March 2025

THE LINK







In this issue:

- sheepish
- to boldy go…
- of mice and women
- hole in one
- cinemania

...and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the March Link

When we worry about the effect of excessive screen time on our brains it is well to remember that 2,500 years ago Plato was worried about writing! He thought that the introduction of the written word would make people stupid because their memories would fail and they would be worse at remembering stories. The general lesson seems to be that new developments such as writing and technology change cognition without necessarily harming it. It is always useful to take "the long view"as Jonathan Freedland does so impressively on Radio 4. You can find his episode on "The harms of social media"on BBC Sounds.

Two miscellaneous facts for 2025, the first is that before electric lighting was invented we slept for 90 minutes longer than we do now. And the second is that Milk & More says that it's glass milk bottles are refilled 28 times on average before being recycled saving 45 million plastic bottles.

And so to the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. Nearly 8 million birds were counted with Kent participants the third most assiduous. Top bird is the house sparrow followed by the blue tit, wood pigeon, starling, blackbird and robin. Pigeon and robin numbers have gone up - I love the cheeky robin who comes to the back door every morning for bread. Overall numbers have declined depressingly, though - the top spot sparrow's numbers have fallen 60% since 1979. This citizen science project provides valuable insights for conservationists and it was fun watching the fluttering tits overwhelming the fat balls in my garden and then shooting off when the jackdaws arrived. Killing with kindness is a problem though - bird tables and feeders have to be kept clean to avoid infection.

And finally.... the Trainline booking website has provided me with eco warrior accolades for all my trips to London. By not driving, I have saved 595kg of CO2, the equivalent of not using the washing machine for 4 years. Of course I never would have driven, but the pat on the back was nonetheless welcome.

Joanna Wade
thelink@hever.org



what I do

I feel incredibly fortunate to spend my days helping people learn and enjoy the game of golf. My journey with Hever Golf Club began in 1992 when I joined as the Assistant Professional under the guidance of the club's first professional, John Powell. Under his mentorship, I completed the three-year PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) qualification, which covered every aspect of the game, from playing ability to club repair and everything in between.

In September 2000, I was honoured to be appointed Head Professional, a role I continue to hold today. Over the years, I've earned PGA Advanced Coach status, established the Castle Golf School at Hever, where four golf coaches offer tuition seven days a week, and published a book to help juniors get into golf. The acquisition of the golf club by Hever Castle in 2002 marked a significant transformation. Now known as Hever Castle Golf & Wellbeing, the club has seen major enhancements to its courses, practice facilities, and clubhouse, making it an even more special place to play.

Beyond Hever, I'm proud to serve as the county coach for Kent Golf's U14 boys' team. Competing against other counties in the south east, these young players showcase an incredible level of talent, and it's a privilege to be part of their development.

Away from golf, my wife and I enjoy watching our two boys play football and golf, and we love exploring the countryside on long walks with our cocker spaniel, Simba.

My passion for introducing more people to golf has been further fuelled by our new Trackman Driving Range. Since its installation, we've seen a surge of new players of all ages giving the sport a try, which is fantastic to witness. Just last week, I coached a four-and-a-half-year-old girl and an 86-year-old man on the same day, a perfect reminder of why golf is such a wonderful, lifelong game.

Peter Parks PGA
Advanced Golf Professional
Hever Castle Golf Club



mice



The question was asked, last year, 'were there any more mice in the Parish?' Well, I am overrun with them although they are no bother, they don't eat the cheese, nibble through wires or make holes in the skirting boards for my mice were made in the Robert Thompson workshop in Kilburn, North Yorkshire.



The first to arrive was on a bedside table lamp quickly followed by another the same for a dark corner in the sitting room. Then came the book stand with the smallest mouse climbing down the side. Next, my favourites, a three legged stool with a burr oak seat, plus mouse and the most handsome mouse, I think, on a box I keep my pills in.

Last to arrive was Timid Timothy who hides in the fruit bowl. I can recommend these Thompson mice, they are fun, friendly and functional, and the cheese is safe.

