THE LINK

February 2021







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- A career in antiques
- Wines from Kent
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- Need help?!

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the February edition

There is only one thing to talk about this month – mud.

The late, great Flanders and Swann took a positive view of it in the chorus of their "Hippopotamus song: "Mud, mud, glorious mud, there's nothing quite like it for cooling the blood; so follow me, follow, down to the hollow and there let us wallow in glo-ri-ous MUD!!" The problem is that my blood is cool enough already and whilst my pigs may agree with their hippo cousins, I do not. Walks become skating rinks, boots leak, dogs look dejected and colours are muted.

The derivation of the word is none too salubrious either. It replaced the old English "fen" with a mix of low middle German "mudde" and Polish "mul" meaning slime – the Sanskrit word "mutra" also gets a look in and is too unpleasant to define in print. Mud was such an enemy on the battlefields in war time and….. and….. But then I think of the eternal childish pleasure of mud pies, find that there are at least 88 spas in the UK offering mud treatments to "tone and detox" the skin, that the phrase "clear as mud" has been around since 1796 - and I start to feel a bit better.



Apparently one's name being mud comes from an obsolete use of the word meaning "a silly twaddling fellow" and no one quite knows why. "Here's mud in your eye" began in the 1930s. One theory is that this toast was first used by farmers drinking to a good harvest, because whilst we hate mud we also hate drought. So here's mud in your eye to a good Spring.

Joanna Wade

THE LINK

pet of the month

A Happy Waggy Tail

A couple of weeks ago my lovely neighbours lost their beloved dog Pippa, she was a 14-year-old lovely little girl and as you can imagine they were distraught. Pippa had been their rescue dog and really was happy, so loved and well taken care of. I think that is why despite suffering from fits and loss of eye sight she lived so long.

I happened to see an appeal from Last Chance two days later about a Greyhound called Laser, a three-year-old ex racing hound, who needed a foster home asap. Laser was already fostered but needed rehoming as he did not get on well with the neighbourhood cats. He has terminal bone cancer and his life expectancy is very limited and his only other option was to return to Last Chance for what little time he had left. When I told my neighbours, they felt so sorry for the poor lad and told me that they would like to give Laser a home.

They contacted Last Chance who paid them a home visit and within a matter of days Laser arrived, just in time for a lovely Christmas. He is HUGE but really lovely and gentle. He was very lost and confused at first but I think once he realised this would be his home, he has really settled down. Laser is quite stoic, we don't think he has spent much time with humans being loved and played with, but bit by bit Jean and Geoff are bringing him round.



He has met the neighbourhood dogs and is good as gold with them. He can be a bit stubborn when he likes and the other day he managed to eat half a pizza which was waiting to be put in the oven, so he is very cheeky. Laser's new foster parents are enjoying caring for him despite the fact they have no idea how long for. I think given that Christmas was so different for everyone, having Laser there lessened the gap that Pip had left. What a really happy Christmas Laser had lying on the sofa and munching on turkey, going for lovely walks and just hanging out with Jean and Geoff.

Say hello if you see them out in the village, you can't miss him - he is huge, black and has a red knitted bow tie.

Susanne Smith

The day I had my Covid vaccine

by our health correspondent Una Higgs

Saturday, 9th January, I was on my way to Sevenoaks for my assigned 8:35 slot for the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine.

I made my way to the front entrance of the medical centre where I was met by two friendly masked young people, one of whom accompanied me inside and handed me over to another who was to check I was the person I was supposed to be. I was then shown to a room where I was questioned about my general wellbeing and whether I had at any time had a severe reaction to a medical procedure.

Everything being satisfactory I was led into a waiting room where two or three of us awaited our turn. When my turn came I was led into an inner room where I was to be vaccinated. Two women were there, one to do the vaccination, the other to assist. I was then taken along a passage to a room with chairs and people waiting for the required 15 minutes wait to ensure there were no adverse reactions. I was then shown through a glass door into a passage at the end of which was the back exit, and was told that I would find my son there with the car. Everything was well organised and there was always a friendly help to scoop me up and push me on to the next bit.

