January 2022

THE LINK





In this issue:

- Farewell to Bryan
- Well done and thanks to John Hodson
- Schools news

...and much more



Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the January Link

and Happy New Year!

Global reasons to be cheerful in 2022 - I have been enjoying the positive news in a book called “Beautiful news” by David McCandless. First, the global whale population is larger than it has been since 1500 and 9 out of 14 humpback populations are no longer endangered. Polio has been almost wiped out since 1990, HIV/AIDS has reduced by 40% and rabies by 43%. The vast majority of the world’s population has access to safe drinking water, 0.7 billion people do not have access, a shockingly large figure, but 6.7 billion do. 52% of the world now lives in a democracy, up from 37% in 1985 and global literacy has increased from 70% in 1980 to 87%.

Now for domestic news…. do have a look at the crib outside Hever Church, don’t miss the last Christmas post - free local delivery from the blue post box at Brocas and come along to the film club at Hever Castle golf club on 28 January. You can pre-book a scampi supper, the bar is open and the film, “Man Up” a well received British film based in London, starts at 7.30 (see the advert on page 4 for how to book).

Also, the castle has kindly offered the parish the lakeside loggia for a Platinum Jubilee party on 2 June, a bank holiday. The Victorious River Band is already booked so put the date in your diaries.



THE LINK

pet of the month

My name is Tabitha and I am four years old. I am going to tell you about my cocker spaniel called Poppy.

She is mostly black but has a pure white tail which looks like a feather. Poppy gives me lots of cuddles every day but can sometimes be a bit naughty. Her problem is that she thinks she is a human. She tries to eat my dinner, sits on the sofa with me and even tries to sleep in my bed!

Poppy can be quite lazy and likes nothing more than curling up in her bed by the fire. However she always keeps one eye on the kitchen, just in case any food drops from the dinner table. We both love going for walks in the local area. I love jumping in puddles and Poppy loves getting as muddy as she possibly can. Our favourite place to go for a walk is the Ashdown forest where we go in search of Winnie the Pooh and his friends. I always take a ball with me on the forest which Poppy loves chasing – unfortunately she isn't very good at bringing it back to me.



My mummy and daddy always say that puppy training didn't go very well with Poppy!

We only moved to Hever last year but Poppy has never been happier. She loves living in the countryside with lots of local walks and has made lots of new doggy friends – she has even tried to make friends with the local horses!

What I do

As someone in love with the countryside I'm drawn to all year round outdoor activities. I took up tennis and running after moving to Crockham Hill, some 30 years ago with my two toddler daughters. I enjoyed more long distance walking and cycling having discovered the world of map reading, and welcomed the joys and benefits of getting involved with rural village life.

Joining the village pantomime society was great fun and the local pub offered a great place for gatherings and relaxing with old and new friends. With so many activities centred around the local church, it was rewarding getting stuck into community activities, events and volunteering. I took to village life, it felt like having one big extended family.

A marriage break up refocused my mind to a career change but I had no thoughts for starting a taxi service or an electric bike hire and sales business then. Instead, I learned new skills, gained a degree and went on to enjoy a 15 year career in the Probation service. Alas that ended late 2018 following a long, drawn out battle, but determined to bounce back I returned to being more active in community life.

After a number of disastrous interviews in London and a bit of soul searching I took on part time work in the local pub, finding it refreshing and rehabilitative. This exposed me to local problems in rural travel and I joked about setting up a cab business. In July 2019 I spent a weekend in Dorset with my daughter and hired electric bikes. They were such a blast, I just fell in love with the retro, chopper style so much that I spontaneously decided to buy one. It was then I thought of running a taxi service and integrating electric bike hires but it was happening fast so I went walking in the Dolomites for some healing and thinking. I registered Country Hire and Go Ltd upon my return, 1st August 2019. I purchased two SuperMonkey bikes, launched the bike hire in October and the Taxi by November just in time for Christmas.

I take great pleasure in serving our local communities and supporting businesses. Living in Bough Beech means I can fill a gap in rural travel for local people and visitors and offer affordable rates. In December my eldest daughter joins me so we can have two cars on the road.