The newest addition to our resident rodents is purely decorative and very quiet. It is a charming family of church mice. They came from All Hallows by the Tower, the oldest church in London. The church itself and the crypt museum are well worth a visit and you may return home with church mice of your own.

Madeline Gutteridge



sheepish

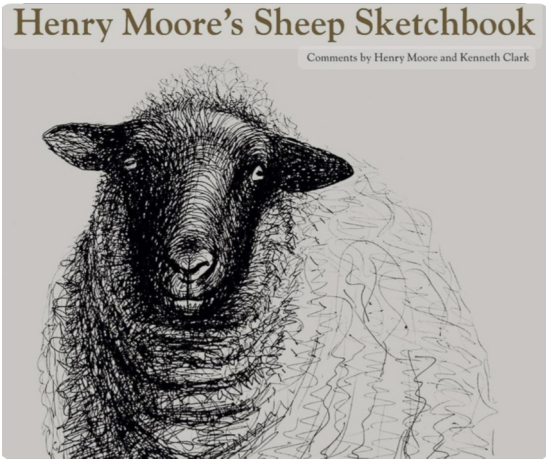
Joanna and Jane, Brocas neighbours talk sheep

Joanna: Who hasn't been beguiled into following a hillside path, one you assume to be THE path, when it is just the meanderings of whimsical sheep? I carry the lifelong trauma of being so beguiled in darkest Surrey on my first ever schoolgirl youth hostelling journey. We kept up our spirits as the day darkened by singing "All we like sheep" from the Messiah (one of a multitude of symbolic references to shepherds, sheep and lambs in the bible) and reached civilisation at last. Thus, or at least thereabouts, my lifelong love of sheep began - and here is my tribute.

Sheep are surprisingly difficult to draw and I marvel at the character which Henry Moore evokes in his sheep drawings. On a recent visit to his house in Perry Green, Hertfordshire, I saw the descendants of his models through his huge studio window, grazing contently in the field.

The writer Madeleine Bunting's sheep experience was on the North Yorkshire Moors where, at night, the only sound was sheep munching grass. Sheep graze for nine to eleven hours a day and ruminate for up to ten leaving very little time to sleep. In her book, "The Plot" Bunting reminds us that our long dependency on sheep is marked by the wool sack used by the Lord Chancellor in Parliament and by the common surname Shepherd. The Kent brewery Shepherd Neame is the oldest in Britain - Samuel Shepherd first became involved in the business in 1732, having married the owner's daughter (Neame came along sometime later, in 1864).

In the past every bit of a sheep was consumed - meat obviously and wool, and the oil/lanolin from their coats also had many uses, some medicinal. But tallow, the fat used to make candles by the many who could not afford wax, was in its time worth twice as much as the meat. Sheep bones have been used to make music, the Roman word for pipe was "tibia". And the skin made bagpipes, drums and parchment.



Down south, woollen cloth-making and trading was a major industry in the Eden Valley from the 14th century - involving big local names such as Dick Whittington and Anne Boleyn's grandfather Geoffrey who was able to buy the castle on the back of his mercantile success....I could go on.... but over to Jane.

Jane: It is so nice to have neighbours who love sheep as much as I do. I certainly know what you mean, Joanna, about those little



Jane Higgs and her lamb

sheep paths I spent my school holidays with my grandparents in North Wales. We stayed on a farm and when my grandfather retired he bought a field from the farmer and built a bungalow. My grandparents didn't see much of me as I was off after breakfast 'to help on the farm': carrying picnics to the fields during haymaking, collecting the eggs, feeding the chickens and best of all helping to bring the sheep from the mountain for shearing or dipping. I could catch the small Welsh Mountain ewes and would help to lob them into the dip.

For a short while I fulfilled a dream to have a small flock of my own as our family had purchased some of the Brocas Farm fields. When the resident flock of sheep was taken away for the last time one ewe and her lamb got left behind. You can imagine the smile on my face when Douglas & Una offered to buy them for my birthday. It wasn't long before they were joined by a pet lamb, a gift from the farm in Wales. He turned a few heads at motorway stops bleating from his box in the back of our car. Then I noticed three ewes for sale near Tonbridge and bought them too. In the summer I had helped with the dipping at Skinners farm and Roy Atfield lent a ram in the autumn. By the following spring I had 5 more in my flock. All the lessons I had learned up in Wales; handling, shearing with shears not a machine, birthing and rearing proved I was capable. It was wonderful – for just over a year – then family life had to take priority again and I had to sell my flock although my original ewe went to a local friend.

