer Horror.

Stand in the woods on a moonlit night and listen for an unseen owl's ethereal call. It's an ancient, unnerving sound that still speaks to something buried deep within us and ignites a primeval fear. The Tawny Owl is the largest and commonest of our island's five owl species, typically nesting in holes in old trees in our remaining woodlands. What is it about this bird that has given us the willies throughout history? Let's start with those huge, lifeless black eyes that seem to stare into your very soul. An owl's eyes are not spherical but tubular like two telescopes and give amazing vision at low light levels. However, the eye's stretched shape and position on the owl's face presents a narrow field of vision. To compensate, a Tawny Owl has special bones and blood vessels in its neck so it can perform that freaky, exorcist-like head twist. This gives the bird the ability to scan all around without having to move their bodies and arouse detection by prey.

In the world of a nocturnal hunter, silence and stealth are everything. Special serrated feathers slice the air, allowing it to fly as silently as a phantom and aerially ambush its victims. Incredible hearing achieved by asymmetrical ears allows them to accurately pinpoint the rustle of a nervous vole below. They can hear fear. Then there's that disembodied voice arising from the darkness. The male's far-carrying baritone 'hooo-huhuhuhooo' and the female's squawky 'kerr-wik' response are like a mis-matched duet between Johnny Cash and Janet Street-Porter. These calls help establish, maintain and defend a breeding territory, and from October the birds are at their most vocal. Of course, Tawny Owls really couldn't give two hoots about scaring us but throughout history these spectral calls have provided a soundtrack to our deepest fears. In a society which is becoming increasingly detached from nature, it's time to get out into the woods and allow ourselves to be unsettled once again by these mystical birds.





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### **Freddy's Hearing**

Freddy goes to the church and listens to the preacher. After a while, the preacher asks anyone with needs to be prayed over to come forward. Freddy goes up and the preacher asks, "Freddy, what do you want me to pray about for you?" Freddy says "I need you to pray for my hearing."

The preacher puts one finger in Freddy's ear and he places the other hand on top of Freddy's head and prays.

After a few minutes, the preacher removes his hands and stands back.

"Freddy, how is your hearing now?"

"I don't know, Reverend," says Freddy. "My hearing's not until next Wednesday."

---

### **The kind hearted Hubby !**

My wife and I walked past a swanky new restaurant last night.

"Did you smell that food?" she asked. "Incredible!" Being the considerate person I am, I thought, "What the heck, I'll treat her!"

So we walked past it again.

---

### **No Parking**

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses."

When he returned, he found a ticket from a traffic warden along with this note "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I'll lose my job.

Lead us not into temptation."

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### **Breakable Packages**

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments." answered the lady.

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***All articles for the November / December 2020  
Magazine should reach us by Friday 23rd OCTOBER  
AT THE VERY LATEST. Addresses and e.mails on inside of  
front cover. Thankyou. Editors***

**PARISH DIRECTORY HANDCROSS**

|                                           |                                                                                        |                        |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
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| <b>Help At Hand</b>                       | If In Need ....Dudley House<br>If offering Help .... Ian Ratcliffe                     | 400212<br>400763       |
| <b>Community Bus</b>                      | For Booking ....Dudley House                                                           | 400212                 |
| <b>Handx Hardware &amp; Craft</b>         | e.mail:christinajoyh@outlook.com (Personal)                                            |                        |
| <b>HandX C.P.School</b>                   | Sharon Bondonno Head Teacher<br>e.mail: head@handcross.w-sussex.sch.uk                 | 400291                 |
| <b>Royal British Legion</b>               | John Stephens (Branch Rep.)<br>25 Truggers Handcross<br>E.mail:stephens915@yahoo.co.uk | 400584                 |
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| <b>Rosemary Club</b>                      | Mrs Helen Arnold (Chair) Albertine<br>Horsham Road Handcross                           | 07540 816170           |
| <b>Parish Hall</b>                        | Gail Boustead (Secretary)<br>Mrs Marion Burchett (Booking)                             | 07887 535638<br>400612 |
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| <b>Handx Sports Pavilion</b>              | Sally Mclean<br>clerk@slaughampc.co.uk                                                 | 01403 733881           |
| <b>Sports &amp; Social Club</b>           | Mrs S Savage (Sec)<br>e.mail: hssc@hotmail.com                                         | 400328                 |
| <b>Allotment Assoc.</b>                   | Sally McLean                                                                           | 01403 733881           |
| <b>Bowls Club</b>                         | Mr.L Jones<br>4 Ash Road,Three Bridges, Crawley                                        | 01293 408829           |
| <b>Les Bonnes Boules<br/>De Handcross</b> | Jane Sibbring<br>e.mail:handcross-petanque@sibbring.com                                | 01825 723640           |
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| <b>Rifle Club</b>                         | Mr J.C. Holdsworth (Sec)<br>4 Bramber Close Horsham                                    | 01403 263879           |
| <b>Community Choir</b>                    | Mr.Graham Reid<br>e.mail:gandc.reid@gmail.com                                          | 400467                 |

*Printed by: Newman Thomson Limited  
One Jubilee Road, Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9TL  
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