January 2021

THE LINK







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Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the January edition... and a happy New Year

THE LINK

As our animals munch through their winter feed, I thought I would talk about haystacks. I was brought up in London but spent many weekends in Bedfordshire where my grandmother lived. Shortly after arriving my brother and I would get on our bikes and pedal fast to the local farm and ask Roger the farmer if we could go and climb on his haystacks. We must have expected that Roger (who was one-armed due to an accident with the PTO on his tractor and a bit scary) would say yes because we often brought our roast dinner in a tupperware box which we ate with our fingers dripping with gravy high up on the stack.

But the thing is that they weren't hay stacks, they were straw stacks, much more resilient, crisp and golden but less fragrant than hay. Hay is grass which has dried on the field - farmers used to pile it high and weave a rudimentary thatch for the top to protect it from the weather as best they could. Straw is the stalk of wheat and barley, the rectangular bales being ejected systematically onto the field by the combine harvester which also threshed as it drove along. The difference between hay and straw is further complicated by the existence of haylage and silage. Haylage is semi-dried hay which ferments when wrapped (often in pale green plastic) and smells deliciously like malt. Silage is wet grass or maize which also ferments, often wrapped in black plastic or buried in a clamp under a covering or old tyres and it is very delicious to cows and sheep over the winter.



Now, sadly, hay and straw stacks are mainly a thing of the past as most farmers make large round bales which are too big and dangerous for children to climb on and slide down. And there you have it. Like the Archers I have given you a story and also some agricultural information which I hope was interesting. The picture above is bales of haylage on the field.

Joanna Wade

pet of the month

Chuck is an eight year old ex-racing greyhound and his successful career lasted four years until a shoulder injury caused him to retire. During his working life his racing name was Chicago, an open class racer with a good record of wins.

Greyhounds make the most beautiful pets. He still enjoys a run around the garden but is happiest getting up late, sunbathing if he can and generally taking life easy after his daily walk.

Chuck is the seventh greyhound we have homed, they enjoy company so do well in pairs. You may have seen Chuck walking around Hever with Jet, another 8 year old ex-racer and Barney our rescue Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

Janet Lindsay





The Henry wishes you all a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2021

For now we are still serving takeaways on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays but as things are so changeable please see our instagram feed for current details (instagram.com/kinghenryviiihever)



Mrs Mavis Seal would like to thank all her friends in Hever for their kindness and help during the pandemic and wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a much better New Year.



Aggie swimming in Frenchman's Creek

what I do

I'm Charlotte Desorgher and I'm a full-time professional dance teacher. Reading that, you might well be feeling a bit sorry for me right now – many of my friends assume I've been unable to work during 2020. And it is indeed true that most of the things I did in the past have been impossible this year – touring a dance show around the UK, teaching large groups of women in dance studios in London and the south east. Bringing the joy of dance to groups of women traumatized by sex trafficking, domestic abuse and rape.

But strangely enough, this year has been one of the most productive and exciting I've experienced, in what had already been a very productive and exciting career in dance.

I've been a dancer all my life – I'm 62 now and my first ballet class, at the age of five, is one of my very earliest memories. I went on to take a degree in dance and education and then, in 1981, I saw a bellydancer perform and fell in love with the dance style that was to become my passion and my career.

It was a late blossoming career – after having spent a few years as a performing dancer in my 20s, I spent twenty years building a successful graphic design business with my award-winning designer husband Paul Houlton (who now designs the Link!) But in 2001 some of my Markbeech friends discovered that I used to be a bellydancer and asked me if I would teach them to dance. And from tiny beginnings in the village hall in Markbeech, has grown an international career as a dance teacher with students from every corner of the world!

Bellydance, despite its silly name and even more foolish reputation, is actually a rich and varied dance form which is practised by millions of women world-wide. In countries as varied as Argentina, Russia and China, bellydance is taught from an early age, and is taken seriously as an art form.

Last year I felt it was time to take advantage of the miracle of technology and look into teaching online. The main reason was that I wanted to give as many bellydance students as possible the opportunity to study with me (I only teach experienced dance students these days). Teaching in person limits me to teaching dancers in my geographical area, whereas teaching online makes my classes accessible to everyone.

Not only that, but at this late stage in my career (I'm planning on teaching for at least another ten years) I had a strong desire to pass on as much of the knowledge I've gained from 60 years as a dancer as possible. Online teaching gives me unlimited potential to do just that.

So, in January I launched my online bellydance school. I had no idea at the time, just how serendipitous that would prove to be!

