December 2024/January 2025

THE LINK







In this issue:

- **Gloria Hunniford in Hever**
- **Christmas loving cat**
- **Carols galore**
- **Yuletide recipe**
- **Elfin post**

...and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the December/January Link

- our February edition will arrive with you towards the end of January.

Why do the press never report good news? Well the BBC has bucked convention and is now producing a regular email called "The Upbeat" (theupbeat@bbc.co.uk) - it's full of good news stories and well worth subscribing to at this dark time of year. A piece of seasonal good news is that cork has become a sustainable product, in other words there is plenty of it being grown naturally. Therefore, rather than choosing bottles with aluminium screw tops which are expensive in energy to produce and recycle, we are advised to go for corks in our Christmas bottles, preferably with no foil wrapping which is just cosmetic. The only problem is that a recent survey found that young people do not know how to use corkscrews!

Many of you have been shaking your heads at the size and weight of the new green recycling bags which Sevenoaks has issued. Hopefully the new scheme will work out because recent research has confirmed that the environmental impact of recycling is far less than that of incineration, which does produce heat but also noxious gasses; it uses energy in the process and creates fewer jobs.

Congratulations to the Skipinnish oak in Lochaber (see below) in the Highlands which has won the Woodland Trust award for tree of the year. Ancient oaks live for up to 1,500 years and support 2,300 different species of wildlife one way or another. Congratulations also to Spain, Portugal and France for continuing their temporary ban on shooting small birds. The Turtle Dove has experienced a 90% decline in the last 30 years but now the population migrating back to Northern Europe from Africa along the "western flyway" has grown by 25%. Sadly the birds choosing the eastern route have not done so well.

The back cover diary is full of good things, so do take a look. Meanwhile we three editors wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Bridget, Ivan and Joanna
thelink@hever.org



Christmas at the Royal Hospital Chelsea



In December 2006, after working at the RHC for just short of 7 years, I retired from my position as Infirmary Administrator early, to look after my two eldest grandchildren, Ella and Dylan. To me, working at such a wonderful establishment could not have been better. The icing on the cake was being presented to our late Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, in June 2006.

There are three Christmas traditions held in The Great Hall. The first being the Ceremonial Stirring of the Christmas Pudding which was held on the first Monday in December. The Quartermaster prepared a very large wooden tub approx. 5' by 3' by 3' with a large paddle type spoon. The In-Pensioners and staff were invited to assist with the stirring and partake in glasses of champagne and wine, whilst listening to The Royal Hospital band and choir. The mixture, consisting 135 eggs, 27 pints of Guinness and many kilos of dried fruit, was cooked later in individual basins and given to each In-Pensioner. Finally at the end of the ceremony, everyone sang the famous song 'The Quartermaster's Store'.

The second occasion, the Cheese Ceremony held 2 days later was more formal, but no less festive. Around 150 cheeses were presented by the Dairy Council .This tradition goes back to 1959. A Chelsea Pensioner cut the ceremonial cheese with a sword whilst the Band and Trumpeters of the Scots Guards played. Champagne, canapes and soft drinks were served and in addition to this, each I/P was given a bottle of Fullers Ale.

The third pre-Christmas ceremony was the traditional presentation of the Australian Cake. Members of the High Commission and Australian Defence attended and very handsome they were too. The Irish Guards' band entertained before the ceremony and fanfares were sounded as guests and VIPs arrived. Then I/Ps, VIPs and staff all mingled together and witnessed the cutting of the cake, again by a Chelsea Pensioner with a large sword.

The above is how I remember these wonderful events taking place. However, it is 18 years since I retired and some small changes to the ceremonies may have occurred. I hope not.

Carol Bowern



Hever Parish Christmas post

We will deliver your cards to their destinations around the parish free of charge...simply pop them into the blue postbox at Brocas (opposite Brocas Road) and the post elves along with their dogs, horses and cycles will do the rest.

The box opens on 1st December and the last post leaves at 4pm on Monday 23rd.



Hever family Christmas Carols

Saturday 14th December

4.30pm at the Henry for mulled wine and mince pies

5.30pm at St Peter's Church for Christmas songs & carols

An audience with Gloria Hunniford

The adage "if you want something done ask a busy person" certainly applies to local broadcast legend Gloria Hunniford. She is a few seconds late speaking to me from her Sevenoaks home of 42 years, because she was putting out the rubbish en route for lunch with her son and then overnight in London to be ready for an early morning meeting. She is filming two series of Rip Off Britain in Manchester and is negotiating the re-release of her album "A taste of Hunni". Then she responds to all my questions like the consummate professional that she is.



