

PARISH NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2020

From the Vicarage

Do you know this story from Victorian times? The scene is a bedroom in a tiny farm cottage. An old man lies in the bed dying. Beside the bed his wife, the doctor and the vicar are ready to administer the last rites. The vicar leans over the bed and after a moment says, 'I'm afraid he's gone'. The doctor leans over to confirm and says, 'Yes I agree.' Suddenly the old man sits bolt upright - 'NO I B'AIN'T!' The wife says to him: 'Lie down George - doctor and parson know best.'

We can almost imagine the story to be true back then, but today the idea of authority has radically changed. So have we lost something precious here, or are we well rid of it? Is the world a better place with obedience consigned to the rubbish bin? - except perhaps in the armed forces, and even that is changing.

In recent years, all authorities have been exposed to scrutiny and all are now seen as being just as fallible as the rest of us. Whether we think of the Royal Family, or the police, politicians, teachers, doctors, clergy - we can no longer hide our mistakes and corruptions as we used to. Even experts in various fields of study are no longer trusted implicitly.

Presumably, we have to welcome this new openness - like so many things it's not great, but it's better than the alternative. But having freedom from oppression and universal human rights leads inevitably to a way of thinking which is called 'post-modernism' - meaning that everyone has the right to make up their own mind about every aspect of their life. No-one has the right to tell me how to behave, or what I can and cannot believe, and like it or not, we are going to have to live with this.

But a nagging question remains: Is there really no authority to whom I should hold allegiance? We might think of the laws of our country, or indeed the laws of nature in this way - if we disregard the delicate balance of the natural world, it will end up disregarding us and will inevitably jump up and bite us, and that will be painful - if not fatal. But at a deeper level, is there any ultimate authority over life itself that we should obey?

Well look around. Look long and hard. Do you find anywhere a more genuine and authoritative voice than that of Jesus Christ? Where can you find such a profound depth of holiness combined with loving practical action, or wisdom of teaching alongside total self-sacrifice? Study the lives of whoever you wish, and ask whether, in comparison, the life and teaching of Jesus does not stand head and shoulders above the rest? And the reason I try to obey his voice is that whenever there is a conflict of interest between what I think and what he teaches, I know deep down that he is always right.

So here's the question If the world is not going to be saved by the teaching and example of Jesus, who IS going to save it?

Frank Fox-Wilson

Church Services (Morning Prayer)

6th September
10.00 am Selmeston Church
10.00 am Arlington Church

13th September
10.00 am Selmeston Church
10.00 am Wilmington Church

20th September
10.00 am Alciston Church
10.00 am Arlington Church

27th September
10.00 am Selmeston Church
10.00 am Wilmington Church

4th October
10.00 am Harvest Festivals (locations to be confirmed)

Because of restrictions on numbers if you would like to attend a harvest festival service please telephone: 01323 811136 or email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk. Places will be allocated to those who respond first.

Evening Prayer: 5.00 pm at Alciston every Wednesday.

Zoom Services

Sunday Zoom Morning Prayer will be held at 9.00am from 6th September. You can be sent a link to join these services – please email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk to be added to the mailing list to receive this link.

Wednesday Zoom Morning Prayer will be held at 9.30 am. each Wednesday during September. Please request a link as above.

Berwick Church

We're hoping that the restoration work at Berwick is going to be completed in September, and to hold our first services in October. If you'd like to be on a mailing list and receive information about the restarting of services, please telephone: 01323 811136. or email benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk and ask to be notified.

Peter Blee

Parish Councillors

Berwick Parish Council has some vacancies for new Parish Councillors. If you are interested, or would like to know more, please contact the Chairman, Keith Winter, at turbospeed55@hotmail.com or the Clerk, Alison Stevens, at berwickparishcouncil@aol.com. Thank you.

Alison Stevens

Rural Crime Team

During lockdown we have generally seen a fall in crime with reduced numbers of violence and burglary. However, one area where we are seeing an increase is in rural crime which includes crimes affecting agricultural equipment, equine, wildlife and buildings. This means that in many of our villages in Sussex that rural crime is a big issue.