There were many months of hard work involved in setting it all up at the end of last year. Members of my dance school

pay a monthly subscription to access videos of dance classes which have been filmed in advance and uploaded onto the site, which means they can be accessed at any time of the day or night. I probably have around 75 classes and specialist courses on there right now, and it took me several months to do the initial filming to get enough content to launch the school.

It was such a steep learning curve, especially for someone of my age largely working alone. I had to learn professional video editing, website design and building, automated payment technology, automated customer relationship systems and of course social media marketing, because that's where sales happen these days.

But when Covid 19 hit and dance classes had to shut down, I had already moved all my classes online and built a healthy initial membership of around 50 subscribers. Later I added weekly zoom classes and a Facebook group to help overcome the isolation so many people were feeling. Dance classes are about so much more than just learning a skill – they are also an important social activity and many women form long-lasting friendships through their dance classes.

And now my membership has grown to encompass dancers from all over the world! I now have dancers joining me every week from Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, France, Italy and the US as well as from every region of the UK. It's exciting, challenging, financially rewarding and enormously satisfying.

Our world has been brought together by the global trauma of Covid and the magic of technology. 2020 has been dreadful year for sure, but it's also been a year of shared experiences and for some like me, new beginnings.

Dancers joining my classes from Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, the US and all over the UK



The Mapleton story part 3

In 1926 Mapleton was purchased by Captain Harold James Pilbrow, an architect and surveyor born in 1882, one of 12 children in Ipswich, Suffolk. He had married Jessie Pynegar in Bromley, Kent in 1911. Having been a second lieutenant in the Queens Regiment before his marriage, at the outbreak of the First World War he joined the Suffolk Regiment and was sent to Jamaica from 1917 – 1922 where by 1919 he had reached the rank of captain.

Once he left the army Harold became interested in real estate. When Mapleton came up for sale he was living in Chislehurst. He settled quickly at Mapleton taking on the mantle of country squire. We know something of his comfortable lifestyle from an autobiography written by one of Harold's kitchen maids, Florence Copeland, who went on to work in many grand houses in England, including Hatfield House. She writes that she was allowed a bath once a week and had half a day a week off and every other Sunday. Mr. Brickett, the butler, captained the estate cricket team.

When Florence contracted diphtheria in 1933 she was sent to the isolation hospital in Edenbridge and was visited every week by the housekeeper who would bring her little treats. She didn't return to Mapleton but went home to Norfolk to recuperate.

The Mapleton estate contained a thriving dairy farm with its own large dairy. Harold Pilbrow became quite an expert on Guernsey cattle, winning many prizes at agricultural shows across the country. He purchased a prize cow with the magnificent name of Honoria's Consequence in 1928 for the sum of 250 Guineas, a considerable amount. He decided to expand in 1929 and bought a 170 acre farm south of Chartwell for £7,000. He sold it to Sir Winston Churchill in 1941 for £14,000. It became a home for Churchill's daughter, Mary Soames.

Over the years Harold Pilbrow and Churchill corresponded regularly on various practical matters. They were not friends but had an amicable working relationship on matters that jointly affected them as neighbours. Churchill once described the main house at Mapleton as 'hideous'. These letters can be seen at The Churchill collection in Cambridge.

After purchasing Chartwell farm Captain Pilbrow spent much less time at Mapleton. He decided to put the house up for sale in 1936 but it attracted very little interest. Harold had become more and more involved in the hotelier business and he sold his dairy herd in 1936 presumably to finance other enterprises.

In 1936 he purchased The Haymarket Hotel in Jermyn Street in London and changed its name to The Winston Hotel. It was renowned for its 'comfort and good food'. A few

years later he bought a much bigger hotel in Coventry Street which he named The Mapleton Hotel. It earned a reputation for being a reliable and



MAPLETON HOTEL, 39, COVENTRY STREET, LONDON, W.1.

