

Whatlington News

DECEMBER 2021

GET IN TOUCH: STEVE TURNER 01424 870041

**Holiday hut plans
opposed** Page 6

**Q: What do these faces
have in common?**



**A: They all feature in our
Christmas Quiz** Page 5

Pageant is back ...



**... and so are
the children!** Page 3

Police study CCTV in search for A21 crash driver

Police have been viewing security camera footage from homes along the A21 in the hunt for the driver of a car believed to be involved in a collision that left a motorcyclist seriously injured.

The crash occurred around 4pm last Saturday near the junction of the main road and Park Lane.

The police are searching for a grey or dark-coloured Land Rover that left the scene of the accident, believed heading south before turning into Stream Lane.

As well as studying CCTV footage from village homes, the force has appealed to the public for witnesses to come forward and is asking garages in the area to be on the alert for a vehicle matching the description that is brought in for damage repair.

The A21 was closed for several hours with paramedics

and the air ambulance attending the casualty, who has suffered serious injuries.

As the Whatlington News went to press the police were still trying to find the damaged Land Rover and asked anyone with information to email collision.appeal@sussex.pnn.police.uk or call 101 and quote serial 806 of 04/12.

703 people killed or injured: the stats driving road safety bid: page 4

Season's Greetings
to all of our customers
and thank you for
your support during
these challenging
times

*Maria, Neil and
all of the team, at
The Royal Oak*



SEE OPPOSITE FOR OUR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

Pageant: return of the children!

The Whatlington Pageant is planned to go ahead on Sunday 19 December but with a changed starting point in response to heightened Covid-19 concerns.

There will be no service inside the church, traditionally the start of the celebrations telling the nativity story with children playing all the parts.

Instead the pageant, with carols and readings, will start in the churchyard before processing by torchlight to Leeford Farmhouse for the stable scene.

Following the retirement of parish priest Kevin Mephram the service will be led by Rev John Hawkins.

And this year, with the arrival of new families in the village, there are more local youngsters taking part than usual.

The event starts at 3.30pm, with free

parking at the Village Hall, and all those attending are urged to dress up warm, wear boots and bring torches.

Annette McBride, who is organising the event with Pam Butcher, said: "The arrangements are going well.

"We have 14 children taking part, which is more than there has been for years – an excellent sign for the future.

"Pam and I have been busy collecting, altering and making the costumes, so hopefully we will have a very colourful pageant.

"Although this Christmas isn't going to be as 'normal' as we'd all hoped I'm sure the pageant will bring back some of the joy of the village's festive celebrations."

■ *If you have children taking part in the pageant please arrive at the church at 3pm.*



Christmas at the church

■ Whatlington Church Christmas celebrations start on 12 December at 10.30am with a Carol Service, when there will be the opportunity to sing favourite carols and listen to the traditional Christmas readings.

It will be supported by a small choir formed by members of Whatlington Singers.

Refreshments will be served after the service, which will be led by Charmaine Hill.

■ On 19 December at 3.30pm the Whatlington Pageant will be held (see above).

■ On Christmas Eve, the 'midnight' service will take place at 10pm with refreshments afterwards.

If you are planning to attend the Carol or Christmas Eve services email churchwarden Jeffrey Bridges at j.bridges815@btinternet.com to ensure Covid-safe arrangements can be made,

Please carry out a lateral flow test at home before attending and stay away if you have any form of viral symptoms. Masks will need to be worn by the congregation when singing inside and at other times if deemed necessary by the churchwardens.

■ **Up to a year before new vicar is appointed: page 7**

Christmas at the Oak

The Royal Oak's *Carols around the bar* Christmas Eve celebration will not be held again this year, due to Covid-19 concerns.

Opening hours over the festive holiday period are as follows:

Christmas Eve – open 12noon-11pm (kitchen 12-9pm),

Christmas Day – closed

Boxing Day –12-6pm (kitchen 12-4pm)

New Year's Eve –12-6pm (kitchen 12-4pm)

New Year's Day – 12-9pm (kitchen 12-7pm)

■ The pub will be closed 2-6 January, reopening 7 January.