Gloria was born in Portadown in Northern Ireland and started performing at the age of seven as part of her magician father's concert party (he was a newspaper man by day). She was determined to become a singer and as a tiny child she would stand on a stool at home singing loudly at the big Bakelite radio expecting that the BBC would hear and offer her work, as after all she could hear them! She had to wait until she was 29 for her first record to be released - and success then followed with three albums and a number of appearances on the Royal Variety Performance.

It is a measure of both her talent and her temperament that she then was given the job by the BBC to move into broadcasting, presenting "Good Evening Ulster" for a number of years, out on the streets during the troubles interviewing people "amongst the bombs, bullets and barricades" as she puts it. Meanwhile she made sure that her three children with her first husband Don Keating were thriving. Having three fine children has been, she says without hesitation, her greatest joy and she counts herself lucky that she was able to have a career as well, something that was denied to her mother's generation.

After her move to England, unable as she was to resist a new challenge, her career blossomed yet further, indeed there is hardly a show which she has not featured in. For example, she became the first woman presenter on Radio Two in 1982 and she also presented Pebble Mill; she has been a guest on masses of shows including



Blankety Blank, Call My Bluff, Strictly Come Dancing and is a regular panellist on Loose Women to name a few. She strongly believes in the value of her work, particularly presenting Rip Off Britain, now in its 17th year, as she can use her skills to protect ordinary people from being, well, ripped off. She has also written an autobiography and been interviewed countless times, Desert Island Discs being a high point as far as I'm concerned, but wears both her fame and her achievements as a female pioneer lightly. My goodness, she may be in her 80s but she is not slowing down, indeed, after the death of her much-loved husband Stephen earlier this year she finds work a great comfort.

And comfort is what Hever has given her over the years. When she moved to Sevenoaks, she found Hever, fell in love with the church and it became her spiritual home. It and the castle have played a very important part in her life ever since, birthdays and weddings have been celebrated there and, sadly, there have also been funerals. Gloria's beloved daughter Caron Keating is buried in the churchyard. She died in 2004 aged only 41 and having fought breast cancer for seven years. The grave is beautifully kept and Caron is always in Gloria's thoughts, especially at Christmas. She tells of how hard it was facing the first Christmas without her, and how her great friend of 50 years Cliff Richard (who boasts about being four months younger than she) looked her straight in the eye and said that she must go bigger and better for the sake of Caron and her grandsons - so she did. She had six Christmas trees, Santa Clauses as big as could be found, many lights, the works and the family carried on with its tradition of having a huge Ulster breakfast, the biggest fry up you can imagine, and then eating Christmas lunch when they had recovered at about 4 pm. Sadly, Gloria will once more have to go bigger and better again this year for Stephen.



Gloria received an OBE from the Queen in 2017 for services to cancer charities, particularly her Caron Keating Foundation which gives grants to cancer charities of all size and focus. Closer to home, she is a patron of the Stag Theatre and a great supporter of Hever Church. In Caron's memory she paid for the interior of the church to be repainted last year and for the repair and revamp of the porch. She comes to services when she can and was recently at the All Souls services in Four Elms.

By the time our conversation ended, I was toe-curlingly aware that Gloria was far and away the better interviewer but she was unfailingly polite. As we finished she asked how many words I was writing and I replied 800. "Well I think you have what you need" she said, and she was right.

Joanna Wade

desert island whisks

Coming from a household where my mother was an excellent cook and an even better baker, I grew up in a kitchen full of weird and wonderful cooking utensils. During the early 1990s I followed Delia Smith on her tv programmes and one Christmas, she demonstrated making mincepies using a lattice cutter. Often when she used unusual ingredients or new utensils, they would immediately sell out in the stores. I was totally captivated about how such a small piece of plastic would make a dish look so professional, so tracked down and bought a lattice cutter, and this is what I use every Christmas to make a mincemeat tart.

This is the recipe I use, although it can be adapted to suit whatever is available at different times of the year.