Tim says:
If you are approaching Sevenoaks via Riverhead, turn right as usual at the big roundabout heading towards the town centre. Shortly on the left you come first to the fire station, then the Medical Centre, and then Lidl. To get to the Medical Centre car park, take the road on the left (Morewood Close) before the fire station and follow the long road round to the right, entering the Medical Centre car park from the rear. Not terribly well signposted, but plenty of parking space.

If you are dropping someone off, you can drive through to the front of the building where the entrance is and drop them there. You can then continue on round to the back and find a parking space.



A good news bird story

It does sound good in Latin. Sylvia dartfordiensis, the Dartford Warbler.

This little bird was first identified on Bexley Heath in April 1773 as an as-yet un-named breed by the ornithologist, John Latham, hence the name.

They were nearly wiped out during the cold winter of 1962/3 and were down to only 11 pairs. They hated the "Beast from the East" of 2018 too - but now all is well and this last mild winter has been popular with dartfordiensis.

The bird is resident in lowland heath-land with gorse and heather, from Surrey west and in Suffolk but Kent's only home-named bird (is it?) is sadly no longer resident here.

Joanna Wade



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Emily's Kitchen

what I do

My family and I moved from Lewes to Edenbridge in 1997 and have never looked back. It was a big decision having grown up in and around Brighton, but the local community immediately made us feel welcome and at home.



We had already been in the antiques business for several years but starting in a new area was almost like starting afresh. However, we soon met local people interested in antiques and with Gatwick only 30 minutes away and easy access to London our existing clientele were able to visit with ease. Our regular presence at national antique fairs also grew our business and to this day we are still in touch with many of those clients.



In 2007 we took over the adjoining premises some of you may remember as Chevertons and set up The Edenbridge Galleries. We felt it would make a wonderful antique centre showcasing dealers all of whom were members of either the British Antiques Dealers Association (BADA) or LAPADA. We were extremely proud of this initiative and the response we received from visitors from around the world was very rewarding. It was a one stop shop for anything antique and interior design related.

We have now decided to wind this side of the business down wanting to go back to concentrating on Lennox Cato Antiques. As one gets older one wants to simplify life and with this past year having been extremely challenging, we are quite relieved to have done so.

Going forward I am very pleased to say I am still involved with the Antiques Roadshow and we have adapted our business to make the most of the internet, producing short videos of our stock and sending out more of our regular newsletters which always seem to be well received thanks to Sue who also manages our social media.

We pride ourselves on the professional service we offer, whether it be selling, buying, valuing or just plain advice. Our motto is 'we never have problems, only solutions'!

Life is full of surprises and in the latter part of 2020 I was extremely proud to have been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Kent. Something I would never have expected in a million years!

All in all, we think our move to this beautiful part of the world was the best decision we ever made!

Lennox Cato DL
www.lennoxcato.com

IN VINO CANTICA VERITAS

If you walk north east from Chiddingstone Hoath along the little lane past the lovely houses that make up the hamlet of Oakenden, it peters out into a footpath. After a fine view and a big field the thicket opens out into Harden vineyard. It grows "regent" grapes, a little known dark skinned variety originating from Germany and producing red wine.

More well known in Kent is the Bacchus grape, prolific in the Chapel Down vineyard in Tenterden, but by no means ruling the roost. The Kent Vineyards website shows 50 vineyards throughout the county producing a variety of wines and reminding us that buying English is no longer the patriotic but long-suffering act it once was.

I don't know where you can buy Harden's but Squerryes in Westerham has made a huge success of its sparkling wine. In 2004 a French champagne house visited the estate, then known only for its Grade I listed house, attracted by the terroir, chalk and greensand, which bore a striking similarity to the Côte des Blancs region of Champagne.

