February 2024

THE LINK







In this issue:

- Farewell Brian Milner
- Frolicsome felines
- Fresh juice on tap
- Fulsome singing
- Films galore

...and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the February Link

It is new year's day, and I am starting to think about my editorial for February, triggered by wanting to share the great tranquility of the wood I am walking through. The palpable calm is pierced by the harshness of a jackdaw or crow, I have no idea which, but also by the growl of an aeroplane going overhead. This interference with daytime poetic thoughts also happens at night when I take an excited breath at a shooting star before the port and starboard lights bound for Gatwick appear.

Talking of excited breath, I heard Michael Morpurgo on the radio realising that he has spent 50 years of regular morning walks with his heart in his mouth, thinking that he is about to see an otter. I have done the same, although over a shorter timescale, longing to see an otter in the Eden. So far I have had to console myself with the odd cormorant or kingfisher, both special in their own right, and I live in hope.

As I listen to some irritated squirrels squabbling up and down a tree trunk I try to take photos for the Link (such is my dedication). Everything has a muted colour which is frustrating because we are working on a redesign of the front cover which needs strong contrasts so that the photos stand out against the coloured background. Work in progress; I must wait for what I need.

Anyway, we hope to see you at the last two film club shows and look forward to Hever castle reopening on 7 February. The castle's laser beams featured large in the Christmas night sky and we will miss all the lights during the dark months to come. We hope that the photos in this edition will illuminate your month, that and the fact that the WHO have just announced that there are now two vaccines which effectively prevent malaria in children; two million children in central Africa have already been vaccinated.

Joanna Wade
thelink@hever.org

PS We are delighted that Costcutter in the High Street opposite Allmans is now running a post office. They are building up to providing a full service, six days a week, from the beginning of February although they won't be able to process passport applications.



pets of the month


Teddy on the stairs

We moved to Four Elms from London last year with Luna Blue and Bertie Blue, both British Shorthairs. Poor Bertie was so shocked and bewildered by the new house that he spent the first three days under the duvet with just his head sticking out.

Our family absolutely adore cats, my London friends jokingly called me the crazy cat lady of West London, a title I'm very happy to accept! We love their different personalities and they are the most fantastic companions. As I work from home, they are always around me looking for cuddles and amusing me with their antics. We support a wonderful cat charity called Strawberry Persian Rescue, so when a Chinchilla Persian kitten came up for adoption, we could not resist adding to our cat family. After a rigorous vetting process by the charity we adopted Teddy, and a black-tip British Shorthair, called Stella. The newcomers very quickly settled in, and fortunately all four cats and our dog live in harmony together, with only the occasional play fight getting out of hand.


In descending order

Stella loves to play fetch with a little bouncy ball, bringing it back in her mouth to be thrown again. Teddy is a big fluff ball - this requires quite a lot of grooming, but he gives the best cuddles; he's a bit of a dare devil, sitting on the highest banisters and sliding down like a naughty child! Two years ago, Luna was diagnosed with a serious heart condition, and it seemed she only had a couple of months to live. After two years on medication the heart scan showed so much improvement that she is now off all her meds, much to our relief.

They are indoor cats, with a busy road nearby we want to ensure that they are safe, and following RSPCA guidelines they have wonderful lives with lots of space and they are active and stimulated. Also, our garden birds can feed safely, free from feline intervention.

Ren Whiting

desert island whisks

which kitchen implement would you save from the waves?

About forty years ago Christopher and I bought a villa in the Algarve after spending a couple of holidays there. It really was a challenge in those days trying to find anything similar to what was available in the UK but we managed to furnish it almost completely from local businesses.

Being surrounded by orange groves and loving fresh orange juice we came upon this juicer in a very old fashioned back street shop whilst on one of our trips. It's quite heavy and very basic but the children used to love squeezing the oranges with it and it was always well used by not just our family but many others who stayed there over the years.

In 2023 I made the decision to sell up in Portugal after all these years and as it is normal practice to sell homes with everything included there were just a few things I wanted to bring back to Hever.