Mincemeat Tart
275g plain flour
60g lard
60g butter
Pinch of salt
Large jar of mincemeat (500g+)
2 satsumas, peeled
Handful of chopped nuts - I like hazelnuts

Milk to glaze
Icing sugar to dust

Make pastry - sift flour & salt and rub in fats until mixture is well crumbed. Add enough water to mix to a stiff dough. Wrap in baking parchment and rest in fridge of 30 mins. Roll out 2/3rds of pastry to line a 23cm loose bottomed tin or a pie dish. Fill case with mincemeat, top with segments of satsuma and scatter over chopped nuts. Roll out remaining pastry into an oblong then using lattice cutter, cut firmly along the oblong. Only go in one direction once - if not sufficiently cut through, ball up pastry and start again. Ease out the lattice gently and lay over tart case, pressing the edges gently to seal. Brush with milt. Bake at 200 degrees C (180 degrees fan) or Gas mark 6 for 25-30 mins until golden and bubbling. Dust with icing sugar before serving with cream or custard.

Sue Hart



village screen film club 2025



The film season continues at the usual venue, Hever Castle Golf Club on
Friday 17 January - Rye Lane
A critically acclaimed film from 2023 described as "a primary-coloured romance bursting with wit, grit and charm". It is set in Peckham in south London and has been referred to as south London's response to "Notting Hill".

The film, which is an hour and a half long, starts 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 £16 to include the meal - scampi and chips or baked potato with beans and/or cheese, both with salad. You can book with Joanna Wade on 07958 919631 or heverbrocas@gmail.com or buy tickets at the door. However, please pre-book your meal by the Wednesday before the show if you would like to eat.

hever fair report



Another wonderfully festive Christmas Fair took place in the beautiful Guthrie Pavilion at Hever Castle last week. We welcomed many new stall holders this year and as ever the talent and craft on show was exceptional. Shoppers were treated to a performance of Carols by Year 5 and 6 choir members from Hever Primary School which really was the perfect addition to the day! As ever all money raised is split between our wonderful Church and School so thank you to all our local cake makers and shoppers and to all the volunteers who made the day possible. A final big thanks, as always, to Hever Castle for allowing us the use of the perfect venue for such an event.

Megan Park, Chair of the Fair Committee

pet of the month



Hi I'm Freddie and this is my story of how I came from the tip to the top.

My brother Fernando and I were rescued as kittens from the council tip in poor condition and nursed back to health by a lovely foster carer from the Cats Protection. At 6 months old we moved to our forever home in Hever with our new family Kerry and Owen. Very sadly my brother disappeared a year later. We miss him desperately and hope he is out there somewhere having amazing adventures.

Eleven years on and my days are fairly routine. Wake mum up around 5am for my early morning cuddles. At breakfast I make an attempt to lick the foam on mum's coffee or the Marmite on dad's toast if they are not looking, before eating my own breakfast and treats. Followed by a morning stroll to manage my territory and do a bit of bird watching. Then back to sleep for the best part of the day.

I love the summer months when I enjoy sunbathing in the garden, checking out the plants and chasing bugs. In the evenings I sit on the upstairs window ledge and check in on the comings and goings in the street, receiving an occasional wave from walkers or riders passing by. Hever is my haven. I'm a little nervous and so I love the peace and quiet of being in the countryside. I even get to spot the occasional deer when out for a stroll in the fields. Sheep are my neighbours but I tend to keep a safe distance from the local dogs. Now with winter approaching it's more about lazy evenings stretched out in front of the open fire. Which I will request by sitting in front of the hearth until the humans make it work. And at this seasonal time of year my favourite pastime is climbing the Christmas tree and helping to wrap presents, which mum doesn't seem to appreciate, but I think is great.



So as you can see, from a council tip to my life today I am a happy cat. Endless treats and a nice home in lovely Hever, I really have a landed on my paws in life. Happy Christmas everyone.

Freddie
as told to Kerry and Owen Slatter

BORE PLACE

What's on at Bore Place?

Workshops, walks and talks to connect with food, farming and nature at our beautiful 500-acre estate in the Kent countryside

20% discount until 15 Dec

Celebrating the launch of new cooking and creative courses!

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Introduction to Beekeeping



Sat 10 May 2025

Get to grips with the basics of beekeeping with this one day beginners course

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Sun 02 March 2025

Learn to make artisanal rag rugs using scrap fabric with textile artist Mary Whitaker



Cooking at Bore Place



20% discount until 15 Dec

Fermentation Fundamentals
Sun 26 Jan 2025

Fresh Pasta without a machine
Sat 8 Feb 2025



Astronomy at Bore Place

with the Edenbridge and District Astronomers!