Denise Mason
Country Hire and Go Ltd



Riding the Purbeck Way on the Supermonkey in Dorset 2019'

village screen film club 2022

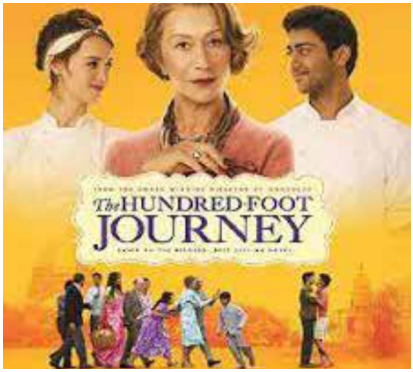
Friday 28 January
Man Up



Friday 25 February
Whistle Down the Wind



Friday 25 March
The Hundred Foot Journey

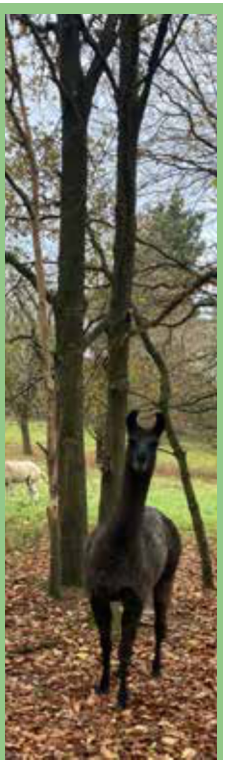


The films are shown at Hever Castle Golf Club. They are all less than two hours long, start at 7.30 pm and doors open at 6.30 for the pre-show meal and bar – with ice cream and popcorn in the interval.

Tickets are a suggested donation of £3 for the film or £15 to include the meal (scampi this month). You can book with Bridget Harris on 01732 700986 or bcharris@btinternet.com or buy tickets at the door. However please pre-book your meal by the Wednesday morning before the show if you would like to eat.

Plea for wool

If anyone has left over wool that they could donate to the Hever Christmas Fair, we'd love to have it. Please get in touch and we'll collect it.
Ana Roxburgh
07595 056 379



A Tribute To Bryan Walters

By his daughters, Katherine & Joey

When we asked Dad to remind us where he was born, he replied 'in bed I think, certainly at a very early age'. That about summed up what had become groaningly known as a grandad joke in which he took great pride.

Dad was in fact born to a loving family in Kingston Upon Thames and lived the early part of his life in New Maldon with his sisters, Ruth and Moira, to whom he was very close.



He had a few vivid memories of his childhood, the earliest being having his tonsils out in his kitchen - which horrified us all. The war was another of course. He recalled the detailed contours of the bomb shelter in his garden and spoke proudly of how his father had cleverly rebuilt it in their sitting room.

When Bryan was 14 his parents and two sisters went to live in Penang for 4 years, as his father needed the security of work after the war. Dad remained in school in England apparently showing promise academically, despite a recently unearthed latin report that read 'He has a good brain but is reluctant to use it!'. It wasn't easy for him living that far from his family and one of his most treasured childhood memories, was being reunited with them 18 months later, on an adventurous trip to Penang during the summer holidays.

Typically, he made good use of his education and studied PPE at University College Oxford where he enjoyed several happy years of hard work and mischief in equal measure.

He delayed his national service until after university and trained in the Royal Artillery, Being deemed officer material the real snag came when during a drill he turned the wrong way. The officer in charge demanded 'are you deaf?', at which he innocently replied 'yes sir'!! After being hauled off for punishment they realised that he was, indeed, partially deaf which put an end to any exciting posts and he was relegated to the army Service Corp serving in Egypt and Northern Cyprus.

On returning he met our mother Virginia and so began the most rewarding chapter of his life. They met through a great friend, Tony Toller. Dad shared Tony's London flat and Mum and her sister were living next door. Dad had considered Mum to be 'out

of his league' until to his surprise, she turned up at his door asking for (would you believe it) a cup of sugar! Luckily, Dad wasn't wearing a shirt at the time and so all his years of rugby and his seemingly wasted army training, paid off in that moment!

