

About 1972, Dorothy and I read that a Russian restaurant, Nitchevo*, was opening in Lewes. It was on School Hill, in a large basement room (where more recently, Seasons was based). We went in the first week. There were few other diners. Harry greeted us effusively (a wife may have lurked). He'd moved Nitchevo from London, because of the price of a new lease. We wanted White Russians, didn't we? Not a question. So, no concession to the USSR. Harry's vodka, sometimes lemon vodka, was carried to the table encased in a very large block of ice.

We returned as often as we could afford to. At this remove, we don't recall individual dishes, but there was everything we'd expected and more, if doubtless inflected for the British – and in my case, American – palate. I do recall kasha (fried groats), not tasted since youth. But we remember clearly, on our first night (besides the White Russians), Harry clearing away the main course plates and pronouncing, "Now you will want to rest". And we did. And afterwards we ate the very substantial puddings.

The Lewes Forum has a thread about the closure of Seasons – and other former Lewes eateries – with jonnyboy's contribution: "I worked briefly at Nitchevo, run by Harry who had a great Russian accent while the customers were there. The accent disappeared when they'd gone!" What matter? *Arnold Goldman*

*Russian for "what does it matter, nothing matters, why worry?"



Photo by Ed Tutty

TWITTENS #3: WATERGATE LANE



Lewes is still a distinctly watery place, but it's nothing like as boggy round here as it was back in medieval times. Those were the days when the Winterbourne went untamed, the land around was marshy underfoot, and Southover was home to a large mill pond. And you – or, rather, your medieval counterpart – would have passed through the appropriately named 'water gate' to reach firmer, more civilised terrain. The gate is long gone, sadly, and instead a water trough from 1912 marks (more or less) the spot, sitting in the middle of the road as if it owned the place. But it's the twitten that rises up from here which has really earned its place in history: at one time Watergate Lane would have been a well-trodden thoroughfare at the heart of a significant Saxon stronghold. So while this twitten took its name from a gate which turned out to be a mere historical blip, in making our way up or down Watergate Lane we're actually still following in the footsteps of a whole army of Saxons. *Juliette Mitchell*
With thanks to Kim Clark, author of *The Twittens: The Saxon and Norman Lanes of Lewes*, Pomegranate Press

BOOK REVIEW: WEEDS, WEEDING & DARWIN

A new book out this month - *Weeds, Weeding & Darwin* – has been described as 'a locally-inspired gardening handbook like no other.' Its author, Willie Edmonds, has worked in the kitchen gardens of Monk's House in Rodmell for over 30 years. He also has a longstanding interest in Charles Darwin, and uses this knowledge to tackle weeds – a fine use of evolutionary theory if ever we saw one. The book features the work of local photographers and can be ordered from any bookshop, £20 (publisher Frances Lincoln).