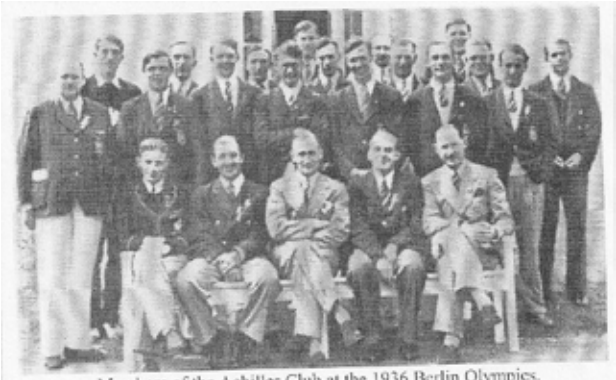
friendly place to stay. During the blitz two bombs fell on the Café de Paris opposite the Mapleton. It was on March 8th 1941 when many people in the café were dancing to the music of Snakehips Johnson who was performing there. He and many others were killed that night and many guests and staff from the Mapleton ran across the road to pull people from the wreckage. There were many casualties and they applied first aid until help arrived. In the 1950's and 60's the Mapleton Hotel was home to the Flamingo Club, a Jazz venue attracting performers such as Ronnie Scott and his band, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, and in 1954 Billy Holliday herself. The hotel is still there but with a different name and part of the BestWestern Group.

Amazingly in 1939 there was an advertisement in the British press:

MAPLETON HOUSE HOTEL,
Four Elms, Edenbridge, Kent
Away from Air Raids. 2 ½ miles from Edenbridge
(Two stations – 45 mins Victoria)
Delightful Pleasure Grounds
Home Farm Produce
Central Heating
Garages
Terms from 2 ½ Guineas weekly
Apply Resident Manager

The house as hotel did not last long, only a matter of weeks or months as it was requisitioned by the army soon afterwards and was destined never to be a single dwelling again.

Captain Pilbrow had two sons. Ashleigh was an Oxford Blue and an international hurdler. In the picture overleaf, you can see him seated with Harold Abrahams of 'Chariots of Fire' fame. His other son, John, studied law but became a hotelier in his father's business. In 1983 he was living in Surrey in a house called 'Puddledock', presumably a nod to the lane that bisected his father's two estates. A frequent visitor to Mapleton in the 1930's was Harold's nephew, Richard Pilbrow. The family would put on shows and entertainments and Richard may



Members of the Achilles Club at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.
Top Row (l-to-r): A.G.Pilbrow, V.E.Morgan, M.Y.Ffrench-Williams.
Second Row: I.S.Ivanovic, W.R.Milligan,, A.Pennington, J.F.Cornes, M.Bourne, E.A.Montague, J.C.Horsfall.
First Row: E.A.Hunter, K.S.Duncan, R.K.I.Kennedy, A.G.K.Brown, F.R.Webster, J.St.L.Thornton, P.D.Ward; Sitting: J.E.Lovelock, B.G.D.Rudd, Lord Burghley, H.M.Abrahams, A.E.Perritt.

have developed a love of theatre there for he became a famous lighting director of stage and film. He worked on Showboat, A Funny thing happened on the way to the Forum, Fiddler on the roof, and Cabaret. He knew Lawrence Olivier and Elizabeth Taylor well describing them as demanding in the case of Olivier and charming in the case of Elizabeth Taylor who would go the pub with the crew after a show. He wrote 'Stage Lighting Design: the Art, the Craft, the Life.' It is still a standard work of reference today for students in the field.

Captain Pilbrow had been a keen traveller all his life and in 1948 he purchased another hotel, this time in Colombo in Ceylon (Sri Lanka as it is today). It was the well established and prestigious Mount Lavinia Hotel. Whilst visiting in 1955 Harold became ill and died. His body was repatriated and he was buried at Underhill, Ditchling, Sussex where he had lived for several years. A year later the hotel was used for the filming of The Bridge Over The River Kwai. Soon afterwards his sons sold both hotels.



Mapleton House was converted into 8 flats in the 1950's and remained so until the 1990's when it was purchased by a development company. They built an extension of five new apartments and refurbished the old ones. All were sold by about 2008 and in 2010 the owners purchased the freehold from the landlord. It is a stable and thriving community.

Stella Carroll

Hever Parish Council

by Charlotte Cole, parish clerk

A very Happy New year to you from everyone at the Parish Council. The Parish Council consists of 10 elected or co-opted volunteer Councillors from across the villages of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech who work tirelessly to make improvements for residents and spend the modest sum of money we receive through the Council tax in an efficient and meaningful manner. The Councillors are supported in all the administrative, legal and statutory functions by the part time employed Clerk. We are acutely aware of the financial pressures placed on everyone in 2020 so have made savings which mean we will not need an increase in the precept (the money we request from council tax) for the financial year 2021 – 2022.

The Council last met on 26th November and minutes, as always, can be found on the hever.org website.

