February 2025

THE LINK







In this issue:

- all good at Hever Primary
- tributes to four loved locals
- bouncy bunnies
- tractor fest
- all change at Hever Hort

...and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the February Link

We hope you had a good festive season, all of it seems a long time ago now as we wait with bated breath for the days to feel longer.

You may have seen that Sevenoaks DC is asking us to complete a survey to help them decide on the future of their waste services. You need to complete it online by 3 February: sevenoaks.Gov.uk/bigwaste or telephone 01732 227000. They will be starting glass and food waste collections in 2026 and are worried that their recycling rates are only 35%, the national target being 65% by 2035. It is fiddly to do, but recycling flexible plastic in Waitrose makes a huge dent in your black sack rubbish.

The parish Christmas post was popular again this year. My experience as temporary village postmistress was a mixture of Under Milk Wood and Lark Rise to Candleford. When one recipient household coincidentally on the phone to the next forewarned "That will be Joanna" as I went up the drive, I was the postie in Llareggub though I can assure you that unlike him I didn't steam open the mail:

"Willy Nilly: Here's a letter for you Mrs Ogmore-Pritchard all the way from Builth Wells. A gentleman wants to study birds and can he have accommodation for two weeks?

Mrs O-P: No.
Willy Nilly: You wouldn't know he was in the house Mrs Ogmore-Pritchard. He'd be out in the mornings at the bang of dawn with his bag of breadcrumbs and his little telescope.
Mrs O-P: And come home at all hours covered with feathers. I don't want persons in my nice clean rooms breathing all over the chairs.
Willy Nilly: Cross my heart, he won't breathe."

Some say that in my little red car I'm more like Postman Pat but any vehicular fame I might claim was mightily overshadowed by the great charity tractor run on 30 December - 109 tractors paraded round the area flashing lights and sounding horns and raising £5,800 for British Heart Foundation and Macmillan.

Joanna Wade
thelink@hever.org



Jacob Tisdall on his family's splendid tractor

what I do



'Wheeler's Wagon' – that's the name I settled on. An homage to my amazing husband and a nod to the old ways of farming. And so my 'theme' was born - Wild West-esque rustic and fun with simple home-cooked food. From soup, breakfast baps / baguettes, full English's, burgers, loaded fries and panini, to barista blend coffees, thick milkshakes, homemade cakes and in summer- soft serve ice cream with toppings galore!

The dream started when I was an excited GCSE student circa 1998 - when I submitted my design for a café. I was living on our family farm - worked by generations of Leppards since 1913. My childhood was spent helping my Nana with the 'Bully Boys' (our beef herd), jumping on the hay bales in the dutch barns playing Pat Sharp's 'Fun House!' (only when Nana's back was turned!) and building dens- idyllic Darling Buds of May bliss! The farm was a busy, vibrant hub of the community- with workshops fixing customers' garden machinery, tractors and combines working the land, and a little shop stocked with a plethora of bits and bobs for a generation that could mend and make do.

Since reaching adulthood myself, getting married and having my 3 kids - so much has happened. We have had to diversify somewhat - with my sister and I opening a campsite - Hever Camping - and welcoming holidaymakers from all over the world.

Last year my husband and I decided now was the time to realise the dream the 16 year old me sketched in my GCSE book. Why not? There is an abundance of people enjoying our beautiful corner of the country - from horse riders, walkers, cyclists, tradespeople, families and campers all possibly wanting to be fed and watered. We cordoned off an area of the farmyard and completely re-fitted an old catering trailer. It was an apt challenge for my handy husband, and I will forever be grateful to him and all our friends and family that pitched in.

We finally opened our doors last month, and it has been a pleasure to meet all our new customers. After 20 odd years cooking, baking and creating for other local eateries - I am finally doing it for myself. When I unlock the doors each morning (Weds- Sunday!) I take a little breath and smile with gratitude - it's finally here. Albeit slightly cheesy (like my loaded fries!) – never give up on your childhood dreams, coz with a bit of hard work, perseverance and luck, they may just come true.