They married in 1958 and set up home in Westerham. Although Dad had become a technical wiz in the newly emerging field of computers, an opportunity arose to buy a small, local, lampshade manufacturing business, Fenella Lampshades. Our parents grew this to a successful business, supplying London retailers such as Habitat and Heals, whilst providing employment for Dad's parents, his sister and a good number of locals. Outside work our parents' creative teamwork also flourished in Westerham's Amateur Dramatics Society, where they helped to design, build and decorate the sets.

We have no doubt, however, that Dad's proudest creative project was as a father to what he would rather embarrassingly refer to as 'his two gorgeous daughters'. We have many happy childhood memories of his humour and playfulness, big family gatherings he hosted with enthusiasm and wonderful holidays driving through France and Spain.

Dad's retirement began in 1996, soon after they moved to their much loved home in Markbeech, where they thoughtfully renovated a derelict farmhouse and created a beautiful garden.

Our parents loved being part of the community, enjoying 10 happy years together until, very sadly, our mother died aged 68. This was when Dad's inner strength really came to the fore and he grasped his widowhood with courage and purpose, aided greatly by becoming a proud grandfather to Joey's children, Sam and Luke, and supported by us both.

Over the next 15 years he rebuilt his life, giving his time to local community initiatives, embarking on ambitious DIY projects and setting creative tasks for the Edenbridge Children's charity, '121'. He made a point of rewarding himself regularly with a nice pint of Harvey's in the local pub with friends.

Mostly, however, he cherished his time with Katherine, particularly his Sunday walks around Hever Castle Lake and precious time with Joey and his Grandson's in Kent and Scotland.

Dad's long term health and vitality was a gift to us all and it was only in the last couple of years that his age began to show. But there was no stopping his zest for life, the quality of which was much enhanced by Katherine's devotion to his care.

Dad was an exceptional person, a wonderful father, grandfather and quintessential gentleman.

We couldn't have asked for more.

thanks to John Hodson

John Hodson is retiring as chair of Hever Parish Council this month, we thank him for all he has done and wish him well.

With his wife, Christina, John moved to Little Chittenden from London 48 years ago to give their young family a rural start in life. At first they didn't meet many people because they had set out to lead the self-sufficient "Good life" with their own house cow, chickens etc to sustain them. But they soon got to know the local farmers when the cow was not straightforward, and made friends at Edenbridge church and teaching Sunday school in Spitals Cross. Self sufficiency slowly faded out…….

One of John's first community activities was as a volunteer, clearing the Four Elms pond for the millennium. The pond was so overgrown with marsh and trees you couldn't even tell it was there and the community set about opening it up. Sevenoaks District Council contributed £20,000 to the cost and John helped with other local fundraising turning the pond into the beautiful spot it is today.

John really started to get involved locally when he retired in 2004. Before that, having graduated from Oxford (PPE like Bryan Walters!), his successful but all-consuming career in the City as chief executive and chairman of Singer's bank meant that he hardly saw his home in daylight . Retirement was literally a new dawn, viewed not from a train but from his garden at Little Chittenden where he and Christina would hold so many fund-raising events. And he was of course snapped up by the Parish Council.



John Hodson and Angela Haydon

Once in the Council, John saw how important it was to do something about the dangerous crossroads by the pond and when he became vice chair, the new Council chair, Ann Cleeve, supported him and John Southworth in their campaign to wake Kent County Council up to the dangers of this fatal accident black spot. John was outraged to discover that plans had been sitting in an in-tray untouched for two years

whilst those who shouted louder elsewhere were getting attention. This soon changed! A great deal of work was done at the crossroads which has helped significantly.

When he became chair John introduced a policy of slightly increasing the precept to enable the Council to get things done for the community. The council is small, its reach is very local and most of the infrastructure of the area is the responsibility of either the county or the district, but he was proud that the Council could do something for Four Elms residents waiting for the bus in the rain by providing a fine new bus shelter. The fete has benefited from new storage and the Four Elms playground has been totally refurbished. In Hever, school safety was improved by a footpath across the parish field, the outdoor gym and goalposts and, for the whole parish, the Queen's 90th birthday party at the Castle.