Then indoor sheep took over and they could live on shelves and didn't need caring for in all weathers; and so down the years as my family grew up so did my collection of sheep; tiny sheep, large sheep, paintings of sheep, poems about sheep, sheep in books and on cards. But you may still see me leaning on a gate looking longingly at those friendly woolly faces.



the naming of pets

“The naming of cats is a difficult matter” according to TS Eliot. I have clearly read too many Jilly Cooper books, where terriers are named Gin and Tonic, as you will see from the joy I get naming my pets.

Having got my flat in London I needed two ginger cats and they were nearly named Border and Gower, but who remembers cricket captains? I settled for Napoleon and Wellington. Cats continue to provide great naming opportunities; Whiskey, Mac and Ginger when I moved to Hever. Now I have Nigella, Delia, Otto and Lenghi (Nigella’s twins – who had a brother, Heston) and Rick Stein. I have no gingers – so no Gordon! Horses are a passion of mine and I was given an ex-racehorse called Red Bordeaux, yes really. I named my bay horses Fleurie, Chianti, Rioja and Brouilly. I have labradors that have graced Facebook with their antics. Jet my first Black lab, then Chablis who carries out her daily neighbourhood



Nigella



Delia gardening

watch walk along Brocas Road, calling for her has led people to wonder if I am summoning my butler. Chablis had a litter of 8 pups, born in 2014, anniversary of WW1 so I chose appropriate names Amelia, Owen, Wilson, Asquith, Bessie, Roosevelt and Guinness. I kept Guinness named, after Sir Alec Guinness, who was born in 1914, and nothing to do with an Irish export.

I have also had several hens and cockerels that have provided excellent naming options. The first three hens were Milly, Molly and Mandy. Cockerels have had various cavalier names from Chanticleer to Sunny, who is currently in residence. Lastly the naming of orphan lambs has been a joy. We started with Anthony and Cleopatra. There was Pasanda and Masala. In Covid times we had Astra and Zeneca and last year Charles and Camilla graced my lawn and carried out much herbal devastation, unlike their namesakes. No lambs last year sadly, due to my knee surgery, so I look forward to spring 2025, Ms Biddle.

So in summary, the naming of pets is a wonderful chance to have some fun.

Jo Cockerill

magic metrobus

Yesterday, a long-time and apparently well-informed resident of Edenbridge took me aback with her confident assertion – “Of course, the buses in the countryside around here are rubbish”.

I’ve just returned home from using our local bus service, the 231/233, as I do several times a week, having enjoyed friendly chatter with my eight fellow passengers (ranging in age from a few months to their 80s) of a kind unknown in the urban area from which I moved three years ago, and I have to say: Far from it, the buses in this delightful little corner of England are a treasure to cherish and to use – certainly not dismiss.

I live in Four Elms so it’s the 231/233 that I use most often, running as it does from Edenbridge to Tunbridge Wells via Four Elms, Bough Beech, Chiddingstone Causeway and Penshurst, with the 231 then proceeding through Fordcombe, Langton Green and Rusthall Common, while the 233 follows the road through Bidborough and Southborough. Sometimes, I change buses in Edenbridge to enjoy a trip on the 236 up to Westerham and Oxted or southwards to Lingfield.



Together with our local train services, our buses have given me magical, memorable moments. For instance, earlier this week, I caught an early evening train home from Tonbridge, alighting at Penshurst station (on the edge of Chiddingstone Causeway) to connect with the 231/233 that would drop me in Four Elms at 6.40. Waiting with only one other passenger for a few minutes opposite the welcoming lights of The Little Brown Jug, I marvelled as the vast sky of twilight darkened into dusk and familiar planets and stars began to shine or twinkle through.

