BDT N+V September 2025

Many of you may have seen scaffolding around one of the chimneys on Beatrice Cottage which is on the right of the main Institute building. There will be more scaffolding around the other main stack shortly (as I write on Aug 14th). Unbelievably, there are 8 separate flues for the cottage – open fires were the only form of heating when built in 1899. Drone footage showed that the cement around the flues was badly cracked and none of the flues were capped. No wonder the cottage suffered damp after heavy downpours.

We have been very fortunate in being able to use many local tradesmen to get on with the work renovating and improving the cottage. Steve Moon has undertaken the majority of the stripping out and incorporating a new kitchen and 2 bathrooms. In regard to bathroom fittings, my enormous thanks to our friends at Claygate Distribution Ltd in Marden who were able to supply ex display units and fittings. B+K have been able to send in one of their electricians at short notice, and Lionel Woodroffe has been able to provide us with some very competitive prices for carpets and vinyl. It is starting to come together so more thanks will go out to painters, plaster, scaffolders and waste clearance contractors in the next edition. We were able to collect some kitchen equipment such as hob and over plus fridge freezer from a family renovating a house in Frant. It is well worth keeping an eye on the Free sites.

All this must cost quite a bit. Indeed! The Trust does not have reserves for this so we have been offered a 3 year loan to pay for the majority of the work. Once done, the monthly rent will go towards the running costs of the whole Village Institute, together with paying back the loan.

Firstly, many thanks to those of you who have generously given donations to the Trust. You know who you are and so do we. Without you would find it difficult to keep this wonderful Grade 2 listed Community Asset available for all the users and in good condition.

How else are we going to generate income? The Ticehurst Talks! There is an enormous amount of local talent in the area who are kind enough to give up their time to put on fascinating Talks on the 2nd Thursday of the month. At present we are working on 10 evenings starting on:

September 11th with local farmer and hop fanatic Chris Levett. The History and traditions of the British Hop Industry.

October 9th. The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Talk with Major General James Cowan, CEO of the Halo Trust. You may remember the famous photographs of Princess Diana seeing their work clearing landmines. Proceeds will be divided between the RBL and Halo Trust.

November 13th Celebrated actor Robert Bathurst in conversation with Sue Gaisford.

December 11th Globally renowned Survival and Bushcraft expert Ray Mears.

The last 2 speaker dates are subject to not finding themselves playing the next James Bond!

Into 2026 – Boy O Boy doesn't time fly! We are finalising the programme, but proposed Talks include a repeat of the History of Ticehurst (maybe over 2 nights), The Chelsea Flower Show - what happens behind the scenes, and "A Kiwi Drops In" – a fascination story of a Hurricane Pilot who was shot down near Cranbrook and escaped death from several crashes as well as from the German Army. We will also be holding another Curry (thanks to Kit Smith) and Comedy Night in April with well known comedian from TV and radio – Simon Evans. Also the first Trans-Americas Expedition using Range Rovers top – tip (Alaska) to toe through the inhospitable Darien Gap to Cape Horn with Gavin Thompson plus a Chamber choral evening. Lots to look forward to.

Peter Reeves

Chairman Beatrice Drewe Trust.