With limited resources it is difficult to get involved in that many projects but under John's leadership Hever has been an active member of the campaign to keep Gatwick Airport's expansion in check and the planning committee has worked conscientiously, if not always successfully, to make sure that Sevenoaks District Council makes the right planning decisions.

An enduring frustration, which not even John could fix, has been that local government law is quite oppressive and makes the bureaucracy which the Council has to navigate disproportionate to its size. There is also the difficulty of balancing the competing interests of the three quite different villages which make up the parish. But there have been no Jackie Weaver moments and John has presided over a friendly, informal council with much laughter along the way. Who would have thought that discussing the location of defibrillators and rubbish bins could be quite as entertaining!

John is not exactly leaving the scene in that he, with Christina, remains actively involved in the fete, he is Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council and chair of the Great Stone Bridge Trust in Edenbridge. He is also proud father of three, grandfather of eight and a good neighbour without portfolio, helping out wherever he can. No doubt the garden at Little Chittenden will continue to host fundraisers for the church and other good causes - and most importantly of all, he remains a gold star delivery driver for The Link!

Angela Haydon, who has lived in Four Elms since 1986 and has had a long career in business management will be Chair-elect at this month's PC meeting – we wish her well too!

Joanna Wade
Vice Chair

From Anne Allan, now living in Cornwall

I was saddened to read of the passing of Ann Greig. I have known her for 63 years.

My family moved to Knowlands in Five Fields Lane in 1935 and I well remember that during the Second World War there were guinea fowl in the big oak tree and they were good watch dogs! squeaking loudly at aeroplanes. They learnt which ones were friendly and ours and which were German and trouble. When Ann first came to the area in the late 50s she lived in a rented flat and hoped to live locally. It was my mother who helped her find Owls Court, pretty much opposite Knowlands.

I remember one occasion when Ann should have picked up my two for school but she phoned early to say she was not well and could I take hers. When I got there, there were others and I had 2 in the front and 5 in the back of a MINI! No seat belts then! One of her sons, Peter, became a farmer. He moved down to Devon where he founded Pipers Farm and now supplies traditionally reared food across the country.

On some occasions I helped Ann run a stall at the Annual Summer Fete, always great fun – we had plenty of laughs.



Winter sunrise'

Hever Parish Council

The Councillors of Hever Parish Council would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. The Councillors have endeavoured to serve the community over the past year and look forward to continuing their hard work in 2022.

The Council last met on the 2nd November, please see Hever.org for the draft minutes. Our next meeting is planned for 11th January 2022 at Hever Village Hall. 7pm planning and 7.30pm for full council. Please see noticeboards or website/Facebook for details and full Agenda nearer the date. Members of the public are always most welcome to attend and if you want to raise a point in the public session at the meeting please advise Clerk ahead of time clerk@hever.org.

Website News
Just some of the articles we placed on Hever.org (see Parish Council News) over the last few weeks:-

Free sessions from SDC for children and parents on Safety for Children.
Flooding preparation – a message from SDC.
Gatwick Expansion – Consultation questionnaire.
Edenbridge and Westerham Citizens Advice Bureau call for volunteers.
Kent Fire and Rescue Services – Water Hydrant Initiative Project.
SDC – call for sites.
SDC – Community Plan Survey – chance to win £100 in shopping vouchers.
Telepal – Telephone conversation service is relaunched.

Some of the things HPC achieved In 2021
Four Elms Pond – The Parish Council was given the opportunity to purchase the Four Elms pond. The necessary funding was raised thanks to the generosity of local residents and businesses. Conveyancing is underway and we hope to complete early in the New Year.
Family fun day, held in Four Elms Rec.
Restart the Bulk Refuse Collections and the next one is on Saturday 12th Feb see the diary on the back cover
Community - Organising film licences for the film nights at Hever Castle Golf Club.
Assisting local groups with grant applications.

REMINDER FROM SDC – Over the festive period your waste, recycling and garden waste collections will take place on their usual day, even if it is a Bank Holiday.

