

**Edition 13 - 22nd November, 2025**



Hi,

**Hello and welcome to this week's issue of *The Dean Scene*!**

It's fantastic to see our community of readers continuing to grow — thank you for being part of it and for helping *The Dean Scene* flourish.

The **Christmas market season** is well and truly underway, and the festive spirit is spreading fast! If you're organising a market or event, please let us know — we love hearing from you so that we can share events with our readers..

This week, we're shining a light on **Holy Cross Church in Woodingdean**, one of several wonderful local groups working hard to make Christmas extra special this year.

Each weekend, *The Dean Scene* brings you the best of life across the Deans — from community news and events to inspiring people, local history, and stories that celebrate where we live.

Thanks, as always, for reading and supporting your local newsletter!

Best wishes,  
Lisa Staples

P.S. Local business owner? We're still offering our special early opening advertising rates—email me directly or visit <https://deanscene.co.uk/business>

## What's Happening in the Deans.....

**Today!**  
**Brighton Guitar Quartet**  
**St Margaret's Church**  
**Rottingdean**  
**November 22**  
**1pm - 2pm**

A welcome return visit from this talented group, their first to the renovated church with its amazing acoustics. For more information on this wonderful group, please see their website.



**Today!**  
**St Nicholas Church**  
**Christmas Fayre**  
**22nd November**  
**10.30am - 4pm**



[Visit the website](#)

# The Parish Church of the Holy Cross, Woodingdean

**Christmas Maker's Market**  
**Saturday 29th November**  
**10am - 3pm**



**Christmas Day Lunch**  
**Volunteers Needed!**



In association with Circa events, we are looking to host another Christmas Day Lunch for people in the Woodingdean Community who are alone this Christmas or cannot afford a Christmas Dinner

We are looking for volunteers who can help serve a meal on the day!

Please contact the church if you can help!

**Mon-Thurs 9am-12pm**  
**Tel:01273 681593**

**Email The Church**



# The Grange Gallery

We love seeing the sun stream into The Grange Gallery bringing paintings to life.

**Our latest exhibition featured Janet Cawthorne "Fleeting Glimpse".**

Janet creates intriguing and dramatic contemporary portraiture. She says "I have always had a strong interest in the concept of ambiguity. There are always different ways of viewing the same things, whether that is two sides to a story, multiple ways to understand a conversation, many ways to interpret an artwork, and so on.

My recent work has involved a mixed-media process involving both digital creation and manual painting.

It could be said that there is a limit to how minimalist an artwork can be, while still being interesting! However I am excited to see where this line of enquiry will take me next, particularly as it links two of my passions: art and psychology".



## Rottingdean Heritage

There's a wonderful exhibition on in **Rottingdean Village Museum** (in the room adjacent to The Grange Gallery) showcasing the history of the village's pubs. Come along and read up all about your favourite!  
**Wed-Sat 10am-4pm and Sunday 1-4 pm**



## Welcome to Career Smarter: A Pioneering Force in Online Education



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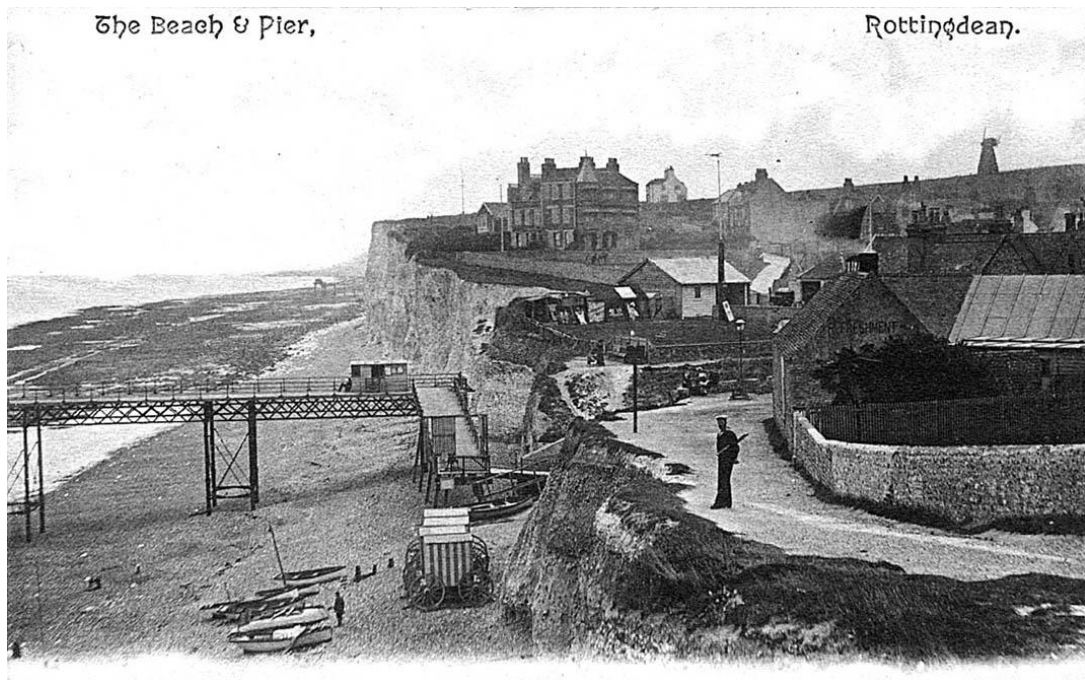
Click through to explore the full range of courses, **take advantage of our Black Friday offers until 30th November** and discover how you can *become career smarter*.

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## Smugglers in The Deans...



