



# GRAFFHAM PARISH NEWS

Issue 367 September 2021



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**Cover picture:** ©Rev. Vivien Turner: Michael Blencowe (Sussex Wildlife Trust) and Ginny Barrett (Churchwarden), encouraging us to get on our bikes to enjoy and take care of nature (and come to the bike service in September!) All photos and articles in this magazine are copyright ©Graffham Parish News unless otherwise stated and should not be reproduced without written consent of the Editor.



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

**Parish of St Giles Graffham with St Peter Woolavington  
St Giles Church Wardens:**

Ginny Barrett 01798 867113

**Priest in charge:**

Reverend Vivien Turner

**01798 867199**

reverendvivien@gmail.com

**Church website: stgilesgraffham.org**

So delighted our final postponed wedding of the season has now successfully taken place. Each occasion has been filled with its own joy and originality, reflecting the characters of our brides and grooms. And with thankfulness that their happy days have finally arrived, heralding new beginnings in life together. We look forward to new wedding enquiries again!

And to our own new beginnings in parish life this autumn. These include: Coffee mornings and Tea afternoons to meet and enjoy each other's company in our village. See September and October's invitations later in this magazine.

A new monthly Service in church from September onwards encouraging family participation, to take place normally on the third Sunday of each month. Our first offering is 'Bring Your Bike to Church' Service on Sunday 19th September at 10.30am. Come with or without bike and give thanks to God for the joy of cycling in our wonderful South Downs countryside.

Our annual parish sponsored walk on Saturday 25th September. This takes a different form this year. We are following a circular route outside the perimeter of our parish, in the tradition of 'Beating the Bounds'. We'll leave you guessing as to the distance! If you'd like to discover for yourself and learn where the boundary of our ecclesiastical parish falls, we'd love company for all or part of the day. See notice and let me know. Or support us with sponsorship to help our church continue to serve the parish community within its bounds. Thank you.

A Village Harvest Lunch the following day, Sunday 26th September at 12.30pm. This replaces the traditional Harvest Supper. If the weather is fine the lunch will take place in the newly landscaped Empire Hall Garden, otherwise inside. It's FREE for Graffham residents, with a two-course hot lunch provided, though this year please let us know you are coming beforehand. Contact Diane Bellis: 01798 867444

It feels good to be listing these new plans, after so long living with restrictions. We do not forget the need for caution or flexibility, however and remain ready to adjust as necessary to ensure maximum possible safety. Do join in any of these events, as we do our best to serve you here. And come to church, it will do you – and us – good!

Wishing you every blessing  
Reverend Vivien

# Ultrafast Fibre Broadband

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We're sorry for the relative silence in recent months but we have GREAT NEWS! OpenReach have now provided a final offer and contract to proceed with our plans to deliver full fibre broadband to every premise on the Graffham exchange. The scheme is affordable and can be fully funded by the Government Gigabit Broadband Voucher scheme with additional funds provided by West Sussex County Council. These vouchers are worth up to £4000 per household so we will be re-starting our efforts to get as many households as possible to pledge to our Community Fibre Partnership scheme. If you have not already contacted us or are new to Graffham, East Lavington or Hoyle (you will have an 867\*\*\* phone number) then please contact us with your name, address, email and phone number. **The only commitment to qualify for the vouchers is to pledge to purchase a fibre broadband connection for one year once the new fibre network has been installed.** This needn't be more expensive than your current Superfast broadband, though you will be able to order up to a 1Gb connection. For many this will be a significant improvement to currently unacceptable broadband speeds, so even if you are relatively happy with your current service, you will benefit from a full-fibre connection and your participation would greatly benefit the scheme to ensure it is fully funded.

**If you have already given us your details you don't need to do anything now.** In approximately three months time we will email you and ask you to submit to the voucher scheme and once we are over the minimum threshold of 202 properties prepared to pledge their vouchers we will have a fully funded scheme so all 365 properties will get free gigabit infrastructure - if you have any queries please contact us as per below.

Simon Longman (for East Lavington) [simon.longman@gmail.com](mailto:simon.longman@gmail.com)

Mark Stewart (for Graffham) [mark.stewart@aldingtoncapital.com](mailto:mark.stewart@aldingtoncapital.com)

Ginny Barrett (for Graffham) [v.j.kingsmill@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:v.j.kingsmill@qmul.ac.uk)

Bridget Adler (for Hoyle) [bridgetadlerinteriors@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetadlerinteriors@gmail.com)

Thank you to Michael Blencowe and friends from Sussex Wildlife Trust, and to Annie, for visiting our churchyards in August to explore possibilities of encouraging nature there. We look forward to developing their thoughts further, to help our conservation area become more fruitful.



