

HassocksLife

Including the communities of Keymer & Clayton

Local village talk,
by the village

Issue #1 : May 2019

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village

Lots of Hassocks news inside...

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Meet headteacher Mr Wignall

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Behind the Counter at Bella & Megs

page 22





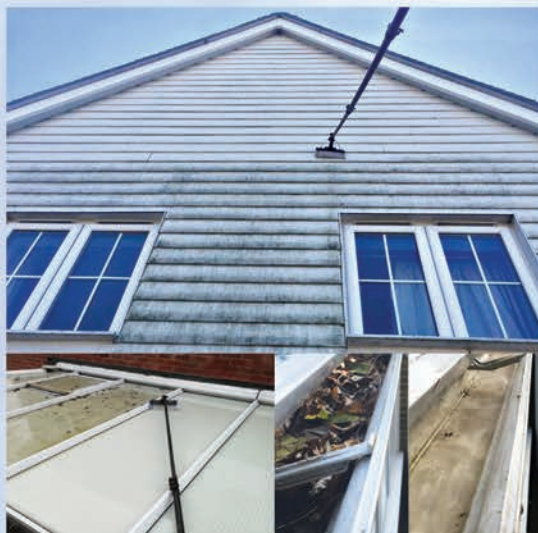
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EDITORIAL



By David Tingley, Editor

Hello and welcome to this, our first issue of **Hassocks Life** magazine!

Hassocks Life is your new, full-colour community magazine for the village – which will be crammed full of genuinely local content for the residents of Hassocks, Keymer and Clayton every month.

This copy may have arrived through your letterbox, if you live in the village, or you might have picked it up from the High Street or a supermarket. Wherever you found it, I do hope you enjoy reading our pages.

Although Hassocks Life is new, I am proud to say that my team and I have been producing **community magazines** like this for over ten years; the nearest example of which is Hurst Life, lying as it does, just the other side of the crossroads.

I have already met so many lovely people in the run-up to getting issue number one out – it's certainly very exciting, and very promising to see just how much **Hassocks residents love living here**. I do look forward to hearing from and meeting lots of residents in the coming months – so do please get in touch either via email (editor@hassockslife.co.uk) or call the office on 01273 796 026.

If you are an **enthusiastic writer**, I would especially love to hear from you. See **page 13** for details about the **Assistant Editor** role to join me working on Hassocks Life every month.

Do flick through the pages at your leisure, but I should point out our **Village People** candidate **Mark Wignall** on **page 18**, an explanatory feature about **Hassocks Community Organisation** on **page 10**, and also **Joe Wayte** met **Phil and Chantal** to go **Behind the Counter** at Bella & Megs on **page 22**.

I'd love you to tell me what you think and offer any suggestions for future issues.

Issue #1 – May 2019 –
4,900 copies printed

Next magazine copydate:
21st May 2019

Next magazine published:
4th June 2019

Hurst Life

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within the magazine are of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the editors. Whilst the editors welcome contributions & photographs, this is on the understanding that there is no obligation to include them and that the item may be edited & that there is no breach of copyright. Neither the editors nor the publisher accept any liability in respect of the content of any article, photo or advertisement.

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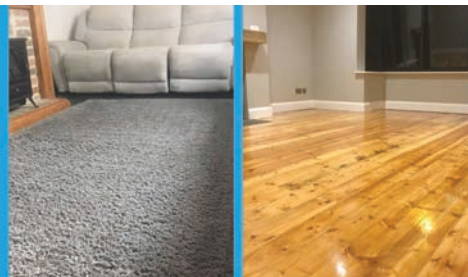
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NEWS

We love to hear from groups, organisations and individuals about what's happening locally. Include a photo if you can. Email your stories to editor@hassockslife.co.uk



Downlands fab dancers

By Nicki Burston

'Do it big, do it right and do it with style', said Fred Astaire, and Downlands Community School 2019 Dance Show did all of those!

Headteacher Mark Wignall's vision to have an active and full creative arts provision at Downlands has certainly paid off. The months of rehearsals, hours spent in the impressive new Dance Studio and perseverance provided the audiences at this year's shows with a delightful and beautiful evening

of dance. It was a colourful, energetic and stunning display of dance - from the individual performances from Year 11 student Emily Wright to the Junior Dance Company's performance to Grease Lightning.

Thank you to all the students who took part - over 80 - from Years 7 to 11 for a memorable evening and, of course, to our brilliant Dance teacher Morvah Cull who is an inspiration to all the students.

Photo: Darren Baldwin



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Norma opera comes to Hassocks

Touring operatic company Heber Opera is once again playing at Adastra Hall with its current production of Norma.

According to Heber: 'Bellini's Norma is an opera that is not performed very often but has a strong story and lovely music, including, of course, one of opera's most famous arias Casta Diva (or in our English version Sacred Goddess)'.

Heber's production will be sung in English and performed in the round, and it will feature the talents of local performer Steve Hawksley (pictured) from Hassocks.



This tour is made up of just five dates, including 7.30pm on Friday 24th May at Adastra Hall in Hassocks and Sunday 26th May at nearby Hurstpierpoint's Village Centre where the show will start at 6pm.

Tickets may be purchased online or by calling 07503 783403.

Community running group gathers pace

Since the launch of Hassocks Community Runners (HCR) in June last year, the group has grown from a team of five enthusiastic team members to a Facebook membership of over 280.



The group (headed by Mandy, Mary, Ros, Emily and Steve) meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm and Friday morning at 9.15am at Proper Coffee Shop on Hassocks High Street. HCR continue to offer runs of 3, 5, 7 and 10km, which enables all abilities to join in. The team has also recently introduced a walking group to the Friday 9.15am meeting, where the walks range from 45 minutes to an hour. Organiser Mandy Dale explained: "We are a free running and walking group and love meeting new members and exploring the wonderful countryside around the area where we live. If you fancy giving it a go, we would love to see you at one of our regular runs. All you need is a pair of trainers!"



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It's spring, let's cycle!

Cycling Without Age (CWA) Hurst & Hassocks is set to add a second trishaw to its fleet later this month, thanks to the generosity of the Burgess Hill District Lions. The group, headed up by Bridget Hamilton, will take delivery of the unit when it is shipped direct from Copenhagen.

