

Newsletter

Wednesday 19 August 2020

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On This Day

A running article or two

From the Ed - feel free to share the races you've run in years gone by. These weird times are the perfect opportunity to indulge in a bit of nostalgia. This is your newsletter and it's your races that make it something special and unique to Lingfield Running Club. So, please trawl your computers and let me share some of those memories. editor@lingfieldrunningclub.co.uk

This is the link to the running club webpage

<https://lingfieldrunningclub.co.uk/>

A reminder that club fees are due by 31st August. Anyone not paid up on 1st September will cease to be a member.

Please email membershipsecretary@lingfieldrunningclub.co.uk

NEW TEAM CAPTAINS FOR THE CROSS COUNTRY SEASON

As I am sure you are aware, committee members serve a 3 year term in their posts, with changes made and voted on, each year at the AGM. Given the unprecedented nature of what we are experiencing, there has been (as yet) no AGM. During this time, Lisa Compton and David Nottidge have been assisting with committee matters and working with EA on guidance, even though their time as Ladies and Men's captains were up.

However, with the Cross Country season around the corner (fingers crossed), the committee have decided to let Dave and Lisa loose and appoint new acting captains to run our teams in the interim. Fiona Champness and David Watkins will now take over as acting captains until such time, that they can be voted in at the AGM.

Huge thanks to Lisa and Dave for their hard work over the last 3 years, much of which goes unseen (dealing with EA, chasing for XC runners) and some of which is more public (virtual races etc).

If you would like to run in this Autumn's XC teams - assuming they go ahead - please let Fiona or Dave know. You will need to be an EA member, as well as a club member, to do so.

LRC Club Coaching Sessions

The club coaches are aware that the training sessions have been oversubscribed due to only having 5 places available and they have favoured those with easy access to Facebook who have seen the messages first.

Tickets for the next club coaching session are available later tonight from 7:30pm.

Event: **7pm Wednesday 26th August** with

[David Worsell](#) at East Court, East Grinstead. Meet by the sports pavillion.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/116382973607>

The booking system works on a first come, first served basis and will also create a "wait list" should someone drop out. The sessions are free despite the system saying tickets

will be on sale



The town that went sects mad: Leafy East Grinstead is well known as the UK home of Scientology... but it's become a magnet for Mormons, Satanists and Druids who dance naked, so could it all be down to a wartime tale of generosity?

By [DAVID JONES FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

PUBLISHED: 22:00, 17 August 2020 | UPDATED: 07:41, 18 August 2020

With its quaint tearooms, lovingly restored 'Bluebell' steam railway and England's longest row of 14th-century half-timbered buildings, East Grinstead would seem to be the quintessential English market town.

It's a place where tourists stop to see the historic sights after visiting one of West Sussex's stately homes. Where neighbours chat to one another in the streets. Where the only whiff of scandal came in 1973, when Alan Ayckbourn chose it as the setting for a dirty weekend in his trilogy of plays *The Norman Conquests*.

In other words, a tastefully normal place.

Do not be deceived. As we discover in an acclaimed new six-part podcast — devised by a writer who was raised in this town of 30,000 divergent souls — East Grinstead, which lies 27 miles south of [London](#), is anything but normal.

For this quaint little outpost has become the sect capital of Britain — our answer to Twin Peaks, the logging town in the 1990s American TV drama, where strange folk settle and weird things tend to happen.

Once a bastion of Anglicanism, in recent years it has become a magnet for esoteric sects and quasi-religious fringe groups.



They range from Scientologists and Mormons to more obscure organisations such as the Rosicrucians, an esoteric spiritual and cultural movement that dates back to the 17th century, and Opus Dei, the arcane Catholic faction that spawned a fictitious murderous albino monk in Dan Brown's bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*.

But the town has attracted other outlandish types, too.

Druids who are said to dance naked at dead of night in the nearby forest. Satanists. Pagans who believe the earth on which East Grinstead was built conceals a network of 'ley lines' that emit waves of spiritual energy.

It is precisely because the town has rather an 'uncanny feel', as he puts it, that Nick Hilton, 27, made the gripping podcast while stuck at home during lockdown.

'It's such a fascinating place because it has all these amazing religions and belief systems, yet on the face of it is so middle-class, conservative and conformist,' he told me.

'Walking down the High Street, with its medieval buildings and tearooms, you'll see these Hollywood perma-tanned Scientologists and Mormons.

