THE LINK

December 2020







In this issue:

- Striking gold
- Christmas at Chartwell
- Amber Dane, a childhood remembered
- More than just landscaping
- Need help?

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the December edition

We hope you have a good Christmas whatever that looks like in these strange times.

I have just finished reading “The Dig” by John Preston, an excellent historical novel about the excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial in 1939 (thanks for lending it to me, Sue Harvey). One of the miracles of the find (beautifully displayed in the British Museum and also on site by the National Trust) is that robbers hadn’t emptied the big mound of its treasure in the 1,300 years it had lain buried there. Metal detecting had always seemed to me to be a threat to “proper” archaeology but I now know from watching the equally excellent and gently funny “The Detectorists” on BBC i-player, that they are a responsible, if rather obsessive, bunch.

It was a detectorist who found the Chiddingstone Hoard in 2016, a handful of ten beautiful Iron Age gold coins. They were made in Northern France in c60-50 BC by Celtic tribes who struck them to finance their fight against Caesar’s invading armies. British Celts were involved in those battles and the gold coins were probably given as gifts as a sign of allegiance and buried in our valley, perhaps for safety or to ward off evil. They are not only “treasure” but also proof of Kent’s involvement in the Gallic wars - imagine those warriors in small wooden boats crossing the channel to help fight the Romans. The coins are now beautifully displayed in the Eden Valley Museum in Edenbridge which managed to raise £13,000 to buy and display them.

Joanna Wade

PS For those of you who read last month’s editorial, I see on thefarmingforum.co.uk that it is quite common to put goldfish in water troughs to keep them free from algae and because the cows like watching them! Also thanks to Billy Ward for all that litter picking, your picture was separated from your article and appears this month.



Photo courtesy of Eden Valley Museum

THE LINK

pet of the month

Our African Grey parrot joined us on Christmas Eve 1997. He was just 6 months old, having been bred and hand-reared locally. We called him Cracker, not only in celebration of the day he arrived, but also because we did not know his sex. He was not fully grown and still had the dark eyes of a juvenile. In time, he developed a powerful, boyish personality, a fine vocabulary and an ability to dominate all the other pets in the house.

When he was young, he was able to fly freely. However, he flew out of the garden rather too often, once, memorably, off to Hever Castle. We now trim his feathers so he can only make short flights. He lives in the kitchen, where it is always warm, and busies himself with remodelling the cupboards, skirting boards and anything left lying around.

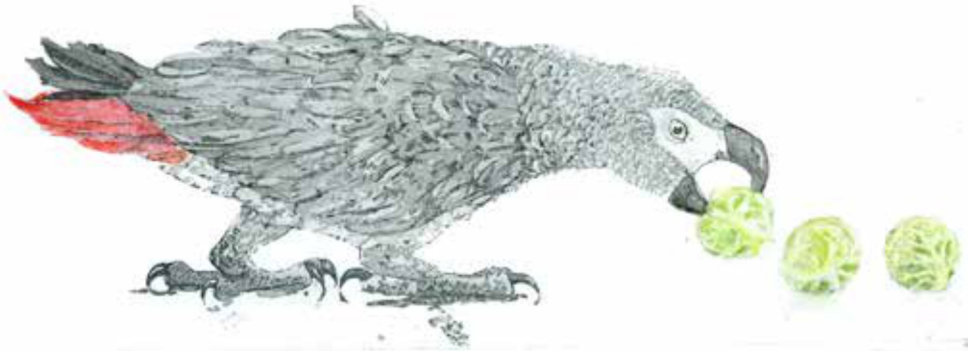
He can talk a lot, when it suits him. Curiously, he really only mimics men. I believe this is because he sees them as competition. He bosses the dogs around, tells everyone that



he is a very good parrot, shouts at the cat to “Get Out” when she tries to slip past and wishes us a good morning at all times of the day. Sometimes he surprises us with a new phrase, which we did not know he had learned. One evening, a new nail had to be hammered into a loose floorboard. Into the silence, after the banging had stopped, he said very clearly, “Poor Puddy Tat” in exactly the voice of Tweety Pie, the cartoon bird.

Apparently African Grey parrots can live until they’re 60. No doubt he will determine which lucky relative inherits him. In the meantime, he teases us as to whether the phone is ringing or if it’s just Cracker mimicking it!