### Flower Arrangers Needed for Saint Giles Church/All Saints Chapel

The Church/Chapel is in need of  
flower arrangers to join our church rota for 2022.

Amateur and beginners would be most  
welcome as would experience flower arrangers.

If you are interested or wish to know more  
please contact Diane: 01798 867444



**GRAFFHAM  
HARVEST LUNCH**

Replacing Harvest Supper  
this year  
ALL VILLAGE RESIDENTS  
invited and welcome

FREE  
TO ALL

(In Hall if weather poor)

Contact 01798867444  
if you would like to come

Empire Hall garden  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>  
September  
12.30pm

**'Bring your Bike to Church' Service**  
**St Giles Graffham Churchyard or Church**  
**Sunday 19 September at 10.30am**



With blessing of the bicycles. New monthly Family Worship. All welcome on two feet or two wheels. Bring a waterproof to sit on, if outdoors and on a bike.

## Graffham CE Infant and Duncton CE Junior Schools

The end of a busy year and looking forward to the next.

We celebrated the end of the summer term 2021, in rather altered style. We were able to say farewell and good luck to our amazing Year 6 children at Duncton Juniors. They shared their memories of their time at our schools and sung, danced and joked their way through an uplifting performance on the school field, in front of their parents. It was wonderful to finally be able to invite these parents, who have supported us for so many years, to a socially distanced assembly. We wish these amazing young people every success at their secondary schools.

This year has been a challenge; but we have also learnt how important community and kindness are to our ethos as a Federation. The support, encouragement and understanding of our parents, governors, members of the churches and community have given to us has been vital to the wellbeing and success of the last year. Our staff across both schools have gone above and beyond in every way, to support each family whether in lockdown or in school, and a great thanks from everyone must go out to them.

Finally, we say a huge thank you to Mrs Marie Bracey, who was thanked for her nine years as Chair of Governors of our Federation. She was given a beautiful painting by our inspirational art teacher, Dominique Kenway, as a thank you gift from staff and Governors. Thank you very much Marie, you will be much missed.

We welcome new children to both schools this September, and 20 new Reception children to Graffham CE Infants! We hope for a calmer and more settled school year.

For more information about our schools, please see our Facebook page 'Friends of Graffham and Duncton' and our website <https://graffhamanddunton.w-sussex.sch.uk>

Contact [office@graffhaminfant.org.uk](mailto:office@graffhaminfant.org.uk) or [office@duntonjunior.org.uk](mailto:office@duntonjunior.org.uk) if you are interested in supporting or looking round our schools as prospective parents.

Helen Martin  
Headteacher

# The Hornet Robberfly

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Once upon a time in the West Country. Dartmoor. August 1977. High noon. A young boy wanders away from a family picnic. The sun beats down and buzzards cry and circle overhead. The boy is startled by a short, snappy rattle like the sound of bullets spinning in a revolver. He turns and finds himself face to face with an incredible looking animal. It's a fly. But a fly like no other. The boy reaches for his camera – but he's too slow on the draw. With a rattle the fly launches itself into the air and is gone.

That first encounter with the hornet robberfly is one of my earliest and most vivid wildlife memories and had a huge impact on me. When I returned home I searched through all my 'I-Spy' and 'Spotter's Guide' books but couldn't find anything that looked remotely like the beast I had seen. For years I believed I had encountered some weird, mythical beast and I vowed to hunt one down and photograph it to prove its existence.



Insects don't come much weirder or as impressive than the Hornet Robberfly. There are 28 species of robberfly in Britain and the Hornet Robberfly is the leader of this wild bunch. At up to 28mm long, it's Britain's biggest fly with a dusty yellow abdomen giving it a hornet-like resemblance. It has huge oval black eyes and a big ginger beard just like Yosemite Sam. This rootin', too-tin' robberfly is a ferocious critter, although they never bother humans. But every grasshopper's knees start knocking at the mere mention of its name.

Like all good bandits, they'll wait on a high point in their long grass landscape until an unfortunate grasshopper hops along into their valley. Then, with their rattling, buzzing war-cry, they'll swoop down and snatch up their victim in their hairy legs. Hornet Robberflies dispatch their prey with a lethal weapon - a sharp beak which can pierce a grasshopper's tough armour and drain the very life from them. These robberflies lay their eggs on cow-pats and their young bury into the soil where they hunt underground for three years before emerging as adults in late summer. Hornet Robberflies are rare; a vanishing memory of a bygone age when our countryside was truly wild and not sterilised by insecticides.

I had to wait decades to see another Hornet Robberfly. I was drifting through the high plains of the South Downs when I heard that familiar rattle from behind me which instantly transported me back to that little boy on Dartmoor. But this time I was ready. My hand tightened around my camera ready to draw, point and shoot as I turned to face an old acquaintance.