Christina Divall
Clerk and Financial Officer
Hever Parish Council
07733228748
clerk@hever.org
www.hever.org
Facebook/Heverparishcouncil

district council news

One of my District Council responsibilities involves sitting on an advisory board of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a body which has been tasked by the Government with the administration of a new scheme, the Farming in Protected Landscapes Grant. The programme pays for projects that benefit climate, nature, people or place. A recent discussion about the initiative prompted me to reflect on how blessed we are with those four categories, as well as how much the first will increasingly come to occupy our lives.

Notwithstanding 'Plan B', we have seen in Markbeech a resurgence of events, be that at the Village Hall, Kentish Horse or Barn. In Four Elms, nature, people and place have coalesced around the pond. And in Hever, we are at the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the life of the Village Hall.



Tom Fort's 'The Village News' explores what qualities successful villages enjoy. It's worth a read. However, much is devoted to consideration of the tangible, whereas I would contend that the secret to a community's success is at least as much down to the intangible. Though the examples above are quite different in themselves, the principal ingredients in each have been energy, positivity and generosity of spirit. The application of time and talents. And the communion of people. Together these make more than the sum of the parts.

The book makes the case too for the importance of embracing necessary changes in order to preserve the status quo. This will be familiar to students of the English countryside who know the key to its success is its ability to evolve.

Authors of these pieces are obliged to look to the year ahead. As I do so, I am optimistic. It is all too easy to dwell on those things we might rather were different but to do so would be to miss how our villages continue to thrive and are laying firm foundations for their future.

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

West Kent MEDIATION
Listen Talk Resolve

West Kent Mediation is an independent charity that offers a *free*, confidential, impartial mediation service to help resolve conflict and the breakdown of relationships between neighbours, families and communities in dispute in the West Kent area.

Mediation helps people to solve problems, gives them new communication skills whilst supporting and rebuilding relationships. The process can help reduce stress, raise self-esteem and empower individuals.

To find out how we might be able to help you and for more information about our service, ring us for an informal chat.

01732 469696 w: www.wkm.org.uk e: theoffice@wkm.org.uk

We are looking for a new Trustee to help make decisions about our important service. There are approximately six Trustee meetings per year in Sevenoaks and our AGM is held in late summer. We require Trustees to participate and bring fresh ideas to these meetings and provide occasional support to our two part time members of staff. Travel expenses are paid.

Please contact Amanda Bell if you are interested in this rewarding position, or require any further information 01732 469696 amanda@wkm.or.uk



Early years and KS1 dazzled us with the brand-new, show-stopping nativity Don't Be Afraid! Did you know 'Don't be afraid' is the most repeated phrase in the nativity story? That's something worth holding on to this year. There was 'zoom' at the inn this year as lots of the cast were isolating but we managed to provide parents with a taste of Nativity with live outdoor



performances. Wonky and Carrot, the donkeys, transported Mary to the stable and made it a Nativity to not be forgotten. Our local MP, Tom Tugendhat, visited us for our final performance and wished us luck. He also presented one of our students with her prize for her entry to his Christmas card competition – highly commended!

Paul Cookson came to visit Hever for a day of poetry performance and poetry writing. He started the day with a whole school assembly, performing a huge selection of poems he has written. He was very entertaining and taught the children lots of actions so they could join in too. He then did three different workshops, supporting the children with writing their own group poems, including titles from 'What might be found in Father Christmas' beard' to 'That's no place to keep a pet'. He was very inspirational and the whole school thoroughly enjoyed the day.

We are very excited that our building work has finished and we have a new kitchen for our school chefs to use. The kitchen will be ready to use from January and has many state of the art appliances. We are currently planning our official opening where our new friendly poet will be writing us a special poem dedicated to our kitchen. At the time of writing we are looking forward to our whole school trip to the pantomime Pirates of Treasure Island at the Stag Theatre in Sevenoaks. A really lovely way to end the term.