Claire Longley



CHIDDINGSTONE CASTLE

HISTORIC HOUSE • COLLECTIONS • VENUE

December

What's Coming Up in December

Enjoy the Castle Grounds
Throughout the winter, our grounds are perfect for strolling and rambling - bring a flask and discover our lovely views, woodlands, Victorian Orangery and lake where you can fish for £10 a visit. Your kind donations in our car park honesty box help us to take care of the grounds and keep them open throughout the year.
More details at https://www.chiddingstonecastle.org.uk

Call for Garden and Grounds Volunteers
Please join our friendly band of volunteers to help us maintain the garden and grounds. Email us at hello@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk and we will be in touch.

Celebrate With Us
We are thrilled that many families and friends are contacting us to arrange celebrations. The house and grounds will be available for your special events throughout the year in line with COVID-19 government guidelines. Contact us for a chat at weddings@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk. For a quick view of opportunities take a look at our Instagram page @chiddingstonecastlewedding and our Pinterest boards www.pinterest.co.uk/chiddingstoneca/boards/.

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor
Due to COVID-19 we are unable to host our usual popular fairs and public events through the winter, but please follow us on Facebook and Instagram in case things change.
https://www.facebook.com/ChiddingstoneCastle https://www.instagram.com/chidd_castle/

Note from our Curator, Naomi
Throughout the winter, we will be working hard to prepare for re-opening in 2021 with new objects on display. The Library books will be dusted, the displays updated, and objects which have been in store for the last few years brought back out. We are also preparing an exciting program of cultural events for the community. Watch this space for Japan-themed activities in celebration of our amazing Japanese art collection. Our volunteers will return to work on the grounds, the collections, and to help with our re-opening. We will be welcoming visitors back to the Castle and Tea Room in the Spring and we are looking forward to seeing you all again.

Local history | Japanese, Egyptian, Buddhist and Jacobite collections | Tudor origins
Victorian rooms | 35 acres of woodland, lawns and fishing lake | Take away Tea Room

Year-round availability for weddings, parties, corporate events, groups & school visits.
We follow COVID-19 government guidelines to respect visitor and staff well-being.

www.chiddingstonecastle.org.uk
Chiddingstone, Kent TN8 7AD - 01892 870347 - hello@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk



Hever School scarecrow competition prize winners

Blackwoods Cheese Company

will be raising their shutter door from 9am – 2pm every Saturday from October 24th – December 12th at Bore Place. The doorstop pop up will feature a range of local cheese, wines from England and abroad, beer, organic veg, provisions and their award winning raw milk soft cheeses.



Thanks to Billy Ward for all that litter picking.



‘Drive in’ Community Carols for the Three Spires

Sunday 20th December at 6pm
Hever Castle Golf & Wellbeing

Car share by individual households

Come and sing within your cars!

Music by Cabin Worship

Decorate your cars and let’s have a festive time

Covid compliant – mulled wine –
retiring offering

Organised by the Hever Residents Association, Three Spires Benefice and with grateful thanks to Hever Castle Golf & Wellbeing and the team

Please check as may be subject to change due to Covid rules

Joyce and Dudley Staplehurst would like to wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and to say thank you for the invaluable support they have received during the pandemic

Seven pork courses Christmas lunch

– an Englishman's view of the Romanian Christmas

I remember the first time Daryl spent Christmas with me in Romania. We were dating for a few months so of course he wanted to make a good impression. So was armed with patience, his incredible charm and smiles, but he was not expecting what followed.

In Romania we buy the Christmas tree as close to Christmas Day as possible and we keep it until Epiphany when it's the end of the 12 days of Christmas and a new beginning marked by Jesus's baptism. We decorate the tree only on Christmas Eve. Once the cakes for Christmas day are in the oven, we play and sing carols and bring out the boxes with decorations. We use the same ones every year and add just a few more new ones.

Santa Claus comes during the night, so we open presents in the morning, but this time we all went to church in the morning and kept the fun of sharing presents for when all my aunts and uncles joined us. Daryl was really keen to talk to everyone, so my brother thought to help him out. When he asked how to say 'nice to meet you' in Romanian, my brother taught him to say 'you have nice legs', so you can imagine the giggles and raised eyebrows they all had.

Christmas lunch was no less adventurous. Mum brought in the starters and encouraged Daryl to have second helpings. When he eventually felt that he had eaten plenty of the many pork cold starters, he asked me if he should leave some space for cake. Mum heard and said 'not before the next courses: pig legs in gelatine, the sour soup, the cabbage rolls, and the steak with pickles'. We all laughed and it remains known as the 'Seven pork courses' Christmas lunch.