"We are so grateful to the Lions," Bridget explained, "as a second bike means we'll be able to do more to help combat loneliness in our villages, getting more elderly people out in the fresh air and having fun. It also means that we can have one trishaw based in Hassocks and the other in Hurstpierpoint. I'd also like to say a big 'thank you' to Proper Coffee and Community Bike Shop for their support too."

The next event takes place on 18th May at Holy Trinity Church in Hurst, where the CWA team will be giving a talk and offering free rides.

Open House and Sculpture Garden

Artist and Clayton resident Kellie Miller is inviting locals to a very special exhibition as part of the Brighton Artists Open House Festival.

For the very first time, the renowned artist will be opening her home and gardens, which nestle on the South Downs on Underhill Lane. The house and gardens is a work in progress project and, after four years of development, she wants to share the story so far.

"Over the last few weeks we have been preparing the space, land clearing and unpacking the cabin that housed our belongings while the house has been developed," Kellie explains. "We have enjoyed getting in touch with the land and planning the exhibition and are looking forward to welcoming guests throughout May."

For Kellie it is an opportunity to exhibit sculpture in a natural environment other than her award-winning gallery in Brighton.

Visitors can expect to see work artists such as Alexia Weill, Félix Valdelièvre and Radek Andrie, who is inspired by the idea of conception and the beginning of life.

The exhibition will be open between 11am-5pm on weekends during May, by appointment only. Email: info@kelliemiller.com to book a slot at Bluebell Cottage, Underhill Lane (BN6 9PL).

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Craftsmen, and not salesmen

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

When some think of fine bespoke jewellery they may consider London's fashionable West End to be the place to go. Others may wander the Lanes in Brighton to find that something special. However, there is an emporium of delights much closer to home...

Richard Talman is a multi award-winning goldsmith who runs his independent jewellers from his workshop at Morehouse Business Centre in Wivelsfield.

RTFJ was founded almost ten years ago when Richard decided to swap his life of commuting to Hatton Garden, where he managed a trade workshop supplying the top West End jewellers, for a local workshop in the country, where he started his own business.

He undertakes any type of jewellery commission from earrings to pendants and eternity rings to necklaces. Each piece is uniquely designed and manufactured by hand to the customer's specification.



Before



After



Before



After

Aside from commissions, Richard is an expert in the restoration and repair of jewellery, and was recently an in-house expert on the popular BBC show *The Repair Shop*. "Most jewellers just want to sell you a new item when you seek a repair, but we go to any length possible to ensure the item is repaired over being replaced, if that's what the client desires," Richard added.

Anyone who has sought the help of their local jewellers for a ring sizing or simple alteration will have experienced the 'standard' two week wait whilst the item is given attention. At RTFJ, however, this can be done while you wait, and even while you watch!

"We just aim to be a little different from other jewellers," Richard continued. "We don't have a shop window full of items for sale, so our advice is impartial. We don't try to sell what we have, we aim to create what a client wants," he assured. "And we welcome anyone to come and see us to see how we can help."

RTFJ operate by appointment only to ensure that customers will speak to the creator of the jewellery and not a salesperson.

For more information or to book a no obligation consultation about a piece of jewellery you have in mind call Richard on 01444 471380. You can see examples of RTFJ's work at www.rtfj.co.uk

Reviews can be found on Google and the very latest of projects are on Facebook & Instagram @RTFJ.



New Skate Park coming to Hassocks

Hassocks Parish Council is pleased to confirm that construction for Hassocks' new Skate Park has recently started. The facility, chosen from a shortlist of designs by residents during a consultation in January, will take 8-10 weeks to complete (weather permitting). The chosen design will be delivered by Bendcrete Leisure Ltd.

The new Skate Park will be sited where the current skate ramps are in the south east corner of Adastra Park. The build will be constructed from sprayed concrete, which is the most practical and resilient material for builds such as ours. The concrete takes time to cure, which means that, although the facility may look finished through the fences, until the fences are removed the Skate Park is not ready for use.

A council spokesman commented: "We will be operating a building site and access will be prohibited. Therefore, whilst the build is in progress and the area fenced off, we would recommend that skaters use the nearby facilities in Burgess Hill, Lewes, Haywards Heath, Henfield and Brighton."

The Parish Council will be posting progress photos on its website (www.hassocks-pc.gov.uk).



Once completed, to celebrate the opening of the Skate Park there will be an official opening 'Skate Jam' event, and details will be available soon.

Development of the Skate Park is just one of several initiatives that Hassocks Parish Council is undertaking in Adastra Park. Further information on the range of projects can be found online at www.hassocks-pc.gov.uk/news/adastra-park-masterplan

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YOUR COMMUNITY YOUR ORGANISATION

Hassocks Community Partnership (HCP)
and Hassocks Amenity Association (HAA)
have merged to form



MORE INFORMATION...

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Volunteers: hassocksvolunteers@gmail.com
Supporters: togetherwithhco@gmail.com
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Your community, your organisation



Hassocks Community Partnership (HCP) and Hassocks Amenity Association (HAA) have merged to form Hassocks Community Organisation (HCO)

By Erika Woodhurst-Trueeman, Trustee

HCO is a registered charity (No. 1183097). Its main aims are to: provide recreation and leisure activities for residents of Hassocks and the surrounding area who might otherwise struggle to access such activities, and, by providing them, also benefit the general public so as to improve social welfare; protect and improve the environment we live in and look after features of historic or public interest.

HCO supports a wide variety of 'life-improving' projects, such as:

Monthly Village Market - A community market bringing local produce and crafts to those who might otherwise be less able to get to them.

Green Group - Protecting and improving the physical and natural environment by creating an attractive and welcoming village.

Hassocks Community Cycle Hire - Hiring out mountain bikes, cycle servicing and promoting cycling and environmental tourism in Hassocks and the surrounding area.

Rail Group - Representing our rail users to ensure rail services meet the needs of all residents.

Star Cinema - Bringing high quality films to Hassocks residents using professional projection services at Adastra Hall and providing an opportunity to socialise, especially for those for whom getting to a town cinema is difficult.

Village Flood Mitigation - Raising funds and working with experts and volunteers to tackle problems and sustainably address local flooding issues.

May Day Event - A traditional spring fair for all the community at Adastra Park.

