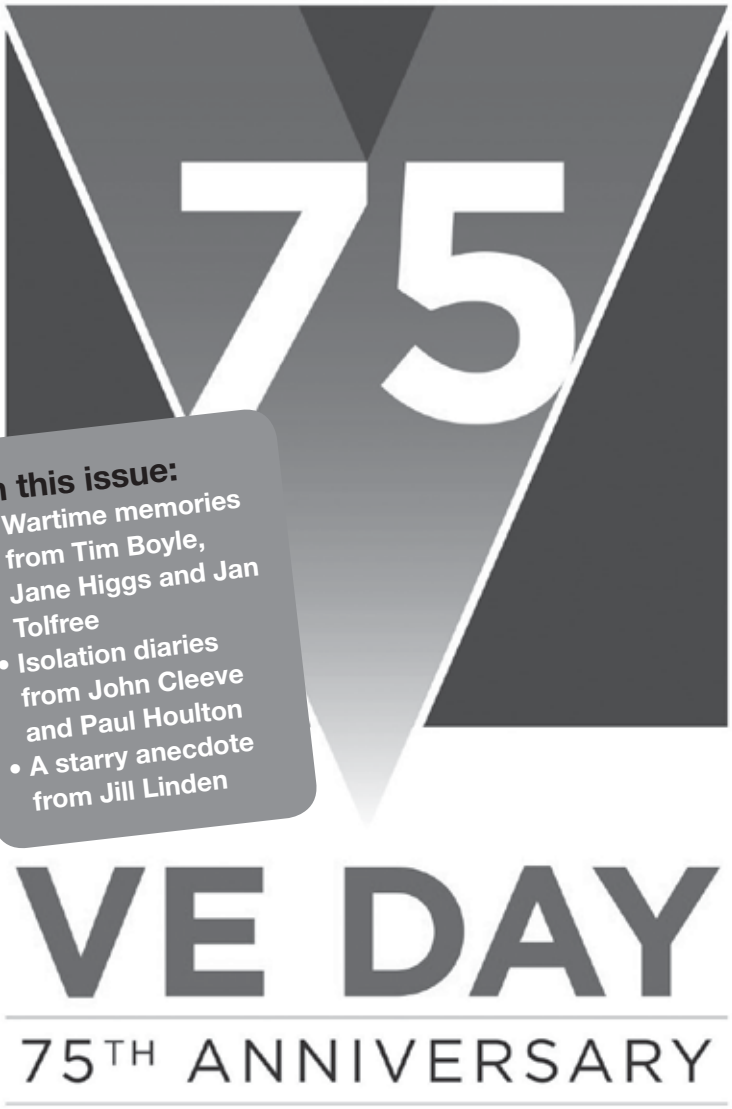
May 2020

THE LINK



In this issue:

- Wartime memories from Tim Boyle, Jane Higgs and Jan Tolfree
- Isolation diaries from John Cleeve and Paul Houlton
- A starry anecdote from Jill Linden

Village magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the May edition

We hope you enjoy it.

THE LINK

By May 1945 Adolf Hitler had committed suicide and Germany's surrender was authorised by his successor, Reichspräsident Karl Dönitz. The act of military surrender was first signed on 7th and a slightly modified document was signed on 8 May in Berlin. VE day had finally arrived. Sadly we cannot hold our VE Day party in the Castle as planned (another time....) but we hope you enjoy the local stories printed here and the free supplement (by email and online only), the "Branch Book of Service Stories" first published by the British Legion in 2000.

And of course life is on hold because of the virus. How strange that in general the best way to help others is to stay at home and do nothing, but some people , where less at risk, are doing wonderful things for the community. So read on here - isolation diaries and stories of how we can help.

So that's it - VE and virus - no ordinary Spring news. Many, many thanks to everyone who is still working to keep us all fed, warm and safe - the NHS of course but also the reservoir and sewage workers at Bough Beech, the bin men, the water and electricity companies, all the shop workers and the postal and delivery drivers who are working tirelessly behind the scenes.

Pet of the month – Charlie is my darling .....the young chevalier



The song is about Bonnie Prince Charlie, hero of the Jacobite movement, but it could equally well celebrate Charlie, much loved companion to my neighbour Una Higgs. The breed was popularised Charles II, Prince Charlie's great uncle who, with impeccable taste, fell for this affectionate but independent-minded breed and gave it his name.

I am honoured with a licence to walk Charlie and he accompanies me and my dogs on our daily outing - unless he finds the prospect too boring in which case he runs home the minute my back is turned. He has his own views on what makes for a satisfying walk.

Una, at 98, has had many dogs in her time but says that Charlie stands out as a delightful, funny and loyal companion. I know not to disturb them as the evening draws in and they settle down to the television, her in her chair and he in his.

Joanna Wade

An update on local food outlets

Please check opening hours / supplies directly as details change rapidly.

Local shops

Four Elms Garage 01732 700121 text 07734007911. Small shop at Four Elms Crossroads to visit. Will also deliver across parish.