Sarah Wheeler
Wilderness Farm, Markbeech TN8 7LP
wheelerswagon.co.uk

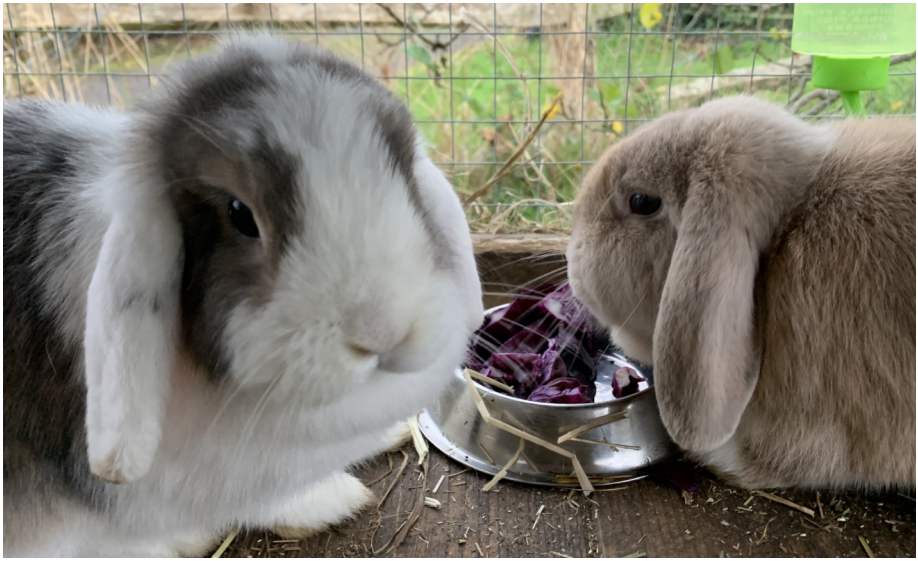
pets of the month

Meet Socks and Pompom, my sister's and my Mini Lop bunnies. The bunnies are sisters too. Socks has her name because her front paws are white and it looks like she's wearing socks. Pompom was named because she was really fluffy when she was little. We took home our bunnies on Good Friday last year - they were our 'easter bunnies'. When they were kits (babies) they were both very cuddly and shy. Also mischievous - they would run around our house and nibble things and hide. Socks has grown to be the bigger of the two, she is more outgoing.

Mini Lop bunnies are small, while their ears are big and floppy, which we think makes them extra adorable. They have a nice, calm, friendly nature. Ours live in a large hutch that we designed and which my dad built using our old wooden climbing frame. Their home has three levels: the floor is their play area, where they have some toys and space. The middle level is where they eat and also enjoy sun baking in summer! The top level is a small, cosy 'bedroom', filled with straw and a heat pad, like a bunny 'hot water bottle'.

Socks and Pompom love to eat - they have fresh leaves and herbs from our garden in summer. They also like treats - cucumber slices are a fave - and they love to snuggle. I am trying to train the bunnies with treats. The first trick is to get them to stand up on their back legs. Socks and Pompom are cheeky, smart and very curious about everything. We love having our bunnies because it feels nice having pets to love and look after.

By Violet Thirkell (7 years old)



Margaret Bates - a tribute



Margaret Bates brandishing a knife was a rare if not unique sight as when not helpfully identifying her Desert Island Whisk (hever.org/link March 2023 edition) she was an exceptionally kind and gentle mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend.

At her funeral in December two of her children gave lovely eulogies. Here are some excerpts from Martin's and then Helen's.

"Mum, Margaret Dorthy Orchard, was born in 1927 close to Bletchley Park of the codebreakers fame (see the Link article on Margaret's childhood, October 2023). She qualified as a nurse and started at the Radcliffe Eye Hospital in Oxford. Here she met Denis, an undergraduate, on a blind date set up by Peter Titchmarsh, the same Peter who lived with Mum at Four Elms for the past 12 years.

They married in 1952, and Dad worked for the pharmaceutical company Borroughs Wellcome until his retirement aged 55. They were posted to Germany, New Zealand and Dublin and when Mum baulked at Venezuela they returned to the UK and settled in Blackmoor Lodge, Four Elms in 1977. Here, Mum became a practice nurse at the Penshurst Surgery (until 1993). After 10 years they planned to move into The Cottage across the yard, but when Dad died aged 58 Mum moved alone, living there for 37 years."

"She was always busy and involved with the community. I remember in Dublin when I was a child, Mum would cook a large turkey, bake a ham and a Christmas cake, we would wrap presents and take them to a family in the tenements, with me feeling awkward but it was just what she did with genuine kindness. Anyone alone at Christmas was welcome to join us and Les who lived in Four Elms came for many years and always brought an orchid….