Village Discount Card - For many residents access to shops is difficult due to transport or mobility challenges. This initiative aims to ensure that our community

continues to benefit from the many and varied shops in Hassocks by encouraging shopping locally. Being trialled now – this card is currently free to existing or new Supporters this year.

Each of these projects is run by a small team of individuals and HCO provides support in the background. We are on hand to provide help, advice and, in some cases, finance, and insurance. The Trustees at HCO are all volunteers and are passionate about the community and protecting and improving the environment we live and work in. We are always keen to encourage ideas for new projects and those who want to lead them. If you have a burning idea for an activity that would improve life in the village, please get in touch!

Join us at HCO!

Become a supporter and/or volunteer:

- **Supporters** are households that make an annual financial contribution towards the activities undertaken by HCO.
- **Volunteers** support our work by helping with projects and receive emailed notices of volunteering opportunities promoted by HCO. They can get involved as and when they wish.

A Volunteer does not need to be a Supporter and a Supporter does not need to be a Volunteer, though it is entirely possible to be both!

We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the country and to be part of a community which embraces volunteering to sustain the quality of life and our local environment. Like many voluntary groups the continuation of our most popular activities can quickly be threatened by a lack of helpers. If you would like to hear more about volunteering opportunities, with no pressure to sign up, email hassocksvolunteers@gmail.com. You will not be contacted individually and your email address will not be passed on or used for any other purpose. You can unsubscribe at any time.



Behind the scenes

CRICKET SEASON

By Joe Isted

Situated in the heart of the village at Adastra Park is Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club. This established cricket club has been running for around 100 years, providing friendly recreational and competitive cricket to the community at both senior and junior levels.

The club currently has three adult teams that play competitive cricket on Saturday afternoons in the 1st Central Sussex Cricket League. Following a successful 2018 season two of the three adult sides have been promoted for the season ahead, offering an even better standard of local cricket to enjoy, either as a player or a spectator. In addition to Saturday league cricket, the club also has a friendly Sunday team. If you are interested in playing cricket then do not hesitate to contact the club, which is always on the lookout for new players at all levels.

Sitting alongside the adult section of the club are the juniors (5-18 years). Clubmark Accredited by the English Cricket Board, the club's goal is to provide a friendly and safe environment for children to enjoy the game and grow as both players and people. The junior section is run by a host of local volunteers who are all members of the club and are qualified ECB coaches. For the 2019 season the club will be fielding teams at U9, U10, U13, U15 & U18 age groups. If you're looking to introduce cricket to your child then why not visit the club during their junior training night. These take place every Friday evening at 5.30pm at Adastra Park.

If you enjoy watching cricket but playing is not your thing, the club is always on the lookout for members of the community who are keen to get involved. Volunteers are always needed whether scoring, umpiring, organising teas or even just to be a social member.

One of the highlights of our social calendar is Club Day on Sunday 26th May. Sponsored by local butcher Andy Twine, an all day tournament is supplemented by BBQ and bar. Come and join us!

If you are interested in becoming part of the club or volunteering any of your time then please do get in touch with Club Chairman Ross Watkins on 07748 967314 or via Ross.tad@sky.com.

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Wanted: a fantastic copy writer in Hassocks

By David Tingley

If you are the sort of person who enjoys writing and also loves being part of the wonderful community here in Hassocks – then you could be just who I'm looking for!

Whilst I take the editor role for this, your new community magazine, what I really need is an assistant who is connected to the village and who is someone with their ear to the ground.

The Assistant Editor role is one which is home based and part-time – just 25 hours per month – but it is an essential part of what this magazine will become. The successful candidate will be passionate about this village and well connected in the community. I need someone who has that journalistic spark to find out what's going on, but who is also a sensitive people person who finds it easy to spend time with and listen to others in an interview environment.

To do the job you'll need a computer, a car to get around and enough time to be flexible with your working hours – a small number of which will be during evenings/weekends. The successful candidate, who also needs to be organised and familiar with using spreadsheets as well as Microsoft Word, will work closely with me as we not only compile and subedit



submitted copy for each month's issue but also write feature content for Hassocks Life.

Starting salary will be £10 p/hour plus fixed expenses. If you'd like to find out more about the role, including a complete job description, please see www.hassockslife.co.uk/jobs where it also explains how to apply. Closing date for applications is 16th May 2019, with interviews being held on Friday 17th May in Haywards Heath.

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Looking for a showroom worthy kitchen without the matching price tag? Then new business Polished Kitchen Designs might just be the company for you... Sarah Henshall and Amy Betsworth – Directors of Polished Kitchen Designs – caught up with us recently to fill us in on their new venture and why buying a kitchen from them could save you money...



Tell us why you have launched Polished Kitchen Designs?

We both come from an independent kitchen showroom background and found there was a growing number of budget conscious clients who wanted high quality products and a personalised experience which you don't necessarily get at a builder's merchants or DIY store. We believe that people shouldn't have to pay a premium for great service, which was how the idea for Polished Kitchen Designs started.

Tell us a bit about yourselves and your backgrounds?

Amy: I was a PR Director for a large cosmetics company in London for many years, but after a couple of my own renovation projects I caught the interiors bug and decided to have a complete career change. I did an interior design course and was lucky to be offered a design role at a local kitchen showroom and have never looked back! Having two young children was a major drive behind my decision as well. I wanted to be based more locally and strike a better balance between home and work life – it's like the holy grail for most working mums!

Sarah: Having worked in an independent kitchen showroom for eight years I wanted a new challenge and being a working mum like Amy meant we were on the same wavelength in terms of how we wanted to work. Having already designed and managed many kitchen installations in the area, I knew I wanted to continue designing kitchens but wanted to do things differently. We've had a great launch with several projects complete and more booked in - we've been blown away by the response and we can't wait to see what the rest of 2019 brings.



What services do you offer and how does it work?

We offer kitchen design, supply, installation and project management. When we set up Polished Kitchen Designs we knew we wanted to be as flexible as possible so we also offer a 'design only' service for clients who want to source their own kitchen but be armed with a good design and materials list.

Most clients opt for a home consultation and free design service. Within a week we will get in touch to review the design and make an appointment to revisit your home with door samples, colour swatches, worktop options etc. This is one of our favourite parts as this is when the concept really starts to come to life.

What makes you different from the other local kitchen suppliers?