The juicer was almost top of the list and now lives with my son Patrick in Speldhurst. My little grandson Alfie now enjoys it as much as his daddy did all those years ago. Nowadays lots of our household gadgets don't seem to last and I'm really pleased this old friend with so many happy memories attached is still going strong and will probably outlive me!

Amber Dane



what I do

Engage and Inspire through Music
Discover the joy and excitement of our singing workshops, specially designed for children! With a focus on fun, interactive songs and games, these sessions are the perfect introduction to the world of music. Our workshops use the voice – our most natural instrument – to build foundational musical skills in a fun and accessible way. Our workshops are an ideal bridge for children interested in piano or singing lessons.

A rewarding experience at Chiddingstone Village School I'm thrilled to share my experiences leading a Kodaly-inspired singing club at Chiddingstone Village School. Every week, we delve into the world of solfege, rhythm, and beat, while our tongue twister jar challenges and delights. Our 'singing spaceship' SOVT exercises and musical 'rollercoasters' make learning about consistent breath energy an adventure. The enthusiasm and inspiration I draw from these children is immeasurable.



Pumpkin spice singing workshop at Markbeech Village Hall

Local Workshop Highlights Our local workshops in Hever and Markbeech Village hall, have been a resounding success,



Jane Ryall: published songwriter and vocalist

especially our Halloween-themed 'Zombie singing workshop' and the enchanting 'Pumpkin Spice' singing event. These sessions not only teach music but also celebrate creativity and community spirit.

Upcoming: Children's Songwriting Workshop I'm excited to announce new Children's Songwriting Workshops this spring; Sunday 17th and 24th March at Markbeech Village Hall 10 - 11am, designed to foster creative expression and musical understanding through play. Open to children of all musical backgrounds, this workshop aims to empower young minds with a wealth of creative ideas and possibilities.

My own journey in songwriting, including accolades from the John Lennon Songwriting Competition and experiences writing in New York, inspires me to share this passion with the next generation. Interested in these workshops? Please either contact me 07970 594601 or on my email below.

Stay updated on upcoming workshops and join our vibrant community by contacting me at janeryalluk@yahoo.co.uk or visiting www.jrvox.co.uk. I'd be delighted to add you to our mailing list and welcome you into our world of musical exploration and joy.

Christmas photo medley













a tribute to Dr Brian Milner



Large numbers of friends and family gathered at Markbeech Village Hall on 15th January, to celebrate the life of Doctor Milner who died on 6 December. Brian was born in Yorkshire in 1935, moving to Bristol a few years later, so that, said his father, he and his brother would never have to work down the mines. He needn't have worried as both his sons went on to qualify as doctors. GP training was at Tetbury where Brian was introduced to life at a cottage hospital which he very much liked. After training he got a job doing anaesthetic work, then paediatrics in Cheltenham where he met staff nurse Linda Smith.

Linda tells us more: "Once we qualified as an SRN, matron would offer a job. The girl in front of me was offered Cheltenham; now had she said yes, well my life would've been a very different story, but she said no, and matron offered it to me. On my first day, I was introduced to a young doctor, Brian Milner. When, after about two weeks, the sister in charge left suddenly I found myself in charge of a children and babies ward which was rather daunting. Among my jobs would be to do the daily rounds with Doctor Milner, which I found equally terrifying. It was hard to keep up with him so I dared ask him if he could help with the nappies. He was very cooperative, and on we went. Little did I know that in a few years time we would be changing the nappies of our own children!

After about six weeks, it was time for him to leave; he was going to Edenbridge in Kent to be a GP/anaesthetist, the job he had always wanted. On his last day he came onto the ward to look at a patient and then left; quite soon after he came back again to another child and then left again... it was when he came back a third time I wondered what he was up to! Then he asked me if I was off that evening and would I like to go to the pictures with him. I replied yes, and there began our romance." They were married in 1964 and the move to Bannisters Barn in Markbeech was in 1965... the older locals remembered the cows going in and out of the shed it had once been. There followed 60 happy years with Milners' five children Guy, Will, Alistair, Ben and Kate.

