



## **Betchworth Annual Parish Meeting**

Betchworth Parish Council would like to thank the local organisations who have contributed to the update which follows. Each group has written their own update.

Contributions by:

The Betchworth Operatic & Dramatic Society

Betchworth Parish Magazine

Betchworth Village Hall

Barley Mow Residents Association

Brockham Green Horticultural Society

Betchworth & Buckland Society

Betchworth United Charities

Buckland & Betchworth Choral Society

The Hamilton Room

Re-Betchworth

The Arts Society

The Toddler Group

The Poland Trust

The Betchworth Tennis Tournament

Pebblecombe WI

St Michaels Bellringers

The Betchworth & Buckland Childrens Nursery

Betchworth Village Archives

St Michaels Church

## Betchworth Operatic and Dramatic Society Update for 2023

BODS have had another active and successful year. We have a stable and loyal membership and we continue to offer the community opportunities to participate in staged productions within a warm and friendly environment. We have attracted new members during 2023 and we always welcome new enquiries for on stage and off-stageroles.

We successfully delivered our usual TWO productions at the Betchworth Village WarHall in 2023. The first was in May when we whisked ourselves away to the luxurious paddle steamer The Lotus. We all enjoyed dressing up in 1940's glamour and creating a bit of intrigue and mystery in the wonderful 'Murder on the Nile' by Agatha Christie.

This is one of the few plays that Agatha Christie adapted for the stage herself and, unlike all the well-known film versions, the detective in the stage play is not the famous Hercule Poirot but rather a Church Canon by the name of Pennefather. It was said that she was bored of Poirot and wanted to introduce a new character!

In November we staged The Matchgirls a musical written by Bill Owen (Last of the Summer Wine) with music by Tony Russell.

The show tells the story of the girls and women from the Bryant and May Match Factory in Bow, London in 1888. Fed up with appalling working conditions, bullying and serious risks to their health, they decided to walk out on strike.

After several months of hardship, they were successful in improving their conditions and as a result the Matchgirls were instrumental in forming the largest union for women and girls in the country and this resulted in a wave of collective organising amongst industrial workers.

A curious subject matter for a musical perhaps, but with good characters, good music, and uplifting humorous touches amidst a serious and important story, it was another excellent and well received show. We also enjoyed a wonderful quiz night in the hall and raised some important funds to help us continue to produce our shows.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Hall for all their support through the years and to the community for continuing to support our productions.

We look forward to welcoming you again this May, for a trip to Italy in an adaptation of Elizabeth von Arnim's book, The Enchanted April.

## BETCHWORTH PARISH MAGAZINE

There has been a Parish Magazine in Betchworth since 1892! Beautifully bound copies of all these magazines can be viewed in the Hamilton Room. Parishioners and their helpers have always run the collating of articles, editing and publishing the magazine on a voluntary basis. Printing has always been done by an outside firm.

The magazine's aim is to give information to and about the whole village. As well as Church matters we report on village activities such as the Parish Council, WI, North Downs Primary School and the Betchworth and Buckland Society. It also embraces any local, non-political news, events and activities that it is felt might be of interest to the readers. The magazine is delivered to every house in the village by an invaluable team of 32 people headed by Susie Redburn. We are always delighted to receive articles, including photos if relevant, which would be of interest to parishioners for possible inclusion in the magazine.

Articles for the magazine now arrive exclusively by email to [betchworthmag@hotmail.com](mailto:betchworthmag@hotmail.com). We also will publish appropriate small ads from parishioners at a nominal cost for a limited number of issues, proceeds going to church funds. There is still a waiting list for commercial advertisers, which is always a good thing.

Our editors, Ros Rokison, Sian Winter and Tim Warren have the task of collating, editing and sometimes retyping all the various articles, putting everything into the correct format and font. Recently we have been joined by Chris Humphreys who helped us out when Sian Winter became ill. Chris has stayed with us and Sian has thankfully now recovered. This has been a great help.