She loved her garden. There were no airs and graces about her gardening, she just got on with it, resulting in a naturally beautiful garden where she would spend hours. I have been picking raspberries since I can remember and even last summer Mum and I had raspberries for our supper from her canes. She even won a prize for them last year at the Hever Hort show which she supported for many years. Her marmalade was a strong contender, hard to beat! She ran the plant stall at the Four Elms Fete for many years until she retired to the job of selling raffle tickets with the help of Peter."

Margaret leaves a big hole to fill....

Joanna Wade

Richard Bennett - a tribute

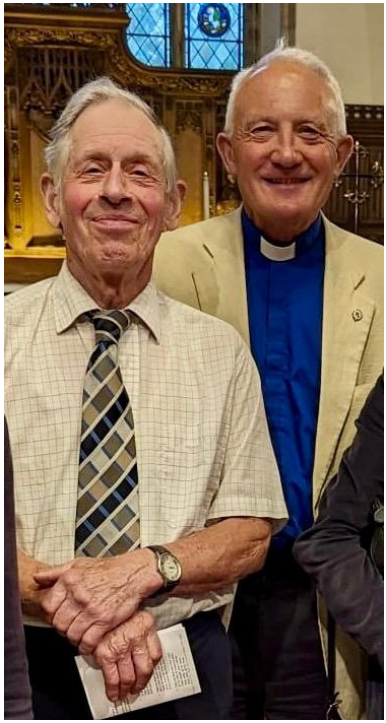
You'd have to go a very long way to even hope to find someone as consistently friendly and cheerful as Richard Bennett who, very sadly, died on 18th December. He was full steam ahead right up to his unexpected death, having attended to the cricket ground gates and served as churchwarden at Margaret Bates' funeral the day before. Although in his late 70s he was still tremendously active in his work, fixing fences and returfing damaged verges and generally buzzing round the villages in his bright red van waving and smiling broadly at all those he encountered.

Happily the Link carried an appreciation of Richard back in April 2023 (available on the Link tab of the Hever.org website) so he too could see the extent of our admiration. Born and bred in Four Elms he knew as much about this area as anyone. He started life at White Post Cottage on the corner of Mapleton Road and spent his free time, when growing up, at nearby Oak House Farm where he and brother David loved driving the tractor years before the law allowed. When he was 15 he went to work for the farmer, Antony Penman, initially as assistant cow man. After his father's death he and his mother moved to the farm where Richard worked for over 20 years, milking the 90 strong herd and helping with pigs and sheep. In the 1980s when the Penmans retired the Bennetts moved to Hilders Lane in Marlpit Hill. Soon after, Richard started his own business which was still going strong almost 40 years later.

Aside from his work, which included the care of the three churchyards in the benefice, Richard found time for many services to the community. He was involved, often behind the scenes, in so much: setting up the Christmas Fair with others each year at Hever Castle, helping with the Four Elms fete field prep before an afternoon in charge of Bowl a Pig and so much more. As Joanna said in the Link article, he was generous with his time to a fault. And of course he was churchwarden at St Paul's for the last 6 years.

To say we will miss him is an understatement. Look out for the snowdrops on the bank at the boundary of the churchyard at St Paul's this Spring – hopefully the snowdrops he planted singly, in the green, will honour his memory and flower abundantly.

Bridget Harris



Jane Hall - a tribute

Jane Hall very sadly died of cancer on 25 November, she was 55. Her daughter Charlotte writes that she died peacefully with her husband and two children at her side:

"My mum was a devoted wife and mother, a loving and caring friend, and a woman of grace, strength and endless love. She loved fiercely and passionately, and I know her loss will be felt by so many. She was the heart of our family. Team Hall may have lost their MVP, but Mum - we know you'll be up there with a glass of pink Prosecco in hand and Mamma Mia blaring in the background. You were the brightest, kindest, warmest soul and this world will never feel the same without you in it. We will love you to the moon and back, forever."



Jane started life in Croydon and went to Oxted School where she met her husband Craig. She then trained to be a journalist and for many years wrote popular columns for the Surrey Observer and the Surrey Mirror. She also voluteered at a soup kitchen, Jigsaw a bereavement charity in East Grinstead and a women's refuge. Jane and her husband, children Charlotte and Sam and dogs Flo and Eric moved from Dormansland to St Nicholas Cottage in Hever in 2017. They quickly made good connections in the area and Jane helped out with a number of HRA events. When lockdown hit she was a founder member of Hever Help, a group which did shopping and picked up prescriptions for people who were isolating or unable to get about. It was a very welcome service and some long-term friendships were forged with the vulnerable people they assisted.