Mars talk
Thurs 16 Jan 2025

How to use your Telescope
Thurs 30 Jan 2025

Constellation Walk
Thurs 13 March 2025





www.boreplace.org

Commonwork Trust is a registered charity, no. 1160725
Bore Place, Chiddingstone, Kent TN8 7AR

CHRISTMAS MADE SPECTACULAR with The FESTIVAL THEATRE at HEVER CASTLE















Frank Sinatra · Jersey Boys · Tom Jones

THEATRE - DINNER IN THE GUTHRIE RESTAURANT - TWILIGHT LIGHTS TRAIL

28 Nov – 6 Dec

www.heverfestival.co.uk 07379 488 477

For this edition, I wanted to share more of our Curriculum to Inspire with you as this is something we are incredibly proud of, and passionate about. Below is a summary of our curriculum values, but if you would like to know more about our curriculum and what Four Elms has to offer, please contact: secretary@inspiream.org.uk.

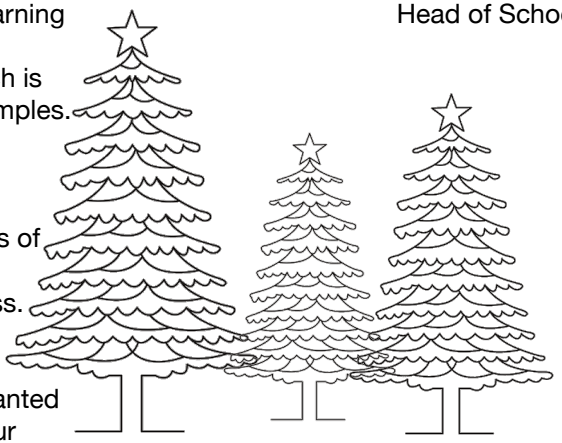


As well as our school values, we also have curriculum values as seen in the image above. These values are linked as we believe they are interdependent and that children make the best progress when taught together. Within our learning experiences, the children strive to achieve 'academic excellence' which is supported by the use of expert examples. To support the development of our character curriculum, we apply our school values and ensure these are taught and promoted within all areas of school life. Strength of character is vital for promoting excellent progress. So far this year, we have been focusing on the values of respect and aspiration. We can't take for granted that pupils know how to learn, so our value of 'learning to learn' aims to teach children those critical thinking skills which will support independence and higher order thinking skills. We appreciate that every child is different, so our value of personalisation helps teachers and learners to consider what each child needs. We support our children in understanding themselves and the way they learn best, and teach them how to use the classroom environment to support them. As a Trust, we focus on the development of the whole child and we aim to prepare children for life outside of the classroom.

We are looking forward to the festivities ahead which will include: a whole – school pantomime trip (which the PTA funds), Christingle service, EYFS and Key Stage 1 Nativity and a Trust wide carol concert. We are also looking forward to Christmas Dinner day where we will be dressed up in our favourite festive jumpers.

We hope you enjoy the festive season!

Jess Fermor
Head of School



news from hever primary

On Monday 21st October we got 'The Call', which we had been waiting for with a mixture of apprehension and anticipation; apprehension because an Ofsted inspection is an important way in which schools are held to account and anticipation because it was the opportunity we had been waiting for to demonstrate the impact of all the work we have done over the last 18 months or so.

Hopefully, by the time you read this our Ofsted inspection report will have been published and we will be able to share their findings. In the meantime, I would like to thank the staff and governors for their commitment and support in the process. It will come as no surprise to hear that our children were great ambassadors for our school and we were overwhelmed by the support from our parent community. The level of positivity from parents, with 100% saying that their child feels happy and safe at Hever Primary and 99% saying that their child does well and that they would recommend the school to another parent, was highlighted as exceptional in the verbal feedback during the inspection.

If you attended the Edenbridge Remembrance parade you may have spotted our head boy and head girl who represented our school and laid a wreath. We also held our own Remembrance Service, led by our Year 6 pupils at St Peter's Church. Choosing respect, the focus of this year's anti-bullying week, has been a strong theme running across the term with Odd Socks Day reminding us to celebrate diversity and our own uniqueness, and our Children in Need fundraising reminding us of the importance of reaching out and helping others. In other news, we welcomed Councillor Laurence Ball and Councillor Chrissy Hudson along with George de Moraville, a supporter of our school, to judge our annual Poetry Recital Competition in St. Peter's Church. Despite all the changes to communication that technology has brought, being able to speak clearly in front of an audience remains a key skill and we were very proud of all our key stage two children who worked hard to learn and perform a poem.