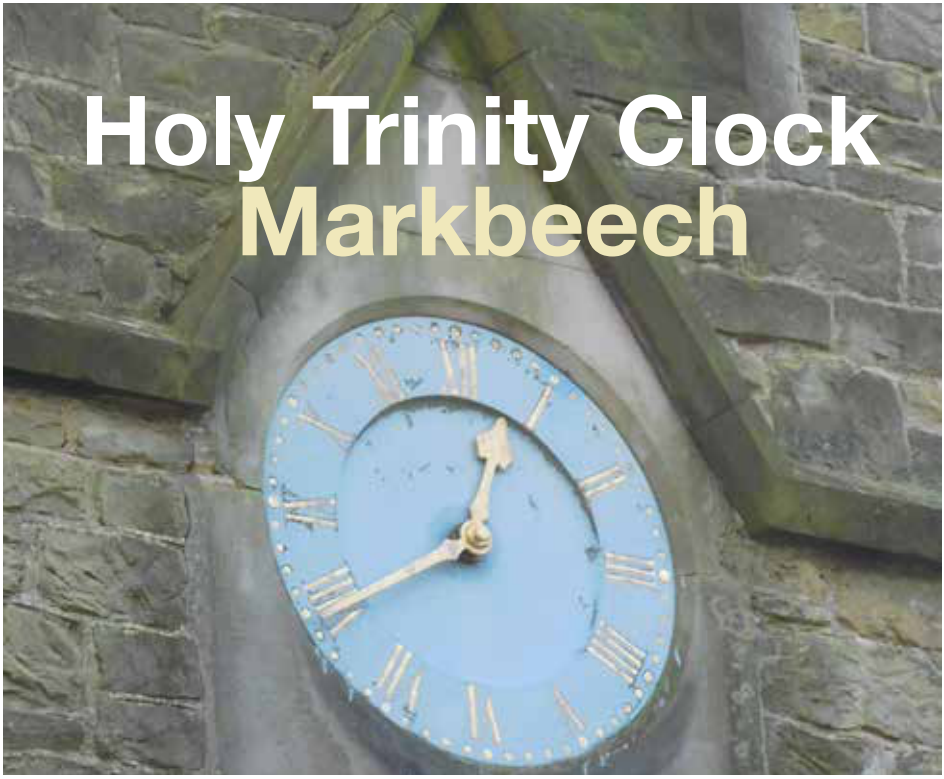
They did not strike a deal with the Warde family (who have been at Squerryes for eight generations) who then decided to go it alone and planted 35 hectares of grapes, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier in 2006 and waited. In 2010 they took their first reserves and in 2016 their 2011 Brut won best English sparkling wine. You can buy it and also Westerham Brewery beer (whose spent brewer's grains feed the Squerryes dairy herd) in their shop/ restaurant at Beggars Lane just outside Westerham and in Waitrose. You might need to hurry as sales of sparkling wine are up 25% this year.

There is also a productive vineyard at Groombridge place and Sanden vineyard, also in Groombridge, sells its sparking white and rosé at Penshurst farmers market. Meopham valley vineyard has been going since 1991, producing a variety of still as well as the sparkling wine which this region seems to do so well, just like the Champagne region. But then of course the Romans had got it right centuries ago when they introduced vines to Kent (which they called Cantica) in 43AD – and then the stuff turned out to be so good that they had to pass laws limiting English wine imports to Italy to protect the Italian producers.

Whoever mentioned Brexit?

Joanna Wade

PS The Harden's walk turns into a long circular walk via Penshurst or a shorter one via Blower's Hill and Salman's.