As well as her family, Jane greatly enjoyed gardening and ran a small business from home designing and making minimalist and chic greetings cards which were an antidote to the more floral numbers found in the shops. She sold them locally and had a stall at the Hever Christmas fair.

The collection at the Hever Christmas Carols was for Hospice in the Weald in memory of Jane and it raised £400. The family have set up a Just Giving page for further donations at https://www.justgiving.com/page/janes-angels-25112024
It is very appropriate that Jane's big heart is being remembered this way.

Joanna Wade

Una Higgs - a tribute

"It lasts a lifetime you know" said Una Higgs brightly of her new Aga as she admired her 100th birthday present to herself. Not only did the Queen send her a birthday message, Aga made her their poster girl as they were also celebrating their 100th - she was photographed for their magazine and given all sorts of kit.

Being nearly 103 when she died in December was really the least of Una's attributes as a friend and neighbour. We were welcomed when we moved in, cooked for on returning from holiday, watered for when the hanging baskets needed attention and competed with for the first crop of runner beans. When feeling less competitive, she would appear with enormous gooseberries beautifully arranged in a wicker basket or fat sticks of rhubarb, trimmed and ready for stewing. She also gamely agreed to feature in various articles I was writing for The Link - see her Desert Island Whisk last September, and the birthday tribute in February 2022 on the parish website hever.org/link.

Una was a local girl through and through, she grew up in Edenbridge and her parents ran a shoe and ladies wear shop where the Edenbridge Sports Clinic is now. She married Douglas Higgs in 1950 and they moved to Brocas in 1957 thus beginning 67 years in Hever. Una was devoted to her family - four children, numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren and in between times enjoyed her other passions, gardening (a keen and loyal member of the Hort) and cooking - she tried to teach me how to make better pastry!

She and Douglas (who died in 2002) were a formidable team, driving all over Europe in their small caravan, latterly with Douglas's dialysis kit on board and, when in England, cramming several enormous Bernese mountain dogs into the boot of the car. Una was quite small but her dogs were devoted enough not to squash her, though it was a relief when she settled down with Charlie her lovely King Charles and then Heidi a poodle/westie cross - a lifelong love of dogs was another signature passion.



The Forge Singers, which Una and Douglas founded in Edenbridge and her bookshelves stocked with histories of Eastern Europe are testaments to her love of music and her enquiring mind. She was doing German lessons until very recently and read the newspaper voraciously each morning - saving articles which she thought friends and family would find interesting.

Thank you for everything Una, we will miss you.

Joanna Wade

VILLAGE SCREEN FILM CLUB 2024/25

The film season continues at the usual venue, Hever Castle Golf Club on Friday 21 February - The Holdovers

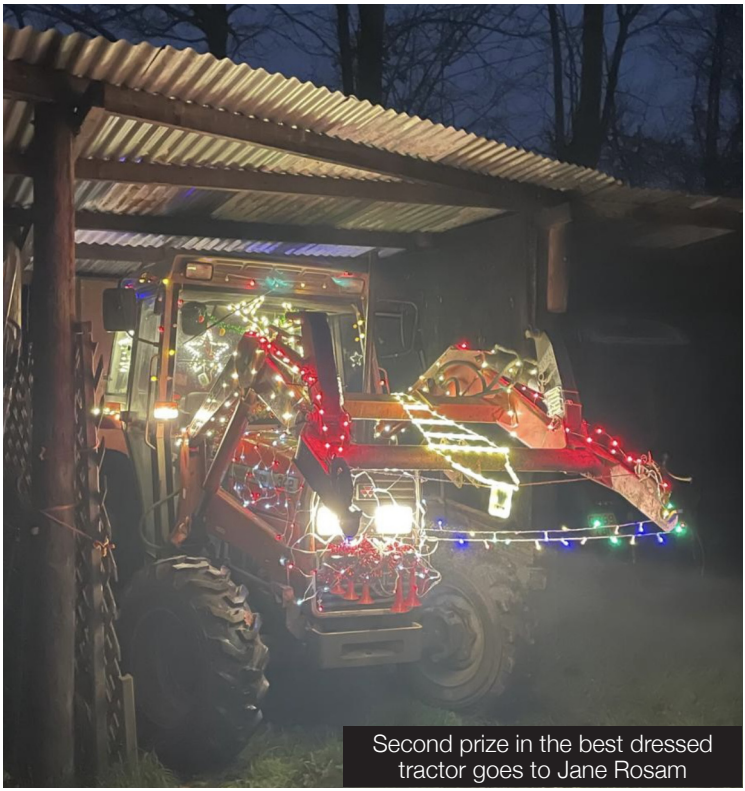


This award winning comedy drama from 2023 follows a curmudgeonly classics teacher (Paul Giamatti) at a New England prep school who is forced to remain on campus during Christmas break to babysit the students with nowhere to go. Eventually he forms an unlikely bond with one of them and with the school's head cook, who has just lost a son in Vietnam (Da'Vine Joy Randolph).