Finally, a reminder that if you are looking for a school place for your little one for September 2025, please contact the school office (01732 862304 or email office@hever.kent.sch.uk) to arrange a tour or to join our final Open Morning on Wednesday 11th December at 9.15am. We would love to show you all our school has to offer.



Helene Bligh
Headteacher



business directory

to add your company email the Editors.
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Building & Design Services

Andy Sayers Electrical Services	maintenance and repairs	07836 256 146
Albourne roofing	slating, tiling, flat roofing, repairs	01892 836777
APH Electrical & Property Maintenance		07816 291713
Beauproperty	house design and building	01892 249000
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
Michael Beall	bespoke carpentry and joinery	07796 175140
Richard A Maslen	Fine furniture and bespoke joinery	07930 341415
W Smithers & Sons	listed building, conversions, extensions,	01342 850 559

Dog Training

Claire Cook, Positive Reinforcement Dog Trainer in Edenbridge		07818 070672

Education

Chiddingstone Nursery School	for children 2-5 years	01892 871315

Fitness

Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 700771
Falconhurst Cricket Club	cricket and training sessions	07771 892762
Smart Nutrition and Fitness	personal training for midlife women & beyond	0771 8588847
Tennis by Nature	kids tennis coaching by Gary Markham	07802 842554

Food - Catering and Restaurants

Gorard Dean Catering -	all events undertaken call Melanie Dean	07710 005 635
Greyhound at Hever,	Restaurant with rooms, open to non-residents	01732 862221

Funeral Services and Burial Grounds

Alex Jones funeral directors & monumental masons		01732 860047
Eden Valley Woodland Burial Ground on the Kent/Surrey border		07802 630012

Garage Services

Stuart Rieman luxury passenger car servicing & repairs		01883 715037

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
MCF Garden Maintenance	local, reliable, catering for all garden needs	079307 29059
R. Bennett	hedges, fencing, grass cutting	01732 862971
SA Landscaping	landscaping, garden maintenance, fencing, driveways and more	01732 671146
Thompson Tree Care Ltd,	tree surgery, tree felling, hedge cutting	07747345815

Health

BDHL private & group health insurance and corporate wellbeing		01892 891900
Paul Marro	cognitive hypnotherapy www.htherapy.co.uk	01732 808211

Home Services

Daren Wood	chimney sweep, pots and cowls fitted	01959 564263
Pegrum	fuels, boilers, plumbing, solar panels, water/oil tanks	01732 463256
Stuff and Buttons, traditional and modern upholstery services		07791 689346
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

Restaurants

Greyhound at Hever restaurant with rooms, open to non-residents	01732 862221

Taxis

Relyon Cars	local taxi company	01732 863 800

Venue Hire and Weddings

Falconhurst Weddings	01342 850526
Markbeech Village Hall	01342 850328



Hever Parish Council

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

Warm Spaces are safe and friendly public places where people of all ages can go to comfortably spend time reading, studying, chatting with others, and meeting new people in their community. To find a local space near you please visit the www.sevenoaks.gov.uk website and search for 'Warm Spaces.'

In line with this, we are in the process of arranging regular monthly socials during the daytime for anyone to drop in, enjoy a warm drink and chat with other local people. Details are to follow so please watch out on the website, social media and notice boards. If you would like to volunteer to help run these sessions, please let me know.

An information leaflet with lots of suggestions for help and support for all residents has been put together by Sevenoaks District Council. It contains useful links to access help on subjects such as help for families, household bills, budgeting, reducing food costs, staying healthy and well, and support with travel costs. The leaflet can be found here: Here for You leaflet

Hever Parish Council would like to extend a massive thank you to Willerbys Landscapes for providing and installing the Four Elms Christmas tree. We hope you will all have a chance to enjoy it and the other festive lights that are appearing around the parish.

Do you receive the updates via email from us? If you don't and would like to sign up to be informed of local news and events then please do so via the website or this link: sign up link for HPC emails . Meeting dates for 2025 will be shortly published on the website. The next one is Tuesday 14th January 2025 in Markbeech Village Hall with Planning at 7.00 pm and full Council at 7.30 pm.