Brian greatly enjoyed work as a GP and also at the cottage hospital in Edenbridge where he anaesthetised for several well know London based surgeons including Sir John Peel, the Queen's gynaecologist. Guy says: "Dad spent 37 years as a GP in Edenbridge. From the view at home, the day to day looked fine, the weekend and nights 'on call' were something else though and it was often busy at weekends. Dad would go out, see patients at home then call in from a phone box to pick up the next messages from mum. When he got home it wasn't unusual for him to have to turn around and go out again. This drove mum a bit mad sometimes, she might have

just made lunch .. He'd mumble a few words of appeasement and head off.

Meanwhile Dad transformed that garden over the years. He spent endless time out there, the results are that big beautiful garden which we had to play in as kids, as did the grandchildren. Looking at the garden now you can hardly believe it was the work of one man especially when you consider how much time he also spent with his Lancia cars.

There were lots of Lancias, I'm sure we counted 9 at one point, they were very cool cars and we got to drive a few. The last one dad owned, which has been sitting in the garage is currently being restored.... Once as a family of seven Dad drove us all to Italy in his big handsome midnight blue Flaminia saloon which had at some point belonged to the Dean of Naples university. We were there for a big Lancia Club celebration, 100 years since the birth of Vincenzo Lancia …Dad was in his element and I think that car won a prize."

His son Will remembers: "'Dr Milner's son aren't you?' said PC Boyden of the Edenbridge Constabulary when he pulled me over on my motorbike age 17 for various misdemeanours. 'Your Dad's a pillar of the Community! And you're letting him down' he said! A bit harsh, I thought at the time, for doing 50 in a 30! But its something I've reflected on many times over the years: what it means to be Dr Milner's son. It had its perks - I'm not sure I didn't use it as a chat up line one day when out and about in Edenbridge in my teens. At my first Saturday job at the age of 15 down at Moore's fruit and veg shop in Edenbridge, Dad dropped me off for what I thought was an interview, but as soon as I walked in Alan Moore gave me a big smile and said 'You're Dr Milner's son right? When can you start?' Such was the warmth I received over the next couple of years working in Edenbridge amongst the community, just on the grounds of being his son."

Guy continues: "Mum has been the biggest beneficiary of Dad's care. As usual with Dad, this is best understood by looking at what he did rather what he said. We're talking decades of commitment here, Dad was looking after Mum on his own until he was well into his eighties (Linda has MS and is in a wheelchair)." Kate adds: "So for us five kids and 10 grandchildren, we have been very lucky to have had Brian Milner as our Dad and Grandad. He has spent his life looking after us, after his patients, and of course, after Mum. So all that's left to say is thanks Dad, for everything you have done for us all."

And his grandson tops it off with a poem in rhyming couplets - here is an excerpt:

"Even if I was being a menace, he'd never tell me off
He'd patch up our wounds and cure us of our coughs
He always had time for us, and we were lucky he was there
To find a grandad like this, is surely very rare".

Linda Milner and her family would like to thank so very much all her family and friends who sent their condolences following the death of her husband Brian, father to their 5 children and grandfather to their 10 grand children, friend to many and doctor to many more.

bore place volunteering

Would you like to volunteer some time this year as a citizen scientist at Bore Place?
We are looking for nature-lovers to help monitor the biodiversity across the Bore Place estate. Citizen science is when the public contributes to scientific research - you could be a species expert, or just someone with an interest. Throughout 2024 we are offering a series of FREE training sessions, to learn to conduct wildlife surveys, in a friendly and relaxed group setting. From there, you can then look to take on regular or ad-hoc voluntary surveys at Bore Place, to contribute meaningful data to our work.

We will be monitoring: earthworms, birds, reptiles, dragonflies, butterflies, bats and dormice. All welcome, no previous experience necessary. 18+ only.
Please see www.boreplace.org/whats-on for dates and to book on, or email volunteering@boreplace.org for more info.





village screen film 2023/24

All are very welcome as the film season continues in February at the usual venue, Hever Castle Golf Club. The film will be:

Friday 16 February - A Man Called Otto. A highly-rated feel-good comedy/drama based on the popular book A Man Called Ove. The film is about a devastated and lonely widower who is brought back from the brink when a lively family moves in next door. Tom Hanks meets a cat, what's not to like?!?



Save the date for the remaining film of the season:

Friday 15 March - Legally Blonde - Reece Witherspoon in what is now a golden oldie from 2001, a hilarious romantic comedy with a bit of law thrown in.