Falconhurst Farm shop http://www.falconhurst.co.uk/farmshop.html or Facebook. Farm shop on Cowden Pound Road for visiting only 10am – 3pm

The Sussex Kitchen. Delivery only, bakery and basics. Delicatessen in East Grinstead.
£6 delivery charge.
www.thesussexkitchen.com 01825 722201

For pets, The Elms pet supplies is open in Four Elms, as is **Bradfords** in Edenbridge

The following information is from the Sustainable Edenbridge group, a community group formed by local people who are interested in improving the sustainability of Edenbridge and the Eden Valley, find them on Facebook. Please contact supplier directly to check about delivery to villages:

Fruit and vegetables

John Beaney (of the Edenbridge Thursday market that is closed for the moment) delivers weekly to Edenbridge. jbfruits@yahoo.com to place an order. He prefers email but if you don't have email please text him on 07977 461759

Meat and eggs

Allmans Butchers 49 Edenbridge High Street. For weekly delivery telephone 01732 863214 to order and arrange payment.

General groceries

Causeway Stores in Chiddingstone Causeway (also open to visit) delivers general groceries most days of the week including bread, milk, fruit and vegetables
Mobile 07377 949412 Landline 01892 871527.

Frozen ready meals for one person including smaller portion option and gluten-free
https://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk/
Delivers on Wednesdays to Edenbridge. They are taking on new customers in all categories. **Wiltshire Farm Foods** offers a similar service but states that they are taking on new customers in the "highly vulnerable" category only at the moment.

Takeaways

Aniseed - Indian Cuisine - 31A Edenbridge High Street 01732 866611 01732 866644 info@aniseededenbridge.co.uk

Domino's Pizza 65a Edenbridge High Street 01732 866663 online ordering also available on their website.

Tom Bells Fish and Chips - not delivering yet but hoping to set up a delivery service soon - 84 High Street 01732 867878

Henry VIII Hever various takeway nights and Sunday lunch with delivery for the vulnerable 01732 862457

If you have any corrections or additions to this list and / or would like to receive updates please contact: sustainable.edenbridge@gmail.com

Volunteers and help

The minor injuries unit at Edenbridge Hospital is currently closed but the unit at Sevenoaks is open.
Contact Sevenoaks District Council to register as a shopping volunteer 01732 227 000 although they may have enough for now.

If you need some assistance have a look at the District Council's website: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20026/your_community/514/request_help_from_a_volunteer_in_your_community

Kent County Council also offer help if you are vulnerable and have an urgent need that cannot be met through existing support networks. You can contact the Kent Together helpline at www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether or by calling on 03000 41 92 92. It is a 24 hour service. Another option is to contact Hever Parish Council for urgent supplies or urgent prescription collection: clerk@hever.org

Hever Residents Association is also offering help: contact Laura Palmer 01732 864 257 or Jane Hall 01732 862 569 or email HRA at hra@hever.org See also the list of numbers of those who can help on the backpage.

Wonderful, bespoke cakes (from £17) and cupcakes (from £18 per dozen) delivered locally. For more details please call Emily on 07767069577 or email emily.kleinschmidt@hotmail.co.uk



isolation diary

I have worked from home for almost twenty years. Twenty years with the radio, my music collection and my wonderful wife for company. So when Covid 19 made its ghastly appearance and lockdown quickly followed, my day-to-day was not so different.

True I had to cancel a trip to Paris to see my daughter and her family and that hurt; but I have been surprised by how much I have missed the little things and how much I have taken them for granted: my weekly evening with young Edenbridge people at the mentoring group 121, my weekly visit to a lonely widower in Westerham, a pint with friends down the Kentish Horse, a quick trip to Waitrose to buy supper and chat to people in the queue, small events in themselves but together they make life rich.

Positives? Markbeech has become so beautifully quiet with no planes, hardly any cars and very few motorbikes, suddenly you can hear the bees and birdsong. I have also had time to tidy my raised planters and plant salads and vegetables...a first to have all this done by the beginning of April. We have had such glorious weather; but I think of families in a flat in a tower block, how on earth do they cope? We are so blessed...If only there was a way to share.

So this period of comparitive isolation has made me realise that it is the simple and fundamental things that are important: family, friends, home and society. Social distancing is necessary for the moment; but let's try to reduce the distance when we emerge from this difficult time.

Paul Houlton

Christian Aid Week 10-16 May



The Coronavirus pandemic is causing global devastation. In some continents it is another disaster on top of the many others, notably climate change. Christian Aid aims to end poverty and injustice worldwide by focusing on key areas. This involves working in partnership with local organisations, as well as with governments and the private sector. In non-pandemic times this week is crucial to their fundraising, through events and donations envelopes, but alas this year this will not be possible. While there are many just causes in need of your help please consider those further afield by visiting www.christianaid.org and make a difference by giving a donation. Thank you.

Plants for sale

I have a smallholding in How Green Lane and I have been growing plants professionally for 30 years, selling at the Hever Hort plant sale, the Penshurst craft fair and local fetes and shows. These have all been cancelled this year, therefore I am offering thousands of plants for sale at a reduced price including an abundance of basket and patio plants and perennials. Also available planted hanging baskets, tubs and fuchsia pots.

For more details and a pre-arranged time slot for collection call George Payne, Trudges Farm on 01732 700298



Tim Boyle's memories of the war

Tim, who has lived in Markbeech since 1966, was nearly four years old when the war broke out.

He recalls: "At the time I was living in a mill town just south of Blackburn, where my father was a police constable. Darwen had suffered badly during the depression in the cotton industry of the 1930's and the joke became that the German bombers flew over without dropping bombs because they judged that 'someone had visited there already'.