Ana Roxburgh



Christmas at Chartwell

Chartwell, the former home of Sir Winston and Lady Clementine Churchill and their family, is of course a local as well as an international attraction and a comment from visitors, often heard there, is that it is such a homely family home.

That was undoubtedly so when the Churchill family lived there and that atmosphere clearly remains. It was Clementine Churchill who set about turning the house into a family home and her taste and style can still be seen and experienced much as it was at the time.



Of the Churchill children, their youngest daughter Mary, spent most of her childhood there and it must have been a wonderful place to grow up both playing as well as mixing with the famous people who visited Chartwell and a particularly magical place at Christmas, as you can hopefully see from the following anecdotes which come from her and others' memories of Christmas there. In winter, when snow permitted such as that of 1927/8, outside games would provide entertainment such as skating on the lakes as well as tobogganing down the slopes at the rear of the house. The varying slopes there were said to provide various degrees of challenge to courageous riders and there are also stories of enough snow then to allow igloos and snowmen to be built.

Before Christmas presents would be hidden away from the children in a cupboard, near the nursery known as the' Genie's Cupboard' which was definitely out of bounds. The house would be decorated in a restrained way by the gardeners who would bring in bunches of ivy, holly and laurel to decorate the rooms and also hang a great bunch of mistletoe in the hall. A Christmas tree would also be brought in and decorated often with real candles. Perhaps predictably, one year, the tree caught light and was very quickly ablaze but the situation was saved by the quick and cool thinking of one of the party who grabbed a fire extinguisher.

At Christmas the children would have stockings to open and then it was off to church before returning for presents before lunch. The dining room became the focus of Christmas day with a large lunch for all those attending, the food often supplemented by gifts from generous admirers of Sir Winston, particularly in early post war years when rationing was still in force and food otherwise in short supply. After lunch there would be conversation around the table often with Sir Winston in his

element in reciting verse or stories. The dining room also made an ideal place for the children's Christmas plays with the stage area behind the curtains which could be drawn across the room.

Underlying all of the Christmas festivities there were often the affairs of state, ever present in Sir Winston's mind, with a secretary often on hand to take dictation.

The National Trust always looks to decorate the house at Christmas in a sympathetic way to represent it as the house would have been in pre-war years. The house is usually open on the three weekends in the run up to Christmas but check on the National Trust website beforehand if you are thinking of visiting.

Being a steward at Chartwell is always a pleasurably rewarding and social experience and perhaps more so at Christmas as families with children visit to experience the house decorated as it would have been in period. Volunteering opportunities need not necessarily involve being at Chartwell though, which is something to consider under current restrictions, for example the Collections Research Team is able to work remotely. If you are interested in volunteering opportunities at Chartwell then take a look at the National Trust website or email chartwell@nationaltrust.org.uk and someone will be able to help.

David Booker

Amber Dane

A 1950's Childhood Remembered

I grew up on a farm in County Armagh… Ireland's 'apple county' where my father grew apples and bred pigs. Our farmhouse was very old. My father was the fourth generation of the family to live there. No central heating in those days but fireplaces in every room including the bedrooms. Layering was the key to keeping warm! We burnt peat in the fires and that smell was quite wonderful. My mother always seemed to be cooking and she baked all her own bread. Everything was delivered to the door and you got to know which days it would be the baker, butcher, groceries or fishmonger. We even had lemonade delivered!

Every now and then my mummy would disappear for a while and I would be sent to an aunt's house. When I got home there would be a Moses basket lined in either pink or blue and a new brother or sister for me….I don't ever remember her looking pregnant! I was the eldest of seven children. Life was always spent outdoors. Picking wild flowers, making dens, camping, just coming inside to eat and then off again. Our bicycles had belonged to my aunties who'd grown up on the farm and were quite challenging to learn on but that was my only means of transport to either the local shop, choir practice, Girl Guides, or The Girls Friendly Society …far too big but I managed.



School was a small country primary school with just two teachers but a very happy place. I have an abiding memory of having to drink school milk that had gone off slightly in the warm weather…no fridge in those days and I still hate milk! The picture is of me (bottom right) in the school shop.

Sundays were always the same. Church, lunch, Sunday School, afternoon tea then evening service. Our family pew was right at the front by the pulpit so you had to behave! I absolutely loved Sunday School and my teacher Miss Florence Martin. She was a wonderful Christian human being, she ran the Mothers Union and sang in the choir and I often wonder how she managed to do everything at home as well as being involved in our church. I kept in touch with her until she died.