Fancy a lunch-time drink or a bite to eat at one of our country pubs in Four Elms, Bough Beech, Chiddingstone, Causeway, Penshurst or Fordcombe? Each has a bus stop close by, often on the doorstep. Fancy a walk to enjoy our network of public footpaths and unfrequented lanes? Take the bus and ask the driver to set you down or pick you up at the spot from which you wish to sally forth or return: outside towns this is a hail-and-ride service, as well as using predetermined

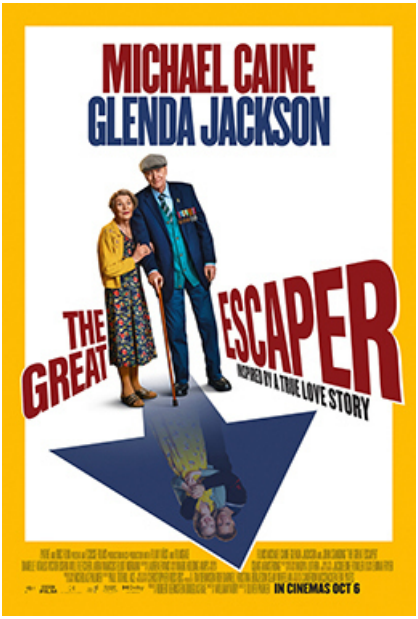
stops. Planning a trip to the shops and facilities in Tunbridge Wells? Why not allow yourself the luxury of views over the hedgerows while avoiding the stress and cost of parking? After all, if you're over pension age and have obtained your (non-means-tested) bus pass, you'll travel free (unless before 9.30 a.m.), while the flat fare for younger adults is only £3 each way. Yes, there is a drawback: no services run on Sundays, bank holidays or during the evenings. Then if necessary, I phone our reliable Edenbridge taxi service.

If you're not a regular bus user, why not try the bus yourself some time? In the process, you'll be able to relax while someone else has the bother of driving you. And in the process you'll be supporting the maintenance of west Kent's delightful and invaluable country buses.

Marion Shoard

VILLAGE SCREEN FILM CLUB 2025

The film season closes at the usual venue, Hever Castle Golf Club on Friday 21 March - The Great Escaper
Tour de force by Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson in her last film. In the summer of 2014, encouraged by his wife, a World War II veteran sneaks out of his care home to attend the 70th anniversary commemoration of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Chaos ensues



The film, which is just over 1.5 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.

Easter Card Competition



Easter is coming and, as ever, we are looking for designs for an Easter Card for our church. So grab a piece of A4 paper and draw, paint or create a collage, then take a picture of it and email it to us at beneficeemail@gmail.com.

We are looking for a card that will show the true meaning of Easter, the love of Jesus and His rising from the tomb. The judges will select one or two designs and we'll use them to print our 2025 Easter card, which will go out into our parish.

The winner will receive a real chocolate Easter egg from us! How amazing is that!

The DEADLINE for submitting your creations is Monday10th March at midnight! Get creative!



SAVE THE DATE
19th April at 3.30pm
for the Easter Egg Hunt
In Hever Churchyard

It's a fun community event and we look forward to seeing you there!



Hever Parish Council

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

In anticipation of an early spring clean, the next bulk refuse visit to the parish is on Saturday 15th March 2025. Please do use this service, which is paid for by HPC. It saves a trip to the dump and they will take most of your household items.

Community Litter picks have been arranged, see the Diary on the back cover for details. The litter picks are a great opportunity to come along and meet some of your fellow neighbours as well as helping the environment.

Unfortunately there have been several fly-tipping incidents in the area, on public highways and also on private property. The impact of this illegal offence, on individuals, wildlife, the environment and road users as well as the financial cost is wholly unacceptable. Please do be vigilant and report if you witness a fly-tip in progress by calling the Police on 101. If you discover a fly-tip that has taken place, please report it promptly to Sevenoaks District Council. This can be done via the website who will come and clear it if it is on public highway, footways, verges and laybys. If it is on a private road or private land then the land owner is left to clear it up.