The film, which is just over 2 hours 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.





Second prize in the best dressed tractor goes to Jane Rosam

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 lots of subs last year, please don't wait to be chased again. If you aren't sure of your position please contact Bridget, 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

With this being the first edition of 2025, on behalf of Hever Parish Council I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. A huge thanks is extended to Mick, Matt and the team at Willerby Landscapes who very kindly donated the Four Elms Christmas tree again this year, decorated it and kept the wonderful lights twinkling throughout the festive season to be enjoyed by all. Their generosity is much appreciated.

With this colder weather, there are places locals can visit for some company in a warm space. These include Bridges in Edenbridge High Street telephone 01732 864224 and Stones who are located at the front of Edenbridge Leisure Centre. There are other local groups who run a Knit and Natter in Markbeech and we are hoping to be able to start one in Four Elms soon too.

The Four Elms Pond volunteers, led by Councillor Roberts, did another sterling job in the autumn clearing debris and growth from and around the pond and ensuring the drainage was flowing as it should and the pond kept healthy. Excess surface water from surrounding areas after heavy rainfall has caused flooding in the vicinity of the crossroads in recent years. Both myself and local residents have reported the issue to Highways and I am pleased to say that Kent County Council is now investigating drainage improvements to manage the water that runs off the land approaching the pond. It is hoped these investigations, and any necessary remedial works, will be carried out and will help to alleviate the issue.

Sevenoaks District Council are inviting residents to have your say on the future of waste collection services by taking part in our 'BIG Waste Conversation' survey. The survey is open until midnight on Monday 3 February 2025 and can be accessed here: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/bigwaste

Should you wish to speak to your Parish Councillors about a matter you would like to raise, their contact details can be found on the hever.org website.

The Bulk Refuse Freighter will next be in the parish on Saturday 15th March. This service is paid for by the Parish Council for all local residents to use, so please do make use of it – as it saves having to make trips to the dump!

The next Hever Parish Council Meeting is on Tuesday 4th March in Four Elms Village Hall. Please see the website http://hever.org/parish-council for more information.

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

hever hort in 2024

Well, where did 2024 go? The Hever Hort season culminated in the November AGM. This is an opportunity to display a selection of pictures of the wonderful exhibits shown throughout the year and list all the trophy winners. The final award is the Presidents' trophy, instigated by two former Presidents, Jane King and Pat Humphreys, awarded to the person who gains the most points over the Spring, Rose and Summer shows. The winner was Jane Rosam, and the trophy was presented by Wendy Izod, assisted by Andrew. It was a poignant evening as Wendy has decided to step down as President, after eight years of wonderful service.

The final talk of 2024 was called 'the Green man in the Garden', an interesting history of an ancient folklore. It often manifests as a foliate head in relief, with leaves emanating from ears, nose and mouth. Sometimes the leaves take the form of the acanthus plant, which has a long history as a motif in architecture and art, going back to the Corinthian columns of ancient Greece. Although I have never grown these plants, my interest in them goes back a number of years. Holy Trinity Church had been broken into and the aumbrey (the small safe which holds the communion vessels) damaged. I was doing furniture restoration at that time and took on the task of repairing the wooden face of the aumbrey. This consisted of remaking some of the relief design, including the acanthus leaves, and then re-gilding the repaired face.

From a horticultural viewpoint, acanthus consist of about 30 different species, and traditionally thrive in warm climates, such as the Mediterranean, but can also been grown successfully in the U.K. They are sometimes referred to as 'Bears' breeches' and can be bought from plant suppliers. There are several varieties suitable for our climate and, as I have never grown them, I am going to try Acanthus mollis 'Long Spike', a variety which attracts bees. So, here's hoping…..

The first Hever Hort talk of this year will be 'La Chaire, the story of Jersey's Lost Garden', by Stephen Harmer. As usual, it will be at Hever Village Hall, on Wednesday, 19th February, 8pm, and everyone is welcome.

Happy gardening for 2025!