Christmas time was magical in our home as I truly believed in Father Christmas and can remember vividly the doll's crib I had seen in a store with mummy appearing on Christmas morning and I can also remember the shock of discovering in an old tea chest the very things I had asked Santa for….my two older cousins had been right about him not existing after all! Another year I had dolls clothes knitted by an aunt on her newly acquired knitting machine. Stockings with tangerines in paper and shiny chocolate coins were also a treat to look forward to. My mother was always up at the crack of dawn to get the turkey in the oven. As a farmer Christmas day was no different to any other for daddy but, my goodness, he loved it and all its traditions and between them they made it special for all of us.



district council news

Tradition dictates that this final edition of the year reflects on the year passed. An initial assessment suggests such an exercise would produce a bleak picture. But one need not dig very deep to see that despite very real hardship being experienced by many, 2020 has been a year in which things for which we can be grateful have taken place.

Pronto Bistro, the new café at Four Elms Filling Station, and Queens Arms Kitchen launched. The Henry was supplying takeaway and provisions seemingly within seconds of lockdown. Barely six months into trading, Falconhurst Farm Shop became an indispensable source of daily staples and tasty treats alike.

Hever Camping seemed to thrive. And Hever Castle Swimming was born, swiftly earning national plaudits.

Whether long in the planning or the product of necessity, they are all worthy of celebration.

Adapting to circumstances to meet demand is the purpose of business, you might say. You'd be right. However behind each are local people rising to the challenge and enriching our community.

That same commitment has been shown by countless others. Lockdown saw volunteers burst forth like an artesian well, serving friends and neighbours in our villages. Simon joined as Priest in Charge to look after our spiritual needs. And Hever Residents' Association's Scarecrow Competition once again brought little moments of joy to us all.

Finally, it would be wrong to fail to remark on that most English of topics: the weather! In this we were incredibly lucky too, basking in a glorious spring and sunny summer. Free from the confines of the office or other pursuits which remove us from our home turf, even the most overgrown footpaths became well-trodden having been discovered and enjoyed.

This year has not been the year for which any of us hoped. For some, I know, this period will not have afforded the opportunities enjoyed by others, with my remarks above proving unrecognisable. Yet to you and all readers alike, I hope very much you have at least experienced the warmth, generosity and kindness which adversity more often than not nurtures in people. That is something no virus, no natural or man-made disaster can remove. And it is both at the heart of the Christmas season and, it seems to me, the firmest of foundations for the year ahead.

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

Hever Parish Council

by Charlotte Cole, parish clerk

Our next meeting is planned to be on zoom 26th November - 7pm planning and 7.30pm full council meeting. Please see noticeboards or website / Facebook for link details and full Agenda nearer the date. Members of the public are always most welcome to attend.
Any queries please contact the Clerk clerk@hever.org

COVID

Hever Parish Council, working with Sevenoaks District Council, continue to offer a service for those who may be shielding to assist with urgent food or medicine supplies. Please contact clerk@hever.org or SDC (who can offer further services) through their website or by calling 01732 227000.

LOCAL NEWS

Hever parish field is having a new pedestrian (buggy / dog friendly) gate installed at the gap near the school entrance.

The dog waste bin near by was knocked over and will be relocated inside the parish field to increase its visibility to dog walkers. All the dog waste bins in the parish are emptied weekly by SDC, a service the parish council pays for.

Four Elms recreation ground (behind the primary school) – we are looking at some eco-friendly matting options to path the route from the gate to the rear of the school – to make it more pleasant for those walking to the playground or accessing the rear of the school (as part of the covid procedures for pedestrian flow).

TREES

Kent County Council manages both the publicly maintainable highway and the recorded public rights of way and access land within the county. Most trees in rural areas are the responsibility of private landowners. If a private tree is causing a risk to pedestrians or road users, we ask that the owner take appropriate action to mitigate this risk. Landowners and managers have a duty of care to manage trees under their responsibility. Therefore, if you are responsible for trees it is important to have a management plan in place and to have your trees regularly inspected by a competent person.