Michael Blencowe,  
Head of Community Action for Wildlife  
Sussex Wildlife Trust,  
[michaelblencowe@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:michaelblencowe@sussexwt.org.uk)

# Graffham Downs Trust Quiz Night

Graffham was back having evening fun in the Empire Hall for the first time in around 18 months at the long delayed Graffham Down Trust quiz on Friday 20 August.



Seventy villagers gathered for event, raising the roof with laughter – and £750 for the nature reserves in the hills overlooking their homes.

The event was originally scheduled for April 2019 and then postponed multiple times because of the various pandemic lockdowns.

The trust's Jim Kirke opened the evening with a brief update on what's been going on at the reserves over the past 18 months, before handing over to question master, Michael Blunt.

Keeping scorer Peter Hardcastle busy, only a few points separated the 11 teams over the six rounds of questions, under the themes of Famous Faces, Nature, Sky and Stars, Here and Now, Yummy!, and Musical Intros.





# Graffham Tennis Club

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Our busy summer season is not quite over but we've had many great matches recently. We have to schedule all of our home league games between mid-May to the end of July as the evening light isn't long enough for us to complete four sets outside of these times. Our Ladies A team have had the toughest season but have played remarkably well in Division 1 given they are playing county and coaching level players every week. They have secured their place in the division for next season with enough points to avoid relegation following good draws and narrow losses in the final matches. The Men's team won their last matches to currently place second in the division but with other teams having games in hand, our finishing position is likely to be third or fourth. The Ladies B team posted an 8-0 loss to Liphook away but won 5-3 on the home leg. Midhurst Ladies will be league champions beating Graffham 6-2 in the final match. Our Mixed Doubles has been very sociable and competitive overcoming Fernhurst 7-1 in their last game.

Tennis Week at the end of July provided the usual brilliant opportunities to play and socialise. The rain managed to disrupt a few events and we were not able to make use of the grass courts for more than the first couple of days before they became sodden and lifeless, but they looked and played fantastic before the rain arrived. My highlight of the week was the junior match played in brilliant sunshine on Monday afternoon. Our coach, Richard Hopp, invited top players from other local clubs in a Graffham vs the Rest of the World match. Joseph Steyn, Araya Jeeva, Lawrence Bates, Theo Longman, Gene Slattery, Freddie Wethered, Maisie Amin and Aubrey Bamber all were fantastic ambassadors for our club, as were our brilliant hosts, Emma Amin and Diana Pettifer. Many thanks to all those in the Club who organised, hosted, played and consumed (hic). It was a much needed return to normality.

See you on the courts,  
Simon

## Church Services and Activities for September

*Visitors to Graffham are welcome at all our services  
St Giles Church is at the far end of Graffham Street near the Downs.  
All Saints' Chapel is opposite Graffham Village Shop.  
Our Church and Chapel are open daily for visitors.*

Sunday 5 September **Parish Eucharist** St Giles Church 10.30am

Tuesday 7 September **Morning Prayer** All Saints' Chapel 9am

Wednesday 8 September **Burial of Ashes** 11.30am

+

Sunday 12 September **Parish Eucharist** St Giles Church 10.30am *and*  
**Evensong** at All Saints Chapel 6pm

Tuesday 14 September **Morning Prayer** All Saints Chapel 9am *and*  
**Pilgrims+** at Botany Bay 10am

Wednesday 15 September **Coffee Morning** at Frederick House 10.30am

+

Sunday 19 September **BCP Holy Communion** at St Giles Church 9am *and*  
**'Bring Your Bike to Church' Service** St Giles Churchyard or Church 10.30am

Tuesday 21 September **Morning Prayer** All Saints Chapel 9am *and*  
**Pilgrims+** 10am (location tbc)

Thursday 23 September **Meeting for PCC members** 6pm

Saturday 25 September 'Beating the Bounds' **Sponsored Walk** *see notice*

+

Sunday 26 September **Parish Eucharist** at St Giles Church 10.30am *and*  
**Harvest Lunch** at Empire Hall Garden or Hall 12.30pm *see notice*

+

Sunday 3 October **Harvest Parish Eucharist** at St Giles Church 10.30am *and*  
**Taize Prayer** at St Giles Church 6pm

Tuesday 5 October **Morning Prayer** All Saints Chapel 9am

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See [www.stgilesgraffham.org](http://www.stgilesgraffham.org) or St Giles Church Graffham Facebook page  
to confirm services.

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

# Graffham Calendar 2021

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## September

- Sat 4 Comedy Dinner – Only Fools and Horses, a dinner show (by the same company that did the Allo Allo event last year for the Petworth nursing home).
- Sat 11 Chaps Choir and Anna Tabbush, CANCELLED
- Wed 15 Coffee morning, Frederick House, Graffham, 10.30am-12pm
- Sun 19 'Bring your bike to Church' service, 10.30am
- Mon 20 East Lavington Parish Council Meeting. Zoom call, 6.30pm.