The main news of the evening was frustration at the placement of the whole of Kent in December into Tier 3 and desire for Kent County Council to have argued the case more forcefully with central Government. County Cllr. Peter Lake and MP Tom Tugendhat are aware of the strength of views locally. Hopefully by the time you read this we shall be in a more locally focused proportionate scheme to manage the threat from covid.

The Council resolved to award a £5,000 grant towards the redevelopment of Hever village hall, whose plans and fundraising efforts are going full steam ahead.

Our next meeting is planned to be on Zoom 7th January 2021 7pm. 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. Our main topic will be the small scale affordable housing project we have been considering for the past 3 years – any proposal would be only for those with a local connection, at an affordable price. We shall be holding a full public consultation in January so keep an eye out for the banners, leaflets and notices or website / Facebook page – with opportunities to comment online, in person or on paper and to attend virtual events. We welcome as many local views as possible before we consider any further steps. A summary of the rural housing needs survey can be found on the Hever.org website.

Any queries please contact the Clerk clerk@hever.org

schooltime

news from Four Elms

Happy New Year from Four Elms Primary School!

December is always met with excitement by all the children as we count down to Christmas. Despite Covid restrictions this year we still managed to hold a number of Christmas events to help get the children, and teachers and parents, feeling festive and ready for their Christmas celebrations.

First up was Christmas lunch and Christmas jumper day. All children were allowed to wear their Christmas jumpers and enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner including crackers, with their friends.

A popular December event is the Mums' and Dads' gift stall. This is an exciting occasion for the children to be able to buy and wrap a special gift independently ready to surprise their loved ones on Christmas Day (if they can keep it a secret that long!).

There was sadly no Christmas production this year, however, each class filmed a song or sketch which was then sent to parents to watch online.

On the last day of term, there were Christmas parties in each classroom. There were prizes for the craziest Christmas outfit, and games such as guess the number of sweets in the Christmas tree jar and name the teddy, as well as a Christmas cash raffle for parents.

Christmas food parcels

In the run up to Christmas, Key Stage 2 planned their Christmas lunch in their maths lessons. Through their investigation, they learnt all about food wastage in relation to Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; that every child has the right to adequate food and shelter. Because of this, Class 4 came to the decision that they would like to create Christmas food parcels, similar to the Harvest boxes from previous years, but for those in need at Christmas. Every child in classes 3 and 4 was asked to decorate and fill a box with Christmas food items, as well as any home made gifts or cards. The boxes were delivered to a local retirement home and to our local food bank. Christmas treats included mince pies, chocolates, Christmas cake and decorations to bring joy to the recipients.



Nicole Holt

news from Hever

It's been a busy end to the term. We were incredibly excited to welcome poet and author, Michael Rosen to Hever via Zoom (please see the school website www.hever.kent.sch.uk for pictures and videos). Michael spent the day entertaining and inspiring our children with his performances and poetry workshops. Amongst other things, Michael treated our children to performances of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and 'Chocolate Cake'. At the end of the day, Michael tweeted to acknowledge our super school and our children's brilliant questioning skills!

Last Friday we held our Nativity "Hey Ewe". The children filled our hearts with joy. Mary rode into school on Wonky the Donkey and the children sang and danced beautifully with such confidence. A massive thank you to Mr Barden (a parent of two children at the school) for filming this for us. We are looking forward to sharing the finished film with parents shortly. We are so proud of how our community has united powerfully to meet the challenge of unprecedented times and ensure Hever students are nurtured and happy.





The whole school also took part in the nationwide Santa Dash. While the adults were the Santas, the children dressed as elves. They enjoyed posing for photos in the church yard before completing laps of the parish field. Children felt united with their community and enjoyed the build up to the Christmas holidays.



Many of our children entered MP Tom Tugendhat's Christmas card competition. Incredibly, they have all received a certificate from the House of Commons. As I write this, our children are looking forward to their Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper day and a Covid-19 safe pantomime organised by our fantastic PTA. This year has been like no other, however our curriculum offering and creatively-safe ideas have ensured a tremendous term.

Joanna Stratton
Headteacher

business directory

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Southworth & Co	accounting services and software	01732 700 670
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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
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Housecleans	cleaning, ironing	01959 532 223
Rockport Cleaning	dry carpet & upholstery cleaners	01732 387 046
Commercial Property		
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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		
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
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
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
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My IT Wizard Ltd	Computer problem solving	07779 285839
MR Computing computer	repairs in your home, no call out charge	01732 590077
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Allman Butchers	meat & groceries	01732 863214 or 700288
Falconhurst Farm Shop and deli		01342 850172
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
Venue Hire and Weddings		
Falconhurst Weddings		01342 850526

Church in January

As we move into the New Year, we are continuing with our services at each of the churches on a rotational basis as well as live streaming and recording the services which can be accessed via https://threespires.wordpress.com/ or https://www.facebook.com/threespiresbenefice and by phone by calling 01732 927132. Please look at the website and Facebook page for information and spiritual help.

