

# Whatlington News

OCTOBER 2023

CONTACT: STEVE TURNER 01424 870041

## New vicar is a familiar face

After nearly two years the village has a new vicar – although he is somebody with whom local churchgoers will be familiar.

Rev John Hawkins has been appointed rector for the combined parish of Sedlescombe and Whatlington – filling the vacancy left by Rev Kevin Mepham.

While the village was without a vicar John stood in to cover services and has now come out of retirement as a permanent replacement for Kevin.

He grew up in West London but moved to the suburbs when he married his wife Julie.



**John and Julie Hawkins**

### WHATLINGTON CONNECTED

Craft, cake  
decorating  
and yoga  
classes  
among  
host of  
activities  
coming up

See pages 4-5

The village  
fete in  
pictures

See pages 11-15

## MP at village meeting to answer your concerns



Whatlington MP Huw Merriman is to hold a public meeting in the village next month.

Huw is also a Minister of State in the Department for Transport and is attending the Village Hall meeting at the invitation of the Parish Council, whose chairman Roger Fisher will host the event.

Roger said: "This is a rare opportunity for villagers to raise concerns not only on local matters and specific transport issues – his particular brief is railways and HS2 – but also on wider Government topics."

■ **The meeting will be held on Friday 3 November at 3pm.**

For news updates and  
details of local events:  
[www.whatlington.com](http://www.whatlington.com)

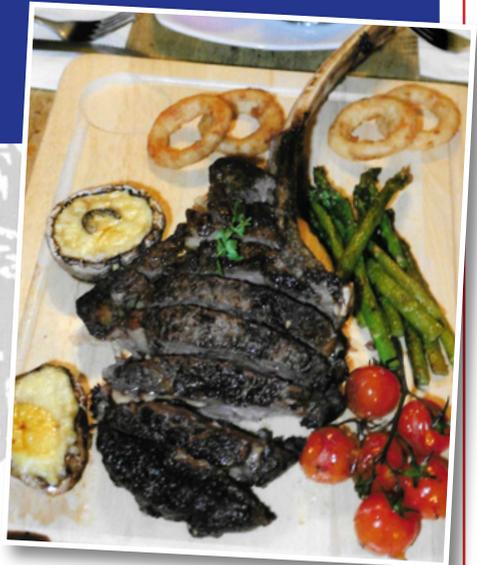
**Great food ■ Warm welcome  
Wide range of ales & wines  
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**Welcome to the  
Royal Oak**

See the  
website  
for our full  
menus

## **Friday night is steak night!**

**Come and try our  
tomahawk steaks –  
big enough to share!**



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ahead  
for our  
Sunday  
roasts**



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# WANTED Help deliver the News

Your Whatlington News is delivered direct to your door by a team of volunteers and now we need some extra help to fill a few gaps in the network, particularly in the Woodman's Oak Road area. It's not a time consuming task and is once every two months. If you can help please call Steve Turner on 07941 669678 or email [steveturner807@gmail.com](mailto:steveturner807@gmail.com)

## A21 to close for safety works

## New vicar

The next phase of safety works on the A21 between Hurst Green and Hastings is about to get under way, with a programme of road closures published.

To minimise disruption the work is taking place on weeknights only, from 8pm to 5am, and is due to start on Monday 9 October, finishing in Spring next year.

The first few weeks are:

Stage 1: Monday 9 to Tuesday 17 October – full closure between Coopers Corner and Northbridge Street roundabout.

Stage 2: Tuesday 17 to Wednesday 25 October – full closure between Northbridge Street roundabout and John's Cross.

Stage 3: Wednesday 25 October to Saturday 4 November – full closure

between John's Cross and A28 Westfield Lane.

A diversion via the A2100 will be in place for the stretch of work affecting Whatlington. Access to properties will be via escort from the start of the roadworks.

### Find out more

Visit <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/a21-safety-package/> to sign up for updates. You can call 0300 123 5000 (open 24/7) to ask any questions or email [info@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalhighways.co.uk)

■ **CCTV cameras have been installed at the junction of the A21 and Whatlington Road to measure traffic flow as part of a National Highways exercise ahead of bringing proposals to villagers on new safety measures.**

### From page 1

The couple have two married children and twin granddaughters who joined in the Whatlington pageant in 2018.