## October

- Wed 13 Tea afternoon, Marsh Farm, Graffham, 2.30-4pm
- Sat 16 The Simon Bates Big Band a 17 piece big band with swing dance demos/teachers in the house. Delayed from this year.
- Wed 27 Graffham Empire Hall Lunch Club. 12.30 for 12.45pm.

## November

- Fri 12 Fleetwood Bac (a Fleetwood Mac tribute band). Delayed from this year.
- Mon 15 East Lavington Parish Council Meeting. Zoom call, 6.30pm.
- Wed 24 Graffham Empire Hall Lunch Club. 12.30 for 12.45pm.



### St Giles Church – Parish Priest's Discretionary Fund

This fund provides occasional support to local people as required. If you think we might help you, we'll be glad to do so if we can. Contact Revd Vivien at [reverendvivien@gmail.com](mailto:reverendvivien@gmail.com)  
01798 867199

## Autumn at Bellmans

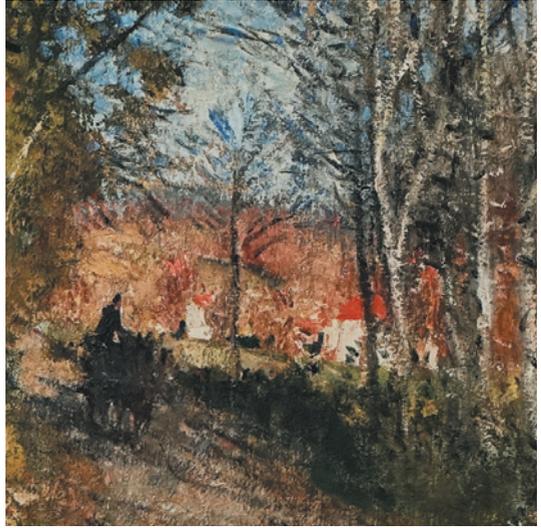
### Valuation Days

**Tuesday to Thursday**  
**9:30am – 4:30pm**

Our specialists are available  
for valuations, please see our  
website for more information.

[bellmans.co.uk](http://bellmans.co.uk)

\*Results subject to buyers premium @ 22% + VAT.



Pierre-Eugene Montezin (French, 1874 – 1946), Carriole sur la route borde d'arbres, oil on canvas. **Sold for £5,000 (plus BP)\***

#### SUSSEX

Newpound, Wisborough Green, West Sussex, RH14 0AZ  
01403 700858 [sussex@bellmans.co.uk](mailto:sussex@bellmans.co.uk)

## A memory of last year

Make space, make room each  
day

Divide and conquer is the way  
Keep your distance maybe shout  
if you see a friend when out

All our tomorrows are still  
in our heads,  
Pillows and duvets and  
staying in bed,  
Dreams and nights are  
full of stories,

We magnify our daytime worries

Half a mind to keep away  
(the other half to chat and stay)  
We pass by on the other side  
waving and keeping rules applied  
One day soon we'll all be free  
to join with all humanity

Here's to freedom!

Susan Hill

# Roadside hedges, ditches and tree management

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Many garden maintenance businesses are asked to maintain verges, garden hedges and trees growing near/overhanging roads and footpaths in the normal course of their management programme or schedule of works. It is worth reflecting and considering the potential ramifications that may arise and affect your business.

There are as many scenarios regarding roadside hedges as there are roads! Footpaths are generally not problematic, providing the vegetation is cut back to allow clear access along the pathway, with no injurious plants e.g. brambles or nettles causing difficulties for pedestrians (especially elderly or those with pushchairs and prams that may need extra space to negotiate). Footpaths are rarely problematic, and those that are in need of hard cutting back will be obvious.

Responsibility for maintaining roadside verges and hedges alongside a major highway will fall under the County Council Highways Department, and they are obliged, by Law, to maintain them by keeping them cut well back under a number of different Acts and Local By-Laws regarding sight lines for traffic safety, overhanging branches of trees are kept within bounds by the same Authorities and do not become part of any maintenance regime carried out by a Garden Contractor.

The roadside hedges that are most likely to affect Garden Contractors are those found along country lanes and 'B' Roads. Many will have verges and ditches that require management – note, not necessarily maintenance – but management, to keep them in good order. The reason for the qualification is that many verges are subject to ecological experiments involving management techniques including wildflower projects, and should not be touched by Third Parties without spoiling long-term surveys, often involving Government funding.