My father wanted to join the RAF, but was not allowed to do so because he was in a reserved occupation. He was one of eight siblings and of these his younger brother joined the RAF and was killed in 1944 (which saddened my father for the rest of his life) and his elder brother, who was in the Army, was captured at Singapore and spent three years in a Japanese POW camp, from which he was very lucky to survive and nearly didn't. Of his sisters, two served in the WAAF's and one in the Army nursing service, including in Palestine, and we used to see them infrequently when they had leave. His youngest sister met and married a Canadian airman in 1945 and went to live in Canada.

I can clearly remember from the radio and newspapers the progress of the war from the surrender of Italy in 1943 to those of Germany and Japan in 1945, including the Normandy landings and the subsequent land campaign. At the Italian surrender I remember marching with friends carrying home made paper flags on sticks around the streets of Darwen in some sort of childish triumphalism.

By VE day (Victory in Europe) I was at a boarding school in Yorkshire and I remember that a sort of bemused anarchy prevailed: the teachers were in their own heaven and ignored us children and we were sent out to collect material for a great bonfire, which was held in the evening. What was amazing was that the children, though young, perpetrated no wanton destruction, although unsupervised, but only collected stuff surplus to requirements.

When the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima I remember I was sitting at the dining table with my parents and heard the news on the radio. I clearly remember the look on my parents' faces: a mixture of shock-horror that a devilish monster had been unleashed and pleasure that the war might end and my uncle liberated. On VJ day (Victory in Japan) the extended family, or those who could make it, had gone to a house on the north Cornwall coast. I remember my mother and aunts making a St. George's flag (a Union flag was too complicated) and one of my uncles, who was a doctor, climbing on the roof to attach the flag to the chimney.

My maternal grandparents lived in Maldon, Essex, which stood above

the Blackwater estuary and looked across the North Sea toward the Netherlands over the horizon. Some sort of naval activity went on in Maldon and the town was cut off: no one without authorisation and a permit was allowed in. As we had family there my mother, myself and my brothers were allowed to enter. I remember, having come down from Lancashire by train, going on a bus from Chelmsford to Maldon which was stopped by the police. Our documents were scrutinised and several people were turned off the bus and told to return to Chelmsford.

My grandparents had a walled garden behind their house and I remember in 1944 sitting with my brothers on the wall at dusk looking out over the North Sea. I remember the flashes on the horizon as V2 rockets were launched in the Netherlands and knowing that within two or three minutes someone, probably in London, would receive them. My mother had two sisters living and working in London throughout the war, but neither suffered any injuries.

Prior to 1943 I remember vague pieces of recall such as my father being to sent to Liverpool during the blitz to augment the Liverpool police. Amongst other things there was a great deal of looting, with which the police had to deal. Also I remember the blitz, particularly on Liverpool and Manchester, the latter being only twenty miles to the south. When the sirens went my father placed us under our stout dining room table (which one of my brothers now possesses) because, he said, it would provide some protection and a breathing space whereas being in the cellar or under the stairs would more likely result in being killed. (He presumably had much experience as a policeman of digging people out of bombed buildings). I remember a lone German aircraft coming over Darwen and machine gunning the streets without causing casualties or property damage.

I don't think I was seriously hungry, but I remember a diet of tinned pilchards in tomato sauce, which came from Canada, and endless semolina – it couldn't really have been like that – such are the tricks of memory. I remember also the dried egg powder, with which one could make leathery omelettes or put in cakes if one could get the other ingredients, which was difficult. This egg powder came from the U.S. and on its box was printed 'a gift from the people of the United States of America'. I remember even as child of five or six thinking 'well, they can jolly well keep it'.

To supplement the family's food supplies my father kept a few chickens and had a greenhouse, presumably rented, and I remember picking tomatoes and tending the plants.

After the war when I was older I remember my father telling me how in 1940 he had been part of

preparation for guerrilla warfare in the event of invasion – preparing Molotov cocktails, scouting out topography, burying arms, etc. (I suppose this was still a secret and still is so he technically shouldn't have told me).


Tim and Mary Boyle

He also told of searching for an escaped German prisoner on the north Lancashire moors. It was cold, wet miserable weather and some of the armed policemen said that they would shoot the escapee and say he was resisting arrest rather than capture him. (This man had escaped two or three times and the searchers were very fed up, but he was recaptured and sent to Canada, where, I believe, he escaped again).

Tim Boyle, Markbeech, 2020



a lovely story from Jill Linden

The year is 1909, my father Sydney Sims, aged 5 and his brother, Jack 6 ½ have just been orphaned, their mother dying from tuberculosis. The boys were sent to a boys home in Middlesex, the Hanwell Home for Boys. The nine years or so spent there were happy and settled and the basic education they received was to stand them both in good stead for the future.

One can only imagine how anxious those two small boys were and what, in early 20th Century England, for working class children in a class ridden society, could they expect from life. My lasting memory of my father was of a man always seeking security for his family, never ever being in debt and justly proud of owning his own home.

During the orphanage years, boys were organised into dormitories with an older boy as a monitor who oversaw their daily routine and in the evening saw them to bed after entertaining them with funny stories and encouraging their reading and writing skills.

One evening the monitor announced that now he was 14 years old he would be leaving Hanwell to begin his working life. The Great War had started and what few family connections Sydney and Jack had were fighting and dying in trenches and on the Somme so my father's question to their monitor was "What on earth will you do? Who will help you?" The monitor's reply resonated with Sydney for the rest of his life. "Don't worry about me because I'm going to be famous". You can imagine the response. Everyone dissolved into laughter. However, to my father, as unlikely as the comments were, he realised that those words were spoken seriously and with a certain determination.