The main difference is that we don't have a showroom – we bring the showroom to you! We have brochures, samples, doors etc for you to look at, which most clients are happy to choose from. For those people who do want a showroom experience, we can offer a VIP trip to our supplier's stunning £1.5 million showroom near Windsor.

By working like this we can be much more competitive in price. Most of our kitchens come in between £10,000 - £20,000, including appliances and fitting. Feedback we have had so far from clients is that for a superior quality product and personal service we offer great value for money, which really is music to our ears!

To discuss your kitchen plans, contact us now for a chat on either 07708 299939 or 07708 299389 or by email: info@polishedkitchendesigns.co.uk. www.polishedkitchendesigns.co.uk

Hassocks opens its first children's Contact Centre

'Keeping Families Connected' is the ethos behind the opening of a new Contact Centre in the village. AG Family Support has been offering specialist social work assessment, family support, child contact, interpreting and training services across the UK for a number of years. This latest project provides a much-needed resource to support families across Sussex.

Founders Arthur & Emily Gajewski, a Consultant Social Worker and Child & Adult Psychotherapist, draw on their experience to ensure the services the Centre offers are of the highest quality and reflect the company's core family values.

"Meaningful contact between child and their significant others is one of the main cornerstones of a healthy identity development process," explained Arthur. "Our Contact Centre ensures families have ample opportunity to achieve those fundamental needs."

This valuable resource is yet another example of how



Hassocks residents and businesses embrace the need to open new ventures in the village and continue its tradition of supporting others at times of need.

For more information why not drop in to the Centre at 40a Keymer Road?

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Good morning Mr Wignall

VILLAGE PEOPLE



By David Tingley

If you want to learn something about community, just have a chat with Mark Wignall, Headteacher at Downlands Community School.

Although born in London, Mark spent most of his childhood in the Midlands – living just down the road from the Cadburys factory; anyone who has heard him talk in an assembly has heard his soft ‘brummy’ accent. Mark has been married to Lynne for 24 years and they have three children Ellen, Harry and Joe. He describes his devotion to Birmingham City Football Club as ‘a life sentence’!

Mark has always been keen on sport. He has always loved rugby, football, cricket and squash, to name but a few, so it is no surprise that he went on to study Sports Science at Brighton Polytechnic. “I didn’t know what I wanted to do at the time, but I did love sport,” he explains, “although there weren’t as many options for a Sports Science graduate back then.”

Mark started his working life as a fitness instructor in the gym at the House of Commons; a role which ranged from designing personal fitness programmes for MPs, to collecting towels. After moving up to Harrogate to work at a luxury hotel doing a similar role, it wasn’t long before Mark asked himself: ‘Is this the rewarding career I really want?’. After some soul-searching, he returned to Sussex to complete a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with a view to being a teacher. Placements during his course were in secondary schools in Bexhill and Cuckfield.

“Fortunately for me,” Mark explained, “there was a shortage of PE teachers at the time – so I walked straight into my first role as one of the PE team at Oathall Community College in Haywards Heath.”

“Being a PE teacher is a brilliant job,” Mark goes on. “I remember that everyone in the PE department was passionate about getting the best possible outcomes for Oathall pupils – and we talked for hours and hours about how we were going to do it.”

One such plan involved introducing a handicap system on the school’s cross-country course (known affectionately as ‘the bog trot’). “By letting the slower kids get a head start, we not only encouraged them to try harder, but the faster runners were motivated to try and catch up those ahead of them. It worked really successfully and everyone improved their times.”

It was these values which Mark was keen to work hard for. “I just wanted to make a difference, and I quickly realised that teaching was the place for me to do it.”

During his second year of teaching Mark decided to do a Masters degree part-time, alongside his full-time job and young family. He explains: "I always want to keep learning, and, whilst it was still early days in the education system for me, I was definitely aspirational in terms of my career."

In 1993 Mark was offered a job as Head of Year 9 at Downlands. The role came with added responsibility but fewer teaching hours. "I knew that making a difference to children's lives wasn't restricted to the subjects in the classroom," Mark told me.

With the new job he was suddenly involved in parent/school relationships and was overseeing and tackling issues such as behaviour, attendance and special needs on an individual level. Mark is convinced that children do better at school when parents and the school are working together.

A keen rugby fan, Mark reintroduced the sport to Downlands. "I loved teaching rugby and was delighted when we started it here," Mark said. "Getting kids outside and part of a team is a brilliant way to help them find their place – and sport is just one example of this." The rugby passion has continued at the school to this day, with the current Year 7 team reaching the County Cup final this year.

As Head of Year, Mark considered it a huge privilege to be able to stay with the same students throughout their five-year journey through Downlands. After nine years in the role and teaching science as well as PE, Mark was appointed Assistant Headteacher in 2002.

"This was a natural step for me," Mark explained. "I discovered the impact my leadership could have on students – which was really exciting." Mark worked with the senior leadership team to improve outcomes for Downlands students. Whilst the focus was on learning and GCSE results, it was also about pupils being able to succeed in society after they left the education system. Mark believes that qualities such as personal resilience are as important a part of growing up as academic results.

"As a lad and the proud new captain of the football team at school, we got totally thrashed in our first game," Mark recalls. "When I got home and my dad asked how we had fared, I was mortified and burst into tears. But that is all part of growth and being a leader. It was a good lesson!"

Moving into the Deputy Headteacher role in 2006, Mark's role changed again. As one of two deputies he was responsible for curriculum, finance and timetabling.

During this time the senior leadership team really focused on raising the expectations of students at the school. "It was a real culture change for both staff and students," Mark said. "As a school we all had to 'go for it', and it wasn't until we started to achieve the desired results, that everyone began to buy in to this approach."

A few years ago, Mark decided to implement the school's behaviour policy much more consistently – something which has had a huge impact on lessons. "Although it was a difficult journey at times, the end result meant we had (and continue to have) a fair and pleasant environment around the school and purposeful, inspiring and disruption-free lessons," Mark commented.

Three years ago, when Rose Hetherington retired, Mark took up the position of Headteacher at the school. "I hope it's come across already," he says to me, "but I am so proud of our school. We were awarded an Ofsted rating of Outstanding in 2017 and our GCSE outcomes are almost half a grade better than similar students nationally."