Joanna Stratton
Headteacher



business directory

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

Accommodation		
Edenbridge Manor Care Home, residential, dementia and respite care		01732 492282
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
W Smithers & Sons	listed building, conversions, extensions,	01342 850 559
Catering		
Gorard Dean Catering -	all events undertaken call Melanie Dean	07710 005 635
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
Dog grooming and walking		
Amy's Top Dog Grooming - dog grooming - Amy		0792 3351299
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
Smart Nutrition and Fitness personal training for midlife women and beyond		0771 8588847

Funeral Services		
Alex Jones	funeral directors & monumental masons	01732 860047
Garage Services		
Stuart Rieman luxury passenger car servicing & repairs		01883 715 037
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
Thompson Tree Care Ltd,	tree surgery, tree felling, hedge cutting	07747345815
Health		
Emma Darthuy Chartered physiotherapist	home physio visit, pilates classes	07771 925346
Paul Marro	Cognitive Hypnotherapy www.htherapy.co.uk	01732 808211
Step by Step	foot health practice	07786 038149
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
Relyon Cars	local taxi company	01732 863 800
Venue Hire and Weddings		
Falconhurst Weddings		01342 850526

Church in January

Given the challenging Covid situation, please watch out for any late changes with details of services below and also at https://threespires.wordpress.com/2021/06/08/our-next-service/ We will also be recording one service a month asterisked and putting this on the website.

Date & time	Service details	Readings	Sunday
2 January 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12	Epiphany
9 January 10am*	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	Isaiah 43:1-7; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22	Epiphany 1 The Baptism of Christ
9 January 3pm	Forest church Hever churchyard		Epiphany 1
16 January 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever	Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11	Epiphany 2
23 January 8am	Said communion St.Peter's Hever	Romans 12:16-21; Matthew 8:1-13	Epiphany 3
23 January 10am	Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech	Matthew 2	Epiphany 3
27 January 6pm	Evening prayer in person St.Paul's Four Elms	Genesis 15; Matthew 26:47-56	
30 January 10am	Morning Prayer St.Peter's Hever	Luke 2:22-40	Epiphany 4
30 January 11.15am	Said communion at St.Peter's Hever	Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 18:23-35	Epiphany 4

The Morning Prayer on 30th January will be a simplified and accessible service with easy to sing hymns when we invite you warmly to come and give church a try!

Zoom Bible studies on Mondays at 6.00pm continues as does Evening prayer on Thursdays at 6.00pm. For details of both 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
07802 809849 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

our rector's thoughts

I hope that you all had a good Christmas without too many late Covid cancellations.

In Christmas 2010, the presenters of Top Gear, tried to recreate the route that would have been taken by the three Wise men in travelling to Bethlehem. But instead of camels, they took three second-hand cars. They set out in the wrong direction, travelled from Iraq avoiding Bagdad and Mosul which were considered too dangerous, into Iran, through to Turkey, then to Syria, Jordan, and finally to Bethlehem.

In the church's calendar, the start of the New Year coincides with the season of 'Epiphany' which means showing or revealing. The revelation of the birth of Christ to the Wise men or Kings who were the first Gentiles to worship Jesus and had followed a star to find him.

We're fortunate to live in the countryside where there is less light pollution. So, on a clear night, we can enjoy star gazing. In the ancient world, the night sky was extremely important and the Wise men were astrologers looking for signs in the stars. Whilst we can't really know precisely what happened then, there is research that suggests evidence of an extraordinary astronomical conjunction of planets around the time of Christ's birth, which would have looked like an exceptionally bright star.

There are three very different kings in the Christmas story but they're not Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar! The three were: Herod, Jesus and the Wise Men. Herod was of mixed ancestry paranoid about his position, disturbed to hear that a king had been born and so plotted to have Jesus done away with. The Bible account says that the Wise men were seeking one to be born, King of the Jews. But the king they found was not in a palace but born in a stable and laid in a feeding trough. Finally, the Kings arrive and worship offering their gifts, which in the 4th Century were described in this way: Sacred gifts of mystic meaning – Incense doth their God disclose – Gold the King of Kings proclaimeth – Myrhh his sepulchre foreshows.

I don't know how long the Top Gear team took to get to Bethlehem, but I'm sure it took the Wise men a lot longer – some have suggested it was a journey of about 500 miles lasting many months. They persevered in their search for Jesus and in the end found him.