He was vicar of St Philip's Burwash from 2004 to 2011 and after retiring moved to Vinehall Road.

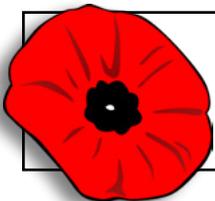
He says: "Together with Staphanie Prosser, I have been taking Sunday services during the recent interregnum.

"I have now come out of retirement to serve as rector of the combined parish and look forward to meeting everyone in my new 'official' capacity."

Churchwarden John Crouch says: "John has had a varied and fascinating career, bringing many life experiences to illustrate his preaching.

"For those wishing to know more about John, we suggest you join us for services.

"In due course there will be a 'licensing' event, details of which will be circulated through the church website, email contacts and social media platforms."



**November's Remembrance commemorations will be marked with a display of large plastic poppies dotted around the village. The Parish Council bought them after a suggestion from village churchwarden Jeffrey Bridges. Councillors have volunteered to put the tributes in place.**

■ **For details of the village Remembrance Service see page 10.**

# WHATLINGTON CONNECTED

Find out what's on in  
Whatlington at  
[www.whatlington.com](http://www.whatlington.com)

**18+25 OCTOBER** 10am-12noon, Village Hall

## Learn the craft of mosaics

Learn the art of mosaics with craft expert Lorraine Ashley, who sells her own creations on Etsy and is an adult education teacher. No experience is necessary – Lorraine will teach you all you need to know to make your own work of art during the fun two-hour sessions. You can do one session or two – it's up to you.  
Cost: £10 per session + materials.



More info at [whatlington.com/events](http://whatlington.com/events) or email [info@whatlington.com](mailto:info@whatlington.com) or call Anne Smith on 07771 994389

**26 OCTOBER**

7-9pm Royal Oak

## Pictionary meets Gogglebox!



**Quiz like no other!**

Alternate rounds will test your drawing skills and your telly knowledge. Advance booking essential.

More info at [whatlington.com/events](http://whatlington.com/events) or email [info@whatlington.com](mailto:info@whatlington.com) or call Anne Smith on 07771 994389



You can also book a £10 basket meal of chicken, sausage or scampi, with chips by calling 01424 870 492 or email [info@royaloakwhatlington.co.uk](mailto:info@royaloakwhatlington.co.uk)

**4 NOVEMBER** 9.30am-12.30pm, Village Hall

## Yoga workshop

Give yoga a try at a one-day workshop with Donna Sams.



For more info or to book contact Donna on 07519 358168 or visit [www.donnasamsyoga.com](http://www.donnasamsyoga.com)



**For details of special services at  
Whatlington Church see page 10**

# WHATLINGTON CONNECTED

Find out what's on  
in Whatlington at  
[www.whatlington.com](http://www.whatlington.com)

**5 & 9 DECEMBER**

Tuesday 5 December, 6.30-8.30pm, Village Hall  
Saturday 9 December 2.30-4.30pm, Whatlington Church

## Learn to make a Christmas wreath

Make your front door Christmas-ready by learning how to create your own festive wreath. Instruction and materials will be provided by Sandie Madge from the Floral Boutique in Robertsbridge but you can bring your own favourite decorations if you'd like. Two sessions are available – at the Village Hall and at Whatlington Church – and places are filling up fast. The cost is £35 to include refreshments but bring your own wine if you prefer something stronger.



### TO BOOK

Village Hall – ring Sandie Sullivan on 07939025828 or email [ssullivan1904@btinternet.com](mailto:ssullivan1904@btinternet.com)

Whatlington Church – ring Fran Crouch on 07825405355 or email [fecrouch@hotmail.com](mailto:fecrouch@hotmail.com)

## Festive Supper

This traditional Village Hall event is provisionally set for 10 December. A hot meal, quiz and raffle are on offer.

To reserve a place email Annette: [wild.blueyonder@btinternet.com](mailto:wild.blueyonder@btinternet.com)

**26 NOVEMBER & 3 DECEMBER**

Village Hall, 3-5pm

## Christmas cake decorating



Whatlington baking expert and professional chef Sandie Sullivan will teach you how to create a unique and personal festive centrepiece. The first session will cover icing your cake, and the second will be about decorating it. Price for each session is likely to be around £10 to include all you need (but bring your own cake).