Our Beat Officer, PC Maunsell, reported an uplift in Rural Crime recently. A focus has been on tools, machinery and small off-road vehicles, such as Gators or Mules. It is suggested ensuring all vehicles and equipment are properly secured and access is limited as best as possible. Consider utilising floodlights, CCTV and motion sensors or sirens to limit opportunities for criminals, and make use of door bolts or chains if you can to restrict access. Please continue to report any suspicious sightings, particularly of small 4x4s you don't recognise or which seem suspicious to 999 if urgent, or 101 or online for non-urgent reports https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report

Poor mobile phone signal affects our parish and can cause inconvenience and frustration! Tom Tugendhat is working with network providers to fix the poor mobile phone signal. Please do complete his survey to highlight the areas where phone signal can be improved. The survey is https://www.tomtugendhat.org/mobile-phone-survey. Your feedback will help drive improvements.

Have your say on Nature Recovery in Kent and Medway! A consultation is open until 12 March on the strategy that will help to create a network of wildlife-rich places across Kent and Medway. The aim is to help stop the decline of nature and supporting its recovery and highlights ambitions for habitats such as chalk grasslands, ancient woodland and coastal grazing, marsh and mudflats. It also identifies priority species that need assistance, like the Shrill Carder Bee, Barn Owl, Duke of Burgundy butterfly and Green-winged Orchid. Visit www.kent.gov.uk/naturerecovery to find out more.

Finally, the next Hever Parish Council Meeting is on Tuesday 6th May 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

news from four elms primary

At Four Elms Primary School, we are committed to fostering a love of reading and improving literacy among our students. This academic year, we introduced the Accelerated Reader (AR) program to support our pupils who have progressed beyond the phonics scheme. AR enables students to read a book, complete an online quiz, and receive immediate feedback, promoting independent learning and self-assessment.

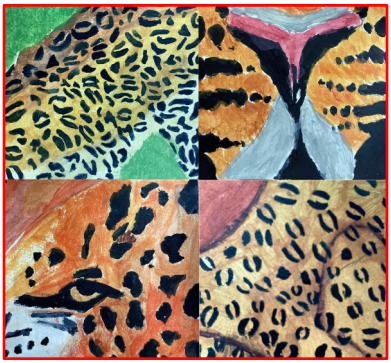
Our dedicated Accelerated Reader leader has worked hard to organise our library space, banding books to guide pupils toward appropriate reading materials. The positive impact of this initiative is evident in our recent data, which indicates an increase in both attainment and progress across all year groups. Students are actively engaging with the program, setting personal goals, and demonstrating a strong commitment to improving their reading abilities.

To further enhance our reading initiatives, we are seeking volunteers from the local community to assist in developing our students' reading skills. If you are interested in contributing to this rewarding endeavour, please contact us.

Jess Fermor Head of School



news from hever primary



Opportunities for curriculum enhancement and bringing children's learning to life are an integral part of our curriculum at Hever. The spring term got off to an exciting start for Reception and Key Stage 1, with a visit from renowned children's author, Sue Hendra, of 'Supertato' fame. For Key Stage 2, leading up to World Book Day in March, we have the highly acclaimed children's author and illustrator Thomas Taylor visiting (illustrator of the well-known cover of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'). At Hever, we are committed to ensuring that every child in our school becomes a reader, with a love of stories, poetry and reading. Opportunities like these are a great way of engaging and inspiring young readers and writers, enabling children to gain insights into how successful stories are created, where ideas come from and how characters are brought to life.

There was been a discernible buzz of creativity across the school during our annual Art Week. There is definitely something about a collective focus, with all classes studying a shared artist, that generates an abundance of enthusiasm and imagination from children and adults alike! This year we focused on Henri Rousseau, initially concentrating on developing drawing skills before moving onto creative expression, leading to some stunning artwork using a range of different media.

Our oldest children in Year 5 and Year 6 have had the opportunity to visit the British Museum this term, to reinforce previous learning linked to ancient China and introduce their next topic on ancient Greece. More locally, our Key Stage 2 children access a series of visits across the year to Bore Place, where activities include learning about regenerative food production on a working organic farm; we also benefit from the wealth of learning opportunities offered by Hever Castle. We are very grateful for the generosity of these local partnerships and the impact they have on our children's learning.