As we go into 2022, I wonder what you are looking for – what are you seeking? I encourage you to make a priority to seek Jesus wherever he can be found. Then will be fulfilled the God's words through the prophet Jeremiah: You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

I wish you all a very happy and safe New Year

Simon

news from the pews

Markbeech

Now, there's a bit of prophecy and foresight required to write this piece as it is only 10th December. As I write the choir are busy practising for our Carol Service on 12th December. It is so joyful to be singing together once more and remembering the precious narrative of Christ's birth in words and music. Our choirmaster, Charles Talbot, is emphatic that before learning the notes of a piece we read and understand the words. His favourite advice is to go home and 'sit in your armchair and meditate on the words'. Although I simply love blasting out 'Hark the Herald' every year with it's descant impossible to reach on Christmas morning, this year I have found 'The Truth from Above' set in a beautiful arrangement by Ralph Vaughan Williams, the most moving. The first and last verses really say all there is to say about our faith:

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love,
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all both rich and poor.
Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

Both our Carol service and our Christmas Day services are designed to be 'Family services'. Our family ranges from little River, nearly two, to Alan in his eighties. Services in our small village church need to continue to serve all needs and as a small community we have to do this together. All ages need to learn from each other: to sit and listen; to pray; to be joyful in worship and respectful of each other's needs.

From Markbeech, we wish you a very happy and healthy New Year!

Nicola Talbot
Churchwarden

From the register

Funeral
at Four Elms
30th November Ann Greig
Weddings
at Holy Trinity Markbeech
11th December
Wedding Kerrie Stead and Michael Bull
Baptisms
St.Paul's Four Elms on
12th December
Reuben Michael Philip (parents Angela & Matthew)

Four Elms

"Christmas Bah Humbug " thus said Scrooge who ultimately found redemption. But what a curmudgeonly man he was to think that about Christmas. Clearly he had not seen the wonderful M&S, John Lewis et al advertisements on television. This would have given Scrooge hope !!

Or would it? Were he able he should have joined the Christingle Service for Four Elms School in early December. The pupils were

incredibly well behaved and around 100 of them were able to carefully and safely hold their orange candles. Here I feel Scrooge would have had that cold heart warmed. Thank you Four Elms Primary school. I'm sure you made your parents' afternoon and you certainly made mine.

Ann Greig was laid to rest with her husband Dennis on 30th November. As her family said, it was the funeral she would have wished for and enjoyed. I can hear her saying "It was magic". For those who were unable to attend Ann's funeral the Greig family have provided a video. Please call me and I will email you the link.

Christmas Day we have a Family Service with Holy Communion starting at 11am. Needless to say we welcome everyone to our beautiful church in Four Elms. The PCC of St. Paul's Four Elms wish you a happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy 2022.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

As I write this article for The Link the country is moving into Plan B but, unlike last year, it looks like we will be able to join together and celebrate Christmas in Church and at home with our families.

You may have noticed a little ladder extending all the way up the spire once more and a brave soul called Colin scaling these ladders. We have had to complete some emergency repairs to the spire where the birds, probably green woodpeckers, have caused damage to the cedar shingles and repairs to the broaching hips on the eastern side of the spire to prevent damage to the internal structure.
We are delighted to have a "Tap and Go" donations machine inside the church for debit and credit card donations during services and occasional offices. Those of you who came to the Christmas Fair may have already seen it in action. You can choose to donate one of the three set amounts £3, £5 and £10 or select any amount and enter the amount that you wish to donate then tap your card on the top of the machine.

The next Parish lunch will be held on Thursday 13th January. Parish lunches are usually held on the second Thursday of every month starting at 12.30. We normally have between 18 and 24 people and serve hot soup, bread and cheese, fruit and a delicious home-made cake. Everyone in the Parish is very welcome but it would be helpful for catering, if you can, to let us know that you are coming or have any special dietary requirements

We would still love to find some more volunteers to join the flower rota. You can get more information from Jan Tolfree or me.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

gardening

As I write this, the leaves are nearly all on the ground waiting for the last sweep up and January will soon be upon us. I have just peeped into my RHS Gardening Month by Month book telling us what to do. I really recommend this, it is full of good advice. It does largely depend on the weather but pruning shrubs, trees and climbers seems to be the order of the day. And it's not too late to plant spring bulbs.