Holy Trinity Clock Markbeech

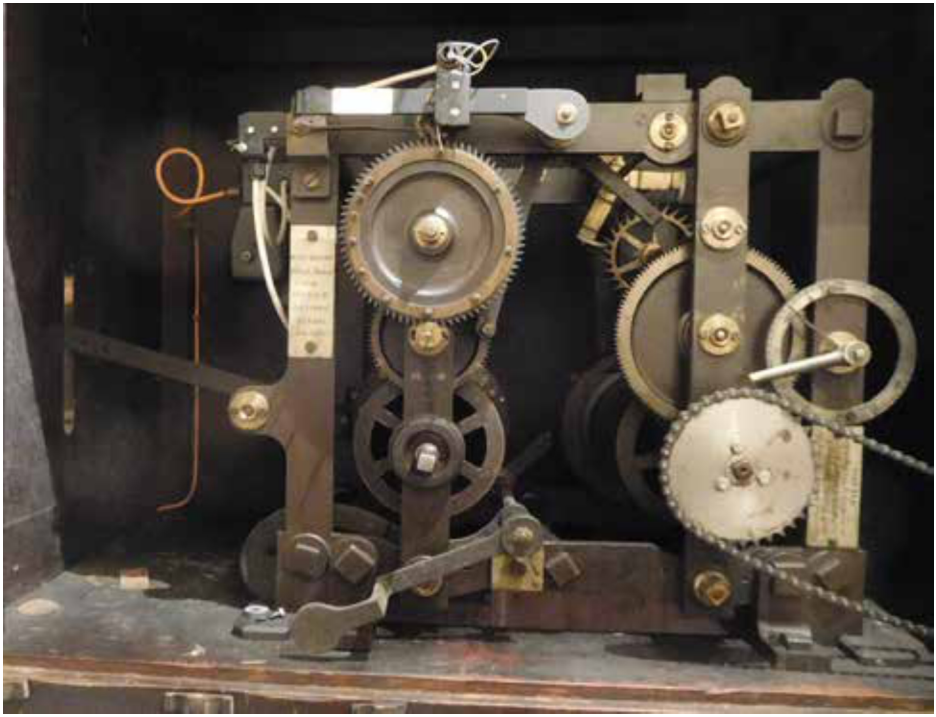
The clock at Holy Trinity church was built by B. L. Vulliamy, Clockmaker to the Queen, and has the inscription:

‘Presented to the church of the Holy Trinity, Markbeech by John G Talbot Esq. in memory of the founder, May 1853’.

The mechanism is reached through a small door at the base of the clock tower, with a very narrow, spiral, stone staircase leading up, so a pre-requisite for entering the clock room is an immunity from claustrophobia!

Just a little bit of technical information: the clock is a tower clock with plate and spacer movement, a design popular in the early to middle nineteenth century.

It has two gear chains, the running gear which controls the time shown on the clock face, and the chiming gear which ensures the clock chimes correctly on the hour. The clock ‘motor’ is a set of weights on a wire and pulley. As the weights fall, they operate the escapement and the large pendulum, which produces the well known tick-tock sound. When the weights reach the bottom of their movement they need to be wound back up for the clock to continue.



Originally, the weights were wound by hand but now an electric motor does this automatically. If there is a power cut, the clock will continue until the weights reach their lower limit, and then the clock will stop and the time must be reset. There is also an electric switch which controls the chiming mechanism. The bell itself is in a separate area above the clock room, reached by a wooden ladder.

My involvement started after some casual conversations with the Talbot family, offering to occasionally check the clock and adjust it as necessary.

My career was in engineering and I have always had an interest in mechanical devices, particularly those based on old technology, so was quite happy to take on the role, previously undertaken by, among others, Len Linden and Andro Linklater. The clock is serviced annually by the London Clock Company and so the role of 'clock keeper' is making small adjustments as necessary. The movement has a small dial and pointer showing the time and a lever which has to be turned to make the adjustments.

I go up the tower about once a month with my iPhone, which has a digital clock, and use that to reset the time if needed. Twice a year, at the equinoxes, the time has to be moved back or forward an hour. The adjusting lever must only be moved anti-clockwise so, in October, when the clocks go back, the clock must



be moved forward 11 hours, which is 66 chimes and could be a bit irritating for those living very close to the clock. I have now discovered that the chiming lever can be uncoupled while the clock is adjusted, so that the bell does not ring.

From late medieval times clock keepers had an important role, as church and town clocks were the main way of keeping communities informed of the passage of time.

That is not the case now but I think it is important to help, in a small way, to keep this lovely piece of engineering heritage ‘up to scratch’.

Doug Bowern



Hever Parish Council

by Charlotte Cole, parish clerk

Hever Parish Council last met on 7th January 2021. The budget has been set to ensure that key services are maintained whilst not imposing any increased financial burden on residents, the parish council part of the council tax will reduce slightly for 2021 – 2022 which is important to do in these financially difficult times for everyone.

Hever Parish Council are required (by Sevenoaks District Council) to undertake a Housing needs survey every 5 years. This was done (independently) in 2018. You may remember getting a survey in the post. It was also advertised widely (on all noticeboards, Link magazine, Facebook, plastic banners etc.). We have been considering the responses to that survey and investigating possible solutions to the issues raised, namely the lack of affordable housing to rent, particularly smaller properties, for local people. There is only one site in the parish that is available for consideration (everything else was either not in a suitable location or landowner chose not to).