Helene Bligh
Headteacher









Dean Beardon and Alex Mackay are organizing this fundraiser to benefit Friends of Hever School.

Our children deserve the best opportunities, experiences, and education, but schools rely on community support to thrive. Together, we can help Hever School grow and continue to inspire and educate our kids for years to come.



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
Eden Valley Builders	extensions, conversions and general building	07778431470
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
MOLE CATCHER, Peter King		Mob:07432 813614 or 01892 520287
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 March

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	Day
2nd March 10am	All Age Holy communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	Sunday before Lent
2nd March 6pm	Healing service at St.Peter's Hever	Sunday before Lent
5th March 6pm	Imposition of ashes at St.Peter's Hever	Ash Wednesday
7th March 6pm	World Day of Prayer for the Cook Islands at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Friday
9th March 8am	BCP Morning prayer at St.Peter's Hever	Lent 1
9th March 10am	Eucharist at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Lent 1
9th March 3pm	Forest church at St.Peter's Hever	Lent 1
16th March 10am	Holy communion with baptism at St.Peter's Hever	Lent 2
16th March 4pm	Confirmation Service at St.Peter's Hever	Lent 2
23rd March 8am	BCP said Holy communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	Lent 3
23rd March 10am	Family service at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Lent 3
30th March 6pm	Mothering Sunday Family service at St.Paul's Four Elms	Lent 4

During Lent, our weekly Zoom and in person Bible studies will combine – please look out for details. Zoe Joannou's 'life group' is on alternate Wednesdays. Our next Men's discussion group will be on 1st April at 6pm at Saxby's Mead on 'Is there such a thing as evil?'. For details of any of these please contact Simon. See my article for details of the Confirmation Service plus March 5th marks the start of Lent and we also have a special service at Markbeech on Friday 7th March for the World Day of Prayer as well as Mothering Sunday at Four Elms on 30th March when the clocks go forward. Also for children, the closing date for our Easter card design competition is 10th March. Please send entries to Ana Roxburgh (email below).

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

Sunday March 16th is our Confirmation Service at St.Peter's Hever when Jonathan Bishop of Rochester will confirm five adults and seven teenagers from our United Benefice – a wonderful example of local spiritual growth.

What is Confirmation and why is it so important? Many of us, me included, will have been baptised ('christened') when very young. Baptism welcomes people into the worshipping community of faith and is for those families who will promise to bring their children up in the Christian faith. They make promises on their children's behalf as they may be too small to express faith themselves. Confirmation is the service at which an adult or teenager says a big 'Yes' to the promises made on their behalf when they were baptised. This is what happened to me at the age of 17 after I had become a Christian. But it can happen at any time: for example, my father was confirmed when he was aged 65.

As I write this, I am busy holding confirmation 'classes' so that the candidates can learn what it means to follow Christ and be sure they are taking the right step. St.Paul says this: *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* (Romans 10:9). Paul is saying that we need both to be prepared to be known as Jesus' followers ie. 'declare with our mouths' and to really believe it in our hearts ie. not just go through a ritual. I think this is a good test as to whether we are ready to be confirmed.

If this might be something for you at a later date, have a look at our website https://threespires.wordpress.com/come-to-us-for/confirmation/ and then have a word with me.

March is also the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday 5th March. Lent is traditionally a time of fasting and reflection as we prepare ourselves for Easter. It might be a good time, therefore, to consider whether we feel ready to say 'Yes' to God whether we've been baptised and confirmed or not. At the time of the early church, getting baptised could be a dangerous thing to do, as it could invite persecution. Regrettably, this is also the case in some countries today. Indeed, it is estimated that 1 in 7 Christians in the world are persecuted and it's getting worse!

So, are you ready to step up and be counted? Like Joshua in the Old Testament: *"…choose this day whom you will serve… But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* (Joshua 24:15).

