

Summer 2008: Queen's Hall Special!

We have decided that this quarter's newsletter will be largely devoted to the Queen's Hall. It has been one of the best kept secrets in Mid Sussex up to now but we want to make sure that everyone knows about it! The costs of maintaining this lovely Victorian building are high but we feel it is money well spent and we want to make all local residents aware of the many improvements that have taken place here over the past few years. Do come in and look for yourselves to see what an admirable building it is. It is a great asset to the area and is available for many different uses. It also houses Cuckfield Museum – well worth a visit to see the displays of local history, dinosaurs etc.

Firstly, a bit of background for those of you unfamiliar with the Hall. The Queen's Hall was built by public subscription to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. A central site between Marshall's Terrace and Attrees (now Kingsleys) comprising a cottage and garden with a depth of 150 feet was given by Mr Sergison of Cuckfield Park. The new hall was opened in 1899 and was "the most modern in Mid Sussex". The original public library functioned in the cottage in front of the hall until it was demolished to make way for the present library and reading room (now the museum) in 1901. The building was owned and maintained by Cuckfield Urban District Council with meetings of the Council being held in the Council Chamber until their meetings were transferred to Haywards Heath in the 1930s. Throughout the years the hall continued to be used by all sections of the community, including use as a temporary hospital during the First World War and a school in World War 2. It is a Grade II Listed Building. In 1972 ownership was transferred to Mid Sussex District Council and, on the instigation of the then Parish Council Chairman, Frank Stirner, to Cuckfield Parish Council in 1994. The Transfer Document states that if the Parish Council uses the building for "any purposes other than as a public hall, museum or library" before the expiration of 79 years from the date of the document, the District Council may serve notice on the Parish Council to give up the Title Deeds to the property!

When the Parish Council took over the building, it was in urgent need of modernisation. A great deal of consultation took place with all sections of the community as to the refurbishment required and a grant of £16,000 was awarded by the Arts Lottery for a feasibility study. A condition of the grant was that specialist consultants be employed to undertake this study which resulted in a report recommending a £2 million refit for the Hall which was to become a fully fledged 'Arts Centre'. After a great deal of work, and unsurprisingly in the view of the Parish Council at that time, the application for further funding from the lottery was refused. A much more realistic/feasible refurbishment scheme was agreed with a total budget of £230,000 and this work was completed in 1999.

The second phase of refurbishment at the Queen's Hall is now well underway. The rear corridor leading to the garden has been replaced (the old corridor had to be completely rebuilt as there was subsidence and it was moving away from the building). This new access gives us a lovely passage to the very attractive garden and decking at the rear. There is disabled access from parking at the rear of the hall, via the recreation ground. The work to the garden will be finished in the autumn and this will really give the Hall a boost as a top class venue for civil ceremonies, wedding receptions and all sorts of gatherings and celebrations. It has the great

advantage that you are not tied to specific hotel menus or anything of the sort and can arrange your own decorating and catering to suit your budget. Rates are very reasonable.

Sadly, the Edith Payne library has had to close recently. There was a very reduced level of support both from borrowers and volunteers and it was no longer a viable proposition. After considerable debate at the Council, it has been agreed that the room will become the new Parish Council Office and Information Centre. We are hoping that it will be possible to employ more staff to enable the office to be open every weekday morning and the larger space will make the viewing of planning applications, etc., much more convenient. The computers that are available for public use will move upstairs to the old office. Cuckfield Museum hope to use this as a Research Room with local history resources available for all to use.

The Hall is also host to a wide variety of activities - literally something for everyone - and we do hope that these activities will continue to be well supported by local people. We want to make sure that everyone is aware of what is going on at the Hall so here are the details of regular users. Please contact the organisers for further details and next time you are passing pop in and see your local hall!

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

MONDAYS

1030 - 1200 **ROSEMARY CONLEY DIET & FITNESS CLUB**
Penny Schouten - 01403 230200

0930 - 1300 **YOGA**
Ann Martin - 01444 811729

1930-2130 **HAYWARDS HEATH CANINE SOCIETY**
Dog Training for Ringcraft, Agility
Mrs Gardener - 01444 881046

TUESDAYS

0900 - 1300 **TINKERBELLS MUSIC GROUP**
Nursery rhymes for young children
Sarah Winckless - 01444 882240

1400 - 1500 **CREATIVE DANCE FOR CHILDREN**
Jo Guppy - 01444 416222

1500 - 1800 **SHAKESPEAR SCHOOL OF DANCING**
Childrens Dance Classes, Ballet, Modern & Tap
Judy Shakespear - 01444 455388

1930-2200 **HAYWARDS HEATH CANINE SOCIETY**
Obedience Training
Carol Collett - 01444 241013

WEDNESDAYS

0900 - 1300 TINKERBELLS MUSIC GROUP

Sarah Winckless - 01444 882240

1000 - 1200 DYSPHASIA SUPPORT GROUP

Helen Simmonds - 01444 248942

1315 - 1445 SOLO DANCING/DANCE FOR FITNESS

Sarah Fenn-Tye - 01273 562996

1700 - 1900 IRISH DANCING

Dance Classes for children

Roseleen Carey 01903 535503

1945 - 2215 BURGESS HILL & CUCKFIELD DANCE CLUB

Ballroom Dancing

Paul Hogan -

1930 - 2100 YOGA

Ann Martin - 01444 811729

THURSDAYS

0900 - 1700 TUMBLE TOTS

Agility, balance & co-ordination for children

Dave - 01444 831612

1930 - 2130 BALLROOM, LATIN & SALSA

Sarah Fenn-Tye - 01273 562996

FRIDAYS

0900 - 1300 TINKERBELLS MUSIC GROUP

Sarah Winckless - 01444 882240

1400 - 1500 CREATIVE DANCE FOR CHILDREN

Jo Guppy - 01444 416222

0900 - 1300 CUCKFIELD CRAFT MARKET

Crafts & Produce - Monthly - See Board for Details

Paul & Beverly Smith - 01444 440274

1900 - 2230 CUCKFIELD EVENING FLOWER CLUB

Second Friday in Every Month - Janet Carr - 01444 453826

1930 - 2230 WORTHING & SOUTHERN COUNTIES HISTORIC VEHICLES

First Friday in Winter Months

Doreen Palmer - 01444 440873