### TO BOOK OR FOR MORE DETAILS

Call Sandie Sullivan on 07939025828 or email [ssullivan1904@btinternet.com](mailto:ssullivan1904@btinternet.com)

**21 DECEMBER** Royal Oak, 7-10pm

## Carols around the bar

Return of the hugely popular community carols singalong where volume outweighs choral skills. More details nearer the time.



# CHARITIES CASH IN ON VILLAGE SUPPORT



The latest charity pub quiz at the Royal Oak raised just over £260 for the DISC dementia support charity. The event was organised by Sandie Sullivan, a member of the Whatlington Community Connectors, who said: "It was a great turn out and the charity would like to thank everyone who took part, bought raffle tickets and donated prizes."

■ Sandie held a stand at the village fete selling craft items that brought in an extra £95 for DISC.

A coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support raised just over £200 through the sale of home-made cakes, a raffle and bric-a-brac.





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"I never thought it was going to be easy but I didn't think it would be this tough," says Oak landlord Hasan Fikret as he reflects on his baptism of fire running his first pub.

It's a year since Hasan rescued the Oak by taking on the tenancy for owners Shepherd Neame – 12 months that started with a bitterly cold winter, power cuts and road closures, and ends with high energy costs and household incomes squeezed.

On top of that his partner Selda has suffered a series of health problems.

And let's not even think about the prospect of a Covid return and potential effect on staffing.

Despite all of that he has signed another year-long agreement with the brewers and is looking to build on the work he has put into the pub.

A refurbished outdoor play area, fresh interior paintwork and all-new kitchen equipment are in place and a new log burner in the upper seating area is about to be installed.

But success with the pub's food offering is the key, says Hasan.

"Unless we can get enough people coming here for meals then there is no future for the Oak. It

# It's not been easy!

## Landlord Hasan reflects on his first year at the Oak with a hope of more support from villagers

won't survive on drink sales alone – my energy bills have reached £3000 a month at times this year.

"Our Sunday roasts and Friday steak nights have proved popular and I'm currently revising the menu to further improve it.

"I want to make it better and I'd welcome any feedback that would help me to do that, particularly from local people. All honest feedback, good or bad, is welcome.

"I'm grateful to those locals who are regulars, they have been so friendly and supportive, but I'd like to see more villagers using the pub. Most of my dining customers come from outside the village or passing trade."

Hasan, however, is committed to keeping the pub open for the village: "I love it here – the building itself, the countryside, the regulars have all made this feel like home."

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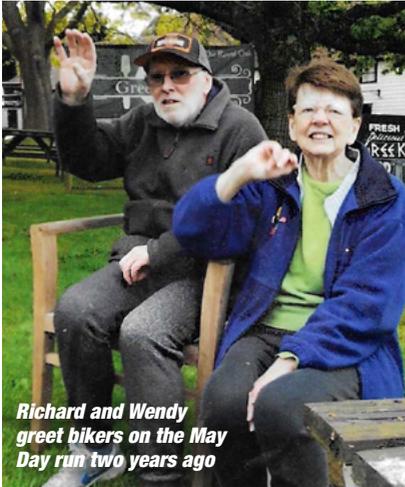
**Email: [julian.chandler@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:julian.chandler@hotmail.co.uk)**

**Home: The Cottage, Park Lane, Whatlington TN33 0NZ**

**Web: [www.julesdecorators.co.uk](http://www.julesdecorators.co.uk)**

## RICHARD JOHN THORNE 1948-2023

# A quiet man with a ready smile and passion for motorbikes



Take any village event in recent years and somewhere in the background you would find Richard Thorne.

At the fete, the film club, church services and as part of the Friday evening gathering at the Oak, Richard would be there with his wife of more than 50 years Wendy.

The couple were a fixture, and a willing pair of hands, at most village occasions and celebrations.

They had lived at Woodman's Oak for virtually their entire married lives, having first met when Wendy was 16 and Richard two years older.

At the time he was an apprentice mechanic in his home village of Beckley – a trade he continued throughout his working life, eventually becoming part owner of Tivoli Auto Services in St Leonards.