'It's that contrast that makes it so interesting. There's this Stepford Wives sense of nothing being quite as it seems.'

Nick says he was awakened to East Grinstead's oddness as a boy, when he played for the rugby club whose grounds back on to the Scientologists' 60-acre estate, Saint Hill, which was the organisation's worldwide HQ for some years after it was bought from an Indian maharajah in 1959. It is still the Scientologists' national HQ.

'If the ball went over the wall, you would have to ask an adult to fetch it because there was this underlying sense of suspicion — a feeling that over that wall lay something weird and sinister.'

Saint Hill is just one of the large estates around the town that have been bought by religious orders, whose members have segued seamlessly into the community, investing in offices, shops and houses.

According to the Scientologists, about 1,000 members live there and some 50 run local businesses: a sizeable proportion in such a small town.

When I asked Tory-dominated East Grinstead Town Council to provide more details about the activities of the Scientologists and other groups, they did not respond. But, as I was warned repeatedly on my visit this week, in East Grinstead such matters are seldom discussed openly.

As one woman put it: 'You could be standing in the supermarket queue, talking to someone who dresses up in funny clothes and takes part in strange rituals, but you would never know it. This is a place where people don't pry.'

Her summation was reinforced when I called in at East Grinstead's museum. It contains tributes to the town's notable figures: hymn-writer John Mason Neale, who composed the Christmas carol Good King Wenceslas here; and eccentric astronomer Sir Patrick Moore, who grew up in the town and later brought galaxies into our living rooms as presenter of the BBC's *The Sky At Night*.

Druids who are said to dance naked at dead of night in the nearby forest.

There is also a poignant display remembering the work of Sir Archibald McIndoe, a pioneering World War II plastic surgeon who won acclaim for reconstructing the disfigured faces of RAF pilots who had suffered terrible burns when trapped in their blazing cockpits.

Yet there is nothing about the Church of Scientology, whose American founder, the science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, moved to East Grinstead in 1958 and bought Saint Hill a year later.

With its replica medieval castle and magnificent rooms preserved exactly as they looked when Hubbard — who died in 1986 — was using his self-invented gadgets to 'map the path of the human

mind' (and check whether tomatoes could feel pain), this is the Scientologists' equivalent of Mecca or the Vatican.

Devotees converge on it from all over the globe, and Tom Cruise — the sect's most famous follower — even bought a £4 million mansion nearby for his regular visits. He sold it four years ago to singer Peter Andre but is rumoured to be house-hunting in the vicinity again.

Other notable Saint Hill pilgrims include John Travolta, who made headlines a few years ago when he tried (and failed) to book a table at East Grinstead's branch of KFC.

There is no mention in the museum, either, of the Mormons, even though Wickenden Manor, just outside East Grinstead, which they bought 60 years ago from the Astor family, is the site of one the church's grandest temples.

The town's many other sects have been similarly ignored.

Why so, I asked the museum's curator, Jonathan Parrett. After all, one need only tap the words 'East Grinstead' and 'cult' into Google to realise its renown as a centre for alternative beliefs.

'It's a conscious decision not to exhibit these figures. The museum is for the whole town and there's an underlying need not to upset groups . . . because we'd be failing in our community spirit if 80 per cent of the town wouldn't talk to us.'

He paused and added: 'And it's the nature of these organisations. They are, by their very nature, secretive.'

They certainly are. Arriving at the 'London England Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' (so named by the Mormons, even though it is nowhere near London), I was halted at the security barrier by an immaculately attired and scrupulously polite guard.

Might I be allowed to look around the sumptuous grounds? Nice try. He handed me an email address and watched intently while I made my exit.

According to Nick Hilton, 'outsiders' have been admitted to the temple on only two occasions: when it was consecrated in the late 1950s, and again when it was renovated during the 1990s.

Satanists and Pagans believe the earth on which East Grinstead was built conceals a network of 'ley lines' that emit waves of spiritual energy

Given that Mormonism is a religious movement with millions of members and could almost have produced a U.S president in Mitt Romney, this struck me as rather odd. There are no steely-eyed security guards at St Paul's cathedral, after all.

Then again, not many religions would have the temerity to posthumously baptise the likes of Princess Diana, Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson.