This last year everything has grown so much due to the excessive amount of rain so I am getting the tree surgeon in early. The rhododendrons will have their dead wood cut out to hopefully increase their blooms. The climbing hydrangea on the house is overdue for its annual pruning and a host of other trees and shrubs need to be trimmed back. The Campsis on the other side of the house is also awaiting it's turn. My Acer Griseum is now displaying its glorious red flaky bark.

A reminder for February, the autumn raspberries need cutting down to the ground, but if you have done it already, don't worry! The experts will have already planted their sweet peas under cover. I enjoy browsing through the seed and plant catalogues.

A word on the history of my garden. It was planted about 60 years ago, or more. The cottage was originally the groom's from Blackmoor, then a portion of the garden was fenced off for a family member who planted specimen trees. It has been a much loved garden since then and we still have a little iron gate in the hedge connecting us with Blackmoor. The bank outside the fence along the lane is not cut till late summer to allow the wild flowers to drop their seed. Then comes the cyclamen for everyone to enjoy as they drive by. They have spread over many years. These and the snowdrops have also run riot throughout the garden. We enjoy, at the end of the garden, one of the wonderful mature oaks in the lane. Age unknown, can anyone come up with a number?

The birds need feeding this time of year. The tits etc have to compete with our resident jackdaws and magpies who always know when food is about, along with the squirrels. Robin is never far away and the nuthatch visit is a treat. Don't forget their water and to break the ice!

Margaret Bates



Benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Four Elms	**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
	2021	134	46	30	6	56	79	45	54	41	121	21	
Hever	**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
	2021	127	42	41.5	5	65.5	84	61	73	41	139	14.5	
Markbeech	**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
	2021	120	40	31	4	55.5	38.5	48	0	39	141	11.5	

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
Margot McArthur 03000 414817
Margot.McArthur@kent.gov.uk
Sevenoaks District:
Matthew Dickins 07910 328110
Hever Parish:
Christina Divall 07733228748
clerk@hever.org

The Link Team

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Copy for the February edition should reach us no later than 10th January -
Subscriptions cost £5 pa if delivered by a volunteer. For payment there are 2 options:
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

January diary

27 Dec **Boxing Day Mee**t Chiddingstone Castle 11am refreshments from 10am

3 Jan **Midlife fitness class** (contact Fiona Coppard 0771 8588847)
Hever Village Hall 10.30am

10 Jan **Midlife fitness class** (contact Fiona Coppard 0771 8588847)
Hever Village Hall 10.30am

11 Jan **Hever PC meeting** at Hever Village Hall
planning 7pm, full council meeting 7.30pm

13 Jan **Hever Parish lunch** Hever Village Hall 12.30pm

17 Jan **Midlife fitness class** (contact Fiona Coppard 0771 8588847)
Hever Village Hall 10.30am

20 Jan **How to Use Your Telescope Workshop** at Bore Place 6.30 to 8.30 pm

24 Jan **Midlife fitness class** (contact Fiona Coppard 0771 8588847)
Hever Village Hall 10.30am

28 Jan **Film club**, Hever Golf Club, doors open 6.30pm, film at 7.30pm

31 Jan **Midlife fitness class** (contact Fiona Coppard 0771 8588847)
Hever Village Hall 10.30am

6 Feb **Shooting The Stars: Astrophotography for Beginners**
at Bore Place 5-7pm

12 Feb **Bulk Refuse Collection** Four Elms Village Hall 9.15 -10am.

12 Feb B**ulk Refuse Collection** Hever Bottle Bank 1 0:15 - 11am

12 Feb **Bulk Refuse Collection** Markbeech village hall 11.15- 12 noon

25 Feb **Film club**, Hever Golf Club, doors open 6.30pm, film at 7.30pm

5 Mar Y**oghurt making workshop** at Bore Place 10 – 12.30 pm

11 Mar **Astronomy Evening**: The Moon at Bore 6.30- 8.30 pm

25 Mar **Film club,** Hever Golf Club, doors open 6.30pm, film at 7.30pm