SOUTHEAST WATER

With the arrival of chillier weather, South East Water is asking customers to carry out a winter MOT on their homes and those of elderly family, friends, and neighbours to avoid burst water pipes this winter.
Pipes burst when exposed to extreme cold such as in attics and outside buildings. Garden taps also need protecting against the cold. The company is also highlighting its Priority Services Register and special tariffs to help vulnerable customers and those in financial difficulties. Please call 0800 952 4000.

For the winter kit, additional advice, and a video on how to protect water pipes go to southeastwater.co.uk/winter or call 0333 000 2468. The name of a qualified plumber can be found at watersafe.org.uk or by calling call 0333 207 9030.

schooltime

news from Four Elms

Our new Reception pupils have got off to a flying start! Their first experience "That's not my dinosaur!" was a huge hit. Upon arriving at school, they were greeted by Dave the dinosaur who told them about





their challenge for the term. They experimented with a range of materials to create their own version of the book 'That's not my dinosaur!'. The children have become such experts in dinosaurs they could work in a museum. They even learnt how to brush dinosaur teeth!

Remembrance Day

We were fortunate to be still able to celebrate Armistice Day this year despite a second national lockdown. The service was broadcast from the churchyard live over Zoom. Class 4 have been learning about World War One inspired by the text 'Stay Where You Are Then Leave' by John Boyne. The moving service was led by Class 4 during which the pupils spoke about those who gave their lives for our country and read out the names of the 29 men of Four Elms who lost their lives between 1914 and 1919.

To support Children in Need, pupils were invited to wear blue clothes in exchange for a donation to Children in Need. During the day, there was a live duck (of the bath time variety) race to raise money for the charity. The children were able to choose a duck from the list and watch it race against other ducks. In a tense race, Quackman & Bobbin' emerged victorious, narrowly beating Quack & Cheese! Some of the local projects supported by Children in Need are: Fegans Child and Family Care, Bore Place and West Kent Extra Limited.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Despite it being November, Classes 3 and 4 held a Christmas Party to kick off their latest Maths experience. They had party food, listened to Christmas songs and were encouraged to wear their Christmas jumpers. The party taught the children how to do complicated division by sharing out the party food between them, which they were then allowed to eat! During December, the children will be organising donations for the Edenbridge Food Bank as part of their learning experiences.

Nicole Holt

We have had a busy few weeks at Hever School. Most excitingly we have launched a new website with a stunning school video. A big thank you to Mr David Barden (a father of two children at the school) who put this together for us. Please take a look at www.hever.kent.sch.uk



Hever School joined the rest of the country in holding a two minute silence at 11am on Remembrance Day. We held a special socially distanced Remembrance Service around the Hever War Memorial. This encouraged pupils to think about the sacrifices made by people in the armed forces. Our students have been wearing and making poppies throughout November



to commemorate Remembrance Day. The red poppy is a sign of remembrance and a symbol of hope for a peaceful future.

Thank you to our Head Boy and Head Girl and our leading lights who read during the service. Reverend Simon Braid led the service beautifully and was so impressed with our Hever students as they focused and showed reverence.

We also took part in Children in Need and excitedly followed the Duck Race. Well done to the winners who chose Quackman & Bobbin as their duck! We raised over £430!

Joanna Stratton
Headteacher

business directory

to add your company email the Editors.
Just £25 per annum

Agricultural Engineers		
Leppards	plant and machinery hire and more	01342 850888
Art		
The Topfoto Gallery	photo gallery, family albums, framing	01732 863 939
Bookkeeping		
David James	accountancy services	01892 871 139
Southworth & Co	accounting services and software	01732 700 670
Building & Design Services		
Albourne roofing	slating, tiling, flat roofing, repairs	01732 700 353
Causeway Joinery	bespoke joinery for the public and trade	01342 850170
Clare Elizabeth	painting and decorating	0777 5328781
G Moss	joiner & builder	07778 440 644
Jem Pickard	painting and decorating 07850 371558 or	01732 863062
M & M Walker	painting & decorating, plumbing, heating	07774 218 684
Richard A Maslen	Fine furniture and bespoke joinery	07930 341 415
TN16 Handyman	property maintenance, home repairs, painting, gardening	074754 38788
W Smithers & Sons	listed building, conversions, extensions,	01342 850 559
Cleaning		
Housecleans	cleaning, ironing	01959 532 223
Rockport Cleaning	dry carpet & upholstery cleaners	01732 387 046
Commercial Property		
Hever Business Centre Office Suites - Karrison Property		01959 563800
Hever Castle Golf club - modern office space to let		01732 701006
Dog grooming and walking		
Amy's Top Dog Grooming - dog grooming - Amy		0792 3351299
Yappy Days	dog walking and pet sitting – Katie	07768 614577
Wash n blow, dogs to go – dog grooming - Chris:		01892 740170/07736 484184
Education		
Markbeech Nursery	for children 2-5 years	01342 850403
Chiddingstone Nursery School	for children 2-5 years	01892 871315
Equestrian		
Four Elms Farm Livery		07771 634995
Fitness		
Toni's Pilates	Personal training, pilates classes	01892 711 197
Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 701017
Chiddingstones' Tennis Club		0776 964 2590
Falconhurst Cricket Club	cricket and training sessions	07771 892762
Pilates by Lorna at Four Elms and Ide Hill village halls		07747 628993