Doug Bowern

Doug was presented with a thank you gift at the AGM as he is also stepping down after 8 years as an excellent Chair and before that as treasurer. He has agreed to stay on until a replacement can be found - is anyone prepared to step up?



news from hever primary

In the final Link of 2024, I shared the news that we had been inspected by Ofsted. I am pleased to be able start the new year by sharing that Hever Primary was judged to be Good in all areas: The quality of education; Behaviour and attitudes; Personal development; Leadership and management and Early years provision.

When I joined Hever two years ago, I talked about my passion for early education and inclusion, and creating an environment where wellbeing and high standards of academic achievement go hand in hand. Thanks to the dedication of the staff, the commitment of governors and the support of the parent community, we were able to evidence all of these elements and more during the inspection period. The report notes that Hever is 'highly ambitious for pupils' academic achievement and their character development' and that 'Pupils learn how to be emotionally resilient, so they can challenge themselves to learn more deeply and confidently.' It recognises the warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils and how we live out our school values together.



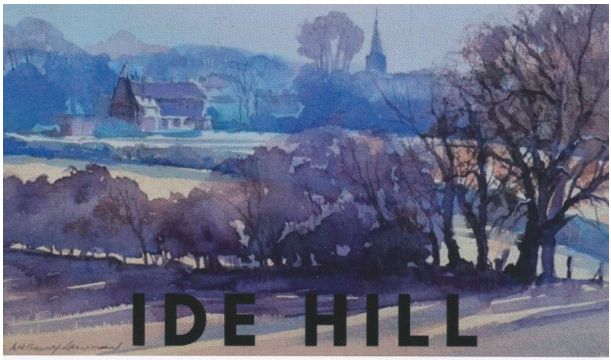
No sooner had we received our Ofsted report, than we received notification of our SIAMS inspection. SIAMS (the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) plays an important role in the improvement of Church schools by evaluating how the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school. This was also a very



positive report which highlights the impact of our ambitious curriculum and the resulting outstanding educational experiences; it celebrates the trusting relationships and nurturing environment where all pupils are supported to be the best they can be as a collective and as individuals.

Both reports capture the essence of our school and celebrate the quality of our provision that enables our children to flourish, academically and emotionally. This reflects the commitment and collaboration of our whole school community, staff, parents and carers and governors, for which I am very grateful. As with all communities, there will always be more to do to ensure we continue to grow and to thrive but we have a clear sense of direction and a firm foundation on which to build. Please visit our school website https://www.hever.kent.sch.uk/, if you would like to read the reports.

Helene Bligh
Headteacher



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anthonylawman.artist

anthony@anthonylawman.com



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APH Electrical & Property Maintenance		07816 291713
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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 and Health

BDHL private & group health insurance and corporate wellbeing		01892 891900
Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 700771
Falconhurst Cricket Club	cricket and training sessions	07771 892762
Paul Marro Cognitive Hypnotherapy	www.htherapy.co.uk	01732 808211
Realign, osteopathy and personal training	www.realign-osteo.co.uk	07841 776591
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
SA Landscaping	landscaping, garden maintenance, fencing, driveways and more	01732 671146
Thompson Tree Care Ltd,	tree surgery, tree felling, hedge cutting	07747345815

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



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/diary/

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
2 Feb 10am	Holy Communion St Paul's Four Elms	Presentation
2 Feb 6pm	Contemporary service St Paul's Four Elms with Cabin Worship	Presentation
9 Feb 8am	BCP Morning Prayer at St Peter's Hever	4th before Lent
9 Feb 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	4th before Lent
9 Feb 3pm	Forest church Hever churchyard	4th before Lent
16 Feb 10am	Holy Communion St Peter's Hever	3rd before Lent
23 Feb 8am	Said communion St Peter's Hever	2nd before Lent
23 Feb 10am	Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech with baptism	2nd before Lent

On Friday 7th February at 10am there is a Women's meeting with Annie Gale, the Head of Social Impact at COOK, at Wedgewood in Uckfield Lane – see page 20 for details. Our weekly Bible studies on Mondays at 6pm and 8pm continue and Zoom Evening prayer is on Thursday at 6pm on 6th and 20th February. Zoe Joannou's 'life group' is on alternate Wednesdays. For details of any of these please contact Simon.

Looking forward we have a Confirmation Service with Bishop Jonathan at St.Peter's Hever on Sunday 16th March at 4pm. If any adults or teenagers are interested in being confirmed, please contact Simon as classes are starting in February. Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone.