On behalf of Hever Parish Council I would like to wish you all a peaceful festive season.

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



our rector's thoughts



It's Christmas again and already Christmas songs are in the shops. One well known Christmas Number 1 in 1976 was Johnny Mathis' 'When a child is born'. The lyrics seem to focus entirely on the birth of a child and end with the words: '*It's all a dream, an illusion now…*' Doubtless we'll see many Nativity plays and sing carols about Jesus' birth. But what do we think? Is it true? Did it happen? Or is it just a vague hope that things might get better; as in Mathis' song: *'Hate to love, war to peace … and suffering will be words to be forgotten'.*

We will read again the nativity story in our carol services. But we'll also read the start of St.John's gospel, which is very different: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1). The passage makes clear that *'the Word made flesh'* is Jesus. *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God* (John 1:11 & 12). This brings us to another kind of birth, which is being 'born again'. Nowadays this term has acquired other connotations that may suggest religious fundamentalism. But the words feature in the baptism service and Jesus uses them later in John's gospel in discussion with another Rabbi. Furthermore, becoming *children of God* does suggest a rebirth – being 'born again'.

The true message of Christmas is that, in Jesus, God broke through into the world and became Emmanuel, which means 'God with us'. If we are ready to receive him, then he can cause a transformation within us that is so radical, it is like being 'born again'. It happened to me as a teenager in the 1970s as it has to millions across the world. Looking at the world as we go into 2025, it can seem like a dark place. In the mid 19th Century an American pastor, Phillips Brooks, depressed at the ravages of the American Civil war, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He travelled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem where he had a spiritual experience that led him to write 'O little town of Bethlehem'. Maybe we could make its words our prayer this Christmas:

O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us to-day. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell; Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

May I wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Simon

Church in December

We have our normal full programme of Christmas services this year and we are sending this round in a Christmas card. Readings and full details are also at https://threespires.wordpress.com/diary/

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
1st Dec 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Advent Sunday
1st Dec 6pm	Contemporary service at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Advent Sunday
8th Dec 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	2nd in Advent
8th Dec 3pm	Forest Church at St.Peter's Hever	2nd in Advent
14th Dec 6pm	Community Carol service at St.Peter's Hever	
15th Dec 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	3rd in Advent
15th Dec 5.30pm	Carols at the Kentish Horse	
17th Dec 6.30pm	Carols at the Four Elms Inn	
20th Dec 6.30pm	Nine lessons & carols at St.Peter's Hever followed by supper	
22nd Dec 10am	Said Communion St Peter's Hever	4th in Advent
22nd Dec 3pm	Carol service at St.Paul's Four Elms	4th in Advent
22nd Dec 6pm	Carol service at Holy Trinity Markbeech	4th in Advent
24th Dec 4pm	Crib Service at St.Peter's Hever	Christmas Eve
24th Dec 11.30pm	Midnight communion at St.Peter's Hever	Christmas Eve
25th Dec 9.15am	Christmas Family Eucharist at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Christmas Day
25th Dec 11am	Christmas Family Communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	Christmas Day
29th Dec 8am	Said Communion St Peter's Hever	Christmas 1



For details of any of these services, our small groups and Zoom Evening Prayer please contact Simon. Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone.



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beneficeemail@gmail.com

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Christina Hodson
01732 700247
Richard Bennett
01732 862971

Hever
Mandy Yarnold
01342 850028

Markbeech
Lynnie Rowan
07881 482154

Church in January

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
5th Jan 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Christmas 2
12th Jan 8am	Morning Prayer St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 1
12th Jan 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	Epiphany 1
12th Jan 3pm	Forest Church at St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 1
19th Jan 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 2
23rd Jan 6pm	Choral Evensong at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
26th Jan 8am	Said communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Epiphany 3
26th Jan 10am	Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech	Epiphany 3

Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 christmas card competition



Max from Hever Primary







Barnaby from Chiddingstone Primary

news from the pews

Four Elms

Once the clocks "fall back" there is no denying that winter is fast approaching. The deciduous trees lose their leaves exposing the chilly landscape. December is a busy month and as we approach Advent we look forward to the joys of the Christmas. Well some of us do, but for those who are homeless and without loving friends and families, Christmas is not as it seems on the television advertisements. It can be a bleak time of the year. Poverty, whether financial or poverty of families, neighbours and friends is particularly grim at this time of the year. The Charles Dickens novel, A Christmas Carol, emphasises the stark reality of poverty. However, for Mr Scrooge there is redemption and the realisation that we live in communities where life is infinitely better if we help one another.