Dad had no ambitions to fame, but hearing those words from someone from an identical background and circumstances inspired my father to believe that he could achieve something in life and I'm proud to say he did just that. He was promoted to the highest non-commissioned rank in the RAMC and later became a fully qualified psychiatric nurse and pharmacist.

The monitor's name, I hear you say? His name was.....



Charlie Chaplin!

“Of little or no interest”
– my parents’ war

This is the title my father gave his first scrapbook; on the brown paper cover he adds “being a record of the attempts of the above-mentioned individual to justify his invasion of the theatrical profession. 1940”. He was 19. Thirty years later he became rather well known as upstanding Captain Peacock in ‘Are You Being Served?’.



At the outbreak of WW2 in 1939 he was earning his living as an insurance clerk but attending evening classes at the London School of Dramatic Art which was evacuated to Witney, Oxfordshire.

“After deciding that his sojourn in the insurance world was not lucrative enough to compensate for the boredom thereof” his professional career started on April 1st 1940 touring Ireland with the Yorke Clopet Company and in the journal there is a photograph of members of the company pushing the railway truck with the scenery and costumes into a siding “Irish railway stations being deficient in shunting engines”!

A year later, in April 1941, he joined actor-manager Donald Wolfit’s company performing at the Strand Theatre, London (now the Novello). The company was well known for its wartime provincial tours and London seasons.

To fill a gap in his working schedule he went for a month to the Sheffield Repertory Company and they wanted him to stay on; “in fact I should have liked to and would have been better off financially, but I couldn’t let Donald down…” He re-joined the company in September 1941 and a programme for October lists actress Beryl Evans.

Call up finally arrived for 27 September 1943 and he attended Aircrew Reception Centre in St. John’s Wood - pay 3/- per week eventually going by ship from Liverpool to Canada and No1 Air Observer School, Malton, Ontario where he trained as a navigator. He passed on November 30 and was Commissioned Dec 1st 1944.

Sixteen days leave was then taken in New York at the Soldiers & Sailors Club in Lexington Avenue where he managed to see 17 shows by attending matinees and evenings. This included one of the special Forces matinee performances in the opening season of Rodgers &

Hammerstein's 'Oklahoma!' at the St. James Theatre, West 48th Street.

Meanwhile, Beryl Evans was touring with the Donald Wolfit company. Stories she told about touring during the war included putting up with freezing cold theatres and long waits, often at night, for connecting trains on Crewe Station. In Cardiff rats ate the hems of the costumes and the precious chocolate the performers had in their dressing rooms. A postcard sent to her parents in Manchester reads: "Just to let you know that we are all still alive. The poor old St. James' (theatre, Kings St, London) was badly knocked about last night and is out of commission for some time. Tonight there seemed to be fires around Piccadilly and one bomb fell close to us at supper time - though it did not put me off my steak and chips."

Flight Officer F.T.Ball returned to this country on January 9th 1945. Strangely he does not note May 8th V E Day in the journal. The next date is in June 'married!'. His bride, the aforementioned Beryl Evans.

Following the end of the hostilities he held various posts within the Royal Air Force finally serving in the RAF Entertainment Unit where his office staff had included Sgt Hancock, Anthony and Cpt Sellers, Peter. F/O Frank Thornton Ball returned to civilian life and the stage, without the Ball, in March 1947.

Jane Higgs

Help for the Scrubbers

Local Susanne Smith is collecting clean (must be clean) pillow cases, duvet covers and sheets for the Tunbridge Wells Scrubbers, part of the Kent Scrubbers movement who are sewing gowns, face masks and wash bags for the NHS. Susanne has been overwhelmed with donations but is still asking for more to be delivered to her at 6 Rectory Lane, Hever.

She sends this message:
Thanks to the lovely villagers and neighbours in Hever I was able to deliver more bedding for the Scrub sewers today.

Here is a photo of some of the things which they are making. Headbands so NHS staff can hook the mask elastic to the buttons as they were getting red and painful ears, scrub bags to avoid cross contamination.



isolation diary

Twas Ann's birthday round about the time when Boris decided to lock us down. We had been asked out to supper by her son and daughter-in-law on the Saturday and we have only been out once since – to get some money.

Ann's a social bunny; I'm not but I'm getting that way. With the diary stripped of social appointments Ann has therefore made lists of things to be done. She loves making lists! People to ring up; things to be done in the garden; things to be done in the house; letters to write.

Boris has said we must wash our hands and take exercise but he does not say what that exercise should be. We can also go shopping. But he obviously didn't get a letter from the NHS which is MUCH more strict: no sharing a bed; no sharing a bathroom; meals up in your bedroom; can't go out; it goes on and on. Is life worth living? Well that applies to me so Ann can go shopping. But she was diagnosed with a problem with her heart just as we were locked down so she prefers to lock herself down too.

We are, therefore, isolated together. Every morning I ask myself if I have a sore throat or a temperature and if I haven't I get up. But all this is possible because of the fantastic kindness and generosity of relations and friends who have offered to shop for us.

The IPad has been great. How they managed in 1918 without it I don't know. Nearly all our conversations with our families have been face- to-face using Facetime, WhatsApp or Wechat, and we are now getting into Zoom.