The articles are then numbered in the correct appropriate order before sending them to the Desk Top Publishers. Their job is to put them all into the magazine template. This is a lengthy process as articles have to fit exactly into the correct number of pages and we try where possible not split articles over the page. This work is done by Ros Rokison, Alison Higgins, and John Scotcher. The DTP team has now been joined by Tim Warren, but we have heard recently that having reached the grand age of 80 John Scotcher is stepping down. We thank him for all his years of volunteering and wish him well.

The magazine continues to be very professional in its construction and production.

If anyone is interested in joining the team we would be delighted to hear from you. We would be particularly interested to hear from anyone who would like to join the team of desktop publishers. The more people involved in the production of the magazine the easier it is for everyone involved. Training will be given if anyone is interested in joining us. In fact if we had a few more volunteers, our hard working team might even be able to take the odd holiday now and then!

Ros Rokison

## **Update for Brockham Green Horticultural Society**

**(Betchworth, Brockham, Buckland)**

### **Events in 2023**

- Three well attended Spring talks. 'Keeping Bees' a demonstration by Reigate Beekeepers, Jim Butress about his 65 years in Horticulture' and Mark Dobell demonstrated 'Propagation'
- May Plant Sale
- Members only garden visit
- Flower arranging workshops, including Christmas wreaths and table decoration.
- Autumn Show. Our busiest social event, with members horticultural, craft and cookery skills on display for friendly competition. The children's entries once again a delight.

### **Plans for 2024**

- Spring talks on Monday evenings at Brockham Village Hall. 'Bat Conservation' on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 'Women Gardeners of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century' on 18<sup>th</sup> March and Plant Heritage and the National Plant Collection Scheme on 15<sup>th</sup> April.
- Plant Sale on Saturday 4th May
- Plans being made for further workshops and garden visit
- Autumn Show at Brockham Village Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024

**Contact Details: Ruth and Paul, membership secretaries. [BGHSociety@hotmail.com](mailto:BGHSociety@hotmail.com)**

## **Update for Betchworth & Buckland Society 2023**

### **Progress/ Events for 2023**

- Our Membership has grown over 2023 to approximately 125 households
- In terms of events;
- We started the year with our Annual Quiz held in January with over one hundred enthusiastic attendees
- AGM held in April with a presentation from James Benn & Norman Jackson from Re-Betchworth on Biodiversity
- Guided walks in April & late June looking at the history of the area & the 'Three Greens' of Buckland
- Social evening in late June at the Red Lion
- Annual BBQ held on Goulburn Green with around eighty attendees with great food provided by the Plough at Leigh & entertainment in the form of a super group of musicians.
- Annual Christmas dinner in late November at the Hartsfield Manor Hotel with around sixty-five people entering into the Christmas spirit
- Finally, in December, our Christmas Drinks were held at the Reading Room to share some Christmas cheer

As a result of the attendance at these events together with the membership fees, the Society has supported

- The Buckland & Betchworth Coronation Events
- The Betchworth & Buckland Choral society
- The Re Betchworth Apple pressing event
- The Betchworth & Buckland toddler group
- The Patchworking Gardening Project

### **Looking ahead to early 2024**

- We have already held our annual Quiz in January 2024, again with over one hundred enthusiastic attendees
- We are holding a Wine Tasting Evening in March at the Reading Room
- Our AGM is planned for May with a presentation from the Surrey Air Ambulance Charity
- Further events including a BBQ & Annual Christmas Dinner are planned for the rest of the year

## **Update for Betchworth United Charities for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- 15 Beneficiaries each received two cost of living payments throughout the year
- Grant given to North Downs School to help children in need with school trips/uniform/breakfast after school clubs etc.
- Grant given to The Ashcombe School to help those children living in Brockham/Betchworth at the school to receive help with uniform/lunches/school trips etc
- Grant for new cooker given to family in need
- Grant given to local family in need for basic house maintenance costs
- Three Trustee meetings during 2023 to discuss special grants and ways we can help
- Advertising our charity locally so that more people can access our help

### **Plans for 2024**

- To continue to support families of school children in need by giving a grant to the North Downs School, The Ashcombe and The Priory. This will assist schools to help with families with costs including uniform, school trips, lunch and breakfast clubs etc.
- We will be giving our usual bi-annual grants to local people in the Brockham and Betchworth area who are in need due to cost of living price increases
- To continue exploring how to best make contact with those in need in our two villages

**Contact Details:      Andrea Brown (Clerk) 07788-194972**

**Camilla Peterken (Chair) 07771-568862**

## **Buckland & Betchworth Choral Society – Update 2023 - 2024**

Last April's music for the Leith Hill Music Festival was Handel's Zadok the Priest, Cecilia McDowell's Laudate and the Haydn Nelson Mass, which we sang with the choirs of Beare Green and Newdigate, Holmbury St. Mary, Bookham, Horsley and Mickleham.

Our pieces for the morning competition were; Wide Open Spaces by Sarah Quartel, In these Delightful Pleasant Groves by Henry Purcell and If Ye Love Me by Thomas Tallis.

We entered one group for the ensemble class, singing The Hills by John Ireland and were delighted to win not only the Arthur Lawrence Cup but also the Julian Armitage Smith Plate for the highest score over the whole two-day competition.

In the summer term we put on a Madrigal Sing Day at St. Michael's Betchworth with an informal performance plus afternoon tea with a glass of fizz. It was very well received, especially as it was a beautiful summer day.

Our November concert was a celebration of our centenary, and we booked St. John's Church in Redhill for the larger space. We had a small orchestra and two soloists and sang; two Handel Coronation anthems, the Vivaldi Gloria, Eleanor Daley's O Ye who Taste that Love is Sweet and Howard Goodall's Love Divine. We also reprised the ensemble performance of John Ireland's The Hills. The retiring collection was for The British Legion.

Our usual December Carol Concert took place at St Michael's, Betchworth.

Both of these concerts were very well attended by locals and families and friends of the singers. The Carol Concert raised over £800 for The Children's Trust at Tadworth. We are very grateful for all the local support.

The Choral Society is currently deep in rehearsals for this year's Leith Hill Music Festival. We are singing Lauridson's Lux Aeterna and Puccini's Messa di Gloria at 7.30 on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April at Dorking Halls. We would be very happy to see local people in the audience at the concert.

Our Wednesday evening rehearsals at the Village Hall are great fun. Singing is good for you and provides the opportunity to meet new people. The choir is non-auditioned and very welcoming to newcomers. Our brand new conductor, George Inscoe, is very encouraging and we are ably accompanied by Anna Tetsuya on the piano. We hold several social events during the year including a quiz night. Once a month we go down to the Red Lion post rehearsals and on Festival days we have a choir lunch at a Dorking restaurant to celebrate the fact the competitions are finished for the day, and any successes achieved.

This summer term we are planning to hold an afternoon concert at St. Michael's Betchworth accompanied by a jazz trio of piano, drums and double bass, followed by tea and 'fizz'.

We look forward to seeing you there.

## **Update for the HAMILTON ROOM for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- Modern comfortable chairs (with/without arms) have been provided
- There is new flooring in the entrance, toilet and kitchen areas
- Regular users continue to enjoy this facility

### **Plans for 2024**

- We hope to continue a refurbishment programme to provide a high quality yet affordable space for existing and potential users

Contact Details: Diana Fitchett

Email address : [d.fitchett@gmail.com](mailto:d.fitchett@gmail.com)



## **Update for Re-Betchworth**

### **Progress for 2023**

- Fully established our village Forest School
- Continued to restore the village Orchard, and celebrated with our first Wassail
- Repeated the success of the community Apple Press Day
- Involved 70 households and businesses in a project to increase biodiversity by sowing native perennial wildflower seeds to help insect pollinators
- Re-launched our resource-rich website, adding a quarterly newsletter
- Were recognised as one of three 'Community Champions' by a Surrey Wildlife Trust award.

### **Plans for 2024**

- Expand the Apple Press Day into a larger family-friendly 'festival', to include a children's art competition.
- Find other 'sustainable living' activities to involve families with young children.
- Arrange group visits to our local MRF (green bin content sorting facility) and find ways to focus residents' minds on waste reduction and recycling.
- Build a small team of volunteers prepared to go a step beyond litter picking and tackle small community schemes (clearing scrub, planting verges and the like).
- Build on the B-Line biodiversity initiative.

**Contact Details: [admin@re-betchworth.org](mailto:admin@re-betchworth.org)**

**Website address : [re-betchworth.org](http://re-betchworth.org)**

## **Update for The Arts Society Betchworth for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- The Arts Society Betchworth meets monthly for lectures at Betchworth Village Memorial Hall on a Monday afternoon at 2.30pm
  - Lectures are also available via Zoom for those that are unable to come to the hall
- Our lectures cover a wide range of subjects – recent topics have included: -
  - The Thames: Theatre of Pageantry and Pleasure
  - British Travellers in Mexico: Lost Cities and Surreal Worlds
- Membership of our society costs just £45 for a year for which you can attend 10 excellent lectures plus the opportunity of going on day trips to a diverse range of destinations. Visitors are welcomed at the lectures for a fee of £8. There is no need to book – visitors can simply turn up at the hall.

### **Plans for 2024**

- Future lectures include: -
  - The Origins of Art Nouveau Architecture
  - The Rise and Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte
- Planned visits include a visit to Tate Britain to see the John Singer Sargent & Fashion exhibition in April, a trip to the Whitchurch Silk Mill and the nearby Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery in May and a trip to Glyndebourne in the Autumn.
- In recent years we have organised short visits to the UK and Europe and a group of members are going to Northumberland in June.

**Website address :** [The Arts Society Betchworth](#)

## **Update for The Betchworth & Buckland Toddler Group for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- The group meets on a Tuesday morning 10 - 12 at £2 per family in the Buckland Reading Room. All are welcome including mums, dads, grandparents, and childminders. We have a different craft activity every week - these have included painting, colouring, gluing, sticking stickers, and seasonal card making. There is a baby corner, ride on area and drinks and snacks for both adults and children. We finish with a story and songs.
- We have a small but loyal following. The children and carers particularly like that we are a bit smaller (and friendlier) than many other groups. We provide a much-needed contact point and social activity for parents and carers.

### **Plans for 2024**

- With the help of a generous grant from the Betchworth Council we will continue to refresh our bigger toys such as the children's kitchen and trampoline.
- We aim to continue to attract children from tinies to pre-schoolers by using social media and posters around the villages.

**Contact: Debbie Jones** [jones13aldersroad@yahoo.com](mailto:jones13aldersroad@yahoo.com)

**We also have a Facebook page – Betchworth and Buckland Toddler Group**

## **Update for Poland Trust 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- The last of the 12 Almhouses at Poland Meadow was occupied at the beginning of 2023.
- All of the occupiers have settled in very well and a community is being formed. For many occupiers having their own home has been a life changing experience.
- In June at the Almhouse Association AGM in June 2023. The Trust were presented with an award for Inspirational Homes. We were delighted to receive that award.

### **Plans for 2024**

- Due to the difficult weather conditions in 2023, either too wet or too dry, and a contractual issue, we were not able to complete the landscaping at Poland Meadow but will be doing so this spring.
- During 2023 The Trust were approached by the Trustees of Anthony West House in Brockham, ( the old vicarage ) to consider whether The Trust would accept a merger between the Trust and AWH. This is due to be completed this year and the Trust has already taken over the management of AWH.
- As a result The Trust now has 36 homes in Poland House, Anthony West House and Poland Meadow for local people only. The former two are for more elderly people whilst the latter is for younger people. All potential occupant 's must be in need, hardship or distress. The area of benefit is firstly Brockham, and then Betchworth, Buckland and Leigh ( except for Poland Meadow which is actually in Betchworth so applicants for vacancies from Betchworth and Brockham are given equal weight). Three homes at AWH have recently become vacant and two of successful applicants were from Betchworth.
- With the help of a generous grant from the Betchworth Council we will continue to refresh our bigger toys such as the children's kitchen and trampoline.
- We aim to continue to attract children from tinies to pre-schoolers by using social media and posters around the villages.

**Contact Details: Tim Kenny Trustee**

**07831 8822 45 [tjkgk@icloud.com](mailto:tjkgk@icloud.com)**

## Update for the Betchworth Village Tennis Tournament

### **Progress for 2023**

- Date changed from July to September to avoid Wimbledon
- Later date worked well as students were still around
- Played fewer games in the groups as it was very HOT
- WhatsApp worked well but needed the magazine for details

### **Plans for 2024**

- Trying July (after Wimbledon) this year due to popular demand
- Will continue with WhatsApp group

Email address : meslot@aol.com

**Update for Pebblecoombe WI 2023**  
**Also known as Betchworth's Evening WI**

**Activities in 2023:**

As possibly the smallest WI in Surrey Federation, we have enjoyed getting to know our own members, finding significant similarities in where we grew up, but also a few surprises, including a member now discovering that her garden backed onto an ancient Roman wall built in 142AD. We held a number of Horticultural evenings, a demonstration of planting a Spring time container, then creating our own with summer plants. We discussed the WI Resolution – Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife, voted on at the Annual meeting. We celebrated the King's Coronation, learnt about the early days of cheese-making and continued with our monthly Craft Afternoon.

**Plans for 2024:**

Our plans for this year include participating in the Annual Council meeting for Surrey Federation in Dorking this month, again discussing the Resolution, not yet declared by NFWI. We look forward to enjoying an outing, various Garden visits and welcoming new members who have been visiting for a couple of months. We wait to see what Surrey Federation will arrange in the way of creative or sporting courses and continue with our own Craft Afternoons.

We are a small, friendly group and always welcome visitors at our meetings on the **1<sup>st</sup> Thursday each month at The Hamilton Room, Church Street, Betchworth starting at 7.45pm.**

**Contact Details :** Margaret Miller on 01737 842098

Or email: [jma.miller@btinternet.com](mailto:jma.miller@btinternet.com)

## Update for St Michaels Bellringers for 2023

### **Progress for 2023**

- Won the striking competition
- Recruited 2 ringers
- Installed a hand rail up the tower steps

### **Plans for 2024**

- To recruit more ringers from the village
- To improve our striking
- Maintain ringing for Sunday Services

## **Update for Betchworth & Buckland Nursery for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- All sessions to attend are full, have a waiting list for September 2024 starters
- Increase in Betchworth families attending the setting
- Local outings to Post Office and Church

### **Plans for 2024**

- To interact more with our local community. Please get in touch if you'd like more information.
- To continue to fundraise to improve our outside space
- To continue to support our children and families through the impact of lockdown.
- To continue to recycle as much of our waste as possible.

**Contact Details: [info@betchworthandbucklandchildrensnursery.com](mailto:info@betchworthandbucklandchildrensnursery.com)**

**Website address : <https://betchworthandbucklandchildrensnursery.com/>**



## **Update for Betchworth Village Archives for 2023/4**

### **Progress for 2023/24**

A very generous grant from the Parish Council enabled us to purchase a new notice/display board which is now in use.

Our first exhibition since the pandemic, 'Buried in Betchworth' was held on 23rd and 24th March 2024. It was extremely well-attended and the visitor feedback was enormously positive, which made the amount of research and preparation so worthwhile!

### **Plans for 2024**

Preparation for next year's exhibition: 'Farms and Farming'.

The monuments and inscriptions survey in the churchyard will resume this summer (weather permitting!).

### **Contact Details:**

betchworthvillagearchives@gmail.com

## **Update for St Michael's Church for 2023**

### **Progress for 2023**

- Survived another interregnum
- Organised 8 weddings and 9 funerals
- Appointed a new priest
- Completed £100k of building work to make the church weatherproof

### **Challenges for 2024**

- Surviving as a rural parish church with fewer financial and people resources
- Having a part-time priest.