My reception was similarly frosty at the Scientology complex. A guard with a clipboard registered my number plate before waving me away. However, I did receive a link to a cheesy film made for the Scientology Network and narrated by a Hollywood-voiced American, which described how Saint Hill had become 'a global icon' set in enough acreage 'to fit Buckingham Palace in twice'.

The film also made much of the Scientologists' integration with the East Grinstead townsfolk. There was footage of the mayor attending a fete, and various dignitaries attested to the sect's generosity towards local charities.

Doubtless this is true. But Nick Hilton's podcast features the harrowing testimony of Charlotte Greenwood, who moved to East Grinstead as a child. Her father had become fascinated by Scientology, with its claim to hold the secret to unlocking one's 'higher self'.

Initiated at an early age, at first she was 'love-bombed', she says. But at 15 she was enrolled in a boot-camp where followers were made to 'run everywhere', forbidden from talking to outsiders or dining with their families, and underwent five hours of Scientology tuition daily.

Matters became worse after she admitted, during a group confessional, to having once tried a cannabis joint. To purge this sin, she claims, she 'spent about a month locked in a room'.

Eventually Ms Greenwood fled Saint Hill and moved into a dingy flat with several other 'outcasts'. However, she says it took her many years to accept that she had been indoctrinated with 'bull****'.

She still lives in the locality. In fact, I was told there are a good many disentangled sect members in the town.

One woman, who asked not to be named, said she knew of a case in the 1980s where a disenchanted Scientologist had been helped to leave the movement by the former vicar at St Swithun's, the imposing old Anglican church that overlooks the town centre.

But all this poses an intriguing question: why have all these unconventional interlopers planted their flags in East Grinstead?

Hilton's aim is to come up with an answer. As the series progresses, he explores — with a healthy dose of scepticism — various theories, some more compelling than others. He ponders whether the town's oddness is down to some geographical quirk. It does happen to stand directly on the Prime Meridian, the invisible line that divides the Eastern and Western hemispheres and stretches right round the globe, from North Pole to South.

It is marked by a slab of prehistoric rock and a plaque in the town council's gardens — and if you stand there with legs astride, you can plant one foot on either side of the great divide.

Then there are the ley lines, a matter of some debate in these parts. Those who believe in such things — the dowzers, with their forked divining rods, and the geomancers, who look for patterns in the soil and rocks — are sure these aeons-old subterranean ridges exist.

Furthermore, they will tell you, the energy they generate is of great spiritual significance, influencing people's behaviour and shaping momentous events.

East Grinstead has certainly experienced its fair share of such events down the years, some of them dark and chilling.

In 1556, three unrepentant Protestant martyrs were burnt on bonfires in the main street. Spencer Perceval, the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated (in 1812), lived nearby and was married at St Swithun's.



Pictured; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Newchapel, near East Grinstead.

They certainly are. Arriving at the 'London England Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' (so named by the Mormons, even though it is nowhere near London), I was halted at the security barrier by an immaculately attired and scrupulously polite guard

In more recent times, a stray Nazi bomb fell on the town's Whitehall Cinema, killing 108 innocents.

And in 1996, a macabre murder shone a spotlight on the goings-on behind the high walls surrounding the town's grand residences.

The victim, wealthy computer company director Richard Watson, 55, was shot in the neck and chest as he climbed from his sports car at Larches Farmhouse, where he lived with his beautiful wife Linda, a former Miss Scotland runner-up.

Police initially accused Mrs Watson, who stood to inherit most of his estate, and her daughter Amanda of hiring a hitman to commit the murder. But the charges were dropped on the eve of the trial.

It was later alleged that Mr Watson had been a spy who passed information gleaned from his Eastern European business trips to MI6, the implication being that he may have been targeted by overseas agents.

Suspicion still later fell on a local antique dealer. But the case has never been solved and remains a subject for whispered speculation 24 years later.

Paranormal investigator Barry Depp says East Grinstead is also 'very haunted'. There have long been rumours that the spectre of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's beheaded second wife, has been seen in East Grinstead, where she once stayed. People have also claimed to see the ghost of a soldier who was shot in a pub cellar during World War I.

However, Mr Depp says he encountered another wraith last year — that of a woman who appeared in the garden of a house he was called to. When he and his team asked her to stop a dog barking, she even complied, he says.

It seems fanciful in the extreme to link murders and supposed hauntings with whatever has caused East Grinstead to become 'Sect Town'. So Hilton examines a much more uplifting theory.