Funeral Services		
Alex Jones	funeral directors & monumental masons	01732 860047
Gardening and landscaping		
APF Trees,	tree surgery and garden maintenance	07786 884924
Hever Landscapes	for all your garden projects	01892 740133
French's Fencing	gates, automation, fencing supply & fitting	0779 5551436
R. Bennett	hedges, fencing, grass cutting	01732 862971
Sam Thompson tree care,	felling, hedge cutting, logs	07747 345815
Health		
Emma Darthuy Chartered physiotherapist	home physio visit, pilates classes	07771 925346
Hever Castle Health and Wellbeing Centre,	classes and treatments	01732 651359
Paul Marro	Cognitive Hypnotherapy www.htheraphy.co.uk	01732 808211
Step by Step	foot health practice	07786 038149
Hairdressing		
Lorna Galbraith	hairdressing in your own home	07989 587931
Rosemary's hairdressing in	the comfort of your own home	07813 400393
Home services		
Andy Sayers	electrical services maintenance and repairs	07836 256146
Daren Wood	Chimney sweep, pots and cowls fitted	01959 564263
Pegrum	fuels, boilers, plumbing, solar panels, water/oil tanks	01732 463256
Sure Kill	pest control services	01732 863206
IT		
IT Wizard	Computer problems	01732 361234
MR Computing computer	repairs in your home, no call out charge	01732 590077
Local Produce		
Allman Butchers	meat & groceries	01732 863214 or 700288
Travel, Taxis and bike hire		
Country Hire and Go,	electric bike hire and local taxi service	07723054863
Stuart Rieman	luxury passenger car service	01883 715 037
Relyon Cars	local taxi company	01732 863 800
Travel Counsellors	tailor-made travel, leisure & business	olivia.wells@travelcounsellors.com
Venue Hire and Weddings		
Chiddingstone Castle		01892 870347
Falconhurst Weddings		01342 850526
Markbeech Village Hall		01342 850328

Four Elms

There was a hint of gloom as the daylight became shorter and then we are back into lockdown. But after November comes December and the Christmas season. Whatever the restrictions let us look forward to this wonderful joyful Christian festival.

Although the services inside St. Paul's have been curtailed, we were able to have a very moving All Souls service at the end of October and outside we were able to have our usual short Act of Remembrance service. This is an important tradition for our village and it was good we were still able to lay our poppy wreath and read out the names of those who lost their lives in the World Wars.

An outdoor Crib Service will be held in the Churchyard garden of St. Paul's on Sunday 20th December at 3pm. There will be a nativity scene and the churchyard will be lit with lantern candles. Please wear Christmas hats and make this a festive afternoon. If you don't come to the Crib Service maybe welcome Christmas with bells and music outside your doors, safely in your bubble. As many are separated from their loved ones and friends please hang on our Christmas tree a message of hope and love to all who are lonely or sad at this special time.

The PCC of St. Paul's wish everyone a very safe, peaceful and happy Christmas. Oh yes, and after 21st December the daylight gradually becomes longer.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

The Hever Annual Parochial Church council Meeting was held on October 14th, just too late to put news from it into last month's magazine. Instead I said farewell as churchwarden ahead of that meeting. The great news is that Mandy Yarnold stepped up into the role as our new churchwarden. Mandy as many of you will know has been for some years a stalwart of our PCC acting as treasurer, then secretary and now this! We are delighted and in a sign of the times, Mandy was admitted into office at the following Sunday Communion by Rev. Simon as there are no Archdeacons' visitations currently. It is a difficult time to pick up the reins with everything constantly changing but hopefully when lockdown eases, services will resume and we will get back to some kind of normal.

