



Under the Downs

3 Country Churches Nestling Under the Downs

View From the Rectory

Well, as the saying goes, March certainly came in like a lion and by now we will know if it also went out like a lamb.

What I remember most about the main snowfall was seeing all the tracks made by various creatures during the night and early morning. My cats had clearly explored all the garden, having sat outside the catflap for a short time. The pheasants had trotted, ever hopeful, backwards and forwards to the birdfeeders, where they had been joined from time to time by many other small birds. No signs of movement by the squirrels: they were probably tucked up cosily in the trees waiting for better times.

We don't often get to see a full pattern of journeys like these, but wherever the creatures went we could see their impressions. We also make many journeys as we go about our daily lives and we leave impressions too. Wherever we go,

whatever we do, leaves an impression however small, and we have an effect on the lives and places around us.

So we have to ask ourselves, do we leave a good impression? I don't mean that we are noticed for our good deeds, but rather that we have made a positive difference, even in a small way, to the world we live in day by day.

Following the teachings of Jesus can help us to do that, and a familiar hymn contains the line:

"O let me see thy footprints, and in them plant mine own"

We may not be able to match the steps exactly, but following his footprints will certainly lead us in the right direction.

Every blessing

Linda

April 2018

Annual Meetings

Annual meetings for each church will be held in April.

On each occasion, there are two meetings:

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners, to elect churchwardens, which can be attended by any person resident in that parish

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting, a report on the church's work during 2017. This meeting is open to those on the church electoral roll

Meeting dates:

St Catherine of Siena Cocking:
Sunday 15th April at 10.45am in church

St Mary Bepton: Sunday 15th April
at 12.15 pm in church

St James Heyshott: Monday 16th
April at 7pm in the Cobden Hall

There's a fifth Sunday in April...

Sunday 29th April at 10 am in St James' Church Heyshott

We will be joined by a speaker from the Children's Society who will tell us not only about their work, but also how the charity is working with others to provide care for young people of all ages needing help.



Moonlight Cottage is re-opening on **Friday 30th March** as The Chicken Shed Café serving Brunch, Lunch and Teas. Private Parties also welcome.

Opening times, 10am—5pm Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays

Come along to our Bi-monthly Bistro nights (more details to follow)

Other events include:

Cocking Lunch Club

3rd Wednesday of each month, 2-course lunch with tea or coffee ~ £7.50, please book as places are limited

Knit and Natter

Every Thursday, 7-9pm, informal chat group with home-made cake and hot drinks

Contact Steve and Sue Redshaw

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Rabbits by Michael Blencowe

Rabbits are so common in Sussex that it's hard to believe they could be rare anywhere, but in Spain they've hopped onto the endangered species list. This is all rather embarrassing for the Spanish because Spain (along with Portugal and North Africa) are the ancestral homes of the rabbit. Indeed the word 'Spain' (or España, por favor) means "land of the rabbits".



Rabbits were perfectly happy here in their native Iberia and had no plans of moving, so it must have bugged these bunnies when they were rounded up by the Romans and transported all over Europe to be farmed and eaten as a delicacy. The first British rabbits were carried over the channel 2000 years ago and subsequent waves of invaders brought more. By the 12th century rabbits had become acclimatised and established in the English countryside. They dug for victory, their burrows and warrens spread across Europe and the hole-y rabbit empire flourished. For our ancestors, rabbit meat provided a heartening meal and boy! – was it plentiful. As we all know, rabbits breed like, well, rabbits (which is pretty rich coming from us, a species whose population has doubled since 1970). The male (buck) and female (doe) can produce 7 litters of 4-8 kittens each year. It doesn't take a statistician to work out that quickly adds up to many millions of munching mouths eating our crops and countryside; and presenting economic and ecological problems. But despite being despised the rabbit also became domesticated and adored. A journey from pot to pest to pet.

This all-powerful rabbit tsunami seemed unstoppable; but they hadn't counted on one man: Monsieur Armand-Delille. This Parisian professor hated the rabbits on his small country estate so in 1952 he injected a pair of them with a new disease called Myxomatosis. This spark started an inferno. In just one year these two simple injections inadvertently led to the death of 90% of all the rabbits in Europe. This virulent flea-borne disease did not discriminate and back in Iberia the original Spanish rabbits were wiped out too. Against other pressures their population has never recovered.

Of course I haven't travelled to Spain to watch rabbits. I'm looking for an animal that's looking for rabbits – the Iberian lynx: the rarest cat in the world. The collapse in rabbit numbers had also impacted their predators and by 2005 the 150 lynx left on the planet faced extinction. Now, thanks to a rabbit re-introduction programme, the missing lynx are slowly returning to these mountains. So did I find one? That's a story for another day.

Midhurst Garden Club

Monday 9 April 2018

Our talk for April is THE SCENTED GARDEN.

Anthony Powell will tell us about the subtlety of Scent, the benefits derived from it and also explain why gardens are better for involving Scent as well as Shape and Colour.

We meet at the South Downs Memorial Hall North Street Midhurst. Refreshments are available from 7.00pm and the talk begins at 7.30pm.

Visitors are very welcome.

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



Church Service Times

There is a fifth Sunday in April: this month our joint Benefice service is at St James, Heyshott at 10am

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