But his lifelong passion was for two wheels. Wendy lost count of the number of motorbikes he owned over the years: "At least 15," she says.

The couple travelled the UK, Europe and the US on two wheels and in later years Richard was a Harley-Davidson devotee, one of the first members of the 1066 HD Club – many of whom attended his funeral at Hastings Crematorium last month.

One of Wendy's first memories of Richard was seeing him in Sedlescombe pushing his motorbike back to Beckley after it had broken down . . . on the way to taking his test!

When he wasn't riding one he spent hours tinkering with them: "He would spend a whole weekend cleaning one," Wendy recalls.

He was a regular of the Bank Holiday motorbike run to Hastings, heading north to its starting point in Locksbottom, Bromley, to join the thousands of bikers heading for the coast.

The couple were regular churchgoers and Richard volunteered to help keep the churchyard tidy.

Wendy says: "He was a quiet man and loved being at home. He had been poorly for quite a while and I couldn't have coped without our two sons Simon and Adrian and my neighbours, who have been fantastic."

As one of the mourners said at the funeral: "He was always smiling and didn't have a bad bone in his body."



# The day I swallowed a wasp



**Whatlington's Martyn Hole detests the pests, particularly after swallowing one.**



I hate wasps, always have, always will and I don't know about you but we've had a lot in Whatlington this year. It's not the sting, I've been stung less than a dozen times, but you wonder sometimes what they're for.

With a bee, a sting means its demise whereas the wasp lives on to fight another day, which has always struck me as unfair.

My worst experience was at a barbecue where draining the remains of a bottle of Heineken, felt something go down my throat. "Oh no..." I thought and the blighter stung me on the way down.

I don't suffer from Anaphylaxis (which can be life threatening) but I felt my throat tightening and breathing became more difficult.

Possibly the greatest lost photo opportunity of all time was me, head down the bowl of our downstairs loo with six excited children peering gleefully over my shoulder.

We rang Yvonne Underhill and she gave me a shot of adrenaline (for the swelling) and Piriton (for the pain). "Don't drive!" warned Yvonne severely, "it makes you drowsy!"

Now my hatred of wasps is very common. With women, wasps come second (to spiders, naturally) in the least favourite creepy-crawlies league table. Men, it's wasps although personally, for me, it's cockroaches probably from my experience living in New York.

Two well-known fables about cockroaches are:

- first, that you never get just one. I'm not sure that's true (from personal experience)
- second, they are the animal most likely to survive a nuclear war. Their genetic make-up is very resistant to radiation damage – this definitely is true. Cockroaches, in tests, are six to 15 times less susceptible than humans to radiation (although fruit flies are even better.)

But back to wasps. There are people who like them: sphekesophiliacs apparently,

although my Ancient Greek is poor.

Why? They believe they are essential to our ecology for two very important reasons. First, they are important pollinators (it ain't just bees folks and no wasps, no chocolate!)

Second, they are superb predators. In the 19th century, a landowner vowed to remove every wasp from his estate. Two years later, he was afflicted by a terrible plague of flies just like one very unfortunate pharaoh.

So, perhaps we should cut the little critters some slack but please, don't build another nest in our attic.

**What's your bugbear? Got something to say? Share it in the News. Email [steveturner807@gmail.com](mailto:steveturner807@gmail.com)**

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# ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH

Churchwardens: Jeffrey Bridges 01424 772535/07446 903239 and John Crouch 07788 416903

Email: [whatlingtonparishchurch@gmail.com](mailto:whatlingtonparishchurch@gmail.com) Web: [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5226](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5226)

## From the flames came new hope for the future

It is, incredibly, almost ten years since services returned to the church following the major post fire restoration of 2010 to 2013, writes Jeffrey Bridges.

While the official re-opening service took place in February 2014, it was in November 2013 that we returned to the church, after three years, during which services were held in the village hall.

Initially it was a bit like camping out in what was a not quite finished interior, but as the new furniture arrived and salvaged items returned it all came together and we welcomed a



congregation of 50 plus to the December 2013 Carol Service.

Wouldn't it be good if this year's Christmas services attract similar numbers!

### UPCOMING SERVICES

#### **Notable services coming up:**

8 October, 10.30am **Songs of Praise** – the Hymns of Charles Wesley – come and enjoy singing some good old fashioned hymns!