Sussex Police have stepped up to the mark and in June launched a new rural crime team. The team has been brought together to serve the rural community, to increase confidence and encourage reporting through preventing crime and carrying out more proactive investigations. Made up of two sergeants, eight constables and six police community support officers (PCSOs), they aim to make rural communities feel safer by building long-lasting partnerships, responding to the community's needs and providing an effective policing service. In turn, this work aims to increase confidence in the police in more isolated areas.

With 62% of Sussex's area dedicated to farming and a significant proportion being in the South Downs National Park, Sussex is defined as 'significantly rural' by DEFRA (2011). Recently, Sussex Police arrested three men near High Hurstwood, Wealden, on suspicion of burglary and going equipped for burglary. This is just one example of the force's approach to disrupting rural crime in the county.

I recently held a virtual meeting with local farmers and rural crime was high on their list of concerns with cases having increased during lockdown and the issue of trespass being significant. I am hoping that the introduction of this new rural crime team will give residents living in our rural areas confidence that resources are going into making their communities safer. Do let me know if you have been affected by rural crime as I can be contacted on maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk

Maria Caulfield - Member of Parliament for Lewes

Keeping Safe From Coronavirus – A Job For East Sussex Together

It's my job to try and ensure as few of us as possible in East Sussex get infected with Covid-19 – but I need your help. The good news is that, at the moment, East Sussex has low rates of the virus compared to some other parts of England. But of course the virus is still there in our communities.

If there were a local outbreak, I or other public health leaders might ask you to avoid certain places or even to stay at home, as the situation is controlled. We'd let you know about this very swiftly, for example on local television, radio and online. You can also sign up now for email updates which we'd send if anything new happens. [Sign-up link](#). Of course, I hope this will never be necessary and we can all work together to avoid it. Above all, please:

- ◆ Keep 2 metres apart from other people wherever you can
- ◆ Regularly wash your hands
- ◆ Wear a facemask in shops and other enclosed public places
- ◆ If you feel at all unwell (a new persistent cough, a change in smell or taste, or a raised temperature) immediately book a test and stay at home for at least 10 days. [Book a test online](#) or call 119 if you have trouble using the internet.
- ◆ If you are asked to self-isolate by the NHS test and trace team, please do.

On the East Sussex County Council website you'll [find latest details](#) about the number of cases where you live, our plan for how we'd handle any outbreak in the county and lots of practical help and support.

Our communities have already done amazing work to support each other through these tough times. We can keep the virus at bay in East Sussex if we continue working together.

Darrell Gale, Director of Public Health for East Sussex

September Gardener's Diary

This is the month we can harvest the potatoes. Spread them out on the ground for a couple of hours to dry out and then put them in hessian sacks for storage in a cool, dark place.

Keep picking runner beans and French beans to stop them going to seed. Check the Sweetcorn by pinching the top to see if it's ripe.

Clear off all weeds and rubbish so it's nice and clean for winter crops like Garlic, which can be planted at the end of the month, as well as broad beans.

Last thing is to check the brassicas for butterfly eggs and caterpillars. Treat if you see any and cover with fine netting to protect against more bugs.

Keith Winter

Family Support Work (FSW) – Update

With the summer holidays in full swing you might think that things are slowing down a little for us here, but it is not the case. As we can't hold any group activities like we would normally do in the summer, our practitioners have been very busy supporting individual families with ideas for outings and activities – we've even been providing picnics for them to take with them! A lot of our families are also very anxious about their children returning to school in September after such a long time at home, so we are working hard to allay those fears and encourage them to think positively.

We are delighted that some of our furloughed staff have returned to work, although still on a part-time basis. This gives us the opportunity to start recommencing some of the activities that we had to put on hold over the last few months.