Rector
Revd.Simon Braid
07802 809849
simonbraid@icloud.com

Wardens

Four Elms
Christina Hodson
01732 700247

Hever
Mandy Yarnold
01342 850028

Markbeech
Lynnie Rowan
01342 850776

Administrator Ana Roxburgh beneficeemail@gmail.com



our rector's thoughts

Just before Christmas sadly we lost two key members of our community: Una Higgs, who would have been 103 this month and Richard Bennett who latterly was a Churchwarden at St.Paul's Four Elms. Both funerals took place last month.

I also had my seventieth birthday last November, which caused me to reflect on Psalm 90:10 *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,…(they are) soon cut off, and we fly away.* How much time we have left, none of us know. We are obsessed with time. We may be *behind the times,* have *all the time in the world,* or find something *a complete waste of time.* Often time seems to rush by and we never have *enough time.* But in a traffic jam or waiting for a hospital appointment, the time seems to drag interminably. The Ancient Greeks had two words for time. *Kronos* from which we get the word chronology refers to time in sequence as it passes. *Kairos,* refers to the supreme or right moment. It is about *quality* time rather than its *quantity*. So I hope you experienced some Kairos time over the holiday period.

Whatever our experience we can't escape the passing of time. Life itself has been likened to different seasons. Spring has the idea of growing up and learning; summer the busy time of having a family or pursuing a career; culminating in the autumn of retirement and slowing down as we reach winter and our life's end. King David wrote in Psalm 31:15 *my times are in your hands.* Christians believe that God knows our beginning and ending and we can trust him for what happens in between. David's son, King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:11: *God has set eternity in the human heart.* John 3:16 is perhaps the most often quoted verse in the Bible: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have ETERNAL life*. This is not about time going on for ever and ever, which sounds like rather boring Kronos time. Rather it is the culmination of a relationship and union with God: more like an amazing Kairos moment which we long to last for ever.

Sometimes we are inclined to put things off until we have enough time. That might include putting off addressing some of the most important questions of life and why we are here. Why not give this some thought in 2025 and join us in church or one of our small groups? I hope you can find the time!

God bless you all

Simon



news from the pews

Four Elms

St Paul's Church community and all around were stunned when we heard the tragic news of Richard Bennett's death on 18th December. The loss to St Paul's Church and the Hever Benefice as a whole is enormous. He was a committed Christian throughout his life, serving us as he believed his Christian teaching had guided him, attending church every Sunday. We all give thanks for Richard. We also say a very sad adieu to another much loved and generous member of our community, Margaret Bates. An uplifting and fitting funeral service allowed many to say farewell. Both Margaret and Richard were lights within our community, serving their neighbours, friends and family to the end. We give thanks for them being among us. May they both rest in peace.

For our Rector, Simon, December is a very busy month. Simon and Susie work tirelessly to ensure there are services available in the Benefice to suit all. We, here at the Benefice, hope you found something to enjoy and celebrate the Good News of the birth of Christ. We thank Simon and Susie for their hard work. Within the village we must also thank Willerby Landscape for the beautiful Christmas trees at the pond and also in the churchyard.

February is often thought to be a rather dull month. However, there is something glorious watching the sunset over a hoar frost landscape, seeing the first signs of daffodils, the beautiful snowdrops and the joy of browsing through the gardening catalogues. And the daylight lasting a bit longer.

February 2nd we have two services. Our morning Holy Communion, celebrating our Patronal Saint, Paul. He is a hard act to follow!! In the evening (6pm) there is a Contemporary Service, with live music and modern worship. St Paul's welcomes everyone to our services and also to our "Enjoy a Cuppa" on the second Tuesday of the month.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden

Hever

St Peter's will be re-opening on a daily basis from Wednesday 12th 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 and the donations visitors make are a vital part of the church's income

We are delighted to be welcoming Annie Gale, the Head of Social Impact at COOK to talk about "Faith at Work" at the women's meeting at 10am on 7th February at Wedgewood, Uckfield Lane.

The Parish Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be happening in April. It will be your chance to read reports of what has happened in 2024 and our plans for 2025. To be included on the Electoral Role please contact Sam Joannou, our electoral roll officer, by emailing samjoannou@hotmail.com for a form or pick up a copy in the church.