Ann's church has had services on Facebook which has been great but it is left-to-right!

We have survived four weeks: eight weeks to go?

Ann and John Cleeve

Jan Tolfree's memories of the war

As a child I lived in Goodmayes Essex not too far from and on the enemy's route to London. We were extremely fortunate not to suffer direct hits but areas nearby did. We did have bomb damage which was repaired after the war.

My father, who served in the First World War so joined the local Home Guard, decided we would have an Anderson Shelter in the back garden – I don't think the chickens were too happy with the disruption! My father made our night time haven as comfortable as possible. He painted the inside of the shelter to obliterate the cold colour of metal and even stuck a frieze half way up the wall. There were five of us, plus a cat and dog, couldn't leave them on their own in the house. There were two bunk beds for my parents and my brother and sister along the outer edge and a small bed between them for me. I can't remember if we had any lighting other than torches as of course there were strict 'black out' regulations.

Early evening would see us trooping down the garden, me in my air-raid suit – similar to the current onesies - taking a thermos of tea and I am sure some home-made cake or biscuits, not forgetting our gas-masks. We would say goodnight to the neighbours who were also going into hiding!

One story I remember that my father re-told many times, was that he risked his life by returning to the house for one knitting needle that my mother had forgotten so she could continue knitting during the long night. How brave!!

We all have so many memories good and bad!

Jan Tolfree



Sevenoaks council news

Many have taken lockdown as an opportunity to explore, if not wholly embrace, new or different technologies. You may now be an accomplished user of Zoom, Hangouts or Houseparty. Communicating and 'convening' by video has become ubiquitous overnight. Whether a good thing or not, I'll allow you to judge!

That experience is no different for my District Council colleagues and me, with the law having now been changed to permit virtual meetings. But it doesn't replace the bread and butter work of a councillor – that which is most rewarding – which comprises those informative and often spontaneous conversations invariably arising from chance encounters: bumping into someone on a walk, in one of our excellent hostelries, or at an event.

Looking through my diary reminds me of the residents' association events, parish meetings, litter picks, quiz nights, services, suppers and celebrations which have not taken place in recent weeks, as well as one-to-ones booked in to discuss this issue or that; for all of which digital channels are no real substitute. Many of those conversations, if not the events themselves, are, though, simply postponed. However, such interactions served another invaluable purpose: sharing and detecting hardship. Though less visible, it has not gone away. Indeed, these troubling times in which we find ourselves have produced particularly challenging circumstances for some. That is why community – most simply put, looking out for one's neighbour – is so incredibly important, now more than ever.

Councils have a role too. As privileged as we are to live in this corner of Kent, the security many of us have previously enjoyed is no protection from not just ill health but other areas with which local government is concerned and endeavours to assist. For example, the death of one's spouse and carer would be difficult enough at the best of times but all the more serious if a nonagenarian with no immediate family, as sadly occurred the other week.

Or, whatever one's income, most households have expenditure geared to their earnings and cannot sustain unexpected losses in income – so it's no surprise that last month the District Council took nearly a thousand calls in one day alone from people fearing they may struggle to pay their Council Tax. And let us not forget that lockdown has been a period of particular anxiety and suffering for victims of domestic abuse.

It is with these and other, less serious, matters in mind that I too have embarked on a new digital journey and setup an Instagram page ('mycornerofkent') to keep you abreast of some of my work during this period and, hopefully, also provide a source of some help to those whom it might otherwise pass by.

Matthew Dickins
District Councillor for Cowden & Hever
Sevenoaks District Council,
Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent,
TN13 1HG
e. cllr.dickins@sevenoaks.gov.uk
m. 07910 328 110
NEW Instagram: mycornerofkent

Home school

Well, it's quite a different school report this month after the schools closed on Friday 20th March. Whilst parents and carers are used to helping with homework and organising activities during school holidays, an extended period of learning away from school is something that few of us have experienced!

The teachers mobilised quickly to plan and prepare work for all the children to be completed at home. In this time of uncertainty, it is important for the children to maintain consistency and so the work set for home learning reflects and continues the experiences completed at school.Each class is provided with a daily timetable which is uploaded to the individual class pages on the school website. The timetable has an explanation of the tasks required and links to any online support, including pre-recorded videos to support learning, and videos filmed by teachers explaining new concepts. At the end of each day, parents email photos of their child's work so that their teacher can review their home learning. A 'celebration' tab showcases the best work of the day.

'2020 – A year of change' challenge

Alongside the learning by class there are weekly challenges for the whole school. **In challenge 1**, the children were tasked to become an expert at something, making the most of their time at home. The children were asked to create mind maps to showcase their ideas on what they can do at home and how they can become really good at it. Ideas ranged from baking, to running, to origami, to juggling, to learning a language, to dancing, to writing poetry, to perfecting a handstand!



Challenge 2 was all about the Great Four Elms Primary School Bake Off. The children were asked to design an Easter cake, starting with sketches of the cake and the key ingredients… just like the real Bake Off!

Over Easter, the children baked their cakes and then asked family members to evaluate them. Once all the photos and reviews are received, the teachers will pick a 'star baker' from each class.

Daily PE

If you are a regular reader of this article, you will know that we are used to taking part in lots of activity and sport. Although our team sports have had to take a back seat, along with the Daily Mile initiative and Monday PE, each class has 30 minutes of PE at the start of the day. A lot of the children (and parents?!) are following Joe Wick's online daily PE workouts, but the main point is to be active for 30 minutes before settling down for learning. I know in our house, this is a great start to the day!