So back to village life in our small community. When you read this we will have had a concert in the Church, celebrating our church and village. What a pleasure to have our St Paul's hosting a concert. On December 10th the Four Elms Primary school will be entertaining the "enjoy a cuppa" morning with carols and songs. Do please come along and enjoy the young voices and chat with friends and neighbours. The Benefice has a full Christmas programme, with services and carols to suit everyone. This is available in the Link and on our Benefice Christmas Card.

Finally, lets all try to be like Mr Scrooge at the end of the novel and give warm



greetings to all our neighbours and echo Tiny Tim's words, "God bless us, everyone".

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

A big thank you to all of the volunteers who help ensure the church runs smoothly. We will have a variety of different Christmas services and celebrations across the Benefice, The details can be found in The Link, on the website and in the Benefice Christmas card.

The nine lessons and carols will be followed by a carol supper in Hever village hall. Tickets for the 2 course meal with tea or coffee will cost £12.00 per head. Please book your tickets and advise of us of any dietary requirements in advance by calling me on 01342 850028.

St Peter's Church will be closed to daily visitors from January 6th until February 8th. Access to the church can be arranged, if required, by contacting me.

The Parish Lunch will be on held Thursday 12th December and then Thursday 9th January, 12.30 for 1pm

lunch, £5 per person. Please don't park on the new track but drop off and then move your car to the parking area. We normally have around 20 people and serve soup, bread, cheese, fruit and a delicious home-made cake for just £5. Everyone in the Benefice is very welcome, please let us know that you are coming or have any special dietary requirements.

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

Since writing last month, there has been a special day at Eastbourne learning about the Cook Islands and their preparation for the World Day of Prayer on the 7th March 2025 (now at 6pm not 7pm as previously stated) in Markbeech. The Cook Islands have prepared an attractive, thoughtful service so please put it in your diaries! The clocks have gone back but this was cheered by a glorious Evensong at Four Elms, beautiful music and the usual warm welcome from all at Four Elms.

Hever Church hosted a lovely Remembrance Service, we were summoned by bells, and it did not rain as we stood outside, all of us with our own thoughts and prayers as the last post was sounded. There was also a poignant short Service of Remembrance in Markbeech on the 11th November, plus the laying of the wreath.

Now we are looking forward to Christmas beginning with a family Service of Christingle on the 24th November and a Contemporary Service at 6pm on the 1st December. There is a long list of Services, lots of opportunities to sing Carols and rejoice with family and friends, so please look carefully in this wonderful magazine.

It just leaves me to wish you a very Happy Christmas and, as the leaves fall from the trees, may 2025 bring you health and happiness too.

Janey Cooper
PCC secretary



Hever Castle prepares for Christmas

From the register:
Baptisms:
20 October Hever Florence Elizabeth Smith

Funerals:
20 October Markbeech Interment of ashes Elspeth Sweeting
22 October Hever Interment of ashes Dr Andrew Russell

gardening



It is difficult to believe we are only weeks away from Christmas – where has 2024 gone?! Christmas is a great time to reflect on the gardening year, the successes and the not so good. It certainly hasn't been a vintage year weather-wise for the gardener. We had our own challenges at the nursery. Our new state-of-the-art polytunnel was delayed considerably due to waterlogged ground. Sales were still buoyant to our garden designer customers – we did wonder how on earth they could get a plant in the ground?!

Our biggest problem was growing for the Chelsea Flower Show. The relentless dull and wet spring held plants back with colour at a premium. However, the results our team achieved were fantastic, with a Gold & two Silver-Gilt medals, including People's Choice for the three gardens we grew for. We grew for one garden at Hampton Court and similar problems ensued with the weather even in the height of summer. Silver-Gilt medal and People's Choice was a fantastic achievement!

A great move by the RHS means that all show gardens at RHS events must be sustainable, or the garden designer will lose marks in the judging. In the past landscaping materials & even plants would end up in skips! We're delighted now to see all the gardens we grew for relocated to charitable new homes. 'The Lion King' garden plants designed by Juliet Sargeant, were all relocated to The Hospice in the Weald in Pembury. A brilliant local charity that does amazing work. In June we were reminded that Covid hasn't gone away – of our 25 strong workforce, we had 13 off at the same time in one week at the height of our sales season. More disappointment followed when we had to cancel the Hever Hort visit – we'll look at rearranging for next year!