Date & time	Service details	Readings	Sunday
3 January 10.00am	Holy Communion at St Paul's Four Elms	Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12	Epiphany
10 January 10.00am	Eucharist at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11	Baptism of Christ
10 January 3.00pm	Forest church at St.Peter's Hever		Epiphany 1
17 January 10.00am	Holy Communion at St.Peter's Hever	Revelation 5:1-10 John 1:43-51	Epiphany 2
24 January 3 00pm	Holy Communion at at St.Paul's Four Elms	Acts 9:1-22 John 2:1-11	Epiphany 3 Patronal Festival St.Paul's
31 January 8.00pm	BCP said Holy Communion at St.Peter's Hever	Revelation 12:1-5a Mark 1:21-28	Epiphany 4
24 January 5.00pm	Family service at Markbeech	1 Samuel 17:1-51 (the story of David & Goliath	Epiphany 4

You are required to wear a face mask at all services.

The Forest Church is suitable for all ages and stages and we especially welcome those less used to attending church services. It will be held at 3pm in the Hever churchyard, please wear suitable clothing!

We are continuing to hold our Zoom Evening prayer on Thursdays at 6.00pm. If you need the details of how to join, please contact Simon. If you would like to join our weekly Bible study on Mondays also by Zoom at 6pm contact Simon for the details.

Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone during this time 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
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)

news from the pews

Four Elms

However different Christmas may be this year, there is something permanent and wonderful about the season which nothing can change. The wonderful event which took place 2000 years ago continues to give peace and comfort. It is a time when we remember our family, friends and all those who are less fortunate than we are. This was exemplified with the wonderful Christmas Fayre gifts that were donated by so many people, dropping them off at the foot of the font in our church. As was commented, people went "Christmas Crackers" with their giving. Thank you to everyone on behalf of the Edenbridge Food Bank. Your gifts will make many recipients very happy and enable them to have a cheerier Christmas.

It is good news we are can sing carols together. St. Paul's Four Elms will have a Crib and Carol Service on Sunday 20th December at 3pm. (observing the rules and guidelines for Covid) and likewise we can have our usual Christmas morning service at 10.30am. Our lovely church will remain open on Christmas day until 3pm for those who would prefer private prayer.

While we enjoy Christmas, within our bubbles, let us wish each other a very happy and peaceful time. St. Paul's Church wishes you all a happy Christmas and our prayers and hopes must be for peaceful new year. And, of course, a decline in the pandemic throughout the whole world.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

As we head towards Christmas, I am sitting down to write my first "news from the pews" and it is beginning to feel more festive as we have just had our first Christmas service, the Christingle Service, at the church.

As with so many events this year, there was a slight twist to the normal service as it was held outside and we used sparklers instead of candles because of the drizzly weather. The children who took lead parts in the service were brilliant, Angela provided the music and we were even able to sing some carols. The outdoor nativity scene looks stunning and I have seen many people stop to look at it as they pass by on foot or by car- thank you to Jane Rosam for organising the construction and erection of the crib.



We have three more services before Christmas and, as we approach the turn of the year, I believe we can look forward to January and beyond with some optimism with the start of the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination programme. Nevertheless, there may be people living locally who are still in need of a little extra support so please get in touch if you know of someone in need of our assistance.

We are pursuing our re-decoration project and have already received

some donations, towards the £10,000 that it will cost to re-paint and repair the internal walls, for which we are very grateful. Anyone who would like to contribute towards this scheme can contact me or our treasurer Will Cowell to find out how to make a donation.

Hever will continue with its popular monthly Forest Church services next year. These services give us the chance to see God in the beauty of the world around us and, as we pray together, we can stop and share in simple reflections and prayers as we discover the wonder of God in creation. Please do come along and find out more, we welcome all ages and look forward to seeing you there.

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

There is no News from the Markbeech pews this month as churchwarden Marielou Linklater is immersed in the immensely time consuming project of editing the footage of the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols which will be available on the Three Spires website.



our rector's thoughts

I hope you all have had a joyful, peaceful and safe Christmas. A big thank you to all those who helped make Christmas so special for so many this year and all those – the wardens and Ana Roxburgh to mention a few - who worked so hard to ensure our churches have continued to function notwithstanding the restrictions.