Nicole Holt

news from the pews

Four Elms

Our pews have moved! We are now staring at screens either laptops, tablets or the television screen. Or listening on the old-fashioned radio. The church building remains locked down but the services, while suspended in the building, continue.

Lockdown, self-isolation, home-isolation, self-distancing… All these words will enter our lexicon of 2020. Will we have poetry and dramas (shown at the National Theatre) looking in depth at this period, emphasising the nuances of relationships? Certainly, the pandemic of 2020 will be part of the GCSE History syllabus in years to come. Will Brian Cox become Boris Johnson on screen?

The Benefice under the leadership of our very able and hardworking new Priest in Charge, Rev. Simon Braid, has created its own virtual church. The Three Spires website has provided a choice of services throughout Easter. Thank you Simon. Of course, this doesn't easily address those who are not internet users but we have tried to keep you in touch with the activities of St. Paul's Church. The telephone is still a very useful piece of equipment.

During this lockdown period there can be no doubt that within Four Elms village there is an immense amount of goodwill and desire to help those in need. Neighbours just being good neighbours. Thank you to everyone. It is very much appreciated.

But this is April. Wonderful bluebells and white cherry blossom. New skills have been learned. Communicating through Zoom and time to perfect the garden. There is much for us to give thanks.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

In the olden days we marked Christian Aid week with people and horses meeting in the churchyard for tea and cake.....the coronavirus emergency appeal needs us more than ever and if you would like to give and can't do so



online give me a ring with a pledge and I will collect from you when we are back to normal.

By the time you read this Simon will have been "made legal" as Priest in Charge - all done remotely by the Archdeacon with Churchwardens looking on from home. We have all become experts in Zoom, FaceTime, Facebook for live services, see the Three Spires website for recordings of all past services - all allowing the Church to keep ticking over but I can't wait to see you all again in person.

I have enjoyed looking through the WW2 stories from locals and the

British Legion book which has been emailed to online readers. If you are interested in obtaining a printed copy of the book please email thelink@hever.org. If there is sufficient interest it may be that hard copies can be prepared.

Meanwhile, very best wishes to you all and let me know if there is anything I can do to help.

Jane Rosam
Churchwarden

Markbeech

Nicki Talbot and I alternate in writing 'News from the Pews' for Markbeech, so the last one I wrote was in February for the March issue, and it feels now as if that were a different world. This month there are no events to remind you of, other than Simon's excellent online services.

In Markbeech, as everywhere, the church, pub, village hall etc are all dark, the village is very fortunate in having a new hub in the farm shop at Falconhurst. In the well spaced queue there you are bound to see a familiar face and strangers chat, united in their common desire to keep distanced but have some human contact.

The benefice's online offering is impressive and if you haven't explored it yet I do urge you to do so. It goes a long way to make up for the lack of actual contact and gives us the spiritual food we all need so badly at the moment. One of the many blessings of living here is the Revd Simon's ability to embrace the technology that makes this possible.

My life now is probably typical of many of us. I only see people online or on occasional forays out for food, or when walking my new little puppy Milly, a little way along the lane. My 70th birthday was the Saturday before lockdown so I officially became old at that moment, but I had the enormous good fortune to acquire this new dog at the beginning of March, a birthday present to myself. Milly is a jackapoo, ie a Jack Russell/Poodle cross. She's little and feisty and affectionate and needs so much attention at the moment that I hardly have time to worry about Covid-19.

I count myself as very lucky as I spend my days gardening and looking after this little creature. We are all experiencing this pandemic in our own ways, for key workers the pressure must be immense, I have a nephew who is an anaesthetist in ICU at Margate Hospital so I get direct news from the front line and **c**an understand a little the effect on him and his young family. I pray for them and all who are working to keep us safe every day. I echo Simon's phrase 'Keep safe - keep well - keep praying.

Marielou Linklater
Churchwarden

our vicar's thoughts

I am writing this having just heard that the lockdown has been extended into May and so it seems likely that the existing restrictions will continue for a while yet.

In addition to the incredibly severe health and economic consequences of the Coronavirus, we've seen our churches closed to all for the first time since 1208. So it is sad that the official start to my ministry in the Three Spires is amidst suffering and without the ability to lead worship within our three churches.

The future Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, wrote: 'There is nothing good about this virus, but that does not mean good cannot come out of it.' Well what might that good be? Here are my five suggestions:

1. As I've phoned people in the parishes, many have commented on how lucky we are to live in a beautiful place where we can enjoy the countryside. Nationally we have also seen the Thursday applause for NHS workers. When we are prevented from doing things we might have taken for granted in the past, we can appreciate them all the more.
2. I've also been struck by how loving and caring these communities are. Without exception, those elderly and isolated people I've spoken to refer to their neighbours, friends and family who have rallied around and ensured their basic needs are met. The church has been seeking to do what we can alongside other community institutions.
3. On a global level, it has been said that 'even the lungs of the planet are heaving a sigh of relief' as the dramatic reduction in travel reduces pollution. Maybe this might lead us to consider our approach to climate change.
4. With the live streaming of services, I have been improving my grasp of modern technology and my official licensing as your priest in charge on Tuesday 21st April will have been by Zoom! I am also aware of people who, with some help, are getting connected digitally and others creating WhatsApp groups to keep in touch.
5. In ancient times, when Christians wanted to deepen their relationship with God, they went into the desert – they actually pursued isolation. This enforced desert time, can be a time to reflect on the deeper things of life, to pray and even to seek God and learn what it means to sustain our own walk without the rhythm of church services or other meetings.