But Mark knows he's not been on a solo mission since taking over the Headship. Downlands Community School is the largest employer in the village by far. "This school has been doing so well and for so long because of amazing teachers, lovely governors and dedicated support and admin staff. Just like those sports teams I started out coaching, over 140 of us on-site unite around a shared vision and that is why I believe it works!"

Spring term is always an exciting time with opportunities like Wind in the Willows, Spring Concert and Dance Show that showcase the amazing talent of local youngsters. On the horizon this year for Downlands is the building of an amphitheatre within the grounds, which will be used by both pupils and the wider community of Hassocks. And with the build due to start after Easter, it's just one more reason why this school doesn't just have community in its name – but running right through it.



The Evolution of Eyewear on our High Street



Walk along Hassocks High Street and you'll notice our local Opticians, the Hassocks Eyecare Centre. Since taking over the business six years ago, partners Vicki Macken and Paul Watts have worked tirelessly to bring leading optometry services to our growing village. They are well known for their warm and friendly customer service and are becoming increasingly known for their constant investment in superior technology and cutting-edge facilities. But what you might not be aware of is the sheer volume of modern, forward-thinking frames they have available in their store.

It's estimated that the first eyeglasses were worn in Italy sometime in the late 13th century but became more commonplace in the 15th century when literacy rates increased. And an 18th century English optician can take credit for sunglasses similar to the ones we use today - James Ayscough created spectacles with tinted lenses in order to improve vision. Sunglasses really took off in the 1930s when the US army looked for a way to create aviation sunglasses that would reduce the distraction for pilots and the world welcomed Ray-Bans.

Since then there have been massive innovations in the world of eyewear. From the 1940s onwards advances in production gave rise to a wide availability of different styles, colours and frames, whilst advances in technology gave us lenses capable of correcting all sorts of vision problems.

The key word now though, Vicki stresses, is choice: "Eyewear has become much more than purely a corrective function - it is strongly linked to fashion, and always will be, but now our clients want eyewear that

reflects how they choose to live their life - particularly in terms of environmental issues."

So what has the Hassocks Eyecare Centre done to reflect that changing mood? "Our range has grown considerably over the last six years," says Vicki. "For example, we now stock over 300 different sunglasses but a large part of our new acquisitions are sustainable collections. We've recently invested in a brand called PALA, an ideological brand that offers recycled and biodegradable frames whilst investing in projects in Africa that supports local communities." And one of their fastest selling ranges? "Our ECO range is made out of materials that make them sustainable but, importantly, the company that sells them plants a tree for every pair sold. And they don't just have incredible green credentials, but the range is fun and fashionable - our customers love the magnetic sun clip-ons," Vicki continued.

So, it's clear that Hassocks Eyecare is investing in the changing face of eyewear and ensuring the choice in their stores reflects what their customers want. "We want to offer a superior experience," says Vicki. "We are a village opticians but our ranges and choice are similar to those you might find in some of the biggest eyewear stores across the country."

But what about the future of eyewear? Vicki believes that eventually eyewear will be custom measured - tailored to fit the unique contours of your face, offering a totally personalised eyewear experience. Whatever happens, we can feel confident that the Hassocks Eyecare Centre will be bringing the future to Hassocks.



Hassocks Eyecare Centre
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Not another café...

BEHIND THE COUNTER

By Joe Wayte

When Phil and wife Chantal decided to move into their corner plot on Keymer Road, they heard the cries from the people of Hassocks hoping it wouldn't be 'yet another coffee shop'. While during the day you can turn up any time for a quick beverage and a bite to eat, Friday nights at Bella & Megs are quite different, and if you haven't already booked, you'll need to join the waiting list.

In April 2018, Bella & Megs café and bistro opened its doors for the first time. The sun was shining, prosecco was on tap and many locals showed up to see what owners Phil and Chantal had done with the place. "It was very white when we first acquired the shop," Chantal explained, "so we decided to do a refit. I wanted somewhere that felt homely, yet rustic and modern." The launch was a huge success and, after twelve months in business, the pair are pleased with how things are going.

Originally from Newick, Phil started his career in stage management at the theatre in Worthing. After ten years of commanding crew behind the scenes, he decided he was ready for his next challenge and turned his hand to hospitality. "I went into training with the British Institute of Innkeeping," Phil told me, "and then advertised myself locally when I was ready to take on a job." Phil received an offer shortly after and moved to Poynings to work at the Royal Oak. It was there that he met Chantal, who grew up in the village.

This isn't the first time the duo have gone into business together. For a number of years they ran Dolly's Pantry in Ditchling, which they sold in 2007.

Between closing the doors at Dolly's Pantry and opening at Bella & Megs, Phil worked as a chef in the kitchen at Cuckfield Golf Club. Chantal moved on to something entirely different and spent ten years working for the NHS. "I retrained and joined the Mammography team at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals," Chantal shared, "we travelled all over the county on a regular basis. I loved the job but it's nice to be based in one place now and see the same faces." Chantal had originally hoped to stay at the NHS part-time but, with their new business taking off, she chose to join Phil full-time at the café.

Bella & Megs gets its name from Phil and Chantal's daughters, Annabelle (27) and Megan (17). In-between the two girls is a brother, Ollie (23). I was interested to find out if there was another venture on the horizon which would be named after him. "Not yet," Chantal responded, "but we did name a breakfast sandwich after Ollie!"



While Phil likes the idea of expanding, he's also incredibly content and proud of what they've got. "We make everything ourselves," explained Phil, "and all of our suppliers – the butcher, eggs, coffee, wine – are all local. It's a long day, but it's worth it."

On Friday nights the café turns into a high-end bistro, which is currently booked up at least three weeks in advance. Phil is the artist in the kitchen, while Chantal ensures everything runs smoothly front-of-house, both supported by a team of staff from the local area.

The venue was in high demand throughout December and continues to be a favourite for private hires. From baby showers and birthdays to corporate parties and local club celebrations, Chantal has had plenty of events to keep her busy. For a recent The Greatest Showman themed children's party, Chantal decided to put out some wooden craft kits which she designed. They went down a treat with the young people but gave Chantal more work than she bargained for. "It took me ages to clear up all of the glitter and sequins after the event," she recalled. "I was finding bits everywhere. It was a great success though."