As the January edition of this magazine had to be printed before Christmas and therefore before the council meeting I could not give you the dates of the meetings in this magazine any earlier although they have been widely advertised elsewhere. There will be Zoom meetings on Tuesday 26th January 3- 5pm and Saturday 30th January 4 – 6pm at which the Clerk and Councillors will be present to answer any questions. There are also many opportunities for locals to be able to comment on the proposals (online survey, by email, leaflets delivered to households in Four Elms etc.).

Please note this is a consultation and opportunity to ask questions NOT a planning application. This is because the parish council want your views. The parish council won't own the land or housing or have any financial interest or risk in the scheme whatsoever.

Please see lots of information on www.hever.org and advise the Clerk if you need any assistance in submitting comments etc. The deadline for comments is 14th February.

Charlotte Cole
Clerk and Financial Officer
Hever Parish Council
clerk@hever.org
Facebook/Heverparishcouncil

district council news

I don't mind telling you, dear reader, that penning this piece is something of a minefield!

Like you, perhaps, I took the opportunity to consider over the festive period my priorities for the New Year. In a reflection of the year recently passed, many of those items on the list for the months ahead have been carried over from 2020. That presents a problem, as I try not to be repetitive – or at least too repetitive – in this column.

There is most certainly no shortage of activity at the District Council, but the truth is it comprises the sorts of thing which tend to produce a stifled yawn when I excitedly hold forth on them. (Alas, these things are more noticeable on Zoom!)

Other important rubrics govern these jottings.

For example, we could all do with some good news. This vile virus dominates all our lives at work and home, yet there is more to life than a pestilent pathogen, so dwelling on it in my dispatches seems best avoided. That is not to say there are not positive and useful developments on that front. Yet they fall foul of another trap: the news here should be current – no mean feat at a time our newspapers are invariably out of date by the time they go to press.

I also endeavour to not tread on the toes of colleagues by straying into the territory of other bodies.

And try as I might to be informative, sometimes column inches prevent embarking on complex topics – I for one would not wish to find The Link a vehicle for great tracts and treatises!

There is the issue of relevance to consider too. What is of interest to Hever may have little bearing on Four Elms. A matter concerning Hartfield Road could be of paramount importance to Markbeech yet interest no one else. It is always my aim to cover matters of interest to all those in the Benefice.

In fact, of around a dozen subjects considered this month, each fell by the wayside with the application of these tests. And so, in writing this, I have succumbed to the lure of the whimsical, which I hope you will forgive.

There is a serious point, though, which is this: my work on your behalf at the District Council has continued apace. Some of it is pretty morbid. Some utterly heart-warming. And some is simply day to day business of government type stuff. But through it all has been an appreciation that perhaps now more than ever we all need to know that others are there for them, so please do not hesitate to get in touch if there is anything with which I might be able to assist.

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

schooltime

news from Hever

Happy New Year to our Hever Community! It is not quite the start to 2021 we had in mind. Reflecting back over the last two weeks, the beginning of term seems like a long time ago!

As we were imminently welcoming back all students to Spring Term, Boris Johnson's announcement changed everything. Twelve hours later, we needed to be ready to deliver 66% remote education for the whole term, as well as offer a provision for vulnerable children and those of critical workers. Fast-forward to now and I couldn't be more proud of our entire community. The way in which everyone has pulled together, switched everything to the virtual classroom and adapted our plans in such a short space of time has been inspiring. We have been overwhelmed by all the positive feedback we have received; this is very kind and really does help during challenging times.

As our 4, 5 and 6 bubble burst this week we are all working incredibly hard to deliver 85% remote provision and those teachers in particular are also delivering lessons from home, with the same pressures, having to balance the needs of their own families and children.

To our Hever Students, we can see you figuring out how to organize your day to best set yourself up for success. You're learning so much about yourself, about self-discipline, and about how to steer your own ship. You're learning to handle technology and the perseverance button and we are so proud.

Good job, distance learners and distance teachers!

Joanna Stratton
Headteacher

Just days before the start of the

news from Four Elms

January term, we had the news that primary schools were closing yet again. And yet again, the teachers swiftly mobilised to provide online learning, despite the minimum of notice, for all classes.