22 October, 4pm – **Service of Memories**

29 October 10.30am – **United Parish**

**Communion**, held at Whatlington

12 November 10.30am **Remembrance Service**

26 November 4pm – **Evening Service**

'Christ the King'

10 December 4pm **Carols by Candlelight**

17 December 3.30pm – **Whatlington**

**Christmas Pageant**

24 December 10pm – **Midnight Service**

with Communion

*For all the above services the Village Hall car park will be open and there will be refreshments after the service.*

#### **Service of Memories (22 October 4pm)**

**We remember departed loved ones. If you would like to have a loved one remembered let the wardens have their name and it will be read out during the service. Candles in memory will be lit.**

#### **Remembrance Sunday (12 November 10.30am).**

**The village War Memorial is inside the church and records the names of those who fell in both the First and Second World Wars. The service will include the Act of Remembrance, where the names will be read out, with the laying of wreaths following the two minute silence.**

#### **Christmas Pageant (December 17)**

**We will be looking for children to participate in the Pageant and encourage local families to consider taking part. Please contact Pam Butcher for more information at [pamela.butcher@icloud.com](mailto:pamela.butcher@icloud.com)**

A good congregation gathered in church for a new format Harvest Festival service, put together by John Hawkins, writes John Crouch. The church was full of floral arrangements, including mini sheaves of corn (the symbol of the village) providing both wonderful colour and aroma.

Members of the congregation read the lesson

and prayers. There was a collection of non-perishable food items, delivered the next day to The Seaview Centre in Hastings.

The service was followed by a buffet supper, provided by the congregation. Just need to remind the churchwarden that Greek plate smashing usually takes place after the meal!



# WHATLINGTON FETE



The village fete returned for the first time in four years and the volunteers setting up the event on August Bank Holiday Saturday morning were greeted by a drenching downpour!

The sun came out just as the event got under way, however, and although numbers attending were down on previous years it was a welcome return for an occasion that traditionally brings villagers together for a fun afternoon.

Attractions included a dog show, bar, bbq, stalls, raffle, kids' games, refreshments and a fiercely contested tug-of-war.

The total raised from the event, organised by the Village Hall committee, was around £670.

The tea, coffee and cakes stall was run by Whatlington Church, which raised £200 towards its own upkeep costs.

The hall committee's Annette Williams said: "I think the morning's poor weather, and the forecast of a rainy afternoon, kept some people away but it was lovely to see villagers sitting together and catching up.

"As always it was the hard work of the hall committee and other helpers who made the event possible, setting out the stalls, gazebos, tables and chairs and all the other items on a very long 'to do' list before and after the fete.

"Plus of course Lesley and Hugh Apthorp who made their field available across the weekend. It was good to be back!"



## Numbers down but spirits up as sun shines



# WHATLINGTON FETE



**Fran, Yvonne, Val, Pam and John served up hot drinks and home-made cakes at the refreshments stall, which was run by Whatlington Church. It raised just over £200 towards the upkeep of the church, vital given an over £4,000 quote for the treatment of deathwatch beetle. Top sellers were Victoria sponge with jam and cream, carrot cake and lemon drizzle. The preserves – jam, marmalade and mincemeat – also proved popular.**



Visit **facebook** and search 'Whatlington Village'



# WHATLINGTON FETE



**Dog family day out: from left brothers Quinn and Bob, mum Meg and dad Beau**



# WHATLINGTON FETE



Stallholders included:  
Bar – Charles Williams and Richard Maidment  
BBQ – Chris Walker and Briony Savoury – Bridget Maidment and Sally Henderson  
Raffle and hoop-la – Annette Williams and Pam Butcher  
Bric-a-brac – Marion Yates  
Books – Charlotte Moore  
Produce – Simon White  
Wine or water – Ed Henderson.  
The dog show was organised by Linda Walker in conjunction with Helen's Hounds