It centres on Archibald McIndoe, whose statue stands in the town centre, and who has a private wing named after him at the town's Queen Victoria Hospital, where he performed his inventive plastic surgery on wartime pilots.

He not only strove to rebuild them physically but placed equal importance on raising their morale, determined that they must not be regarded as freaks and hidden away from society, but as heroes.

He, therefore, approached the townsfolk and urged them to invite the convalescing airmen into their homes, and to greet them unflinchingly when they shopped or drank in the pubs. He also found the men jobs and insisted they wear their uniforms with pride. His approach to their treatment was so experimental that the airmen dubbed themselves The Guinea Pig Club. They held reunions until 2007.

As the residents followed the surgeon's wishes full-heartedly, taking the airmen into their midst, East Grinstead became known as The Town That Didn't Stare. This is the title of the podcast.

You may be wondering what this has to do with the sect story. Well, Hilton asks whether the munificence of McIndoe (who would sometimes say God was guiding his hand when he performed his operations) has created a special aura around the town.

Perhaps an ambience of tolerance has somehow seeped into its fabric, making it the ideal haven for people who in other towns might be ridiculed or shunned.

In the end, Hilton concludes that this theory, although wonderfully 'romantic', is also fanciful. The likely reason why the sects have converged on East Grinstead is more prosaic.

Nestled in the scenic High Weald, it is replete with big country estates whose upkeep became unaffordable to their owners after the war, when the wealth of the aristocracy declined.

They were put up for sale — and dollar-rich alternative U.S churches that wanted to branch out into Britain snapped them up.

That they were suitably secluded and within easy reach of Gatwick airport and London added to their attraction.

Whatever the truth, the sects have enhanced certainly East Grinstead's mystique. And if ever Martians do decide to visit us, they will know exactly where to land their spaceships

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8636849/East-Grinstead-UK-home-scientology-magnet-satanists-Mormons.html> **if you want to read the actual newspaper article**

<https://audioboom.com/channels/5027460> if you want to listen to Podcasts - **The Town that didn't Stare**



Tuesday 18th August 2020 entries opened for the **2020 Virtual High Weald Challenge**.

The 2020 Virtual (Time-trial / Leader-board) High Weald Challenge Trail Races consist of a 50km ultra trail and / or a trail half marathon over the official High Weald Challenge routes, which takes place BETWEEN Tuesday 18th August and Sunday 27th September 2020.

Our virtual race is however slightly different, as our virtual race requires the runners to

run along the official trail route, thereby enabling runners to experience the extremely awesome routes of the High Weald Challenge Trail Races, so like a time-trial where each runners starts at a different time, but their overall time to complete the same official route is added to the race leader-board.

Whilst at the same time participants in the event will best part of an online community, with the regularly updated leader-board, as and hopefully an active Facebook event page, as well as receiving the 'Weald Famous' High Weald Challenge handmade coffee mug, and/or a High Weald Challenge finishers medal. A small donation from every entry fee (10%) is also being provided to the Vanguard Rambling Club – Vanguard Way Working Party, to help provide a little bit of assistance for the great work they do in maintaining the Vanguard Way long-distance footpath trail.

Check out the Virtual High Weald Challenge webpage for more information and to enter online. Stuart Mills, Races Director

<http://www.trailrunningsussex.co.uk/virtualtrailraceshwc.html>

Note from Ed

With running events being few and far between and a big hole in terms of "new" for this week, I'm including this event that has been well supported by LRC in the past. LRC have won places on more than one occasion. Juhana Kirk, Mandy Regenass, Scott Ulatowski, Eddie Sutton, Kelly Jarvis to name just a few. You are able to run the route more than once if you want to improve your time and you can choose when you run as long as its between Tuesday 18 Aug and Sunday 27 Sept 2020. Two distances to choose from - what's not to like?