I hope we won't lose these positives once this crisis is over. Then I'm looking forward to some serious celebrations!

Simon

Church in May during the lockdown

We are assuming that the lockdown will continue during May. Services will be live streamed and recorded on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/threespiresbenefice and can also be accessed via our website https://threespires.wordpress.com/ where there will be other material to help us during this period. We also plan to be putting services onto YouTube so please watch the website for details.

Date & time	Service details	Readings	Sunday
3rd May 10.00am	Live streamed Holy Communion	John 10:1-10 Acts 2:42-end	Easter 4
10th May 10.00am	Live streamed Holy Communion	John 14:1-14 1 Peter 2:2-10	Easter 5
10th May	Recorded family worship	Jesus story book Bible page 240-242 (based on Mark 4:35-41)	Easter 5
17th May 10.00am	Live streamed Holy Communion	John 14:15-21 1 Peter 3:13-end	Easter 6
17th May	Recorded family worship	Jesus story book Bible page 324 (based on Acts 1:9-11)	Easter 6
21st May evening	Recorded reflective service (non Eucharistic)	Acts 1:1-11 Ephesians 1:15-end	Ascension Day
24th May 10.00am	Live streamed Holy Communion	John 17:1-11 Acts 1:6-14	Easter 7
31st May 100am	Live streamed Family Holy Communion	Luke 11:9-12 Acts 2:1-21	Pentecost

Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone during the crisis or any other help including reading the text of the above services over the phone.

Priest-in-charge
Revd.Simon Braid
01892 871453 and
simonbraid@icloud.com
Wardens
Hever
Jane Rosam
01732 868085
Four Elms
Christina Hodson
01732 700247
Richard Bennett 01732 862971
Markbeech
Nicki Talbot
01342 850526
Marielou Linklater
01342 850579
Administrator
Ana Roxburgh
beneficeemail@gmail.com
Prayer hotline
Ellie Heard 01732 865564
or Revd.Simon Braid (above)

We are also looking into setting up Zoom and phone Morning and/or Evening prayer and a Zoom/phone bible study group. If you are interested in either or both of these, please contact Simon.

10th-16th May is Christian Aid week. Please see the article on page 5 and during this period of lockdown, given the impact that the Coronavirus has been and will be having on those on the margins, do please be generous if you can.

Each of our three Annual Parochial Church meetings, which would have happened during April, have been postponed. We're expecting these meetings to take place in October and new dates will be announced as soon as we are able.

Knit for Peace



FAST and EASY Teddy Bear Pattern

Materials:

Use the appropriate size of needles for the yarn you choose. The weight of the yarn will determine the size of the bear. Size 3.75 with double knitting yarn would be a good match. Pins to hold bear together while sewing; a tapestry needle; synthetic stuffing; dark coloured yarn or buttons for eyes, nose and mouth.

Pattern:

The bear is worked in stocking stitch throughout and is knitted from the feet up, over the top of the head and down the other side to the feet again.

Begin with the legs and work two.
Cast on 8 stitches and work 16 rows. Break the yarn and leave the stitches on the needle.
Cast on another 8 stitches and work another 16 rows.
To work the body, knit across both legs and then work 12 rows. 2
To work the arms, cast on 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows.
Work 8 more rows, then cast off 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows.
To make the head, work 38 rows on the 16 stitches you have left.
To make the second side of the arms, cast on 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows and work 8 more rows. then cast off 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows.
To make the second side of the body, work 12 rows.
To make the second side of the legs, work the first 8 stitches and then work
16 rows on these stitches. Cast off. Return to the remaining 8 stitches and work 16 rows on them. Cast off.

To make up the bear, fold the knitting in half and line up the sides, pinning if necessary. Using mattress stitch and working on the RT side, sew around the bear leaving an opening at the crotch area. At the ears, arms and feet, round off the sewing up slightly. Before inserting the stuffing, create the ears by stitching across the head at an angle, making 2 triangle-shaped ears. Either create eyes and a nose with yarn or use buttons. Stuff the bear with synthetic stuffing, shaping the head as you go. Close the crotch area.

For now please hold on to your work or give away. Once the crisis is over you will be able to send completed items to Knit for Peace, Radius Works, Back Lane, London NW3 1HL. You can send them spare yarn now. If you have enjoyed knitting this please make a donation to support Knit for Peace projects at www.knitforpeace.org.uk.

gardening

We are currently in 'lockdown' and experiencing times like we have never experienced before. Our thoughts go out to families who have lost close ones & we salute the magnificent job our NHS are doing.

I cannot think of too many industries that haven't been affected by this current situation (supermarkets, Amazon & off licences an exception!), but horticulture has been hit awfully. As news came of lockdown we lost 35% of our turnover instantly with the closing of most retail outlets. This includes garden centres, stately homes (Hever Castle amongst others we supply) and of course our public open weekends. This was then followed by our designer and landscaper customers postponing projects.

This time of year should be our busiest time and where we make our living. Off the back of a disastrous early Spring with relentless rain things looked bleak!! We had to make quick decisions to try and save our family business now in its 39th year.