**Felix Turner, pictured right with his sister Iris, won the Name the Monkey game with his guess 'Rainbow'.**





# WHATLINGTON FETE



## Dog Show results Sponsored by Helen's Hounds

### Waggiest Tail

1 Pip (Richard Gane);  
2 Laddie (Bridget  
Maidment); 3 Quinn (Alice  
Woodham).

### Prettiest Bitch

1 Primrose (Summer  
Phillips); 2 Meg (Karen  
Elliott); 3 Scarlett (Julian  
Brookhouse).

### Most Handsome Boy

1 Ozzy (Laura Ridler);  
2 Bob (Karen Elliott); 3  
Floyd (Pauline Lyon).

### Champion Pup

1 Buddy (John  
Shepperd); 2 Ruben  
(Jane Pip); Red (Briony  
Walker).

### Victorious Veteran

1 Meghan (Janine  
Scothern); 2 Scarlett  
(Julian Brookhouse); 3  
Shadow (Sandie Sullivan).

### Top Junior Handler

1 Chunk (Prairie); Meg  
(Evie); 3= Beau (Freddie)  
Bob (Alfie)

### Best Six Legs

1 Quinn (Alice  
Woodham); 2 Pip  
(Richard Gane); 3 Buddy  
(John Shepperd)

### Royal Rescue

1 Laddie (Bridget  
Maidment); 2 Scarlett (Jo  
Brookhouse); 3 Meghan  
(Janine Scothern)

### Dog the Judge Most Wants to Take Home

1 Shadow (Sandie  
Sullivan); 2 Scarlett  
(Julian Brookhouse); 3  
Ruben (David Harris)

### Best in Show

Buddy (Nicola Finan &  
John Shepperd)  
Reserve: Ozzy (Laura  
Ridler)



**Class winners line  
up for the Best in  
Show judging**

IN YOUR GARDEN

Tom Schollar

# The height of colour in your autumn garden

Autumn can be a wonderful time for colour in the garden, assuming the weather isn't too unkind, as a host of flowers finally come into bloom.

These are often 'prairie' flowers from North America. They are hardy and all of the following plants like our local clay.

This fabulous plant (*photo 1*) is *rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldstrum' and grows to about a metre in a normal year. If that is too tall, there is a shorter version, called *rudbeckia fulgida* 'Little Goldstar'. For us, this has reached about a third of that height in its second year.

For a taller full yellow *rudbeckia*, try *Herbsonne*, which normally reaches more than two metres, but do protect this from slugs when the shoots emerge in spring and from rabbits, if they enjoy your garden.

This (*photo 2*) is *rudbeckia* 'Henry Eilers' with unusual petals. In its first year it was modest in height, but has



now settled in and reached two metres.

The mainstay of the autumn border has to be asters, but check the height of 'Novae-Angliae' asters (now called *symphyotrichum*) as many of the reasonable height plants – reasonable in a garden centre pot – will get to more than a metre once settled in our fertile clay. These are mostly pink/red/purple.

'Novi-Belgii' asters are similar height, but come in a wider range of colours, including white.

Shorter asters are available: try 'Neron', 'Johan', 'Fornett Flourish', 'Purple Dome', 'Cotswold Gem' or 'Kristina' – all about 40cm.

All of these have daisy-shaped flowers but for variety I love this late-flowering red hot poker, called 'Rooperi' (*photo 3*), which grows to about 80cm. *Salvia uliginosa* has spires of true blue flowers whilst *vernonia crinata* 'Mammuth' and *Eupatorium* have domes of purple flowers.

## SEDLSCOMBE AND DISTRICT GARDEN SOCIETY

[www.sedlescombegarden.society.org.uk](http://www.sedlescombegarden.society.org.uk)

### Cultivate your interest

**Our aim:** to promote to residents of Sedlescombe, Whatlington and surrounding areas an interest in all aspects of gardening, including maintaining the rich diversity of garden plants to help combat the effects of climate change.

**How we do it:** shows, speakers, trips, social events, newsletter.

**How to join:** Contact Secretary Brenda Page on 01424 870455 or email [sdgs.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:sdgs.secretary@gmail.com)

**What it costs:** £9 per person per year or £12 for joint membership.

### COMING EVENTS

Sedlescombe Village Hall

**Wednesday 11 October:** Quiz Night.

**Wednesday 18 October:** Coach trip to Sheffield Park to see the fantastic autumn colour. We expect the coach costs to be a little under £20. Entry is free to National Trust members and £15 for non-members.

**Tuesday 7 November 2pm:**

Graham Blunt will explain 'How to grow exotics outside'