With the warm weather that we have experienced last month, the decorators have finished the exterior of the Church. I hope you agree that it all looks very smart and we are looking into the possibility of redecorating the interior also. This will be a big job as the interior walls of the Church are very high and so will require scaffolding to be put up to reach the top in safety. This is another initiative from the Friends of St Peter's

who have been so generous in their support to refurbish the church building.

We have planned over the past few months to have a large outdoor Nativity in front of the Church which hopefully you will already have spotted! Thanks are due to Tony Yates for the construction and to Claire Longley for her artistic talents with the animals and backdrop. May it bring some warmth and blessing to this Advent season.

Finally - and I do promise finally! I would like to say thankyou to everyone for the very generous leaving gift. Most unexpected and I was very touched by it.

I wish you all a very Happy and healthy Christmas.

Jane Rosam (on behalf of)
Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

There were good moments and less good moments last month in Markbeech. Sadly, our magical 'Winter Fair' had to be abandoned. With so many good ideas, rather than cancel forever, we have deferred until February when we will amaze you with a 'Valentine Fair' – never seen before in Markbeech – to be held on Saturday 13th February. Watch this space!

Simon Braid led a very special small Act of Remembrance held on the village triangle on Remembrance Day when a few people gathered in a socially distanced way to remember the six young men from our community who gave up their lives in the First World War. We cannot begin to imagine how we might cope with that happening today and brings the pandemic we are suffering into perspective.

We now enter the season of Advent, although there has been so much talk of Christmas and whether we will have 'Christmas', that Lockdown November has felt very much like that season of waiting and watching to me. Of course Christmas will happen – it is just that the way we celebrate might be different. The Benefice Choir managed to meet just before lockdown to record some favourite carols, a beautiful solo of Once in Royal sung by Isobel Cheshire, Kings solos by Crispin Southgate and George Talbot and the delightful page in Good King Wenceslas by Ivy Wilkinson. Readers from around the Benefice will don their smartest Christmas attire and Nine Lessons and Carols WILL happen, thanks to Marielou's brilliant skills. There is also a Nativity play featuring children around the Benefice being put together by Gemma Wilkinson which we hope to put on in Holy Trinity Church on 19th December so look out for publicity about this. We WILL have a service on Christmas Day at 9.15 when we hope to see you all with your favourite stocking gift.

Happy Christmas!

Nicki Talbot
Churchwarden

Church in December

We are determined that Christmas will not be cancelled! But please follow us for updates in this changing situation via https://threespires.wordpress.com/ or https://www.facebook.com/threespiresbenefice or contact us directly. Services will continue to be recorded and livestreamed on FaceBook but may be subject to change due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Date & time	Service details	Readings	Sunday
6 December 10am	Holy Communion at St Paul's Four Elms	2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8	Advent 2
13 December 10am	Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Markbeech	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8; 19-28	Advent 3
13 December 3pm	Forest Christingle in St.Peter's Hever church yard		Advent 3
20 December 10am	Holy Communion at St.Peter's Hever	Romans 6:25-27 Luke 1:26-38	Advent 4
20 December 3pm	Crib and Christmas Tree service at St.Paul's Four Elms		Advent 4
20 December 6pm	Drive-in community carols at Hever Golf Club		Advent 4
24 December 5pm	Crib service at St.Peter's Hever		Christmas Eve
24 December 11.30pm	Midnight Communion at St Peter's Hever	Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20	Christmas Eve
25 December 9.15am	Family Communion at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-14	Christmas Day
25 December 10.30am	Family Communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	Hebrews 1:1-12 John 1:1-14	Christmas Day
27 December 10am	Holy Communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	1 John 1 John 21:19b-25	Christmas 1
Ready by 20 December	Recorded Nine Lessons and carols from Holy Trinity Markbeech		
Ready by 20 December	Recorded Nativity Play at Holy Trinity Markbeech		

We have postponed our Christingle to 13th December which will now be held outside with sparklers – do come suitably dressed! Christingle materials will be provided and we will be taking an offering for the work of the Children's Society. The Crib service at Four Elms will be outside and other services may also be held outdoors.

We are very excited about the Drive-in community carols on 20th December and see the separate publicity about this.

We are not ticketing services over Christmas so all are welcome but be ready to sit socially distanced, wear a mask and note that we will probably still not be able to sing. Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone during this time or any other help.