You only need to be aware of the possibility of such a situation and be reassured in writing by your customer – not as a waiver, but as a statement of belief. As far as they are aware, there are no experiments currently being conducted outside their property. Always bear in mind that it is likely that the centre of the hedge is the boundary of the property.

The presence of a ditch along the roadside may be an indicator or ownership, as traditionally the owner of the ditch has the right and legal responsibility under Riparian Rights and Responsibilities to maintain the ditch in good order to allow the free flow of surface water along the boundary of the property. Material excavated from the ditch was tra-

ditionally spread along and under the hedge, thereby maintaining the health of the plants and stability of the bank.

Trees that overhang roadsides are also the responsibility of the owner, and should be kept cut back and maintained to prevent vehicular traffic from being affected. This requirement to allow free movement of traffic covers both pedestrians and vehicles, including cycles. Pedestrian paths should have 2.1m minimum height clearance, and 5.2m height clearance (sometimes more, depending on the road and type of traffic) for vehicles.

These are legal duties, which the owner should be aware to maintain under their Duty of Care for the safety of users. (Highways Act 1980 refers) Failure to comply may result in an order from the Council obliging the owner to maintain the hedges and trees, otherwise formal action may follow.

Note too, that hedges should be cut back to prevent obstructing road signs, street lights or other public lamps in accordance with the Highways Act. All works carried out on the highway (and this term includes minor roads) should be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations found in Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Regulations as appropriate.

Flail mowers must be used in a manner that the machine can cut in the direction of the flow of traffic, and is undertaken in good visibility and in daylight to reduce the risk of flying debris and stones, and ensure the attention of passing traffic. Warning signs should be set out along the approach roads at appropriate distances bearing in mind potential traffic speed, sight lines and bends.

All workers undertaking this type of work must carry full Public Liability insurance, specifically including these operations. All staff must be fully competent in the use of all equipment in their care.

All debris that arises during cutting operations must be kept clear of the pathways and roads, and ensure that all staff undertaking the work are qualified and competent. Appropriate PPE and warning signage are essential, as is appointing a Banksman, armed with a broom, to keep an eye open for passers by of all types and keep their pathway clear of trip hazards.

Appropriate staff training is advisable, together with full risk assessments and method statements. Operators involved in any works near to roads must be aware of the risks to themselves, their work colleagues and others. A suitable first aid kit and qualified First Aider should be a pre-requisite for any team working under these conditions.

Timing of these works is very important. Hedge cutting and tree maintenance are time consuming works, and require careful planning to

ensure a one-visit operation. Where possible, the winter months are the best time, to avoid disturbing nesting birds and other species that may be foraging during warmer months amongst the floor of the hedgerow or banks. Most plants will have finished flowering and dropped their seeds during the winter, and most autumn berries and fruits will have been taken by birds and other wildlife.

In more rural areas, there may be an element of coppicing or pruning some of the stronger growing species such as ash and oak to branch out instead of growing evermore upwards and losing the benefit of providing a hedge screen and wildlife highway.

Be aware that hedgerows may not be removed without permission under the Hedgerows Removal Act 1997. Any hedge that needs to be removed for whatever reason must have a fully detailed permit following a system of notification and planning approval. Any ditch so affected may require suitable diameter pipework to continue the flow of surface water.

Alan Sargent FCIHort MPGCA  
[www.landscapelibrary.co.uk](http://www.landscapelibrary.co.uk)

Invitation to a **Coffee Morning**  
at Frederick House Graffham  
Wednesday 15 September  
**10.30 to 12noon** All welcome.

*Supporting St Giles Church.*



The Graffham Empire Hall Lunch Club will be restarting from Wednesday 27th October 2021, 12:30 for 12:45pm. Come and join us for a home cooked two course meal and coffee £8.00 Please book before 23rd October by calling Sarah 01798 867567

Reverend Vivien and Phillip would like to thank the congregation at St Giles for a lovely celebration to mark the completion of three years' ministry in Graffham. We are appreciating serving in Graffham very much. And how good to see everyone enjoying cake and fizz in church again, after a time of lockdown trial.



## Graffham Garden Group update

Trips for the remainder of 2021:

- Wed 15th September – Gilbert's Dahlias, Romsey
- Friday 22nd October – RHS, Wisley

Check Graffhamonline and noticeboards for updates or contact Carole Kirke on 867026

Diary dates for 2022

[assuming Covid allows]

- New Year lunch, Thursday 27th January 2022
- AGM, Friday 11 March 2022
- Spring Plant Sale, 7 May 2022
- Flower Show, 16 July 2022

18<sup>th</sup> September  
From 6pm - 11pm  
LIVE MUSIC  
From 7pm - 9pm  
With the  
PSYCHEDELIC  
HEARTS CLUB  
DUO