Luckily, we live in an age of online tools which the children are used to accessing as part of their normal school day. This has greatly helped with the transition to remote learning. Alongside the usual online maths, spelling and literacy, the teachers have been recording their own youtube videos to provide virtual teaching. Some pupils even work together in informal virtual classrooms, collaborating on their work as they would in person and motivating each other to focus on the lessons and stay engaged. Self-motivation is a skill that most people don't achieve until university! Given wellbeing and self-care is such an important issue nowadays, we have recently introduced daily Zoom class catch ups to share successes, ask questions of the teacher and chat to classmates.

The curriculum so far this year has been wide and varied. Alongside the usual core subjects, the topics covered have included: the art of self-portraiture, healthy eating, musical instrument making, continents of the world, latitude and longitude, percussion and wellbeing.

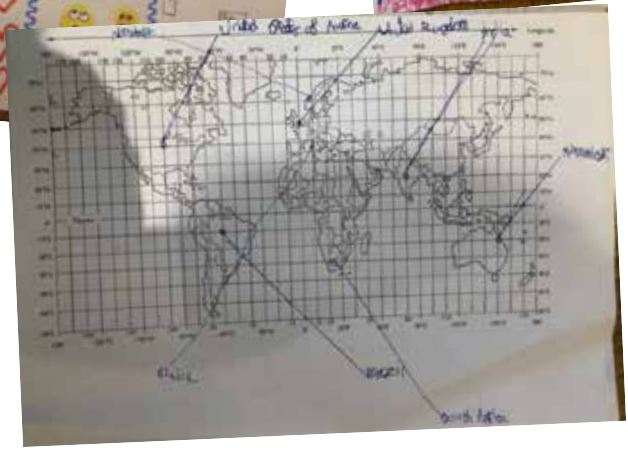
Here are some examples of the great work completed across all the classes, which are shared on class celebration pages.

Nicole Holt









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Accommodation		
Edenbridge Manor Care Home, residential, dementia and respite care		01732 492282
Agricultural Engineers		
Leppards	plant and machinery hire and more	01342 850888
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		
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
IT		
My IT Wizard Ltd	Computer problem solving	07779 285839
MR Computing computer	repairs in your home, no call out charge	01732 590077
Local Produce		
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 February

With the worsening Covid situation and the need to encourage us all to stay at home, all our services are now recorded for the foreseeable future and accessible via https://threespires.wordpress.com/ or https://www.facebook.com/threespiresbenefice and by phone by calling 01732 927132 with a livestreamed introduction on Sundays at 10.00am on Facebook. Please look at the website and Facebook page for information as things can change at short notice.

Date & time	Service details	Readings	Sunday
7th February	Holy Communion at St.Peter's Hever	Colossians 1:15-20 John 1:1-14	2nd Sunday before Lent
14th February	Holy Communion at at St.Paul's Four Elms	2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9	Sunday before Lent
14th February	Forest church at St.Peter's Hever		Sunday before Lent
17th February	Impostion of ashes St.Paul's Four Elms	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 John 8:1-11	Ash Wednesday
21st February	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15	Lent 1
28th February	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38	Lent 2
28th February	Family service at St. Peter's Hever	Luke 4:1-13	Lent 2

All services will be available by 10.00am on the above dates.

We are also closing our churches for private prayer but Simon will be in St.Peter's Hever on Tuesdays between 8.30am and 9.30am and if anyone would like him to light a candle and pray for them or a loved one, then please let Simon know.
We are continuing to hold our Zoom Evening prayer on Thursdays at 6.00pm and our weekly Bible study on Mondays also by Zoom at 6pm.
We will be starting a Lent course using the Church of England's 'God's Story Our Story' (see https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/livelent-2021-church-resources-gods-story-our-story) at 6.00pm and 8.00pm on Mondays starting on February 22nd. For details of how to join all of these please contact Simon.

Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone during this time or any other help including obtaining text versions of the above services or having them read 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)

our rector's thoughts

I was having my eyes tested some years ago and the Muslim optician asked me: 'Do you fast?'. We know that fasting during Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam and I remember being in Egypt watching a boatman breaking his fast as the sun set with dates in water.