In particular, we are excited to let you know that our charity abseil at Peacehaven Cliffs can go ahead on 19th September. We had booked this last autumn and had thought that we would have to cancel it. But as an outdoor event, and with the abseil company having met all the conditions to be designated a Covid-safe organiser, we're now busy making the preparations and encouraging people to sign up. Anybody can take part from age 10 and above (maximum weight limit 16 stone/100 Kg) and all that we ask is that participants commit to raise a minimum of £100 sponsorship each. More details can be found by contacting Melissa on 01273 832963 Ext. 304.

Thank you all for your continued support of our work.

June's work in numbers

- ◆ 302 (socially distanced) visits to families and 189 phone calls supporting 45 grandparents, 453 parents and 422 children.
- ◆ 46 supported meetings (virtually via Zoom/Skype etc.) with other agencies.
- ◆ 182 deliveries of food and other items such as children's activities made.

Prayer points

- ◆ Give thanks for 2 young people supported by our practitioners who have won places at Oxbridge to start in the autumn despite incredibly challenging home situations.
- ◆ Strength for some of our practitioners who are currently having to deal with court cases involving the removal of children from families they are supporting.
- ◆ Pray that our staff who have just returned from furlough are able to have a smooth transition back to work.

Nikki Kerr, FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

A Timely Reminder

Every day above Selveston a Spitfire can be seen and heard that flies daily from Biggin Hill to Beachy Head and back, taking enthusiasts for a thrill of a lifetime in its double cockpit. This year is the 80th Anniversary year of the Battle of Britain when great air battles between Spitfires, Hurricanes and Messerschmitts of the Luftwaffe were taking place over our southern villages and towns. Had this air battle been lost by the RAF, then the invasion plans of Hitler in 1940 (Operation Sealion) would have swung into action, leaving only the Home Guard, to fight on the beaches. Amongst these regulars were an elite, highly secret and well-trained group known as 'The Auxiliary Units' who would become known as 'scallywags' and later as The British Resistance.

These men were recruited often because they were gamekeepers, farmers or even poachers who were used to handling firearms and knew the local land and were able to live off it. These volunteers wore distinctive badges on their uniforms; in this area the number 203 was worn on their shoulders. Additional training was undertaken during the weekend at Coleshill House near Highworth, Wiltshire and Tottenham Manor, Small Dole, West Sussex. Here they would be trained in unarmed combat, assassination, demolition and sabotage.

We tend to think of the Home Guard as a group of old soldiers from the First World War along with some local farmers and a teenager or two, practising drill with broom handles. We still have one of those 'Home Guard Teenagers' living in Selveston, Len

Pike now in his 90's, who enlisted as a private and became a marksman who first told me of these units. (You can read his story on the village website: www.selmeston.info/home_guard)

When I interviewed Len about his time in the Home Guard, he told me about some local men who, after the war, were revealed as part of this secret unit. Neither Len nor his other companions in the Home Guard had any idea about these units at the time. In fact it was only in the late 60's/70's that some information was released from the National Archives regarding their activities, and only in the last few years the identity of those involved was revealed. In many cases family members suspected little, and were never told, and are probably still not fully aware of their activities today.

Churchill initiated these units in May 1940 and appointed Colonel Colin Gubbins to organise them. He became experienced in guerrilla warfare during the Russian Civil War and the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21, and enlisted Captain Peter Fleming (elder brother of Ian) and Captain Mike Calvert who were both experienced in deception type work. Certain locations were selected in this area and the Royal Engineers were tasked with constructing deep, elaborately concealed underground observation posts (OB's) and ammunition stores, with a camouflaged entrance and emergency escape tunnel. Their mission was to attack the invading German forces, assassinate the officers and blow up the railways, fuel dumps, and aircraft. Their bases contained plastic explosives, incendiary devices and enough food and water (along with whisky) to last just two weeks. It was thought that these bases would be discovered within 12 days of any invasion, and members of these units were instructed not to be taken alive. The units were stood down on the 3rd December 1944 after the D-Day invasion was fully secured. Details of these men were made public a few years ago, and are recorded here:

Abbots Wood Patrol (Known as Folkington)

Base Located at Abbots Wood then moved to Folkington Wood

Lieutenant Thomas Henry Dinnis (7.3.1916–22.3.1983) Patrol Leader. Milton Court, Milton St, Alfriston–Farmer.