★  
: :  
BUFFET  
DRINKS  
RAFFLE  
BRIC a BRAC

# BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH FUND RAISING EVENT

In the  
GRAFFHAM  
PAVILION

£5.00 a  
ticket

Tickets available from 12, Guillod Cottages, Graffham 01798867174

# Regular Activities in The Empire Hall

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<b>Mondays</b>	(see below)	OSTEOPATH BOOT CAMP
	19.30 – 20.30	Abigail Martin (07523 860167)
<b>Tuesdays</b>	8.30 – 12.00	POST OFFICE
	9.00 – 11.00	GREAT FEET (see below)
<b>Wednesdays</b>	9.15 – 10.30	YOGA Deborah Albone
<b>Thursdays</b>	10.30 – 11.30	EASE INTO EXERCISE Abigail Martin (07523 860167)
	12.15 – 13.15	BOOT CAMP Abigail Martin (07523 860167)
	(see below)	OSTEOPATH
	14.00 – 16.30	POST OFFICE
<b>Fridays</b>	10.30 – 11.15	PILATES – Nicky Capes (07990 517858 or 01730 812297)

- Osteopath: Mondays and Thursdays, daytime and early evening. Booking required, ring Anna Shawcross 01798 867523 for an appointment.
- Great Feet (Chiropodist's Visit): Tuesday 14th September 9.00 – 11.00 Treatment Room. GHSA members only. Booking required, Vikki Wood (07825 185880)
- Empire Hall Lunch Club from October. Fourth Wednesday of the month: 12.30 for 12.45. Call Sarah 01798 867567 to book.

Any changes will be posted on the Empire Hall Noticeboard. The Empire Hall will be available to hire for Children's Parties, Wedding Receptions, Private Functions and Classes as restrictions allow.

Website      [www.empirehall.org.uk](http://www.empirehall.org.uk)  
Email        [empirehall@gmail.com](mailto:empirehall@gmail.com)  
Phone        Booking Secretary Eira Ashby 867297

# Graffham Bygones: Charcoal Burners of the Weald

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Today as you light your barbecue, consider the humble briquette you hold in the palm of your hand for charcoal is an amazingly versatile substance and humankind has found purposes for it since 1500 BC. From when stone-age man picked up a smouldering carbonised twig to decorate his cave wall; to 904 AD in China when black powder (gunpowder) was invented; to the twentieth century cosmetic industry, charcoal and its products have improved the peoples' lives. Uses range from purification, filtration, fuel, medical applications, explosives, art, tooth cleaning, soil improvers and animal husbandry. It can be seen why charcoal is often described as the most important substance ever created.

There is a long history of charcoal burning in this parish, carried out under the canopy, on the flatter ground, where the Weald abuts the Downs. The Fifties Graffham Histories Group refer to a man called "Luff", one of the oldest family surnames to come from the Anglo Saxon tribes of Britain. This particular "Luff" produced spray-coal at the foot of the Graffham Downs. "Spray" is an old Sussex term for brushwood or waste wood. Other Sussex terms for this commodity include bavins, or hollards. Luff was one of the last independent underwoodsmen who made his living as a charcoal burner but he was also a trader, as he would carry the sacks of spray-coal, on his back, over the Downs to sell in East Dean.

Another record of Graffham charcoal burners is illustrated by the photographer, George Garland, in November 1938. This burning was carried out with a portable steel ring kiln. These steel ring kilns shortened the burn period required to burn the charcoal. The Fifties History Group reveals that in 1939-45, conscientious objectors made charcoal in Graffham for use in gas masks, needed for WW2. Indeed, the charcoal industry also saw a resurgence in 1915, following the threat of gas attacks to frontline troops in WW1.

An event which illustrated the local demand for charcoal took place recently, on 10th July, 2021. The Wealden Iron Research Group carried out an experimental smelt using charcoal in a furnace in an attempt to produce iron. At the end of the firing, they did

manage to produce a bloom of iron. This event embodies the story of charcoal production in this area whereby smelting furnaces were fuelled by charcoal, creating a huge demand for charcoal and timber but by the nineteenth century, with the advent of coke, this demand ceased with the production of iron being moved to the Black Country.

Before the use of coke, this was the traditional method for making a charcoal stack constructed near the site, where the wood had been felled. Each stack began with the construction of a central flue, around which wood was stacked, repeated two or three times. A core of brushwood was placed around a thick stake or 'motty pin' or 'mottle peg'. Wood was then stacked in a complex dome structure leaning towards the centre with its 'motty pin' chimney in the middle for lighting. Vents controlled the flow of the air to allow the fire to draw and prevent the temperature rising. The dome was covered with leaf mould, bracken, straw then wet sand, earth and turf.