Jesus said 'When' not 'If you fast', because fasting was then a weekly discipline. It seems to be less observed in the church today except perhaps during Lent which starts on 17th February and lasts the forty days up to Easter matching the forty days during which Jesus fasted in the desert.

Fasting is back in fashion. We have 'dry January' to encourage sobriety after the supposed excesses of Christmas and there are health programmes like 'intermittent fasting'.

Fasting doesn't have to be about food and drink or giving up chocolate during Lent. In the past I have fasted from watching television and from social media. Even technology geeks in Silicon valley are fasting from technology once a week as a means of weaning themselves off dopamine, the chemical released in the brain from pleasurable activity! But with endless Zoom meetings and needing to keep in touch during the necessary lockdown, perhaps now is not the time for this type of fast.

Fasting doesn't have to be about giving things up either. Have a look at the 40acts website (see 40acts.org.uk) which provides suggested acts of generosity to perform in Lent. During Covid, this might be a very good thing on top of all the existing acts of kindness which we've seen in our communities and more widely.

But is fasting about gritting our teeth and trying to do something either for our health or to prove to ourselves that we have will power?

Fasting in the Christian tradition is all about abstaining from something for a spiritual reason rather than an end in itself. Fasting is about humbling ourselves and realising we are not always in control. That is why the Lenten fast starts with Ash Wednesday, when our foreheads are signed with the cross in ash with these sombre words reminding us of our mortality: 'Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return'. Maybe Covid has reminded us of the fragility of life. Of course, we'll need to find an alternative way of doing Ash Wednesday safely this year!

Most importantly though, as the lockdown enforces a fast from activity, why not use this as a time to reflect on our lives and even to seek God? Through the prophet Jeremiah God says: You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

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

Simon

news from the pews

Four Elms

The stark contrast between the purple altar frontal, the church without flowers during Advent and the transformation to the white altar frontal and the lovely Christmas flowers illustrates the heart of the Christian season. We herald in the birth of Christ, the Light of the World, and it couldn't be more symbolic than this.

Christmas, as always, is a great joy with Christmas trees and traditional carols. We were delighted to welcome everyone to our church for the afternoon carols with the Edenbridge Town Band and were just as delighted to receive £430 collection for Crisis, a charity helping the homeless. Christmas morning Eucharist was also a continuation of a Four Elms tradition and we thank the Rev. Simon Braid for officiating at both services.

We welcomed and thank the Rev. Andrew Procter for presiding over our Café Church. We celebrated the Baptism of Jesus and the Rev. Procter enthralled everyone with his address on the importance of baptism.

You might think that January is a dull month post Christmas. Not a bit of it. Although we have had a lot rain that should not deter intrepid walkers. Our beautiful countryside offers good footpaths and each season has its own beauty, muddy or dry, winter or summer. But be sure not to bring the mud from your boots into the house! As we look forward to 2021 let us look out for our neighbours who maybe troubled in some way. Perhaps we can help.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

Regretfully, we have suspended all services and private prayer at St Peter's due to the current lockdown and high infection rate and once again our services have reverted to Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. This does not mean that there is nothing going on at the Church! We are holding our PCC meetings via Zoom and working on our postponed 900th anniversary celebrations which are planned to take place on 13th June. The Quinquennial, the five yearly assessment of the fabric of the Church building took place last year and now we must repair the items highlighted by the report.

The Friends of St Peter's church also met recently via Zoom to discuss their projects for the next year. They are looking for new members to help complete projects, raise funds and would love to find someone who is able to fill the role of Minute Secretary, could that be you? Please do contact me to discuss what is involved in being a committee member of The Friends.

The project to repaint the interior of the church has benefited from a generous donation which will ensure this can be completed and at the same time we will restore the wall painting on the South Aisle. The words were exposed when the pulpit was moved in the 1895 restoration

and reordering. We have had a visit from Tom Organ from Arte Conservation who specialises in wall paintings and he is preparing a report on it. This will need to be completed before the painting of the interior walls can take place and we understand it will cost about £1,000.

"If you know people in your Church or your neighbourhood that are facing adversity, I encourage you to offer a hand of friendship to them. That is what Jesus would do." – Jonathan Falwell, senior pastor in Lynchburg, Virginia.