As the couple are well-versed at managing cafés and coffee shops, I was interested to find out had been the biggest thing they had learned during their first year working together. "When we were at Dolly's Pantry we never thought about people with allergies – you'd never find a gluten free cake in the shop," Phil answered. "It's been a real eye opener," added Chantal, "and we have to make sure we're catering for vegans, nut allergies, milk preferences and more besides. Everything has to be clearly labelled so people know what's in our food." Helpfully, every item on the menu is made from scratch by Phil and his team, so knowing what's in the food isn't too difficult.

If you're thinking of starting your own business or café, Chantal had this advice to give: "Customer service is everything," she said with passion, "and you have to go the extra mile. We have games for children, cushions for those that need elevating and I'm always ready to hold the door. Most of all, I genuinely enjoy seeing our regulars, as well as new faces, to have a friendly chat and find out how they're getting on."

Before taking over at Dolly's Pantry, Phil and Chantal had thought about leasing a pub together. However, the realisation that working and living in the same venue might cause too much strain on their family put them off. "You've got to find a happy balance when you own your own business," Chantal commented. "We don't open on Sundays," added Phil, "because that's our family day. One day it would be nice to open seven days per week, but you won't see us running it."

Bella and Megs is open 9am to 4pm Monday to Saturday as a café and on Friday nights as a bistro, but don't forget to make your reservation.

"Customer service is everything"



We want to know everything...

By David Tingley, editor

Our motto at Hassocks Life is: 'Local village talk, by the village'. As such, we really need to ensure that we know what's going on so we can shout about it and share it.

This will be greatly helped with the appointment of an Assistant Editor (see page 13), but it would be really helpful if everyone felt able to contribute to Hassocks Life.

This could be simply in the form of letting us know details of an event taking place here (charity fundraiser, concert or community event) or perhaps you know someone who'd make a fantastic Village People candidate (see page 18), is doing something amazing for charity or is opening a new business in the village. All of these are great potential stories for this magazine and we'd love to hear about them.

Get in touch with me by email: editor@hassockslife.co.uk or call the office on 01273 796026.

For more ideas how to get involved see our website: www.hassockslife.co.uk/contribute-something

Monthly Market grows

Hassocks Village Market, if you don't already know, is a monthly market which takes place on the fourth Saturday between 9am and 12.30pm on the forecourt of National Tyres.

Catriona Hawksley now organises the market, which comes under the banner of the Hassocks Community Organisation (HCO). "We have an increasing number of visitors every month and it has developed a real buzz and community feel at the market, which often hosts local groups and charities," Catriona explained.

"We are fortunate to have many long standing local stallholders and traders who have a passionate local following."

At the market shoppers can find all manner of produce and gifts including pies, flowers, chocolate, bread, meat, vegetables and crafts. In fact 'Made in Hassocks' is a new initiative only started this year to encourage micro craftsmen to show and sell their merchandise, joining the other regular stallholders.

"If you make jewellery or pottery, sew, knit or paint then I'd love to hear from you," explained Catriona. Local artists and creators wishing to showcase their work at the market should get in touch via email: hassocksvillagemarket1@gmail.com.

The next Hassocks Village Market will take place on Saturday 25th May, opening at 9am.



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Girls football comes to Hassocks

By Jason Roberts

When Hassocks Juniors Girls vs Lindfield Girls kicked off on a Saturday morning last month, on the pitch by the cricket pavilion at Adastra Park in front of a large excited crowd, it was the fulfilment of a lot of hard work by a lot of dedicated volunteers whose goal it was to get girls football to Hassocks. After a really hard fought and exciting draw, the feeling that it had been a success was unanimous - and that girls football is here to stay!

The establishment of the Hassocks Juniors Girls team was the brainchild of Christian and Naomi Dermaine-Stone, whose daughter played for the Hassocks Juniors under 10s team. Late last year they started to put out feelers and advertised at the local schools. In November held their first training session at Adastra Park. Fourteen girls came along to take part and regular training took off - with the squad expanding to 19 players across two age groups (under 9s and under 10s). A friendly against a development team from Horsham on the 3G pitch at Downlands School was a success, and then finally the aforementioned game against a local established girls team.

The game itself was a hard fought affair, a classic game of two halves - with Lindfield pulling out to an early lead and Hassocks coming on stronger later with honours even at the end. There were smiles on all the players' faces after the game, and a lot of excited and proud parents.

With Hassocks Ladies being so successful this year, and the Women's World Cup coming on in the summer, the appetite for girls football is undoubtedly there, and Hassocks Juniors is committed to making sure we can provide it.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to help run girls football in Hassocks, or is interested in playing please contact the club at: hjfcchairman@gmail.com.




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Finding homes for feline friends

The National Cat Adoption Centre (NCAC) in Chelwood Gate is set in 51 acres of outstanding natural beauty in the heart of the Ashdown Forest. It is the perfect place to take a break, with our wonderful café, or to go for a walk and take in the peaceful scenery. You can visit our nature trail, and we also have a picturesque lake, where you can sit on benches nearby and while away a minute or two, and we are blessed to have a herd of Hebridean sheep grazing on the land.



Through our wonderful relationship with The Donkey Sanctuary, we have three resident donkeys on-site: Star, Holly and Twinkle. We have trained volunteers who look after their every need. The donkeys welcome visitors, so why not pop up to see them?

We have a gift shop selling a wide range of cat-related goods, giftware and cards. Our café sells a wide range of home-made cakes, serves a varied selection of teas and coffees and provides hot and cold food using locally sourced ingredients. All proceeds at the café and shop go to our registered charity, Cats Protection, to help us to help more cats.

The NCAC, the largest cat adoption centre in the UK, is home to anything up to 500 cats and kittens, all looking for a loving new home. Whether you are looking for a tabby, tortie, a young kitten or an older cat, you can feel

safe in the knowledge that these cats will have been given the best possible care. We have a cat for every home, so why not consider a rescue cat and give them another chance of happiness?

We also have cats here who are looking for a more 'outdoorsy' set-up in their new home, so if you can offer this sort of home please do contact us for more information.

All of our cats, on adoption, have been vaccinated, microchipped, neutered, regularly flead and wormed, and had a full health check by our vet. They also come with four weeks free pet insurance, so you really can adopt with confidence, all for the adoption fee of £80.