The films (all less than two hours long) start at 7.30 and doors open at 6.30 for the pre-show meal and bar - with ice cream in the interval.

Tickets are a suggested donation of £2 for the film or £15.50 to include the meal - scampi and chips (there is a vegetarian alternative). You can book with Joanna Wade on 07958 919631 or heverbrocas@gmail.com. Please book your meal by the Wednesday before the show if you would like to eat. Please bring cash and pay on the door.

The Whibley story

Prominent in Hever churchyard is a stone which tells a sad family story, though exactly what the story was is just a guess. The inscription which crams itself into all the available space says:

"Here rest the bodies of Arthur, fourth son of Richard Whibley and Elizabeth Sarah his wife of New House Farm in this parish, born October 18, 1849 deceased January 21, 1851 and of Harriet Mary their eldest daughter born December 13, 1844 deceased February 6th 1851- may they rise again into life eternal Amen.

This stone in affectionate remembrance was placed here by their grandfather David Whibley of Delaware House shortly after their parents sailed for Australia with their five surviving children Edward Thomas David Emily Walter James."

Could their grandfather not count his numerous grandchildren or which of the sons had two names?

Joanna Wade



Please pay your subscription NOW

Many thanks to all those who have standing orders or other arrangements in place to pay your sub in the course of the year. If you haven't, please pay now. We had to chase up a lots subs last year, please don't wait to be chased again. If you aren't sure of your position please contact Bridget by phone or email, contact and payment details on page 21.

The annual sub is unchanged at a modest £5 for a hand delivered copy (£18 for postal subscribers). If you no longer want a paper copy you can read the Link online for free at hever.org BUT please let us know.

Many thanks

Hever Parish Council

Your Hever Parish Council
PROUDLY REPRESENTING HEVER, MARKBEECH & FOUR ELMS
Any questions? Please contact clerk@hever.org

Hever Parish Council would like to warmly welcome Hilary Jones who was co-opted as Councillor, Four Elms Ward at the recent meeting. Councillor Jones fills the seat that was vacant from the May 2023 elections.

There is a Community Litter Pick arranged for Saturday 23rd March, so please watch out for information on timings and where to meet. Everyone is welcome to take part and it is a great opportunity to catch up with your friends and neighbours as well as keeping the area clear of litter.

Whilst writing, here is a reminder of some useful contact details:

Roads, potholes and pavements – please report any issues via the Kent County Council reporting tool on their website or if the issue is urgent and could cause an accident please call KCC on 03000 418181 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday or on 03000 419191 at all other times.

Public footpaths and rights of way issues/ blocked routes – please report any issues via the Kent County Council reporting tool on their website.

Planning – to view information on planning applications and planning enforcement, details can be found on the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) website: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20008/planning

Cost of living support - for advice on energy bills and energy efficiency, contact Simple Energy Advice: 0800 444202 or visit https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/

Find your way through to the cost of living support available with Kent Together on the KCC website or call Kent Together on 03000 41 92 92 or Sevenoaks District Council via https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/homepage/97/help_with_the_cost_of_living

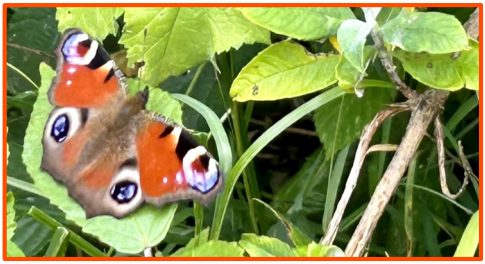
Reporting crime – Please report any incidents via the Kent Police website: https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/ or call 999 in the event of an emergency.

Missed refuse collections – please report any missed refuse collections via the SDC website under the rubbish and recycling tab.

Other useful contact details:
Kent County Council: Telephone 03000 414141
Sevenoaks District Council: Telephone 01732 227000
Hever Parish Council website: hever.org or contact me, see details below.

The next Hever Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th March in Hever Village Hall (7.00 pm Planning and 7.30 pm full HPC Meeting) to which all are welcome. The next bulk refuse freighter visit to the Parish will be on Saturday 10th February.

Mrs Rachael Turner
Clerk and RFO 077849 12645
clerk@hever.org



After the joyous festivities of the holiday season, we are delighted to share the wonderful experiences that have taken place at the start of Term 3.

Class 3 (year 3 and 4), kicked off the term with a remarkable Tudor Day. Immersed in the rich history of the Tudor era, the children dressed in period costumes and sampled authentic Tudor food and drink. This engaging experience served as the perfect launchpad for their exciting new project.

The Year 1 and Year 2 students of Class 2 embraced the outdoors during a session at Forest School. Using their knowledge of habitats and minibeasts, the children constructed micro-habitats, applying their skills to create thriving environments. This hands-on encounter with nature not only enhances their understanding but also instills a love for the world around them.

Our youngest learners in Reception, Class 1, embarked on a captivating journey exploring the theme of safety. Little City, a specially designed role play area, allowed the children to dive into various scenarios where they could play and discover the roles of different community members who ensure our safety.

Class 4 took a trip to the scale model of the Solar System in Otford just before the holiday break. Since then, they have been busy finding out more about the mysteries of space. The students have been engrossed in celestial learning, and we encourage locals to explore the scale model.

We look forward to a term filled with curiosity, exploration, and continued growth.

Help needed

We are looking for a few nimble fingered members of the community who may be able to make us a few weighted blankets. Weighted blankets are a wonderful way of offering sensory and calming support to children. The cost of these blankets online is ever increasing. These can be made really easily by filling material (the size for a child's lap blanket) with dried rice. You can even add a little lavender to add a calming scent! The stitching will need to be very sturdy and durable for the young children to use safely. If you are able to help us with this, please email our Secretary - secretary@inspiream.org.uk. We would be incredibly grateful for any help you can provide.

Jess Fermor
Head of School



news from hever primary

It has been lovely seeing the children's enthusiasm as they returned to school after the Christmas break ready for new texts and new topics.

Reception started their Starry Night topic by learning about nocturnal animals and people who work at night, including the emergency services. This was supported by a visit from a police officer this week and next week they will experience the Space Dome (a mobile planetarium) to inspire their learning about the planets.

Year One and Year Two discovered a mysterious purple and gold egg in the wildlife area last week. Their investigations have led to them to conclude it is a dragon egg and they have been imagining what it would be like to have secret dragons in the classroom, linked to their new text The Dragon Machine by Helen Ward.



Year Three and Year Four experienced a fascinating Rocks Workshop to launch their Rock, Relics and Rumbles topic. The children were shown how to categorize various rocks based on their appearance and simple physical properties, using



scientific equipment. They learned about the processes involved in the formation of different rocks and fossils, supporting their understanding of geological concepts.

You probably read about Rev. Simon's son Joshua in last month's Link, who has been in Antarctica. Joshua will be coming in to share his experiences with our Year Five and Year Six children to bring to life their Frozen Kingdom topic where they are learning about the incredibly beautiful but often hostile territories of the coldest parts of our planet.

We have also had great excitement taking all our key stage two children to the West End last week to see Matilda the Musical. The children thoroughly enjoyed spotting all the landmarks on our journey up and the show was amazing! We are very grateful to our PTA for subsidising this event to enable all the children to share in this experience.

Helene Bligh
Headteacher

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Claire Cook, Positive Reinforcement Dog Trainer in Edenbridge	07818 070672

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Fitness

Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 700771
Gyrotonics at the barn with	Stephanie Bates	07803 876816
Falconhurst Cricket Club	cricket and training sessions	07771 892762
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Funeral Services and Burial Grounds

Alex Jones funeral directors & monumental masons	01732 860047
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Falconhurst Farm Shop and deli		01342 850172

Travel, Taxis and bike hire

Country Hire and Go,	electric bike hire and local taxi service	07723054863
Easy Cab Taxi Services	based in Hever	07359 759 784
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Venue Hire and Weddings

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Markbeech Village Hall	01342 850328

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Church in February

Please watch out for any late changes with details of services below. Readings and full details are also at https://threespires.wordpress.com/2021/06/08/our-next-service/

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
4th February 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	2nd before Lent
4th February 6pm	Contemporary service St.Paul's Four Elms with Cabin Worship	2nd before Lent
11th February 8am	BCP Morning Prayer at St.Peter's Hever	Sunday before Lent
11th February 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	Sunday before Lent
11th February 3pm	Forest church Hever churchyard	Sunday before Lent
14th February 6pm	Imposition of ashes at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Ash Wednesday
18th February 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever	1st of Lent
18th February 4pm	Four Elms at Four Family service	1st of Lent
25th February 8am	Said communion St.Peter's Hever	2nd of Lent
25th February 10am	Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech	2nd of Lent

Lent starts with our Ash Wednesday service on 14th February. For the five Mondays in Lent starting on 19th February we will be running a Lent course with our two Bible studies combining to meet in person and including a meal. Watch out for more details and if you are interested in joining us please contact Simon.
Our Zoom Evening prayer is on Thursdays at 6.00pm and Zoe Joannou's 'life group' for young mums is on alternate Wednesdays. Also watch out for details of our February Men's discussion group. For details of any of these please contact Simon.

Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone.

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Wardens
Hever
Mandy Yarnold
01342 850028
Four Elms
Christina Hodson
01732 700247
Richard Bennett
01732 862971
Markbeech
Lynnie Rowan 01342 850776
Marielou Linklater
01342 850579

On behalf of Markbeech PCC I would like to thank everyone for their huge support for our Winter Fair in November. I think it was a fantastic occasion and our thanks are due to our customers who came in droves and also our stallholders who worked so hard. We made just over £3000 for the church at this event. Thank you everyone for their contributions.

Liz Kaberry

our rector's thoughts

There are two very different festivals that coincide on 14th February this year. As in every year, it is Valentine's Day but this year it is also Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent. At the service people come forward to be marked with the sign of the cross in ash often made from burning of palm crosses from the previous year. These words are said: *God our Father; you created us from the dust of the earth: grant that these ashes may be for us a sign of our penitence & a symbol of our mortality; for it is by your grace alone that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour…. Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.*

It is a reminder that we are not in control and that we are mortal. As Lent progresses towards Easter, the atmosphere of the season darkens and our bible readings begin to anticipate Christ's suffering and the Cross. In contrast, Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love. The origin of Valentine's Day is rather patchy. St. Valentine was a Roman priest and physician who was martyred around 270AD. Legend has it that St. Valentine signed a letter "from your Valentine" to his jailer's daughter, whom he had befriended and healed from blindness. That doesn't sound much like romantic love!

But maybe it is fitting that these two festivals coincide because they are both about love. Ash Wednesday is about love because it looks to Easter and Jesus' death on the cross. Paul writes in Romans 5:8 *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Through Jesus' self-giving love something happens in our hearts that brings us to love God in response and Ash Wednesday and the disciplines of Lent could be a starting point.

We've very recently held our 'Foundations for Marriage' preparation course which is offered to all couples who are getting married in any of our three churches. It's a fun and practical course designed to help build strong marriages and to celebrate love as we do on Valentine's Day. St.Paul writes: *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* (Ephesians 5:25). Maybe this provides the link between Valentine's Day, Ash Wednesday and the Cross. In the Bible and the Wedding service, marriage is seen as a picture or visual aid of the love between Christ and His people. A love which is shown in sacrifice.

God bless and may we all experience the love of God as we approach Lent and Easter.

Simon



news from the pews

Markbeech

The Christmas Day Service at Holy Trinity Church was just magical. A full church including many families and lots of excited children. We are so fortunate to have Simon and Susie in the Benefice. They are brilliant at engaging with all ages, from the very young upwards. Favourite carols were sung, the service was early which meant those in charge of Christmas lunch could relax in the knowledge that whatever had been left in the oven wouldn't incinerate!

Now it's all a distant memory and 2024 is here and Christmas decorations have been packed away for another year, thank you letters written, New Year resolutions adhered to (or perhaps not!) and somehow there is a sense of a new beginning. A new term for children with new goals to be reached. Perhaps new homes for some, new jobs for others and perhaps new ideas and new pastimes and pursuits for many of us.

Hooray, today it's not raining! Now we can gradually look forward to the evenings getting just a fraction lighter and then that simple joy of discovering the first snowdrop or primrose. A precious moment to reflect - away from some of the horrific happenings all too readily supplied to us on the news.

Here's wishing you all peace and joy for this new year.

Lynne Rowan
Churchwarden

Four Elms

After a busy December we seemed to have arrived at the New Year in a blink of an eye. Much to be concerned about in 2024 with localised wars throughout the globe. It is difficult not to be angry and upset at the devastation and destruction caused. If we never understood the meaning of globalisation our purses will tell us the effect it has on us personally. But this is nothing compared to those in the epicentre of these tribal confrontations. Similarly, the inclement weather, especially the floods and the havoc caused to the lives of people reminds us of the importance of the need for everyone to be aware of climate change.

Much was made of the fact that the King stood next to a "living" Christmas tree as he presented his Christmas Day Speech, which, it was suggested, would be replanted in one of the estates. May I say that St Paul's Four Elms, may not have large "living" Christmas trees but we do have small potted and decorated trees for the window ledges which are now in their third season. Throughout the year they will be tenderly nurtured. Hopefully they will last for some years to come.

Our "Enjoy a cuppa" continues and it is a great pleasure to see neighbours call in for a cuppa and a chat at St Paul's on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Everyone is very welcome – it is not just for those who attend to church.

In addition to our usual services in February our Patronal Festival for St Paul, which occurs at the end of January, will be celebrated on 4th February (10am) and in the evening we have a Contemporary Service at 6pm.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

St Peter's will be re-opening on a daily basis from Wednesday 7th February. I would like to give a huge thank you to the volunteers who open, clean and close the church for our visitors through the year. The donations visitors make are a vital part of the church's income.

Do you love flowers? Our beautiful church thrives on the vibrant touch of fresh flowers, and we're seeking volunteers to occasionally help us maintain that splendour and witness the joy and inspiration that floral contributions bring to our church family. We are looking for more people to join our flower rota, and gentlemen that includes you too! You can do a flower arrangement, put some flowers from your garden in a vase, a bunch of flowers from the shop or order a box of flowers pre-selected for arrangements from an online shop. Please contact Susie Braid, if you are able to join our team, on 01892 871453.

The monthly 8am Book of Common Prayer (BCP) service held on the second Sunday of the month is now Lay lead.

The next Parish Lunch will be on Thursday 8th February, 12.30 for 1pm lunch. Please don't drive or park on the grass at the hall during the wet winter months. We normally have around 24 people and serve soup, 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.

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

NOTE FROM GILL LAMBERT'S DAUGHTER, CATHERINE

Many people remember Gill Lambert and have been asking if we have news from her family. Gill was the most loyal and dedicated member of St Paul's Four Elms and was Churchwarden for several years. We remember her fondly and are delighted she is enjoying a comfortable and much earned retirement.

Catherine writes

Gill wanted me to send you all her love and best wishes for the festive season. Now in her 87th year but still looking much younger, mum has had a settled year and is happy at Bourne Wood Manor where she lives in a hotel-like room on the dementia floor with other residents. There is a great team of carers who know Gill and her sense of humour well. There is always plenty going on with exercise classes, music, quizzes and games. Mum enjoys sitting in the fresh air and sunshine, enjoying the birds and the flowers in the lovely gardens. Her family visit frequently and in November her daughter Joanna and her husband were over from America. Also her brother David and his wife visited from America. Mum still knows who they all are and loves hearing the family news.

gardening

The month of February is like Marmite – love it or hate it.

As a gardener and nature lover, personally I love it. It is the month when normally all tidying of leaf debris has been done and the garden is naked. All the structure is in its full glory, there to see. You notice the beautiful barks of stunning trees like Prunus Serrula Tibetica and the white barks of the Betulas and don't forget the beautiful catkins on Corylus avellana Contorta and Garry elliptica plus many others. Love it or loathe it, ivy in all its forms looks stunning and makes wonderful winter homes for bats, insects, and small mammals, and what a treat the berries are for many birds and insects.