God bless you all

Simon



news from the pews

Four Elms

Richard Bennett (churchwarden) would have been overwhelmed to have seen the packed church at St Paul's for his funeral service. We were all overwhelmed by the number of friends and neighbours wishing to pay their respects to him. How fitting a tribute to a man who served his church and his community with love and dedication. He was always a such a cheerful person and I am sure that enigmatic smile was there to the end. For St Paul's church it is a great loss and we miss him very much. I know his family wish to say their thanks to everyone for joining them at such an eventful funeral. Rest in peace Richard.

The beginning of February was a busy month at St Paul's with our Patronal Festival, praising St Paul. He was an exceptional man who travelled around the Mediterranean Sea, being shipwrecked three times, preaching the word of Christ to all. Knowing from experience how choppy the Mediterranean Sea can be, I cannot imagine how brave and heroic Paul was. I hope he was a better sailor than me! After celebrating our Patron Saint, an evening Contemporary Service was well attended, with the theme of peace. A much needed theme in these uncertain times.

As we move into March its time to look forward to Spring and Easter. Before Easter of course comes Lent, a time of reflection and contemplation. In the middle of Lent is Mothering Sunday. Perhaps a controversial term nowadays but be assured for our special service on Sunday 30th March there is a warm (and floral) welcome to all parents, carers and guardians. And of course, there is always Shrove Tuesday and pancakes to look forward to as well. Always a favourite.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden



Hever

Gillett and Johnson have visited the church and given our beautiful 17th century four poster clock a comprehensive inspection and lubrication of all of the parts. At the back is a replica of the copper dome dial that is seen outside to help set the time accurately. The metal construction means that the accuracy of the time can be affected by outside temperatures. We are grateful to The Friends of St Peter who paid for this work to be completed and Simon Scott for looking after the clock.

This April the church will have its quinquennial inspection completed by the church architect and they draw up a list of maintenance and repair works with an indication of their urgency. Estimated costings are used then to work out the monthly contributions that the church needs to put aside into its Fabric Fund, held by Rochester Diocese, for the works to be completed

This year the Electoral Roll will be revised, a job carried out every 6 years and new electoral roll forms must be completed by those who wish to be included. 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 March, 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

How welcome to see the snowdrops and daffodils bravely waving towards March and Spring. The funerals at the end of last month, although of course sad occasions, were so well attended and made all of us there, not only grateful for the wonderful souls departed, but glad we live in such a loyal and united Benefice.

At the end of February, Markbeech will hold a Family Service made even more special by the Baptism of Orlando who will be made so welcome. On 7th March, the World Day of Prayer Service will come from the Cook Islands. It is at 6pm and everyone is welcome. We have been promised representatives from all the local churches in the ECC, and, though it is the beginning of Lent, we will be decorating the church at Markbeech with colourful silk flowers and be giving a flower to take home as a memory – sadly we cannot promise the Cook Island sunshine too! The islanders have spent many months preparing the service which includes some happy and catchy music. It is also, for me, an overwhelming thought that on March 7th, across the world, Christians will be praying together using the same service, with probably the same hopes, dreams and faith.

Susie Braid and Fiona Irens organised for Annie Gale to talk to ladies across the Benefice about her work with Cook. It was a special morning, Annie has a strong faith which influences everything she does, including her work with ex-prisoners and the homeless. We also were very grateful to Zoe for sharing her lovely home.