The adoption centre also plays an invaluable part in our education programme conducting talks and tours to schools, local community groups and coach parties. There's always something going on at the centre such as boot sales, fun days, fairs and children's birthday parties. Please visit our website for more details: www.ncac.cats.org.uk

Our next upcoming event is our spectacular Summer Fun Day on 7th July. It will be full of entertainment features, Earthquake Drummers, Renshinkan Karate England, BMVocals and Redhurst School of Dance. We will have stalls, games, tours of the centre, raffle, tombola, face-painting, BBQ and beer tent and so much more.

A visit to the National Cat Adoption Centre will certainly be one to remember!

If you are interested in helping the cats at the NCAC and would like to volunteer, please visit our website for more details: www.ncac.cats.org.uk. We have lots of volunteer roles available.





Ultimate family day out

READER COMPETITION

Heralded as 'THE' ultimate family day out in the South, the South of England Show is returning this year from 6th-8th June and we have two pairs of adult tickets to give away in this exciting competition (accompanying children under 16 go free!).

Taking place at the iconic South of England Showground in Ardingly since 1967, the annual event has become a 'must attend date' spot in the family calendar offering people of all ages a varied programme of entertainment and a chance to reconnect with the countryside.

This year's three-day programme features the popular agricultural and equestrian competitions and displays, alongside rural crafts and an abundance of food, drink and shopping opportunities.

Children will enjoy watching Shetland ponies go head to head in their own mini Grand National, or piggies performing in the piggy pranks obstacle course.

In the Heritage Zone they will be able to experience life as a Saxon or Norman and watch thrilling battle re-enactments, while the Discover the Countryside area offers pond dipping, birds of prey and the chance to meet some water buffalo.

The youngest members of the family can explore The Gruffalo Wood and meet the beloved storybook character himself (subject to appearance times).

Parents and grandparents can enjoy the thrilling spectacle of the Bolddog Lings motorcycle stunt display or visit the new for 2019 Wine Walk where they can sample the wine and learn about the fabulous vineyards right on our doorstep.

Even the teenagers will enjoy the event with many 'instagramable moments' to capture with the show's music stage hosting sensational artists from East Sussex College.

Iain Nicol, CEO of the South of England Agricultural Society (SEAS), said: "Every year we welcome thousands of visitors to The South of England Show, and this year we're expecting a record 70,000+ guests over the weekend."

He added that the SEAS is a charity and the annual show raises vital funds to support people with an interest or involvement in agriculture and other related land-based industries. "From inspiring schoolchildren to learn about the land, to offering travel bursaries for people working in the farming sector or helping with

funding towards agricultural research - we want people to know that when they visit The South of England Show they will also be supporting these fantastic projects and people across the South East," he said.

To win a pair of tickets to this year's show just answer the following question: In what year was the very first South of England Show held? Email your answer to: competition@hassockslife.co.uk. Don't forget to include your name and contact telephone number. The closing date for entries is 21st May 2019.

Tickets for the South of England Show 2019 are available from www.seas.org.uk and can be bought online in advance for a 10% discount. Tickets cost £22 for adults, £20 for senior citizens/students, and under 16s go free with a paying adult.

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Housebuilder steps in to save the swifts

Local housebuilder Barratt Homes has renewed its pledge to support the iconic British swift at its current site in Hassocks. With research from the British Trust for Ornithology revealing that the British swift population has fallen by 51% since 1995, the housebuilder will be installing its custom built 'Swift Bricks' at the development to provide a habitat for the declining species.

Swifts typically make their home in the roofs of older buildings. However, these habitats are being disturbed due to repairs and changes in roof design. To combat this, Barratt Southern Counties, in partnership with the RSPB, has committed to providing one swift brick per plot at each of its new homes developments.

A total of 130 safe, custom-design swift nesting boxes will be installed at the housebuilder's Saxon Mills development in the village. These special bricks have been designed to match the existing framework of the homes and will be installed to create a safe, unobtrusive home for the swifts.

Lynnette St-Quintin, Sales & Marketing Director for Barratt Southern Counties, comments: "As a housebuilder, we feel that it is our duty to provide a home for swifts across our developments."

Jamie Wyver, RSPB swift lead, comments: "We know how to give swifts the new homes they need – now let's bring them back to our towns and cities! We need local councils and developers on board as they have the



power to make an enormous difference. Think of all the new building that's going on around the UK: with a few tiny changes we could be providing millions of homes for swifts."

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RECYCLE THIS...

WSSC Recycling Ambassador Colin McFarlin writes this monthly column so that we can all learn something new about what can, and cannot, be recycled here via the domestic blue bins in Hassocks. If you have a question for him, email: editor@hassockslife.co.uk.



What can I do with old towels, bed linen, clothes, etc?

You will be pleased to know there are a number of options open to you.

You can contact the Cats Protection at Chelwood Gate 01825 741 330 as they are often looking for old towels and bedding they can use for their stray cats.



You can take them to a charity shop. As you know charity shops accept good quality items they can resell, but did you know that charity shops also accept 'rags'. This is the term used to describe old worn clothes that cannot be sold in the shops. These are collected and sold to the rag industry where they are shredded, cleaned and used as filling for, amongst other things, car seats. Next time you are sitting in a car you are almost certainly sitting on someone's old clothes!

You can take them all to the Household Waste Recycling Site in Burgess Hill or East Grinstead, where you will find a specific bay for your items. These are also sold to the rag industry, but the money goes to WSSC for essential services.

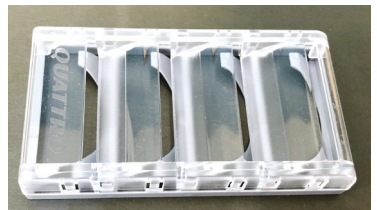
Do you remember rag and bone men? Well, it is the same trade, but without the horse and cart!

You can take them to the many clothes banks you will see around Haywards Heath. You can find them at Sainsburys in the car park immediately to the right as you drive in, or outside many local shops.

The important thing is NOT put them into your kerbside recycling bin or your kerbside rubbish bin as they cannot be recycled through that mechanical process.

How can I recycle the plastic holder my razor blades are packed in (see photo)?

This type of plastic cannot be recycled in your kerbside recycling bin but do put into your black top rubbish bin and all the plastics and paper are extracted and turned into RDF - Refuse derived Fuel that is then sold to industry. This way they do not end up in landfill.