You may be fooled into thinking February is a quiet month, but it is not. Wrap up and get out there. Cut down any grasses which you may have left for the birds to feed on the seed heads. Divide Snowdrops whilst in the green. Prune any winter flowering shrubs. Now is the time that I heavily prune my buddleias and start on my roses. If you have not done your fruit trees, this is the last month, but not plum trees, save that for mid-summer to avoid silver leaf. I also give them some fertiliser and wood fire ash as a boost for fruit production later. Late summer flowering Clematis can be cut back to 30cm. If you haven't already removed the leaves of Hellebores, do it now so you can see those shy beautiful blooms, and if you're lucky enough to grow Epimediums, cut all the leaves away in preparation for the most delicate flowers to come.

Take this naked time to walk round your garden and see if anything needs moving and, if the ground is not frozen, do it whilst the shrub or plant is dormant. Remember to have fleece ready to cover the flower buds of camelias and magnolias if a frost is expected, it's a shame to wait all year and then Jack comes and it's all over.

Remember to check greenhouses regularly for any plants with decaying leaves and do give small amounts of water, not to Cacti or Succulents though, wait until March and then only a drizzle. I start early seed sowing now of chilli, tomatoes, peppers, my sweet peas and some annuals. I also take any cuttings I can get from Salvias, Fuchsias and Pelargoniums.

The highlight for me this month is the return of my Kingfishers. I wait in anticipation that once again they will come and nest for their 10th year.

Lorraine Harrington
Blunts Brook



Benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
FOUR ELMS												
2021	134	46	30	6	56	79	45.0	54	41	121	21	78
2022	22	55	27	7	58	12	7.0	36	79	75	201	86
2023	60	9	105	83	27	27	41.0	23	39	152	122	109
HEVER												
2021	127	42	41.5	5	65.5	84	61.0	73	41	139	14.5	87.5
2022	16.5	44	22.5	2	62	19	15.0	39	85.5	58	195	80
2023	80	2	111	93.5	37	33.5	58.5	23.5	59	152	131	110
MARKBEECH												
2021	120	40	51	4	55.5	38.5	48.0	0	39	141	11.5	86
2022	21	80	23	12	55.5	21	3.0	0	82	76	226	114
2023	90	4	123	105	31	34	56.0	32	48	161	142	106

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

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Subscriptions cost £5 pa if delivered by a volunteer and £18 if sent by post.
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

February diary

31 Jan	**u3a talk on Tommy Cooper**, Crockham Hill Village Hall, 07741 460500 for details,	2pm
8 Feb	**Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall,	12.30 for 1pm
10 Feb	**Bulk refuse freighter**	tba
13 Feb	**Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
16 Feb	**Film - A Man Called Otto**, Hever Castle Golf Club,	7.30pm
25 Feb	**Astrophotography for Beginners**, Bore Place, tickets £10 adults,	5 – 7pm
28 Feb	**u3a talk "The World of Art Nouveau"**, Crockham Hill VH 07741 460500 for details,	2pm
5 Mar	**Hever Parish Council meeting**, Hever Village Hall	7.30pm
12 Mar	**Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
14 Mar	**Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall,	12.30 for 1pm
15 Mar	**Film - Legally Blonde**, Hever Castle Golf Club,	7.30pm
17 Mar	**Children's songwriting workshop**, Markbeech Village Hall, 07970 594601 for details,	10-11am
23 Mar	**Community Litter pick**	tba
24 Mar	**Children's songwriting workshop**, Markbeech VH, 07970 594601 for details,	10-11am
27 Mar	**u3a talk " Where do novelists get their ideas?"**, Crockham Hill VH, 07741 460500 for details,	2pm
14 Apr	**Dawn Chorus Bird Walk**, Bore Place, adult £10, child £7,	6 – 8am
18 Apr	**Bat Walk**, Bore Place, adult £10, child £7,	7.30 – 9pm
21 Apr	**Yoghurt Making Workshop**, Bore Place, adult £32,	10.30 am – 1pm
26 Apr	**Concert of Bach cello suites**, Orlando Jopling, St Peter's Hever	7.30pm
11 May	**Introduction to Beekeeping**, Bore Place, adult £63,	10am – 4pm
9 Jun	**Learn to make Kefir**, Bore Place, adult £32,	10.30am - 1pm