Private Arthur Desmond Dinnis (1922–4.3.1943) Milton Court, Milton Street, Alfriston–Farmer and cousin to Thomas Dinnis. He later joined the RAF as an Air Gunner and was killed in action with 83 Squadron whilst bombing Essen, Germany).

Private Sidney Robert Dumbrell (23.9. 1914–2.12.2005) Otham Court Farmhouse, Polegate–Gamekeeper.

Private William Arthur Longhurst (22.2.1905–1980) 5 Downsway, Berwick–Builders Labourer.

Private John Leonard Raymond (15.10. 1912–16.5.1992) Wooton Farm, Folkington–Dairy Farmer and ARP First Aid Driver.

Private Percy Richard Robinson (11.1.1899–1985) Burgh Hill Cottage, Chiddingly and May's Corner, Chalvington–Cowman.

Private John Daniel Talbot (16.8.1906–5.12.1998) Valence Estate, Westerham, Kent–Gardener.

Private Robert Edwin Wright (10.7.1905–8.2.1963) Gatewood, Wilmington–Woodman and small holder.

Bishopstone Patrol (Known as Badger 1)

Their Base was located at Bishopstone Manor Farm and they also used a disused water tank at Hobbs Heath near Rathfinny Farm, Alfriston.

Sergeant Lionel Harry Mawe Willett (20.11.1888–5.10.1956) Patrol Leader. The Cottage, Bishopstone Manor Farm, Bishopstone – Farmer; Served with Sussex Yeomanry in WW1 and awarded the British Empire Medal in 1944.

Private Reginald Jonathan Clark (12.1.1907–1971) 19 Lower Berwick, then 140 Morton Farm, Seaford–Farm Carter

Private Daniel Leslie Paul (13.2.1895–13.3.1980) New Farm House, Chyngton, Seaford–Farmer

Private Frank Percival Turner (27.6.1902–1979) 129 White Row, Bishopstone–Farm Labourer

Private Frederick White (30.7.1895–?) 135 Bishopstone, Nr Seaford–Farm Worker and Stockman Served in the Royal Sussex Regiment during WW1.

Private Cyril Edward Woolmer (23.8.1923–3.7.2007) 11 Hampden Gardens, South Heighton–Farm Worker Tractor Driver.

Firle Patrol (Known as Badger 2)

Their base was located on the lower level of Firle Plantation Wood, access was by lifting a small tree trunk to the space below containing 3 bunks with a stove, but it was discovered in 1942 by Canadian Troops who ransacked it, stealing food and the emergency whisky! This forced the patrol to move to Badger 1 base.

Sergeant William Arthur 'Bill' Webber (29.8.1908–2001) Patrol Leader. 51a The Street, Firle–Market Gardner, Foreman.

Private John Thomas Cornwall (5.2.1895–1966) 21 The Street, Firle then Burgh Lane, Firle–Painter and Decorator–In WW1 he was a Gunner with the Royal Field Artillery.

Private Tom Smith (13.3.1913–2006) 20 The Street, Firle–Market Gardener.

Private Herbert John Henry Pilbeam (13.6.1887–1950) Lodge Gate, Firle Park, Firle–Farm Labourer.

Bill Webber kept a diary of the Patrol's exercises from 1941 until the stand down of the units on 3rd December 1944 (6 months after the invasion of France in June). This was, of course, forbidden, but luckily it gives an insight into their activities, such as creeping up to the Canadian Army Camp at Seaford, and planting a small charge, and the instruction on how to silently kill using the Commando dagger.

It is worth remembering that all patrol members had to keep up their day jobs as well as 'keeping mum' regarding their attachment to these units. They should not be forgotten as our last line of defence during WW2.

