



Under the Downs

3 Country Churches Nestling Under the Downs

View From the Rectory

February 2018

Right in the middle of this month, on the 14th, if you look in your diary you will find that we celebrate both St Valentine's Day, and Ash Wednesday. What could these two days possibly have in common? And why is St Valentine thought of in connection with love?

To answer the second question first, Valentine was one of those members of the early Christian Church in Rome who was put to death, like many others, by the Emperor Claudius. The date of his death, February 14th, coincided with a pagan festival connected, as many were, with earthly love, but also the medieval belief that this was the date on which birds started mating, hence the custom of sending cards, sometimes anonymously, to our own special 'significant others'!

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, when we remember Jesus'

temptation in the wilderness, and think about our own shortcomings, and how we might do better, both in our relationships with one another, and our journey with God, as we start to look towards Easter and its Resurrection promise.

Saying sorry, whether that is to another human being or to God, is a very loving thing to do, as is thinking of ways in which we can be more loving in the future to those around us, and how we can, in our individual way, respond to the love that God pours out on each and every one of us.

So yes, there is a connection!

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God"

1 John 4: 7

Linda

Let's Get Cracking!

by Michael Blencowe of the Sussex Wildlife Trust

Each winter the big freeze consumes northern Europe and our island's mild maritime climate provides a refuge and a lifeline to birds whose regular food sources lie buried under snow and ice. Blackbirds, bramblings, bitterns, starlings, sanderlings, smew and many other species head here to survive. But this year the winter visitor everyone is hoping to see is the hawfinch.

You probably won't be familiar with the hawfinch so I'll give you a few key identification features...aw, forget it. Just look at that massive beak! You can't miss it. It's like someone crossbred a chaffinch with a puffin. I'm amazed it can stand up – you'd half expect that ridiculous beak to send it tottering face-first to the floor. This pair of monstrous mandibles combined with powerful jaw muscles can exert a whopping 150 pounds per square inch of pressure and are designed to crack its favoured food; fruit stones and seeds. You know how horrible it is when you bite down on an olive and find there's a stone inside? Hawfinches would shatter that stone without batting an eyelid.

This winter Britain seems to have been the holiday destination for hungry hordes of hawfinches. There's an estimated 14 times as many here than usual. It's a once-in-a-lifetime invasion – the result of a successful breeding year for continental hawfinches followed by a drastic shortage of food; an equation that sends them flocking across Europe in search of seeds and stones.

Ash Wednesday

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday - and this year is on 14th February.



At the start of Lent people went to church to reflect on their past shortcomings, to think of the suffering of Jesus, and to resolve to do better in the future.

Our service of Holy Communion in St Catherine's Cocking at 10am reflects this: it is a time for thinking about the journey of Jesus and of ourselves, of saying sorry for things we have done or said in the past, and for those who wish, the opportunity to receive the sign of the cross in ash.

Do join us if you can:

Wednesday 14th February 10am
St Catherine of Siena Cocking



Benefice Lent course 2018

Lord, teach us to pray

In the Diocese of Chichester, 2018 has been designated the Year of Prayer.



Lent begins on Wednesday, 14 February and in the weeks following we will be using a published course to help us find out more prayer in general, and The Lord's Prayer in particular.

Each week we will look at different sections of the Lord's Prayer and how it underpins our own journey of faith.

There will be five sessions, each on a **Monday** afternoon, from 2pm until 4pm, finishing with tea and biscuits/cake.

Dates and locations as follows:

19 February	Cocking Village Hall
26 February	Cobden Hall, Heyshott
5 March	St Mary's Church, Bepton
12 March	Cocking Village Hall
19 March	Cobden Hall, Heyshott

Although this is a series and it is really helpful if you can attend all sessions, each week does stand alone, so if you can only manage some of the dates, please come along anyway.

To help with catering, please let us know if you are planning to attend: give your names to Sheila Ryan, John Murray, Nick Sherwin, David Imlach or Glynis Mancini.

St Paul wrote to the people of Ephesus:

'Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.'

Family Activities at Chichester Cathedral

'Famous Folk' Friday 16th February 2018 from 10.00am – 3pm

A fun filled family day to be held in Chichester Cathedral

Collect stamps on your very own Passport as you find out about some of the Cathedral's famous characters. Prepare to be entertained and have fun! There will be people to meet, a variety of activities to do, games to play and things to make including crown making, weaving, magic sculptures and transport collages. Once your Passport is full collect a prize from the shop.

There is no need to book just drop in. The cost is **£1.00 per child payable on collection of your passport at the West Door or Eastern Arm**. A couple of activities (brass rubbing and magic sculpture) will have an additional small charge.

Suitable for children aged 3 – 12 years, who must be accompanied by an adult.

Midhurst Garden Club

Monday 12 February 2018

Our talk this month is on ORCHIDS. Jonathon Watson has been growing Orchids from some 25 years and is currently President of the Wessex Orchid Society and also one of the British Orchid Council's National Judges. His talk will be an overview of Orchids and the conditions they require to grow well (bearing in mind there are 28,000 + species identified and around 200,000 Hybrids).

For more information about the Club please contact Denise Skinner 01730 814194, askinner3@sky.com or check our website midhurstgardenclub.co.uk

Midhurst WI

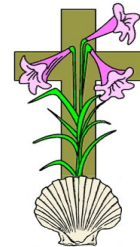
The Midhurst WI have had a busy few months. Last October, we welcomed the West Sussex Federation Chairman to our meeting and also a local lady who demonstrated making small flower arrangements for the home. In November we had our Annual General Meeting and, at our meeting in December, we had our Christmas lunch followed by both Christmas songs and others led by musician Ray Martin on guitar and accordion.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, February 7th at 2:30pm at the Catholic Church Hall when our speaker will be John Owen Smith with a talk entitled 'On the trail of Flora Thompson'. The BBC dramatised three of Flora's semi-autobiographical books as 'Lark Rise to Candleford' in 2008. Flora lived for a while in Liphook with her husband and children.

Anyone who would like to join us will be most welcome. For more information about the Midhurst WI, please contact me, Jill O'Grady, on 01730 601273.

Church Service Times

This is the usual pattern, but occasionally there are changes - please check the church noticeboards. This is especially important at festival times such as Christmas and Easter



St Mary Bepton

11.15am 1st Sunday of the month Matins BCP
2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays Matins with Holy Communion BCP

St Catherine of Siena Cocking

9.30am Every Sunday
1st Sunday of the month Family Communion CW
2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays Holy Communion CW

St James Heyshott

11.15am 1st Sunday of the month Family Communion CW
9.30am 2nd Sunday of the month Holy Communion BCP
9.30am 3rd Sunday of the month Matins BCP
11.15am 4th Sunday of the month Holy Communion CW
6.00pm 1st 2nd and 4th Sundays Evensong BCP
3rd Sunday Compline

On a 5th Sunday of the month, there is a joint service at 10.00 am at one of our churches - please check the notice boards or our magazine.
CW - Common Worship is the modern language service **BCP** - Book of Common Prayer is the traditional service