Once built the 'motty pin' would be removed. The Hearth Master used a long-handled shovel, known as a 'shool', to gather embers from the fire. He dropped them down the chimney of the stack, where they would act as the incendiary charge. The stack was sealed, leaving the wood to slowly carbonise, taking several days. When the charcoal was ready wisps of blue smoke could be seen. To monitor the process, charcoal burners had to tend the fire night and day and so lived on site in a hut. So as colliers did not fall asleep during their vigil they sat on a one-legged stool. According to Lisa Hill in *Time and The Practice of Charcoal Burning* the end of the leg was tapered to a point, so that the sitter's weight would drive the stool into the ground. Continual effort was then needed to keep the stool steady, keeping the collier awake to tend the stack.

The huts that the colliers lived



in were temporary structures, leaving few archeological remains. However, in *Sussex Industrial History*, Issue 14, an excavation is documented of a more substantial burners' hut in Fittleworth which had a conical structure with a diameter of 7m, larger than most huts.

The charcoal colliers "lived a life out of time" which Lisa Hill describes as "following a pattern that had been constant for many centuries." Some description of this traditional lifestyle is included in *Swallowdale* by Arthur Ransome with Old and Young Billy who are charcoal burners. It was a timeless, solitary life as A. A. Milne describes:

The Charcoal Burner has tales to tell  
He lives in the forest  
alone in the forest  
he sits in the forest  
alone in the forest  
And the sun comes slanting between the trees

Pauline Goodwin

The interest in Fleetwood Bac is very high. Tickets will be on sale online from 1st September, it is highly recommended to secure your tickets as early as possible.

Thanks, Jim Kirke

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# Graffham Nature Watch

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For those who don't know, we now have a wonderful Facebook page to share photos of beautiful sights around Graffham. Here are a few recent finds from the community.





Above ©Jonathan Simons. Below left ©Paul Stickley,  
below right ©Sally Blunt  
Left page. Top ©Paul Stickley. Below, both ©Ann Rowney



# Work Party

---

A work party of Graffham gentlemen volunteers has spent a number of mornings this summer getting St Giles' churchyard and graveyard ship-shape.

Brambles, ivy, elder and all sorts of other weeds that had completely covered a number of graves have been cut back for the first time in several years and will now be kept under control with regular mowing and trimming – while allowing wildflowers to bloom around the perimeter for the benefit of insect life. Climbers that could cause damage to walls have also been cut back

Hedges were given a haircut before nesting season and will have a further tidy up in the autumn, when the remaining brambles and elder etc. will be brought under control.

Under the leadership of Stuart Lewis, those who have helped have included Michael Blunt, John Bracey, Hugh Brown, Patrick Churchward, Tim Crow, Peter Hardcastle, Sandy Macqueen, Stuart Mathie and Neil McLean.

If you would like to join at any future churchyard work parties, please contact Stuart at: [jsl3wis@gmail.com](mailto:jsl3wis@gmail.com)





# Graffham Garden Group

## Outing to Gilbert's Dahlias, Romsey

### Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September

- Talk about growing and propagating Dahlias
  - Walk through the dahlia field - 400 varieties of Dahlias followed by chance to place orders for 2022 as well as buy plants
  - General plant nursery growing a large selection of unusual perennials as well as stocking a good selection of trees and shrubs
  - Tea in their tearoom
- We will leave Graffham at 12.40, aiming to arrive there at 2pm

Please let me know if you would like to go on this trip

**Contact; Carole Kirke 01798 867026**

# Weddings

---

Final wedding photos of the season. Posy and Ollie (right), and Rachel and Toby (below), two couples now happily married at St Giles in August. Here are their photos, including the now-traditional posting of the wedding document in the letter box just outside the lych-gate. Every blessing to you all.





# Update on tree felling operations at Seaford College

English Woodlands Forestry are the company overseeing the planning and operation of the recent tree felling activity on the embankment at Seaford College. Laura Henderson – their Forestry Business Lead provides a bit of background to the work.



There are two main components to the woodland management work taking place at Seaford. The first has been the thinning of Ash trees – mostly at the base of the hill. This has been necessary as sadly the Ash is suffering from a potentially fatal disease called Ash Dieback. We have removed the most severely affected trees but left any that look in better health in order to maintain the forest canopy and associated ecology. We will monitor the health of these remaining trees carefully but may be obliged to remove some more in the coming years.

The other operation is the much more visible and potentially disruptive removal of the Western Red Cedar on the embankment slope. These trees were planted in the 1970s as part of a Forestry Commission scheme. In usual circumstances they would be thinned on a cycle but due to the complexity of the site this was never done and the trees are now becoming drawn up and liable to blow over.

Since the 1970s, forestry in the UK has changed considerably and there is now widespread recognition that plantations of single-aged single-species conifer on sites that were previous ancient woodland (such as this one) are detrimental to our ecology and our environmental resilience.