There may be people living locally who are still in need of a little extra support, please don't leave it to someone else, get in touch if you know of someone in need of our assistance.

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

Christmas will seem a long time ago by the time this piece is read but I think for historic reasons it is worth describing the scene at Holy Trinity Markbeech on Christmas morning 2020.

It was the brightest of days, very cold and still enough to light the final Advent candles outside. A one way system guided our faithful congregation into the churchyard where bubbles of families, couples and singletons kept firmly to their socially distanced spot marked by a cone. It was easy to see that Father Christmas had delivered some interesting bobble hats, sparkly tights and fancy dress clothes of films quite unknown to me. I, apparently, looked like a squirrel dressed in my mother in law's fur coat! Hearing the Christmas story once more and the joy of singing just one verse of our favourite Christmas carols was evident in the smiling eyes of masked faces. We were blessed to share this together.

So what shall we expect in Markbeech in 2021? We simply pray for a return to normality. Regular shared worship, community get togethers and enjoying the company of others.

Nicki Talbot
Churchwarden



gardening

As I write we're in full lockdown, the pandemic is rife and the weather is awful. It might not be the start to 2021 we were hoping for, but there is hope. We have the vaccine rollout and a year ahead in the garden to plan for.

I love this time of year not only as a commercial grower but as a gardener myself. Plant catalogues drop onto the doormat and are always met with excitement! One such publication arrived this week from Avon Bulbs. It reminded me that there are many goodies we can plant to enhance our gardens in the month of February.

In recent years there has seen a huge rise in the popularity of Snowdrops (Galanthus). Comparable to the Victorian craze in Tulips, there are now hundreds of cultivars available. Snowdrops exchange hands for big money and the aforementioned catalogue contains single bulbs for as much as £90 each! To most a Snowdrop is a Snowdrop! To avid collectors they are looking for variants with green tipped petals, (Marjory Fish), yellow (Primrose Warburg), doubles (Miss Prissy) and even faces (Grumpy) to name a few!

Personally you cannot beat the common single, Galanthus nivalis en masse. We visited Welford Park in Berkshire last year to see swathes carpeting a five acre wood - a true spectacle! Although we can't go this year there are Snowdrops closer to home. Hever Castle in recent years has planted 90,000 Snowdrops throughout the grounds. From February 10th, enjoy a socially distanced amble along their Snowdrop trail.

A brief wander around the nursery this week showed there is much more besides Snowdrops to brighten up the garden in February. One of my favourite Winter shrubs is currently in its pomp - Sarcococca confusa is evergreen with dark, glossy foliage with at first glance fairly inconspicuous white flowers along the stems. What sets this plant aside is the most amazing vanilla scent. Plant near the house to get the best benefits.

What also caught my eye was our batch of Cornus (Dogwood) A deciduous shrub, they have brightly coloured stems that intensify in colour with colder weather. Standout varieties include 'Baton Rogue' (red), flavaramea (yellow) and 'Midwinter Fire' (orange). Other shrubs notable for their stunning Winter foliage are Nandina and Leucothoe. Evergreen shrubs, they are at their best at this time of year with colour enhanced by cooler temperatures.

Despite a dreadful 2020, we as a business experienced a remarkable year. Our 38 year old family business can plan for 2021 with the importance of outside space and gardens ever more prevalent.

Unfortunately we regret to say there are no public open weekends planned for the early part of this year. Hopefully once the vaccination programme takes effect, we can welcome you later in the year.

Get gardening and stay safe!

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	38	6	45	21	42	35	142	59	88
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	97
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	95.6

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

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Benefice website threespires.wordpress.com **Community website** www.hever.org

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Copy for the March edition should reach us no later than **15 February 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 21 for numbers) or the churchwardens (see page 16) 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

Don't forget Go2 bus services if you are considering transport options, for instance, to the Sevenoaks Medical Centre for vaccinations. You can request a bus from a bus stop near you to the Fire Station in Sevenoaks which is next door to the Medical Centre. The bus should be at your chosen stop within 30 minutes. Fares vary but all adults pay £6.50 each way for any journey over 8 miles. To use the service you first need to register using the Go2 Sevenoaks app or by phoning 01732 463 964.