On This Day

Some sporting events that happened on this day - over quite a span of years

[1900](#) Start of first and only Olympic cricket match in Paris; GB beats France by 158 runs

[1909](#) Indianapolis 500 race track opens

[1953](#) England regained cricket Ashes after winning series 1-0

[1955](#) US raises import duty on bicycles 50%

[1962](#) Homer Blancos plays finest round in golf, shooting a 55

[1982](#) Renaldo Nehemiah of US sets record for 110 m hurdles, 12.93 sec

[1983](#) LSU footballer Billy Cannon sentenced to 5 yrs for counterfeiting

[1992](#) Romesh Kaluwitharana scores 132 on Test Cricket debut (SL v Australia)

[1992](#) Sri Lanka make their highest cricket score ever 8-547 v Australia

[1993](#) Sally Gunnell runs women's world record 400m hurdles (52.74")

[1995](#) Bruce Seldon TKOs Joe Hipp in 10 for heavyweight boxing title

[2001](#) German Ferrari driver [Michael Schumacher](#) wins the Hungarian Grand prix at the Hungaroring to clinch his 4th F1 World Drivers Championship and equal Alain Prost's record of 51 Grand Prix victories

[2001](#) Canadian Open Women's Golf, Angus Glen GC: Annika Sörenstam wins by 2 from [Kelly Robbins](#)

[2004](#) American swimmer [Michael Phelps](#) wraps up the 200/400m individual medley double at the Athens Olympics when he wins the 200m (1:57.14 OR) ahead of teammate [Ryan Lochte](#)

[2004](#) American swimmer Aaron Peirsol wins the men's 200m backstroke in Olympic record 1:54.95, giving him the 100/200m backstroke double at the Athens Olympics

[2004](#) Australian swimmer Jodie Henry records 53.84 to win the blue ribbon 100m freestyle gold medal ahead of Dutch star Inge de Bruijn at the Athens Olympics

[2007](#) Canadian Open Women's Golf, Royal Mayfair GC: Mexican Lorena Ochoa wins by 3 from Paula Creamer

[2007](#) The Tradition Senior Men's Golf, Crosswater Club: Mark McNulty of Zimbabwe wins lone career major title by 5 strokes from David Edwards

[2008](#) Chris Hoy encapsulates British dominance of track cycling at the Beijing Olympics beating teammate Jason Kenny to win the sprint, adding to his keirin and team sprint gold medals

[2008](#) Britain's Victoria Pendleton beats Anna Mears in the women's cycling sprint final at the Beijing Olympics; GB dominates the track winning 7 of 10 gold medals

[2008](#) Reigning world champion, Christine Ohuruogu wins the women's 400m at the Beijing Olympics; GB's 50th gold medal in Olympic track & field competition

[2008](#) The men's gymnastics program at the Beijing Olympics concludes with the home team from China dominating the medals tally takes 7 of 8 gold medals; Zou Kai wins 3

[2016](#) Tajikistan's Dilshod Nazarov throws 78.68m to win the men's hammer throw gold medal the Rio de Janeiro Olympics; first gold medal for Tajikistan in Olympic history

[2016](#) Vivian Cheruiyot of Kenya goes one better than her London silver medal when she wins women's 5,000m at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics; runs Olympic record time of 14:26.17

[2016](#) A 6-way tie for first place in the final of the equestrian individual jumping competition at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics; Nick Skelton of Great Britain wins gold medal jump-off

[2016](#) Great Britain upsets the heavily favoured Netherlands to win the women's field hockey gold medal at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics after drawing 3-3 in regulation time; win dramatic penalty shootout, 2-0

[2016](#) Germany beats Sweden 2-1 in the women's football gold medal match at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics; 52,432 at the Maracanã Stadium

[2016](#) Chloe Esposito of Australia sets Olympic record overall score of 1,372 points to win the women's modern pentathlon in Rio de Janeiro. Élodie Clouvel of France second (1,356 points), Oktawia Nowacka of Poland third (1,349)

[2016](#) Kiley Neushul scores 3 goals as the US women's water polo team routs Italy 12-5 to win the gold medal in Rio de Janeiro and retain their Olympic title

[2018](#) [Novak Đoković](#) beats [Roger Federer](#) 6-4, 6-4 in the final of the Cincinnati Masters to become the first player to win all 9 Masters 1,000 tennis tournaments since the series started in 1990

The Real Story Behind This Iconic Olympics Photo

Mary Decker was the favorite. Zola Budd was a mystery. Photographer David Burnett captured their clash.

<https://www.runnersworld.com/runners-stories/a33367218/mary-decker-zola-budd-1984-olympics/>

Endurance Training Could Counteract the Harmful Effects of Sitting for Too Long

Too much sedentary time? New research shows that regular exercise could lower the risks.

<https://www.runnersworld.com/news/a33501475/endurance-training-effects-of-sitting-study/>