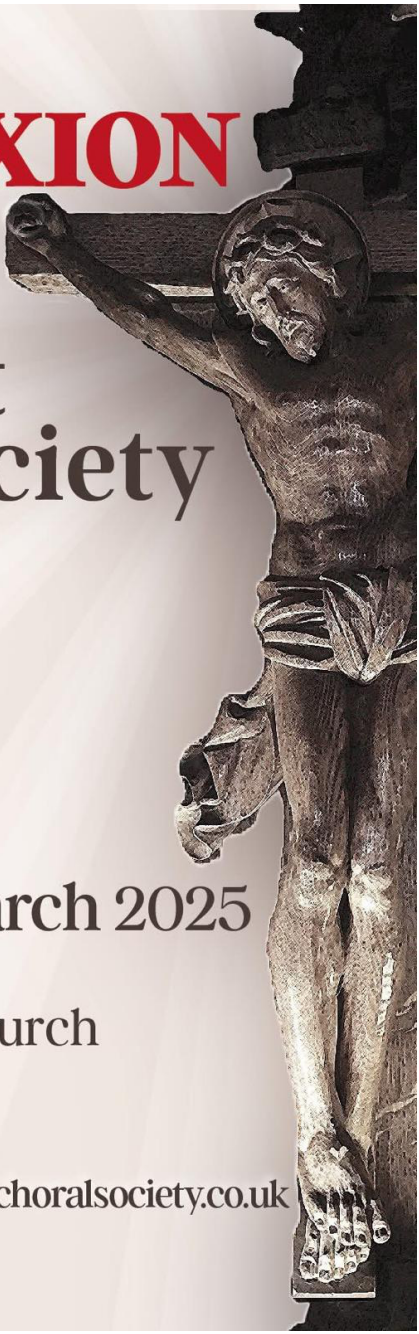
On the 23rd March there will be Family Service in Markbeech, usually well attended by local families who are always made so welcome. Donkeys are being warned about our Palm Sunday service in April, Easter being so late this year.

Janey Cooper
PCC secretary

From the register:

Funerals
21st January Hever Una Higgs
22nd January Four Elms Richard Bennett

THE CRUCIFIXION STAINER



Penshurst Choral Society

Joe Tobin Conductor

Saturday 29th March 2025 at 6.30pm

St John the Baptist Church
Penshurst TN11 8BN

Tickets from penshurstchoralsociety.co.uk
or on the door.
Adults £15 Children £5

benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
FOUR ELMS													
2023	60	9	105	83	27	27	41	23	39	152	122	109	797
2024	58	122	94	61	49	27	64	28	165	86	77	78	909
2025	89												
HEVER													
2023	80	2	111	94	37	34	59	24	59	152	131	110	891
2024	73	136	82	58	49	25	74	32	183	83	62	52	906
2025	126												
MARKBEECH													
2023	90	4	123	105	31	34	56	32	48	161	142	106	932
2024	80	139	95	71	61	29	62	44	186	77	79	60	983
2025	114												

HALL BOOKINGS

Four Elms – Kevin Haydon 07787 394 806
Hever – Mrs Ryan 01732 864168
Markbeech – Mrs Paige 01342 850328

COUNCILS

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

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 **April** edition should reach us no later than **15 March** Subscriptions cost £5 pa if delivered by a volunteer and £18 if sent by post.
To pay you can send a cheque payable to 'The Link' with your address to 1 Triangle Cottage, Hever Road, Hever TN8 7NL or 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

march diary

Until 31 May 2025 **Exhibitions: The Story of Bough Beech reservoir and Healthcare in our Town**, 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

June 5 to July 13 **Grange Park Opera**, West Horsley, Surrey grangeparkopera.co.uk

28 Feb **Hever PTA Quiz,** Edenbridge WI Hall, £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
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
21 Mar **Film Club, The Great Escaper**, Hever Castle Golf Club	7.30pm
22 Mar **Community Litter pick**, Hever – meet on the parish field	9.30am
22 Mar **Community Litter pick**, Markbeech	1pm
29 Mar **Community Litter pick,** Four Elms	9am
29 Mar **The Crucifix Stainer**, Penshurst Choral Soc, Penshurst Church tickets £15 child £5	6.30pm
5 Apr **Hever Hort Spring Show**, Hever Village Hall	2 – 4pm
8 Apr **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms	from 10.45am
10 Apr **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
13 Apr **Birdsong walk**, Bore Place, tickets adult £20, child £11	9 – 11.30am
19 Apr **Easter Egg Hunt,** Hever Churchyard	3.30pm
26 Apr **Spring foraging walk**, Bore Place, tickets £35	2 – 4.30pm
10 May **Introduction to Beekeeping**, Bore Place, £80	10am - 4pm
15 May **Bat Walk**, Bore Place tickets £12.50	8.15 – 9.45pm

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