We furloughed 2/3rds of our workforce, the government enabling us to retain staff, rather than lose them (very commendable). Slowly, orders have started to bounce back, mainly from gardeners who can work in isolation.

Our site is closed to protect the welfare of our staff, but we are also offering a click & collect from the end of our gate for our trade customers that is proving popular. With over 800 people on our popular public open weekend mail-list, we wondered how we could offer our beautiful range of plants? We now offer a 'contactless' service to our local, loyal retail customers. We send an updated retail list weekly, you send back your order and pay by BACS and we deliver to your front drive/garden/door. Unfortunately we cannot take plants through to the back garden and we cannot offer our delicious teas & cakes we offer at our weekends!!

If you are not on our mailing list, please visit our website www.howgreennursery.co.uk to register. Click on Public Newsletter tab and you will be added to our list.

This time of year, we have a huge range, well over 1000 lines, including alpines, herbs, perennials, ornamental grasses, shrubs, trees & patio plants. We have also been selling plants from our front garden in Tunbridge Wells with an amazing response! We are also donating 10% of takings to the wonderful NHS.

Now is the time to get out in your gardens, especially with the lovely weather! Gardening is both great for you physically, but also mentally. We're all staying positive and with our wonderful hard working staff, we'll get through this and come out stronger!

Right….and breathe! If that all sounds a little downbeat, then lets get on with what we all love to do and that's gardening! There's so much going on at the moment and so many jobs to do.

It's a great time of year for planting – we've come out of a really wet Winter, so there may be gaps in the borders. The ground is warming up and drying out so perfect for plants.

We are mostly all on the notorious Wealden clay so any soil improvement prior to planting is well advised. If possible try and fork over the soil to help aerate – this promotes better root growth. It is also worth adding some John Innes no. 2 or 3 to the planting hole, to add drainage. Definitely recommended if planting Mediterranean plants such as rosemary and lavender.



We are inundated with requests for summer patio plants, but please be careful. Daytime temperatures may be above average, but nights are still cold. Remember, it only takes one frost to ruin all your hard work and investment! If you are lucky enough to have a greenhouse or heated tunnel, now is the time to sow a variety of vegetables such as tomatoes. In these difficult times there's never been a better time than to grow your own. Home grown produce tastes so much better, plus you have the satisfaction of the results and provenance.



Stay safe and get gardening!

Simon Sutcliffe
How Green Nursery

Benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Four Elms	**2018**					62.7	1.2	44.7	67.2	17.1	38	96	70
	2019	28	33	54	12	29.5	111	55	27	58	112	115	114
	2020	66	106	55									
Hever	**2018**	79	36	81	65.5	79	0	36	63	32	41	127.5	81
	2019	23	56	45.5	12	24	90	63	28.5	64	119	98	114
	2020	77	125	48									
Markbeech	**2018**	83	40	82	77.25	70.05	1.5	51	68.5	33	47.5	105.5	91.5
	2019	39.5	41	59.25	13.25	29	78.5	74.5	38.5	71	133	92.5	138
	2020	96.25	140	47.5									

Hall Bookings

Four Elms:
Village Hall
– Mike Follows 01732 700280
or 07887 950921
Parish Rooms
– John Southworth 01732 700670
Hever
– Mrs Ryan 01732 864168
Markbeech
– Mrs Paige 01342 850328

Councils

Kent County Councillor
Peter Lake 07740 701695
Sevenoaks District:
Matthew Dickins 07910 328110
Hever Parish:
Charlotte Cole 01342 322123
clerk@hever.org

The Link Team

Bridget Harris, Joanna Wade, Paul Houlton
email: thelink@hever.org
Telephone 01732 700986 (Bridget) Mobile 07958 919 631 (Joanna)
Address 1 Triangle Cottage, Hever Road, Hever TN8 7NL
Benefice website threespires.wordpress.com **Community website** www.hever.org

The views expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editorial team. There is no implied approval or recommendation for any service or event advertised in the magazine.

Copy for the June edition should reach us no later than **15th May 2020**
Subscriptions cost £5 pa if delivered by a volunteer. For payment either: a) Send a cheque payable to 'The Link' with your address to 1 Triangle Cottage, Hever Road, Hever TN8 7NL or b) Make a bank transfer or set up a standing order payment to 'The Link' at Lloyds a/c 01057697 sort 30-92-92 with postcode and surname as reference.

A copy of The Link can be viewed in The Link section of the community website www.hever.org

Are you self isolating? Do you need help?

If you need help with shopping, prescriptions, posting letters etc please call the editors (see page 25 for numbers) or the churchwardens (see page 21) or call any of the following. We would all be very happy to help.

Laura Palmer – 01732 864257
Jane Hall – 01732 862569
Laura Hands – 07792 167 470 (based in Hever)
Beverley Thomas – 07855 968 006 (based in Edenbridge)
Toria Corcoran – 07885 491 893 (based in Edenbridge)
Andrea Hayto – 07766 503 062 based in Four Elms)
Sophie Fraser – 07793 464 705
Amy Hurlstone – 07982 996 642
Emma Short – 07985 047 746 (based in Four Elms)
Cheryl Small – 07795 841 178
Caroline Crooks – 07887 505 409
Four Elms Helpers 01732 700247

You can also email thelink@hever.org or hra@hever.org or fevhlunch@btinternet.com