The next Parish Lunch will be on Thursday 13th 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

Markbeech

Welcome to 2025, with all the hopes and fears that we all suffer from, especially at 3am! However, looking back at the Christmas run up and beyond, the churches across the Benefice enjoyed an encouraging increase in attendance. Christingle is a beautiful family service, brilliantly handled by Susie Braid, and no one set fire to long hair, but equally the significance is so special. There were carols in the pubs, The Kentish Horse (and Four Elms) and we were thrilled with the enthusiasm that the participants at the Kentish Horse showed and how well it was attended. I am sure it was the same at Four Elms. The Carol Service on the 22nd, the children's choir shone and were a joy to listen to. It ended with some delicious mulled wine (courtesy of Kit and Liz Kaberry, yet again) and a suppressed feeling of excitement about Christmas Day around the corner, so to speak. The Markbeech service at 9.15 on Christmas Day was the happiest of occasions and impressively attended. The Children singing Away in the Manger was very moving.

Now we have had to say goodbye and safe journeys to three local treasures. Mary Elliott from Edenbridge who looked after EMAT latterly and previously organised so many local clubs and events. The wonderful, special Richard Bennett, so valued over the Benefice and a friend to so many. And centenarian, Una Higgs, whose request for an Aga for her 100th birthday was a cause for optimism. She was beautifully cared for latterly by her son and other family members and friends and all three will be so missed by us all.

Janey Cooper
PCC secretary

From the register:

Funerals:
3rd December Four Elms Kathleen Beeney
17th December Four Elms Katherine Bates
23rd December Hever Jane Hall
15th January Four Elms Lydia Butcher

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM GILL LAMBERT

It was good to hear from Gill's daughter Catherine. She reports:
"Mum is still happy at Bourne Wood Manor and has not deteriorated. She still recognises close family and recently celebrated her 88th birthday surrounded by all her family"

Happy Birthday Gill

A message to the community from Richard Bennett's family.

We would like to thank you all for the support and condolences that we have received, it's been overwhelming and heart warming at the same time to see how much this community cherished and how much love there was for Richard. We've loved hearing all the memories and stories you've told us and we hope his memory lives on within this community you have all built and one that he loved and cherished so much. As a family we would like to thank you once again for your kindness during these difficult times.



THREE SPIRES



You are invited to *Faith at Work* with Annie Gale

Head of Social Impact at COOK

at Wedgewood, Uckfield Lane, Hever TN8 7LJ

The home of Zoe Joannou

7th February 2025

10.00am for coffee; 10.30am talk + Q&A ending at 11.15am

For details see

https://threespires.wordpress.com/

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	77	78
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	62	52
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	79	60

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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Copy for the **March** edition should reach us no later than **14 February** 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

Until Spring 2025 **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

25 Jan	**Apple Pruning course**, Bore Place, contact www.underwoodsman.co.uk tickets £100	9.30-4pm
30 Jan	**Telescope Workshop for Beginners**, Bore Place, tickets £10 adult, £7 child	6.30-8pm
4 Feb	**Knit and Natter**, Markbeech Village Hall	2-4pm
7 Feb	**Faith at Work talk**, Annie Gale at Wedgewood, Uckfield Lane	10am for 10.30am
11 Feb	**Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
13 Feb	**Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
19 Feb	**Hever Hort talk on Jersey's lost garden, La Chaire,** Hever Village Hall	8pm
21 Feb	**Evening of Jazz with Jennifer Maslin Quartet**, Markbeech Village Hall, tickets from Edenbridgemusicandartstrust.org.uk £20 to include supper	6pm for 6.45pm
21 Feb	**Film Club, The Holdovers**, Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm
28 Feb	**Hever PTA Quiz,** Edenbridge WI Hall, tickets £15pp inc supper from quizheverpta@gmail.com	6.30pm for 7.30pm
2 Mar	**Introduction to Rag Rugging**, Bore Place, tickets £60	10am - 4pm
4 Mar	**Hever Parish Council meeting**, Four Elms VH	Planning 7pm, full council 7.30pm
4 Mar	**Knit and Natter**, Markbeech Village Hall	2-4pm
11 Mar	**Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
13 Mar	**Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
13 Mar	**Stargazing Walk**, Bore Place led by EB and District Astronomers, adult £12, child £8	7.30 – 9pm
15 Mar	**Bulk Waste Freighter**, Four Elms Village Hall	8.30-9am
15 Mar	**Bulk Waste Freighter**, Hever bottle bank	12.15 – 12.45 pm
15 Mar	**Bulk Waste Freighter**, Markbeech Village Hall	1-1.30pm
19 Mar	**Slugs, Snails and Beasties**, Hever Hort talk, Hever VH	8pm
21 Mar	**Film Club, The Great Escaper**, Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm
22 Mar	**Hever Litter Pick**	9am

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