### ☠ Brandy, Beacons & Bold Deeds: The Smugglers of the Deans

Long before Saltdean Lido and Brighton buses, the Deans were a smuggler's paradise. In the 17th and 18th centuries, these quiet chalk valleys were alive with whispers, lanterns and the clink of contraband. With secluded coves, hidden cliff gaps and winding lanes leading inland, this stretch of coast was perfect for the lucrative business of "free trade."

### Rottingdean — Where Half the Village Ran the Brandy:

Rottingdean was the beating heart of Sussex smuggling. The gap in the cliffs offered a ready-made landing spot for small boats gliding in under moonlight, holds packed with tea, lace, wine and brandy — and sometimes wool being snuck out to France.

Beneath the cobbled streets, a **network of tunnels** is said to link the seafront with old cottages and pubs, including **Ye Olde Black Horse Inn** and the former **Customs House**. The pub cellars made perfect hiding places for a few “extra barrels,” and it’s said that if you listen closely, you can still feel the hum of mischief in the walls.

The **Rottingdean Windmill** on Beacon Hill wasn’t just for grinding grain — locals swore its sails once turned in secret code, signalling to waiting ships that the excise men had gone to bed.

Even the great **Rudyard Kipling**, who lived in the village, was charmed by the tales. His poem *A Smuggler’s Song* (“Five and twenty ponies, trotting through the dark...”) was inspired by these very hills.

And if you’ve ever heard of **John “Smoker” Mills**, Rottingdean’s most notorious 18th-century smuggler, you’ll know why the locals both feared and admired him — he could outrun a customs officer and outdrink a sailor before breakfast!

#### **Saltdean — The Quiet Accomplice:**

A little east along the cliffs, **Saltdean Gap** provided the perfect stage for unloading cargo unseen. Under cover of darkness, kegs were rolled ashore, hoisted up the cliffs, and spirited over the Downs by pack ponies. Local women hid silk beneath their petticoats and men disguised brandy barrels under straw.

#### **Ovingdean and Beyond — The Green Lanes of Secrecy:**

Though smaller, **Ovingdean** and its inland neighbours played their part too. Farmhands and shepherds acted as lookouts or storage hosts, guiding the smuggled goods inland along the old “**Green Lanes of Sussex**.”

These paths — now peaceful walking routes — were once busy midnight highways for contraband.

The smuggling years left more than just stories — they shaped the character of the Deans. Every pub, lane and cliff seems to hold a secret, and every whisper of the wind on Beacon Hill sounds faintly like the echo of hooves carrying brandy through the dark.



John "Smoker" Mills



## Later This Month In The Deans...

**Brighton Male Voice Choir**  
**Woodingdean Methodist**  
**Church**  
**Saturday 29th November**  
**3pm**



**Charity Quiz**  
**St Martin's Church**  
**Saturday 29th November**  
**7pm for 7.30 start**  
**BYO drinks and snacks**



**Ovingdean Christmas Fair**  
**Saturday 29th November**  
**Ovingdean Village Hall**  
**11am - 2.30pm**



## Holly Crompton

Holly Crompton is an illustrator and designer, based in Brighton. After studying Illustration at Solent University in Southampton for three years, she graduated with First Class Honours.

Holly's inspiration comes from the natural world, it's wildlife and intricate details, her work showcases it's beauty and subtlety. She enjoys working in various mediums, from pencils and pens to inks and watercolours, sometimes combining mediums to capture a subject's detail and atmosphere. More recently she's begun to work digitally, merging a love of drawing with technology.

Come and meet Holly at the Ovingdean Christmas Fair on Saturday 29th November!

You can also shop online and learn more about Holly's work on her website [www.hollycromptonillustration.com](http://www.hollycromptonillustration.com)



**HOLLY CROMPTON**

[View Holly's Website Here!](http://www.hollycromptonillustration.com)

**Nuffield Health**  
**Monday 1st December at 6pm**

Free Health Talk – Meet the Expert!  
Join us for an informative evening with  
Mr Prasanna Epaliyanage, Consultant Neurosurgeon,  
at Nuffield Health Brighton Hospital

Do you suffer from headaches, neck pain, or back pain?

This is your chance to ask the expert and get trusted advice on  
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Spaces are limited – don't miss out!



Ask the expert about your  
headache, neck pain & back  
pain



Mr Prasanna Epaliyanage  
Consultant Neurosurgeon



Nuffield Health Brighton



Monday 1st December 6pm



**[Email Here!](mailto:brighton.enquiries@nuffieldhealth.com)**



## Saturday 29th November - Rottingdean Village Cinema

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29**  
**ROTTINGDEAN VILLAGE HALL**  
**LICENSED BAR AND REFRESHMENTS**

FILM STARTS **6.20pm**   
**TICKETS £3**



Based on a true story  
STEVE COOGAN  
*The Penguin Lessons*  
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE FULL MONTY  
AND THE WRITER OF PHLOEMINA

6.00pm - 6.20pm Doors open  
6.20pm - 8.10pm **THE PENGUIN LESSONS**  
8.10pm - 8.30pm Intermission  
8.30pm - 10.10pm **THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND**

FILM STARTS **8.30pm**   
**TICKETS £6**



"A FRESH, BIG-HEARTED COMEDY"  
BY THE EDITOR  
TOM BARDEN, TIM KEY AND CAREY MULLIGAN  
*THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND*  
BY GETTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER

Tickets available on the door or from  
Rottingdean Emporium & Gallery, Park Road  
Deveson's Grocer, 60 High Street.  
Rottingdean Village Cinema on facebook  
for more information. 

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or from Deveson's Grocer, 60 High Street, Rottingdean

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