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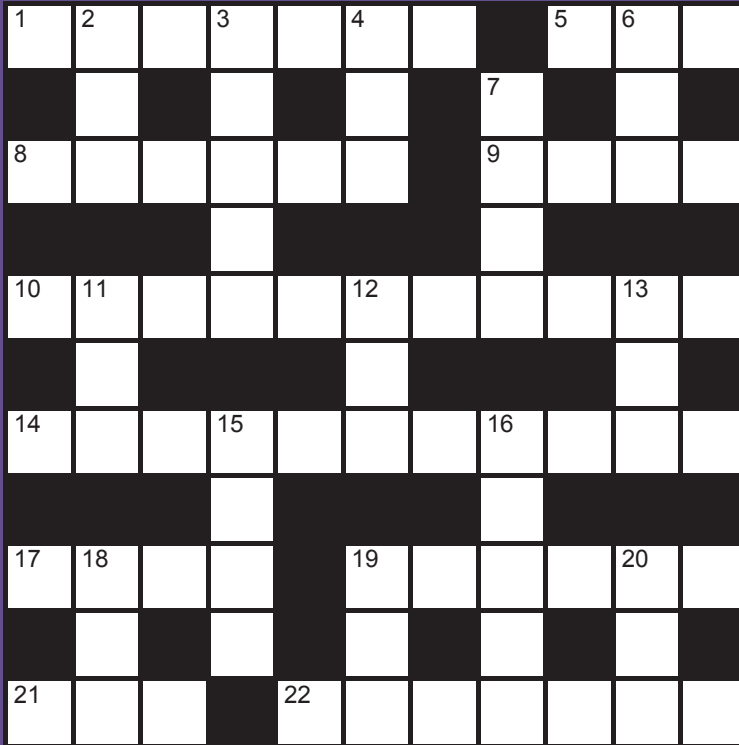
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Family crossword



Got 20 mins spare?
Have a go at this crossword - which should be varied enough for all ages to answer some clues.
Answers listed on p.35

Across

- 1 Psalm book (7)
- 5 Shelter (3)
- 8 Reflecting surface (6)
- 9 Test (4)
- 10 Manufacture in large quantities (4-7)
- 14 Fragments (4,3,4)
- 17 Couch (4)
- 19 Non meat-eater (6)
- 21 Pigpen (3)
- 22 Disrobe (7)

Down

- 2 Snow runner (3)
- 3 Songbirds (5)
- 4 Spike of corn (3)
- 6 Period of history (3)
- 7 Alcoholic drink of fermented honey (4)
- 11 Help (3)
- 12 Hurried (3)
- 13 Fish (3)
- 15 Smack (4)

- 16 Enthusiastic (5)
- 18 Plump (3)
- 19 Covered vehicle (3)
- 20 Belongs to it (3)

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HassocksLife

Sudoku #34

Courtesy of <http://andrews-sudoku.blogspot.co.uk>

Find the solution to #34
in next month's magazine

	9				4		7	
				5				4
5	4			1	7	9		8
		2				6		
	6	9				4		2
		1						
				7		3		
		6						
7				3	2			5

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25 – 26 May

Kew Science Festival

at Wakehurst

Wakehurst

Visit kew.org/wakehurst

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

What's on this month

AT ADASTRA HALL

Regular events

Tue **Modern Jive class**
8pm

Thur **Beginners/Improvers Dancing**
6.50pm

Ballroom & Latin Dancing
8pm

May

8th **Horticultural Society** – 7.45pm
'Borde Hill House & Garden' talk by owner Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke (new members welcome)

12th **Psychic Holistic Fair** – 10am-5pm
Free talks and meditation all day (Free entrance)

17th **HHD U3A** – 2pm
'So Far, So Good! A behind the scenes look at army life, an investiture and assistance dog training' with Malcolm Wells

24th **Heber Opera** – 7.30pm
Production of Norma in the round, sung in English (www.heberopera.co.uk)

AND ELSEWHERE

May

7th-9th **John Lawson's Circus**
Recreation Ground, South Avenue, Hurstpierpoint (www.johnlawsonscircus.co.uk)

9th **Mid Sussex National Trust** – 2.30pm
Clair Hall, Haywards Heath - Talk: 'Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-Ups' by Andy Thomas

11th **Model Railway Show** – 10am-5pm
Dolphin Leisure Centre, Haywards Heath (£5 adult entry)

11th **Bowls Open Morning** – 10am-12.30pm
Adastra Bowling Club, Orchard Lane – Come and try lawn bowling (event repeated on 18th May)

12th **Windmill Open** – times TBC
Oldland Windmill, Lodge Hill, Hassocks

12th **National Mills Weekend** – 11am-5pm
Jill Windmill, off Mill Lane – Windmill open to the public most Sundays

18th-19th **Big Tennis Weekend**
Weald Lawn Tennis Club – Try tennis for free (01273 844283)

18th **Cycling Without Age** – 10.30am
Holy Trinity Church, Hurst – Talk from CWA team and free rides

19th **The Great British Gin Festival** – 5-10pm
The New Inn, Hurstpierpoint – Taste over 30 different gins at this event organised by South Downs Cellar (£15)

24th-27th **Art Exhibition** – 10am-5pm
Ditchling Village Hall - Attic Art Club celebrates its 80th anniversary with exhibition (admission free)

June

2nd **Windmill Open** – 2-5pm
Oldland Windmill, Lodge Hill, Hassocks

9th **Mid Sussex Triathlon**
The Triangle, Burgess Hill – 400m swim, 25k bike, 5k run (www.midsussextriathlon.com)

9th **Burgess Hill Bike Ride** – Reg from 8am
Queens Crescent Car Park, RH15 9DP – 10, 20 or 40 mile routes (www.burgesshillbikeride.co.uk)

15th **Sussex Chorus Concert** – 7.30pm
Hurst College Chapel – Will Todd and the Will Todd Ensemble (tickets £15/£5 www.sussexchorus.org)

Got an event going on?

If you are organising an event or function which you'd like to promote to Hassocks - here's where to do it!

Our monthly What's On section can include events taking place right here at Adastra Hall or elsewhere in Hassocks, or could be further afield (provided we have space).

Email details of any events which you'd like listed to editor@hassockslife.co.uk before our copy date - the next of which is 21st May. See the website for copy dates for the rest of the year: www.hassockslife.co.uk

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