The Village Hall Festive Supper, due to be held on 11 December, was cancelled as a precaution to reduce the Covid risk to those planning to attend.

412 accidents 703 people injured 218 fatally or seriously

Stats behind £20m A21 road safety proposals



In five years there were 412 accidents on the A21 between Sevenoaks and Hastings with nearly a third of the 703 people hurt suffering serious or fatal injuries.

That number exceeds the national trunk road average and the stretch between Flimwell and Hastings is officially classed as medium to high risk.

It is against that background, and analysis of 10 years' of accident data, that £20.3million has been allocated for improvement works as part of the National Highways A21 Safety Package.

The authority stresses the project, due to be completed by 2025, is intended to improve safety

and reduce collisions, injuries and deaths. It is not aimed at increasing the capacity of the A21.

A key part of the strategy is to reduce the variability of speed limits along the route. In the less than four miles between the Riccards Lane and the A28 (Westfield Lane) junctions there are five speed limit changes.

The package proposes a consistent 50mph for single carriageway roads outside of villages, and 40mph within them.

This is designed to improve driver behaviour and reduce the number and severity of accidents.

In 2019, 33.1 per cent of all road collision fatalities occurred on rural roads with 60mph speed limits, dropping to 6.7 per cent on roads with 50mph limits.

In addition to measures to improve signage and road markings, two specific schemes for Whatlington have been identified so far.

Junction of Park Lane and A21: it is proposed to relocate the 40mph sign further north to improve visibility, avoiding the current sign's potential to distract drivers' attention from vehicles joining the A21, and giving them longer to reduce speed before entering Whatlington.

Whatlington to Blackbrooks: this stretch had the highest number of fatal collisions (three) and the proposal is to reduce the 60mph limit to 50mph.

Under the Safety Package pledge to improve the provision for pedestrians, Whatlington Parish Council is pressing its case for pavements alongside the A21 through the village.

However the council has expressed concern that the total budget will not be sufficient to finance all of the schemes being proposed.

National Highways promises further consultation with parish councils and residents on specific local proposals in 2022.

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It's Quizmas!

Test your knowledge of local and national events and history. FREE entry and FREE of prizes, the answers are on page 8

1. When is Twosday?
2. Why did an angler fishing the River Line call the police?
3. What percentage of motorists were clocked exceeding the 40mph speed limit on the A21 during a June Speedwatch session?
A 43% B 76% C 57%
4. Who was given permission to publish a newsletter on the parish council's website?
A: Village Hall B: Sedlescombe Village C: MP Huw Merriman
5. Captain Sir Tom Moore sadly died at the age of 100. How many lengths of his garden did he walk in raising £32 million for NHS Charities Together?
A: 50 B: 100 C: 1000

6. Who went to war over caterpillar cake?
A: M&S and Aldi B: M&S and Sainsburys C: Sainsburys and Aldi?



7. The Euro 2020 final – in July 2021 – between England and Italy drew the UK's biggest TV audience since which event?
A: Princess Diana funeral B: Harry and Meghan wedding C: First Moon landing
8. Which retailer closed its final store on 15 May after more than 240 years in business?
9. What Battle object was moved 20ft to the right place?
A: Cash dispenser B: King Harold's death spot C: Parking ticket machine
10. Which monarch owned land in Whatlington?
A: Alfred the Great B: Harold Godwinson C: Elizabeth the First

11. Una Stubbs, *right*, sadly passed away. In which film did she first find fame in the 1960s?
A: Summer Holiday B The Young Ones C Cathy Come Home



12. Which of these is NOT a theory for the origin of the name 'Whatlington'?
A: A wheat-fortified hill B: A 7th century Susexian subking called Watt C: It's the end of the roman road Watling Street

13. In which decade did hops stop being grown at Hancox farm?
A: 1940s B: 1950s C: 1960s
- 14: What term does Nikolaus Pevsner use to describe the Whatlington Church tower in his book *The Buildings of England: Sussex*?
A: Unusual B: Understated C: Unfortunate
- 15: From what period does the Communion Cup or Chalice in the Parish Church date?
A: Jacobean B: Victorian C: Roman
- 16: The oak frame of the church roof is thought to date from 1275 – which King was on the throne of England then?



- A: Henry III B: Edward I C: Richard I
- 17: What Year did The Royal Oak open?
A: 1450 B: 1490 C: 1530

- 18: Selling well over 1000 pints since reopening in April, what is the biggest selling lager at The Royal Oak?
A: Fosters B: Whitstable Bay Blonde C: Spitfire Lager
- 19: How many people are employed at The Royal Oak? A: 12 B: 10 C: 8
- 20: In what year did Rother Council start its brown bin collections of garden waste?
A: 2010 B: 2012 C: 2014

- 21: On which wall is the village defibrillator, used to resuscitate anyone having a heart attack?
A: Village Hall B: Royal Oak C: Whatlington Garage

22. What was Battle resident Frank Chacksfield, *pictured right*, famous for?



23. What links the following names: Franklin, Imani, Olwen and Tineke?

24. In which parliamentary constituency is Whatlington?
A: Battle and Rye B: Bexhill and Battle C: Rother South

Holiday hut plans opposed by council

Two separate planning applications for shepherd's hut holiday accommodation in the village have drawn objections from the parish council.

A plan for two huts at Riccards Spring in Riccards Lane, each with running water and electricity and available for hire all year, was refused by Rother District Council.

Whatlington councillors objected stating: "With all the necessary infrastructure – electricity, water and drainage – it would be overdevelopment and harmful to the character of the parish and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

The council also raised objections to potential noise and light pollution. In rejecting the plan Rother

stated: "The applicant has failed to demonstrate that benefits to local tourism brought about by the change of use of arable land for use as holiday let accommodation would outweigh the harm upon the AONB and open countryside."

A second and unrelated application, for six huts at Mill Farm in Mill Lane, has still to be decided by Rother.

Whatlington councillors have objected stating: "The parish council objects strongly to this overdevelopment application.

"The land is an agricultural field outside the domestic curtilage of Mill Farm. The parish is rural and this would be harmful to the character of both the parish and the AONB."

Leeford Place Hotel up for sale

Leeford Place Hotel is up for sale for offers in excess of £2.25million. Set in eight acres of land, the hotel is one of the area's best known wedding and function venues. It has 17 guest bedrooms as well as staff/owners' accommodation. The hotel is being marketed by Christie & Co of Maidstone.

Financial help offer for struggling families

Households struggling to meet the cost of food, energy or water bills this winter can apply for support as part of a £3.9m fund being made available to councils across East Sussex.

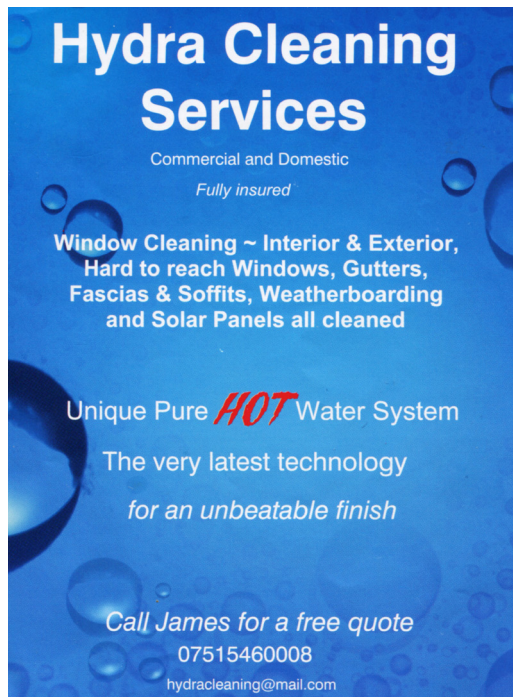
More than half of the fund will be directed to families with children.

It will pay for free school meals for those who are eligible in the two-week Christmas school holiday, in the week of half-term in February and the two-week Easter holiday in April.

Families struggling to meet everyday bills will be considered for support if they're 18 or over and receive a means-tested benefit (including universal credit, pension credit or working tax credit among others).

Money is also being made available to charities that support households in need, including foodbanks,

For more information contact Rother Household Support Fund via Rother District Council on 01424 787000.



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ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH

Wait for new priest 'could be up to a year'

Christmas is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year in the church calendar, and this year looks to be as busy as Covid permits. Looking at the schedule of services, including the welcome return of the pageant, there is almost a return to 'normality'.

Mind you I am not sure we will notice much change, given how busy the past couple of months have been: two weddings, Remembrance and the final service for Kevin, all of which have seen high attendance, for which we have been most grateful.

No doubt the pageant and carol service will see similar numbers attending. It would be welcome to see some of that attendance translated into more joining for the regular services.

With Kevin having now begun to settle in his retirement, the church enters an 'interregnum', which is described as 'a period of reflection before a new priest is appointed to fill a vacancy'.

During this period the churchwardens, supported by the members of the parochial church council (PCC), take responsibility for the running of the

By John Crouch, Churchwarden: 07788 416903

church, under the direction of the Bishop via the Archdeacon for the area.

We are pleased to advise that we have arranged cover for services at Whatlington up to and beyond beyond Easter 2022.

To achieve this we are grateful to Rev John Hawkins for his support with the Eucharist services (1st and 3rd Sundays) and to a variety of lay-readers for the Morning and Evening services (2nd and 4th Sundays).

Anyone requiring baptisms, marriages or burials during this time should in the first instance contact either of the wardens.

We have no preconceived idea of how long the interregnum will last.

Some are relatively short-lived – three to four months – while others can last a couple of years.

Early indications suggest we are likely to be in the current situation for about nine months to a year and we will keep the community updated.

Church services

The pattern of church services for each month in 2022 will be:

1st Sunday 9.15am Holy

Communion

2nd Sunday 10.30am Family

service – refreshments afterwards

3rd Sunday 9.15am Holy

Communion

4th Sunday 4pm Evensong –

refreshments afterwards (6pm

from April)

5th Sunday 10.30am United Service

with Sedlescombe alternating

between the two churches

■ Find details of services and latest

news at: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5526/whatlington

■ There is also a church Facebook

page: [www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/Whatlington-Parish-Church)

[Whatlington-Parish-Church](https://www.facebook.com/Whatlington-Parish-Church)

Saying farewell to Kevin

The annual Memorial Service, at which we remember our departed loved ones, was especially well attended this year as it also marked the last service taken at Whatlington by our priest Kevin Mepham.

He was with us for almost 10 years and will be much missed.

The church was specially decorated with roses, Kevin's favourite flower, and following the service there were some excellent refreshments served.

The following week there was a United Service at Sedlescombe, again well

**By Jeffrey Bridges
Churchwarden 01424 772535**

attended, when we wished Kevin farewell and a long and happy retirement.

Following the service there was a presentation to Kevin of the money collected jointly across both churches as a retirement gift.

This amounted to £2,100, a sum reflective of the high regard in which Kevin has been held across not only both churches, but both civil parishes. We believe Kevin may use the collection to go towards a new greenhouse.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 22nd February 2022 (22/2/22)
- 2 He pulled two WW2 shells from the river using a powerful magnet
- 3 B – 76%
- 4 MP Huw Merriman
- 5 B – 100 lengths
- 6 A – M&S and Aldi
- 7 Funeral of Princess Diana in 1997
- 8 Debenhams
- 9 The engraved stone on the spot where King Harold was thought to have fallen
- 10 B – Harold Godwinson
- 11 A – Summer Holiday
- 12 C – End of Watling Street
- 13 C – 1960s
- 14 C – Unfortunate
- 15 A – Jacobean (1624)
- 16 B – Edward I, a carving of whose head, and that of his Queen Eleanor of Castile, appear on stone corbels in the church
- 17 B – 1490 (although it says 1450 on the pub!)
- 18 C – Spitfire Lager
- 19 A – 12 (excluding landlords Neil & Maria)
- 20 C – 2014
- 21 B – Royal Oak
- 22 He was a band leader whose records Limelight and Ebb Tide remained in the hit parade on both sides of the Atlantic for most of 1953
- 23 They're official names for storms in 2022
- 24 B – Bexhill and Battle

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