Priest-in-charge
Revd.Simon Braid
01892 871453 and simonbraid@icloud.com

Wardens
Hever
Mandy Yarnold
01342 850028

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
Elly Heard 01732 865564
or Revd.Simon Braid (above)

our rector's thoughts

This month Jane Rosam is writing her final contribution to news from the pews as she has recently stood down as St.Peter's Hever churchwarden to pursue her theological studies for 'licensed lay ministry'. I am extremely grateful to Jane for her consistent, faithful and tireless service as churchwarden over the past six years and for her support and welcome when I first arrived on the scene last year. I am particularly grateful for her wisdom and collaborative approach as I and the wardens have worked to ensure we continue to 'do church' during the various lockdowns and Covid restrictions. Thank you Jane!

As I write this we're all wondering what Christmas is going to be like. It will certainly be different and as the church in the Three Spires, we're determined Christmas is not going to be cancelled! But do check as services may be subject to last minute change. For some it may be uniquely difficult if separated from family and friends, suffering illness or financial shock and I know we'll all keep a look out for any in special need. Do let me know if I or the church can do anything.

One thing that won't change will be the watching of films on the TV. Perhaps we'll have some of the Narnia films based on the books by CS Lewis. I read the books as a child, but didn't realise they contained such a strong allegory with Aslan being the Christ figure. Lewis held academic posts at both Oxford and Cambridge and, as well as creating Narnia, he wrote on poetry, medieval literature, science fiction and Christian theology. He was not always a Christian and experienced a conversion in 1929 recorded in Surprised by Joy.

One of the first Christian books I read, shortly after my own conversion as a teenager, was Mere Christianity, adapted from a series of Radio broadcasts given by Lewis. In the book, Lewis says of Jesus: God has landed in disguise on this enemy occupied world in human form. He was talking about Christmas and the 'incarnation'. God himself, in Jesus, became a human being and lived among us. He was and is Emmanuel, a Hebrew word which means 'God with us'.

Lewis made the obvious point that Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important. Worth bearing in mind as we hear the age old story again this Christmas. Perhaps we'll have more time this year to reflect on what it means. What could be more important than that?

I wish you all a very joyful and peaceful Christmas.

God bless you all

Simon

It's not all about landscaping

You would be forgiven if you thought that Willerby Landscapes, which is based in Four Elms, and one of the UKs leading commercial hard and soft landscapers was just about installing landscapes such as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Europe's highest public park the Sky Garden on the 32nd floor of 20 Fenchurch St London, to name a few.

What is not largely known is in addition to installing prestigious landscapes and roof gardens, behind the scenes Willerby Landscapes is a UK leader in technical developments to support its business. By the nature of its business, the landscaping industry has lagged behind many other industries in the use of technology and more recently this has proved to be the case where the number of roof garden installation in London has increased along with Health & Safety concerns for the operatives and public when lifting materials high onto the roofs of commercial and residential buildings.

When Willerby won the tender to install the 300m roof garden on Google's new UK headquarters, it had been working on a fresh approach to lifting items on to the rooftop. "One of the ways the tender was adjudicated was on innovation," says Matt Ainscow, Operation Director for Willerby. "Google isn't just interested in best price but also in best quality. It wants to see people build things in new ways. So, we developed a new lifting system to get the soils and materials up to the roof which involved developing a smartphone App for the operatives to use to check the safety of the bespoke lifting bag which lifts the materials. On scanning the specific barcode for the bag, the App will inform the user the current status of the bag. It will state that the bag was OK or Rejected at its last scan during the journey of the bag to the location.

The key factor is that the named App, Willerby BagChecker, is real-time process for both front-end operative users scanning a barcode and backend administrative and Health & Safety management user. Having an environmental advantage, the developed lifting bags are reusable. This presents a need to ensure that the bags are commissionable at every lift and comply to LOLER regulations for Health & Safety lifting operations. Consideration has also been given on the situation and operative management for checking the condition of the bags, before, during and after the lift.

So clearly for Willerby Landscapes there is more to just installing beautiful landscapes, there are opportunities to improve safety and to meeting client expectations by innovative thinking and the use of technology to meet these aims.

David Witham
Communications Manager

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	38	6	45	21	42	35	142		
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	38	13.5	45	25	41.5	41	160.5		
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	40	10	49.25	31.6	36	54.6	163.75		

Hall Bookings

Four Elms:
Village Hall
– Kevin Haydon 07787 394 806
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 January edition should reach us no later than **14 December 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 23 for numbers) or the churchwardens (see page 20) 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