Simon Muggleton

Yellow Meadow Ants - South Downs Skyscrapers

If you're feeling boxed-in by buildings and overwhelmed by architecture, I've found the perfect escape route. Head up onto the South Downs and let the developed world be stripped away with every step. Yet here, in this ancient landscape, towering above the thyme and trefoils in the turf, you'll find some of the most impressive buildings in Sussex.

Ant hills are mini miracles of design and construction, the visible tip of the ant's underground empire. Soil is mined and carried, grain by grain, to the surface to construct this metropolis of mounds - some of which can be centuries old. Every ant hill represents a separate colony of Yellow Meadow Ants – respected as the finest architects amongst Britain's 42 ant species.

Ant hills are high-rise heat-traps built to harvest the sun's warmth. This soil solarium houses a series of chambers, the colony's nursery. Here, worker ants tenderly tend to eggs, pupae and larvae – moving them around within the ant hill to keep them always on the sunny side.

With a strong division of labour, each colony is a 'superorganism' made of thousands of hard-working individuals serving a common cause – their colony and queen. But life is far from peaceful. Every ant hill is a miniature kingdom at war with its neighbouring ant hills. Epic battles are fought daily on these downs, and every summer squadrons of winged ants take to the skies in an attempt to establish new colonies. It's a perilous mission – certain death awaits them if they land in occupied territory.

Down under the ant hill, other ants work on the aphid farm. Root-feeding aphids are herded and 'milked' for their honeydew – a hi-energy drink which helps fuel the colony. Ants also obtain a similar sugary syrup from the caterpillars of Chalk Hill Blue butterflies. When these caterpillars are ready to pupate, they are carried underground and adopted by the ant colony. Upon emergence, the subterranean homesick blue butterflies scramble back to the surface and escape to the summer skies.

Ant hills don't just benefit ants; their angles and aspects create a unique micro-habitat on chalk downland. Their sun-baked slopes are great for basking butterflies, grasshoppers and lizards and their soft, sifted soil is loved by mosses, grasses and flowers. This softness is also their vulnerability. Every ant lives in fear of the great winged terror from the sky – the green woodpecker. Its brutal bill and sticky harpoon tongue can cause carnage in a colony. Winged monsters, kingdoms at war – it's a veritable Game of Thrones out there on the South Downs in September.

Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

Benefice Clergy

Revd Peter Blee

Rector of Berwick and Vicar of Selmeston with Alciston

The Parsonage, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6SR

Tel: 01323 870512 Email: peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk

Peter's day off is Saturday.

Revd Frank Fox-Wilson - Assistant Priest

The Vicarage, Wilmington, Polegate, BN26 5SL

Tel: 01323 871148 Email: frank.fox-wilson@berwickchurch.org.uk

Frank's 'on duty' days are Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Churchwardens

Alciston - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623

Berwick – Vacant

Selmeston - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

Benefice Administrator

Stephanie Lewis-Grey Tel: 01323 811136 Email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Parish News Advertising and Distribution

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

Parish News

This "digital issue" is also available on the benefice church's website www.sussexdownlandchurches.org.uk and Berwick Parish Council's website www.berwickparishcouncil.org.uk. We are anticipating that future issues will be distributed in this way until things return to normal.

As the "digital issues" do not include advertising, we intend to include the advertisements in the printed issues until they have appeared in a full 12 month's issues.

The production team is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

Contributions (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin Chilvers by the 12th of the month.

Email: empty.sea@outlook.com; Post: 66 Parkfield Avenue, Eastbourne, BN22 9SF.

You should receive confirmation of receipt by the 15th of the month, but if not, please call him on 01323 507655.

Contributions can also be passed on to one of the coordinators:

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

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

Laurie Tinsley, Wynsford, Berwick Tel: 01323 870895.

Donations

Financial donations to the Parish News are gratefully received. Cheques payable to "Parish News" can be passed to the Treasurer, Valerie Shaw, Selmeston House, Selmeston, Polegate, BN26 6UD.

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