Replacement of such woodland by native broadleaf species is now encouraged by the Forestry Commission and many other conservation organisations.

Next year replanting of the site will start using a carefully selected suite of tree species that are native to England, are more in-keeping with the South Downs landscape, are better for our native ecology and are resilient to climate change. We are looking forward to planning the planting and to watching that new woodland grow into a lasting legacy for the future. We are working with a professional landscape architect to help with this process.

The scale of the work might seem drastic – it is a big and visually disturbing job. The complexity and expense of the operation however demands that it has been done over a two – three year time frame. That is because the planning has to account for the specifications provided by the Forestry Commission, the limitations of the machinery and systems, the nature and needs of the ground, the time frames of the school term, health and safety and the vagaries of the weather. Completing the job relatively quickly also enables comprehensive consideration of the landscape – especially for the replanting scheme. Without the full picture it is much harder to do this effectively. This project has therefore had the endorsement of the Forestry Commission, the South Downs National Park and the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

We are delighted that some of the timber we are felling will also be used to clad a new forest school for Seaford College. Putting the timber into local construction locks up its carbon and reduces emissions.

We are aware that the work has caused some disruption – especially for local residents and users of the footpaths. This has been exacerbated by the incredibly wet weather this summer which has made the temporary rutting to the paths more extreme than we would have liked. We are really grateful for the patience of the public while we finish this challenging job. This week we are starting to deal with the brash and towards the end of August we will fully reinstate and regrade the paths and trackways. The whole site will very quickly respond and will start to green up with grass and native flora rapidly reducing the visual impact and naturally starting the process of ecological restoration.

Invitation to a **Tea Afternoon**  
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Wednesday 13 October  
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Balcony Area £35, with guaranteed seating



Demonstration Lindy Hop/Swing dancers will be there to show the way and provide ticket holders with an opportunity to practice before the event. As one can imagine space will be limited for this crackerjack evening and the dance area will be no less than 25 square meters (which is not as much as it might sound).

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The programme will be assembled from an exciting mix of classic instrumental and vocal big band numbers from the great bandleaders including Glen Miller, Count Basie and Duke Ellington and from the stunning vocal arrangements sung by the likes of Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Matt Monroe. The sound of all these amazing musicians playing full-on in the lively acoustics of The Empire Hall will take your breath away!

The Band has appeared as a headline act at many festivals including The 2019 Jazz Gin & Blues Festival and four appearances at the West Green House Festival.

Testimonials to Simon Bates' band include Alice Cooper, Charles Kennedy, Boy George, James Nesbitt, Anastasia, Robbie Coltrane, Jay Kay, Aleisha Dixon, Terry Wogan, Tony Hatch, Cilla Black, Chaka Khan and John Dankworth.

With many reviews in the public domain these two sum it up!

I don't think the word 'amazing' can be used enough times in one sentence to sum you up ...even if you were to put "amazingly amazing" - which still doesn't do it much justice!

**Jez Rose**

Thank you so much for last night, you were all wonderful and succeeded in creating the most amazing atmosphere in that room. Please pass my thanks on to all the members of the band and I'm sorry I was not able to thank them all personally at the end of the evening. You sounded wonderful and really added something exceptional to the occasion - were already worrying about how we are going to achieve the same next year!!

**Margaret Andraos**  
**English National Ballet**

# Petworth Area Churches Together

---

Over the past two months the PACT Food Bank has made a regular monthly food box (or boxes) delivery to 48 families – approximately 80 boxes per month. UK Harvest provide us with fresh fruit and veg, as they are able, and this is distributed with the boxes.

This is a mammoth task for our team – not just delivering, but collecting the sorted food from Chichester (up to a quarter of a ton of it per week), and also packing the boxes. As usual our volunteers have responded magnificently, even though we have two of our regular active volunteers off sick.

At present we are also packing Kids Lunch Packs (KLP), which we will deliver over the next four weeks, two KLPs per child, to cover the six weeks school holidays. The KLPs are being packed by two 15-year-olds, as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. We are extremely grateful for their help.

Advance Notice: Autumn Lecture on Friday October 15th at 7.30pm – with Nola Leach, Chief Executive of CARE ( Christian Action Research and Education). They work at the coalface helping Parliament to make ethical decisions.

More details to follow next month.

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- Vegetables - (Tinned)
- Tuna / Fish - (Tinned)
- Pasta Sauce (Jar)
- Noodles (Dried)
- Tea Bags
- Rice Pudding - (Tinned)
- Chocolate
- Biscuits



Please donate to this food bank by putting any of the listed items in the box at the village shop. All items available From Vasu and Jeeva but all donations welcome! Any queries please ring Ann Brown on 01798 867561

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