As you are reading these pages, you are probably getting geared up for Christmas. We are excited to announce we have our annual Christmas Pop-up shop from Monday 9th – Thursday 19th December, including the weekend of the 14th & 15th 9am-4pm daily. Planted baskets, Hellebores, Snowdrops, seasonal shrubs, potted bulbs and local crafts will help with those tricky to buy for gardeners! If you find yourself bored over Christmas with another repeat of 'E.T.' or 'The Great Escape' head to our website to take part in our Christmas Quiz – pour yourself a favourite tipple, get cosy in the armchair and tackle our 100 horticultural questions to get the brainmatter working!

All that's left to say is Merry Christmas and here's to a fantastic 2025 gardening year.

Simon Sutcliffe
How Green Nursery

Benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
FOUR ELMS												
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
2024	58	122	94	61	49	27	64.0	28	165	86		
HEVER												
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
2024	73	136	81.5	57.5	48.5	25	73.5	31.5	183	82.5		
MARKBEECH												
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
2024	80	139	95	71	61	29	62.0	44	186	77		

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

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The views expressed in the articles in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editorial team. There is no implied approval or recommendation for any service or event advertised in the magazine.

Copy for the **December/January** edition should reach us no later than **15 January** 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

December/January diary

Until Dec 21st **Exhibition of Edenbridge crested china,** Eden Valley Museum, Edenbridge
Until Spring 2025 **Exhibition The Story of Bough Beech reservoir**,
Eden Valley Museum, Edenbridge
2nd & 4th Wed each month **Bore Place 'Wilder Wellbeing'** nature sessions for adults
– free, book online www.boreplace.org/whats-on

22 Nov **Film Club, Inherit the Wind,** Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm
23 Nov **Markbeech Winter Fair**, Falconhurst Barn,	10-3pm
23 Nov **Trees, breeze and Liberty's**, St Paul's Four Elms	7pm
24 Nov **Rustic Christmas Wreath Making**, Bore Place adults £60	10am – 1pm
28 Nov **Sinatra at Christmas**, Hever Festival Theatre, Hever Castle	12pm and 7pm
1 Dec **Christmas Wreath Making Workshop**, Falconhurst, £75	11 – 12.30 or 1.30 – 3pm
5 Dec **The West End Jerseys at Christmas**, Hever Festival Theatre, Hever Castle	7pm
6 Dec **Simon Howard is Tom Jones**, Hever Festival Theatre, Hever Castle	7pm
7 Dec **Carols in the Cowshed**, Bore Place, adults £5.50 children £3.50	3-5pm
8 Dec **Bird ringing demonstrations at Bough Beech nature reserve**, tickets free pre booked only from Bore Place	10am-12 noon
10 Dec **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
12 Dec **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
14 Dec **Hever Village Carols** in the Henry from 4.30, carols in St Peter's Hever	5.30pm
14 Dec **Penshurst Choral Soc Christmas Carol Concert**, Penshurst Church, tickets online	6.30pm
15 Dec **Carols at the Kentish Horse**, Markbeech	5.30pm
17 Dec **Carols at the Four Elms Inn,** Four Elms	6.30pm
20 Dec **Nine Lessons and Carols**, St Peter's Hever, followed by carol supper	7pm
22 Dec **Four Elms Christmas Carols** at St Paul's Four Elms	10am
9 Jan **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
14 Jan **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
14 Jan **Hever Parish Council**, Markbeech Village Hall Planning 7pm, full council	7.30pm
16 Jan **Astronomy - Marvellous Mars**, Bore Place tickets £10	6.30 - 8pm
17 Jan **Film Club, Rye Lane**, Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm
25 Jan **Apple Pruning course**, Bore Place, contact www.underwoodsman.co.uk tickets £100	9.30-4pm
26 Jan **Fermentation Fundamentals**, Bore Place, tickets £48	10am-2pm
30 Jan **Telescope Workshop for Beginners**, Bore Place, tickets £10 adult, £7 child	6.30-8pm
8 Feb **Fresh Pasta without a Machine**, Bore Place £48 inc lunch	10am-2pm
21 Feb **Film Club, The Holdovers**, Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm