



BERWICK SELMESTON ALCISTON

VILLAGE NEWS

MARCH 2024

◇ VILLAGE NEWS

Advertising is coordinated by Brian Calcott. Tel. 07999 788618.

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The Production Team is Jane Anderson and Martin Chilvers.

Contributions, Photos, etc (other than advertising requests) should be sent to Martin by the 12th of the month by email: empty.sea@outlook.com

They can also be passed to one of the coordinators:

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Valerie Shaw at Selmeston House, Selmeston Tel: 01323 811567.

Laurie Tinsley, Wynsford, Berwick Tel: 01323 870895.

Donations

Financial donations to the Parish News are gratefully received.

Cheques payable to "Berwick, Selmeston and Alciston Village News" can be passed to:

The Treasurer, Brian Calcott at:

2 Railway Cottages, Station Road, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6TA.

Alternatively, electronic donations can be made to:

Barclays Bank - Account No. 70650625; Sort code 20-49-76.

◇ CHURCH CONTACTS

Benefice Priests

Revd Peter Blee Rector of Berwick and Vicar of Selmeston with Alciston

The Parsonage, Berwick, Polegate, BN26 6SR

Tel: 01323 870512 Email: peter.blee@berwickchurch.org.uk

Revd Shirley Pearce Assistant Priest

The Vicarage, Wilmington, Polegate, BN26 5SL

Tel: 01323 318231 Email: revshirleym@gmail.com

Shirley Pearce's 'on duty' days are Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Churchwardens

Alciston - Michèle Boys Tel: 01323 870623

Berwick - Andy Williamson Tel: 01323 870163 / Paul Lewis Tel: 01323 870927

Selmeston - Jan Matthews Tel: 01323 811380

Benefice Administrator

Jane Grutchfield Email: benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

◇ VILLAGE CONTACTS

Parish Council Clerks

Alciston - Sandy Thomas Email: alcistonparishmeeting@gmail.com

Berwick - Alison Stevens Tel: 01323 460007 Email: berwickparishcouncil@aol.com

Selmeston - Bryan Stevens Tel: 07799 862765 Email: selmestonparishmeeting@gmail.com

Village Hall / Field Hire

Berwick Village Hall - Thea Eastmead Tel: 01323 871218 Email: theaeastmead77@gmail.com

Berwick Field - Carole Vine Tel: 07341 660046 berwickfieldhire@btinternet.com

Alciston and Selmeston Village Hall Website: www.southdownsvillagehall.org

Arlington's Village Market and Coffee Morning

10.00 am - Noon, Tuesday 12th March
at Arlington Village Hall.

All are very welcome; we will be pleased to see you. There will be fresh bread, cakes, quiches, local eggs and other regular stalls. Arlington's Pop-Up Museum will also be taking place at the same time.

Thank you to the many people, local and from further afield, who support this community event. We hope you will continue to do so. Please bring your friends, and if you have not been before you will be very welcome. The February Market was again very busy, and the hall was full of visitors.

For further market information please contact Anne Hope:
Tel. 01323 486219 / 07760 424169,
Email anntonyhope@gmail.com.

For further museum information please contact Wendy Holmes:
Tel. 07889 689844,
Email talkingteapot@yahoo.co.uk.

Pauline Jackson

Firle and Beddingham Women's Institute

7.30 pm Wednesday 13th March
at Firle Village Hall

At our February meeting we had Sally Gabriel to talk to us about 'Ronald McDonald House' in Brighton - this is one of several houses round the country (and the world) providing accommodation for parents who have sick children and babies in hospital. This is their 25th anniversary year. They are funded by McDonalds Restaurants and when anyone pays for their food there is a percentage that goes to help run these houses.

Sally is the house manager in Brighton and has a brilliant team with her to run the 18 ensuite rooms in two separate buildings. Parents are expected to look after their own bedrooms and there is a communal kitchen and lounge where everyone can relax.

There are facilities for laundry as well so that parents can look after their own children's laundry and feel they are contributing to their general care. Nowadays hospitals are 'centres of excellence' and it is mainly the Trevor Mann baby unit which is the reason parents come and stay, some for a short time, some for much longer, depending on how ill their child is. Several members asked Sally questions after her talk and then we were able to pass over the money raised at our Christmas raffle as well as a donation to thank her for her talk.

Next month Mairi Thomas will tell us how to take good photos with our mobile phones. Do come and join us if you would like to. Please give me a call if you would like further information.

Rosemary Norris
President Tel: 07784 707016

The Spring 'Fun, Fish & Finking' Quiz is Back

Saturday 16th March at A&S Village Hall

Bring your own team of six or we can join you up with others. Same fun format as usual with The Village Chippy providing us with fabulous, tasty food.

£15.00 per person includes the quiz entry and a fish/veggie and chips supper.

Bar and food available from 6.30pm;
the quiz starts 7.30pm.

Tickets are limited and extremely popular so book today!

Please contact Mairi 07582 938185,
Helen 07969 732109 or Phil 07538 187552.

Rachel Lewis

Village HUB

11.00-12.30 Monday 18th March
at A&S Village Hall

The Hub welcomes you all to enjoy refreshments, delicious tea and coffee as well as homemade cake in a convivial, warm environment. Pop in anytime, open to everyone - bring your little ones for a run

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around and meet up with neighbours and friends of all ages.

Please contact any of the committee below if you have any questions or need help with transport to and from the hall. Contact: Thea 07772 155772, Helen 07969 732109, Mairi 07582 938185 or Janie 07785 940915.

Rachel Lewis

Village Hall AGM

*7.30 pm Wednesday 20th March
at A&S Village Hall*

The Village Hall Committee warmly invite you to come along to our AGM.

Enjoy a glass of wine with us and find out what we've been doing over the past year and what exciting plans we have for the year ahead. Notification of the AGM Agenda is posted in the Village Hall and on the Parish Notice Board. If you would like a copy prior to the meeting email chair.southdownsvillagehall@gmail.com or ring on 07969 732109.

Warm regards from
A&S Village Hall Committee



WHEN BATTLES RAGED ABOVE
A GROUP at Berwick view the remains of a German fighter, shot down during the Battle of Britain 45 years ago this month, in this picture from the past.

The Messerschmitt 109E crashed near the railway station.

The girl sitting on the fence is Mrs Florence Plater. The boy on the fence

on the left is Derek Brooke, of Pollards Farm, Chalvington, while the girl with her head turned is Iris Pilbeam, of Ripe village. Mrs Ivy Brooke is on the right.

The picture was sent by Mr Phillip Plater, of Bilborough, West Nottingham.

Many thanks to Jean Bradford for this cutting in response to last month's Village News article.

Family Support Work - Lent Boxes

It's once again the time of the year when Lent boxes are available in all the benefice churches. Please take one and return it at Easter. Alternatively, you can send a

donation direct to Bank account name: Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work (CDAFSW), Sort code: 20-12-75, Account no: 40257133 Reference: Lent (plus name of your church e.g. Selmeston). Or you can send a cheque made payable to CDAFSW to: Family Support Work, Garton House, 22 Stanford Avenue, Brighton BN1 6AA

There are further details on the FSW Website at: www.familysupportwork.org where you can also donate. Family Support Work do a remarkable job in helping vulnerable and needy families in Sussex. Very many thanks again for your continued support.

Tim Berrett & Jane Anderson

John Charles Wilmot - 1st Baron of Selmeston



When the Anglo Saxons ruled this area of East Sussex, those warriors who were loyal to the King and were closest to him, were often given land and a title such as earl. After the Normans landed on these shores in 1066, they introduced the French feudal system that also had various titles, baron

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was one of them (from Latin baro) meaning man, servant, soldier, mercenary.

In the 20th century Britain introduced non-hereditary life peers, where all new appointees have been at the rank of baron and are addressed in Parliament as 'The Noble Lord'. They are entitled to hold a coat of arms which also depicts a coronet above the shield. Between 1950 and 1964 Selmeaton had their very own Baron, known as Lord Wilmot -1st Baron of Selmeaton. (There are five titles in the peerage system, Duke-Marquess-Earl-Viscount-Baron).

John Charles Wilmot was born in Plumstead, London on the 2nd of April 1893, the son of Charles Wilmot, an engraver. After leaving Hither Green Central School in South London, John became a bank clerk, and attended evening classes at Chelsea Polytechnic and Kings College, London. On the 21st of March 1918 he volunteered to serve with the Royal Naval Air Service and was given the service number 52801. His records show that he was 5'10" tall with dark brown hair and blue eyes, and was posted to the President II, the official title of the accounting section at The Admiralty, not a surprise with his banking background.

On 1st April 1918, the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and Royal Flying Corps (RFC) were incorporated into a new flying service, The Royal Air Force (RAF). John served with the RAF as an AC2, (Aircrafts-man 2nd Class) until March 1919, when he was discharged back into civilian life.



John Wilmot with Dr Edith Summerskill at the Labour Party Conference Margate May 1947

He had joined the Labour Party pre-war, aged 16, and was also a member of the Fabian Society, becoming a founder member of the Lewisham Labour Party in 1919. He married Elsa Slate in 1928, and after three failed attempts entered parliament as the Labour MP for Fulham East in 1933 until 1935. He was elected as an alderman of the London County Council in November 1937, and was re-elected as an MP for Lambeth (Kennington) in May 1939, serving throughout the war for this constituency.

In July 1945 under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, he became the MP for Deptford in south London, until January 1950, and made a Privy Councillor, serving as the Minister of Aircraft Production 1945-1946, (introducing the new jets for the RAF) and Minister of Supply until 1947.

He retired as an MP before the General Election of 1950 and was made the 1st Baron Wilmot of Selmeaton in the New Years Honour List of King George VI. He retired from Parliament in 1950 and became chairman of the woollen textile company Illingsworth Morris and Co Ltd of Bradford, Baron Wilmot died at St Georges Hospital London, on 22nd July 1964 aged 71, and was cremated at Putney Vale Crematorium, London.

It is not known why John Wilmot chose Selmeaton as part of his title, as it would seem he had no connection here, either by land, house or business? (A negative check has been made with the Houses of Parliament Library).

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Audio-Visual System Project

The A&S Village Hall Committee is working on an exciting project to raise funds to install a complete audio-visual system at the hall, with HD projector, screen, sound system and outside PA. This will mean we can provide facilities for film evenings and exciting presentation opportunities alongside offering a more up to date event

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space for the wide range of groups who use the hall.

We are very grateful for your ongoing support in joining us at our Village Hall events and as a portion of profits we make will go towards our new AV fund, we especially welcome you to keep coming! You can watch the progress with our fabulous fund-raising barometer next time you visit.



We'd love to know your thoughts about the Village Hall and Events we run. If you have a spare couple of minutes, please complete this brief survey:

bit.ly/ASHallSurvey

or scan the QR code:

(Hard copies of the survey are also available at the hall, or from the members of the committee.)

A&S Village Hall Committee

Social Housing Reforms

This month I am encouraging local residents to take part in a government consultation on two key social housing reforms.

Firstly, as a constituency MP, I am contacted regularly by residents affected by unsocial behaviour of neighbouring tenants and while in the private sector this can be tricky to deal with, in social housing landlords have more steps they can take. Now the Government is consulting on giving councils and other social landlords powers that could ban those who blight communities and repeatedly make their neighbours' lives hell through anti-social behaviour, or evict them through a 'three strikes and you're out' policy, as part of the new consultation.

The second change being looked at are new measures which will change how social housing is allocated, requiring people to be a British citizen, Irish citizen, Commonwealth citizen with a right of abode in order to be able to apply for social or council housing. With waiting lists locally growing significantly for social housing it is

important that local people can stay in the area where their friends, family and support networks are in order to better promote and support extended family networks. Too many local families are having to move away to access affordable housing.

The reforms include new UK and local connection tests to determine social housing eligibility, with applicants required to demonstrate a connection to the UK for at least 10 years and their local area for at least 2 years. Prospective tenants on higher incomes could also no longer qualify for social housing, although existing tenants will not be affected.

As part of the reforms, people who have unspent convictions for certain criminal anti-social behaviour or have been subject to certain civil sanctions could be disqualified from social housing for up to 5 years. The government is seeking views from the public, councils, social housing tenants and providers and wants to bring forward the reforms as soon as possible.

This sits alongside the £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which aims to deliver more of the affordable, quality homes this country needs, and which will unlock a further £38 billion in public and private investment in affordable housing.

The consultation will close on the 26th of March 2024. Details on how to respond can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-reforms-to-social-housing-allocations>. Or go to www.gov.uk and search for 'Consultation on reforms to social housing allocations'.

Maria Caulfield MP

March's Gardener's Diary

Spring is nearly upon us, and the soil should be warming up, so get ready for sowing and planting. If your soil is workable, rake it over to produce a nice seed bed ready for your Parsnips and, if not already planted, put your Broad Beans in as well. A good tip with Parsnips is to sow 3 seeds every 4 inches and put a few radish seeds in

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between them. The Parsnips take a long time to germinate, and the radishes will come through quicker and mark the row.

By the end of the month plant early Potatoes if the soil is workable. Plant the tubers 12 inches apart in rows 2 feet apart, about 5-6 inches deep. Garlic can also be planted now.

Do not rush to plant anything if the soil is too wet, it will always catch up if it's a few weeks late going in.

Lisa Collington

Recipe of the Month: Easter Biscuits

(Makes approx. 30)

Ingredients

225 g self-raising or plain flour

½ tsp baking powder if using plain flour

Pinch of salt

110 g butter

110 g sugar

A little grated lemon rind

50 g currants

1 egg

Method

Sift together the flour and salt and rub in the fat. Add the sugar, lemon rind, baking powder (if required) and currants and mix with the beaten egg.

Knead lightly on a floured board and roll out ¼ inch thick.

Cut into rounds with a 2-inch fluted cutter and place on greased baking trays. Bake for 15 minutes at 180°C (160°C fan), 350°F, Gas mark 4.

Valerie Shaw

Family Support Work (FSW)

Already Easter is approaching, and the first part of the year has gone by so quickly. With all our practitioners at capacity, and the longest waiting list we have ever seen, it is a sad reflection of our times and the struggles that so many families are facing at the moment. It also highlights just how crucial it is that we are maintaining our service in all areas, as there seems to be nowhere else for families to turn.

The biggest issues by far that we are dealing with currently are financial problems, support for children with special educational needs and mental health difficulties, all of which require intensive long-term help which is keeping our practitioners extremely busy. We are on course by the end of March to have supported over 650 families in the year.

We so value all the help we receive from you in so many ways. One of our biggest needs at the moment is for more volunteers in all areas to help practitioners run group sessions as well as support for individual families, so if you feel that you may be able to help then please get in touch with the office and speak with Jane (West Sussex) or Alison (East Sussex).

Our events calendar for the year is filling up fast. For those of you in East Sussex, we will not be running our Easter Walk this year but are currently planning a new event in May half term, so please keep an eye on our communications for more information in due course. We are also looking forward to our skydive at the end of April as well as various fundraising events happening in many areas, and our Open Garden season which starts at the beginning of April. Do look at the events page of our website for information about all of these.

Thank you as always for all of your prayers, offers of help and donations. We really feel so supported in our work by you all.

January's work in numbers

- ◆ 216 individual visits and 1080 calls with families supporting 255 adults and 168 children
- ◆ 50 supported meetings with other agencies
- ◆ 45 group sessions held supporting 766 parents and 235 children
- ◆ 112 food deliveries made

Prayer points

- ◆ Pray that the right people will be found to fill our current practitioner vacancies

Chloe Burrell

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- ◆ Give thanks for the generosity of all who contributed to our Winter Fuel campaign

Nikki Kerr,
FSW Director of Fundraising and Marketing

The Strange Case of Dr Bodkin Adams

In Eastbourne it is healthy / And the residents are wealthy / It's a miracle that anybody dies; / Yet this pearl of English lidos / Is a slaughterhouse of widows - / If their bank rolls are above the normal size. If they're lucky in addition / In their choice of a physician / And remember him when making out their wills / And bequeath their Rolls-Royces / Then they soon hear angel voices / And are quickly freed from all their earthly ills.

The sound of shotguns can still be heard around our three villages during hunting

season. However, during the 1950s, those sounds might have triggered the thought, 'I wonder if that's Dr Adams and his friends?'



Bodkin Adams was a general practitioner in Eastbourne and was, reputedly, the richest GP in the country, arriving as he almost invariably did in his grey Rolls-Royce and accompanied by his friends such as Sir



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Roland Gwynne (Mayor of Eastbourne) and Alexander Seekings (Chief Inspector of Police).

However, Dr Adams reputedly had another life - as the most prolific serial killer on record. It was alleged that Dr Adams had gained his wealth by doing away with his rich patients after persuading them to alter their wills in his favour. These suspicions came to a head in 1957, when Dr Adams was charged with four cases of murder. The method? Overdoses of morphine to elderly and sick patients.

The consequent trial, at Eastbourne Town Hall, was at that time the longest murder trial in history. There was a mass of circumstantial evidence but little physical evidence - Adams had control of the death certificate and had arranged rapid cremations.

After a reported meeting between Lord Goddard (the Lord Chief Justice), Sir Roland Gwynne, Sir Reginald Manning-Buller (the

Attorney General) at the White Hart Hotel in Lewes, the judge, Mr. Justice Devlin, was directed to point out to the jury the lack of physical evidence, which he subsequently did. The jury, after a short recess, proclaimed Adams 'Not Guilty', and the police investigation report was officially sealed from public view until 2033! Adams returned to Eastbourne and remained a member of the Eastbourne establishment until his death in 1983, aged 84.

After a challenge, the report was released in the early 2000s, which have since underlined the mass of evidence and the effect of Adams' links to power and influence. In folk memory, the rumours continue.

It's the mortuary chapel / If they touch an Adam's apple / After parting with a Bentley as a fee. / So to liquidate your odd kin / By the needle of a Bodkin / Send them down to sunny Eastbourne by the sea.

Brian Calcott

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The Wheatear



It's been a long winter, but rest assured that our summer migrant birds will soon be with us. As you read this, beating hearts and beating wings are powering tiny bodies through north African skies.

Wheatears are our earliest returning African migrants. It's a fast 3,000-mile flight from sub-Saharan Sierra Leone to Sussex for a 1-ounce Wheatear, and they've been recorded migrating at 500 miles a day. The dashing males arrive first, their soft, sun-bleached shades of pink and buff topped with a dapper black bandit's mask. At Sussex Wildlife Trust's Southerham nature reserve near Lewes, you'll see them scurrying over the grazed downland turf or perched along the valley's fence lines. When they fly, Wheatears flash the white rump which gives them their name. Because Wheatears have nothing to do with wheat or ears. Their original name... well, courtesy prevents me from writing their old English name in such an upstanding publication - but let's just say they were named after their white behinds. Victorians and vicars bird watching in mixed company blushed when they were called upon to identify one, so their name was subtly censored.

Wheatear is a more palatable name for a tragically palatable bird. In Sussex, Wheatears were considered a local delicacy and were served at the finest banquets in Lewes, Brighton and Eastbourne. Sussex shepherds would trap them to increase their income; in the late 19th Century the birds fetched 3/6d a dozen (£17.50 today). Shepherds could earn £14 per season (£1,260 today) trapping Wheatears - half their annual wage. Around the town, shepherds were eventually banned from trapping Wheatears as it distracted them from their sheep.

Gluttonous gourmets were so desperate for fresh Wheatear that they would prowl the downs and take birds straight from unmanned traps, leaving a pile of coins for the shepherds. In 1900, outspoken and outraged Sussex conservationist W.H Hudson wrote, "It is not fair that Wheatears should be killed merely to enable London stockbrokers, sporting men, and other gorgeous persons who visit the coast, accompanied by ladies with yellow hair, to feed on them at the big Brighton hotels."

But the damage was done. Trapping and the gradual loss of their sheep-grazed downland habitat caused the birds to disappear from the Sussex downs. The Wheatears we now see around Lewes unsurprisingly don't hang around. Each spring they briefly return to their old downland haunts, flash their behinds at the people of Sussex and keep on moving. From Lewes, they'll head onwards to breeding sites in northern England and northern Europe. But for some of these birds, their amazing migration continues for a further 2,000 miles across cold oceans to Greenland and Arctic Canada.

Michael Blencowe
Photo: ©Tom Marshall
Sussex Wildlife Trust

From the Vicarage

I have been watching a programme about a Hasidic Jewish community in Antwerp. It is a good drama, with intrigue, drug smuggling, diamonds, and only a little



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violence. But the setting makes it remarkable, an insight into the lives and traditions of a deeply religious family in modern life. Perhaps most fascinating was the role of the matchmaker, busy in every episode. In this day and age?? Decisions that could take a young woman far from the community which has always been part of her life. Honestly, I had no idea!

There is a story in the Bible, (in Genesis 24), that tells a remarkable tale of a young woman, Rebekah. Isaac was no spring chicken when his dad Abraham encouraged him to get married. Abraham was concerned that Isaac should not take a Canaanite woman to be his wife, but someone from the place where his kith and kin were established. Probably too frail to undertake the journey himself, Abraham had a trusted servant travel there to find the right person.

The servant put his faith in God to help him discover who God wanted in this special household, and, in what appears to have been a remarkably brief time after their arrival, Rebekah appeared. A meeting at the well (perhaps the modern equivalent is Costa?) went according to the plan that the servant had put to God, and the servant asked consequently about overnight accommodation. Rebekah dashed home to tell her brother and her mother, and in due course Rebekah's family learned about Abraham, found they were related to him, and also the purpose of the servant's journey. Gifts were exchanged and it was arranged that the girl would become Isaac's wife.

Perhaps because the customs of that day were so alien to ours, Rebekah appears commendably sanguine throughout. Yes, sure, she wanted to be married, but it meant travelling a long way to a place of which she had no knowledge, to a man she had never heard of before. And to leave the very next day, as the servant wanted to complete his mission without delay. At least they asked Rebekah about this the next morning. And she said, 'I will', no doubt throwing everyone into a fevered rush to get things arranged.

The packing, the sorting, the sad goodbyes. My heart goes out to her mother, and to Rebekah's servant-girls, the chance for family reunions being quite remote thus making farewells dreadfully final. It also called for a remarkable level of trust, travelling an exceedingly long way over rough and arid country with strangers.

I have made some journeys into the unknown in my life, and I am sure you have too. Think about them, draw them from your subconsciousness, and consider how much you have learned about trusting other people, who have sometimes made decisions for you. We like to think we are in control of our lives, but we cannot control the circumstances in which we may find ourselves. If you love God, he is with you on every journey you will ever undertake, even to the grave. That has, and will, always give me confidence.

God bless you, and may He give you courage and fortitude in your journeys.

Rev Shirley

P.S. Isaac loved Rebekah, and years later she gave birth to twins, Esau and Jacob. But that's another story.





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Sunday 3rd March

09:30 Arlington Holy Communion
09:30 Selmeston Holy Communion
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Mothering Sunday 10th March

09:30 Arlington Holy Communion
10:00 Selmeston Family Service
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Sunday 17th March

09:30 Alciston Holy Communion (BCP)
09:30 Arlington Holy Communion
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Palm Sunday 24th March

10:00 Berwick United Service

Holy Week Compline Services

18.00 Monday at Arlington
18.00 Tuesday at Wilmington
19:00 Wednesday at Berwick

Maundy Thursday 28th March

19.00 Alciston Holy Communion and Vigil

Good Friday 29th March

15.00 Selmeston Good Friday Service

Easter Sunday 31st March

08:00 Alciston Holy Communion (BCP)
09:30 Arlington Holy Communion
09:30 Selmeston Holy Communion
11:00 Berwick Holy Communion
11:00 Wilmington Holy Communion

Prayer

9.30 am each Wednesday at Berwick church.
(On the first Wednesday of the month there is Holy Communion (BCP) instead.)
5.00 pm each Thursday at Wilmington church.

To receive a weekly notification about services (the Sunday Link) please email the Benefice Administrator at benefice.administrator@berwickchurch.org.uk

Please visit the benefice websites to check on services and times:
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