Hopefully we can look forward to some good news in 2021 and a possible return to whatever the new normal will be. But we don't know the future and it is easy to feel anxious as we follow the news.

One of the most popular Bible stories is that of David and Goliath. Our Family service in January will be on this theme. It's popular because we love to see the underdog triumphing against the odds. We all have Goliaths in our lives. Those big giants that seek to dominate and control us, casting their darkness over us. It might be our health or that of our nearest and dearest, the impact of Covid, the economic situation and financial challenges, or mental health and relationship issues. All these can fill us with fear, worry and anxiety – like a Goliath threatening and taunting us. What all these Goliaths have in common is fear: fear of failure, fear of death, fear of being alone, fear of the unknown and of what we cannot control. 'Don't be afraid' is God's most common phrase in the Bible. David defeated Goliath by believing in his own abilities as a young shepherd who had fended off lions and wolves. But above all he trusted God.

As we peer into 2021, maybe we feel just a bit afraid. In 1939, the country faced a much darker prospect following the outbreak of the Second World War. In his Christmas radio broadcast, George VI quoted from a poem: I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown', and he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be better than light and safer than a known way.'

At Christmas we celebrated Jesus' coming as the Light of the World. With our hands in his, we need not feel helpless faced with our own needs and those of our nation because we have a God who can, will and does make a difference. Perhaps 2021 is the year in which to take that step and place our trust in him.

Keep safe – keep well – keep praying
God bless you all

Simon

gardening

Happy New Year to you all. I have always known the benefits of my garden and wildlife but so many people have said it was their sanctuary last year and that the joy of nature kept them going.

I love every season but there is something special about the winter months. You get to see the garden in its naked form - I really get to appreciate trees such as Prunus Serrula which is fab all year but comes into its own right now with its peeling bark which reveals deep coppery bands that glisten when the low sun hits it. Like a lot of things, it gets better with age. Another amazing tree is betula utilis 'Snow Queen' with its white bark which glows in the moonlight. Both these trees I planted within my first few months of moving to Blunts Brook. When doing a new garden, I always get the main structures in first so they can grow with the garden.

I always smile when I hear people say "roll on winter so we can have a rest" - none of it in this garden. After weeks of leaf raking and acorn collecting (the only downer of living amongst an oak woodland), I start the gardening year. I prefer to prune my apples and pear trees now as you can see their growth more easily when they are bare. I also have two large herbaceous beds and I will start on them but leave the grasses and plants with large seed heads as when they get frosted it is a sight to behold. Also, the birds love seed heads, especially teasels, and to see a flock of gold finches feeding is magnificent and the bases of the grasses make lovely little nests for mice and bank voles.

By January I have normally weeded my vegetable plots but I save the hardest job for after Christmas to help shift the extra pounds gained. I begin barrowing the compost onto all four veg plots giving it the time to do its job and although back breaking it pays off.

Any days I cannot be in the garden I head for the greenhouses where I take cuttings of my fuchsias and pelargoniums which strike easily on the hot bed. January is also the time I start to sow seeds. Sweet peas and broad beans go into a cold tunnel (cover as mice love the new shoots) but basil, chillies and tomato seeds get started on the hot bed in the greenhouse. Also, at the end of the month I start my onion sets off in the tunnel. Although I lift in or build cages for my many tender plants, as soon as winter starts to bite, I cover them with extra fleece for protection. I do open the doors on days above 5 degrees for a few hours to stop too much condensation with causes botrytis.

Other delights for this month are the snowdrop – what a toughie it is, performing whatever the weather, lonicera purpussii (shrub honeysuckle), the scent so powerful that I always cut a few stems to bring indoors to enjoy. Also, cornus mas, a tree smothered in yellow scented flowers which any emerging bees love, and it truly lifts your spirits on a dull day. Remember too this month to cut the leaves from epimedium and hellebores so when the flowers emerge you can see them in their full glory.

Most importantly, continue to enjoy our green spaces and wildlife.

Lorraine Harrington

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	59	
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	55	
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	40.5	

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

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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
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Laura Hands – 07792 167 470 (based in Hever)
Beverley Thomas – 07855 968 006 (based in Edenbridge)
Toria Corcoran – 07885 491 893 (based in Edenbridge)
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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