December 2025 /January 2026

THE LINK







In this issue:

- Bob's your historian
- tributes to two grandes dames
- on track for 200 years
- castle canines
- AND CHRISTMAS!!

...and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

Welcome to the December/January Link



As the trees finally lose their leaves, spherical green mistletoe bushes stare down at us from on high, inviting a Christmas kiss. Inspecting an unusually low-level bush, I was amazed to see that it was not growing round its host's branch like ivy but literally growing out of it. Wikipedia had to be consulted.....

Seconds later I had the facts - what happens is that a bird will eat the mistletoe's sticky white berries and then wipe its beak on a branch, ideally a poplar, lime or apple tree. The berry's seeds are coated in a substance called viscin which enables the seed to stick to the branch until it germinates. Then, as in a horror film, a specialised root called a haustorium erupts out of the seed and bores into the host branch, starts taking nutrients and water - and the bush grows!

The tree I was looking at was a Turkey Oak, so called because its leaves look like a turkey's foot - all very festive. As is this Link - Ivan and Bridget rising to the many occasions advertised here with their excellent baubles. They work long and hard each month, we are very lucky to have them.

And as for the birds in those trees .... I knew birdsong reduced outside the spring breeding season, but I had no idea that it actually changed into "subsong" during late autumn and winter. The subsong of blackbirds is quiet and introverted, containing snatches of the full song but without the polish of the spring. It seems they like to keep in practice as they wait for the mating and fighting season, but they also like to rest and conserve their energy. The Link team are doing the latter in December, but we are back full throttle in January.

Meanwhile we three editors wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Ivan Furness, Bridget Harris and Joanna Wade
thelink@hever.org

THE LINK



what we do



Locals Mick and Sara Thornton are sitting in their office surrounded by shiny white crockery ready to set off on Jools Holland's winter tour. They have been running the Food Factory, catering music industry tours, for over 20 years. Mick came into tour catering via hotel management and found he loved the life, Sara, who did a sociology degree, did the admin from home while their three boys were going through Chiddingstone school etc, and now touring with him. Their sons grew up with tales of Elton John, Cliff Richard and many more - and they *still* don't think their parents are cool!



Mick might look slightly unsure in the picture I took of them but nothing could be further from the truth..... you need only look at the framed menu signed by James Taylor to "the best in the business" to see the full extent of his skill. Chicken satay or prawn pil pil skewers followed by five choices of main course including salmon poached in green tea, with syrup sponge for pudding - all on offer within an hour of arriving at a venue and building a kitchen and dining area for that night's performance. The menu changes every day. Despite the luxurious food on offer - lobster bisque is a favourite, simple homely dishes are prized. Jools Holland loves corned beef hash and fried egg, the Rolling Stones shepherd's pie (Keith Richards eats it every day). The crew travelling with an artist can vary from 20 to 140. David Gilmour travelled with 140 on his 2024 tour of Italy featuring a residency in the Circo Massimo in Rome. A team of six did all the catering: three chefs, a shopper, a pastry chef and the dressing room manager, the latter being Sara's domain.

There are many myths about the faddy and extravagant demands of the stars for dressing room treats but the Thorntons say this is exaggerated not least because the performers ultimately pay for all their luxuries. Nonetheless, a dressing room which feels comfortable and familiar is important and Sara takes great care to provide plants, tablecloths and treats to keep the stars happy. Venues vary from the Albert Hall which has a kitchen ready for use in the cavernous basement to poky spaces with no facilities at all. They have worked in them all, and with no complaints because they like a challenge. And some of the places they have cooked in sound fabulous - including the

amphitheatres of Verona and Nîmes and a marquee next to the Bosphorus.

The stars eat quite early, then the crew and after the show leftovers are polished off so there is little or no waste. And they are off.....loading their equipment onto the trucks, crammed in alongside the lighting and sound gear, hopping onto the well-appointed tour bus, also catered by Food Factory of course, and sleeping. After the tour there is time to rest - and then to polish up the chinaware ready to hit the road again. Mick still loves cooking and they both love being around creative people with an enduring passion for what they do. There are a lot of "lovelys" in this paragraph - but it is, all ways round, a lovely way to make a living ....

Joanna Wade



village hall update

The Hever Village Hall Management Committee, following the helpful feedback from the community meeting on October 4th, has decided not to continue to explore the option of moving the hall across the road from the current site ("option 2"). At its meeting on October 28th, the committee agreed to concentrate on the remaining option, the construction of a new hall at the back of the current site ("option 1"). The external design is being revisited and planning permission needs to be a renewed. The committee has in the past carefully considered whether the current hall could be restored and concluded that this was not feasible (please see the Design, Access & Heritage Statement in the November 2021 Planning Application for more detail). It discussed a proposal made at the meeting to restore the current hall, but again concluded that this was not feasible. It is open to looking at this proposal again if a detailed and costed plan is provided.

Once the committee has formulated its final proposal a consultation will take place by questionnaire delivered to every household. The committee would like to thank all attendees for their participation in the open meeting and also those unable to attend who gave feedback. Minutes of the October 28th meeting are being finalised and will be uploaded to the Hever.org website along with the Design, Access & Heritage Statement once approved.

Mandy Yarnold
Chair - Hever Village Hall Management Committee
hever.village.hall@gmail.com

village screen film club



At the usual venue, Hever Castle Golf Club, our second film will be:

Friday 17 January - Widow Cliquot
Champagne! This is the story behind the Veuve Clicquot champagne family and business that began in the late 18th century - featuring the grandaughter of one of our regular audience members.

The films (all less than two hours long) start at 7.30 and doors open at 6.30 for the pre-show meal and bar - with ice cream in the interval. Tickets are a suggested donation of £2 for the film or £16.00 to include the meal (the same price as last year) - scampi and chips or baked potato with cheese and/or beans. 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 and please bring cash if possible.

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 Tuesday 23rd



Boxing Day Meet In Chiddingstone Village

Come and join your local hunt on foot on 26th December for our festive Boxing Day Meet where you can enjoy the spectacle of the horses and hounds arriving at 11am.

The earlier you arrive at Chiddingstone village the nearer you can park, so please leave in plenty of time. Refreshments available from 10am.



The NHS app can be used to book appointments

What I said in October was wrong! You can use the all-powerful app to book appointments with your GP though you have to be persistent as the route isn't obvious. At the top right hand corner of the "Services" section there is an underlined View all - click on that and you get the chance to "Contact your GP about a health problem" - click on that and you can go from there. Or ask Vicky (see the November Link).

Joanna Wade

Daphne Owen-Jones - a tribute by her children

Daphne was a remarkable person. She absolutely thrived in social situations, she only had to walk into a room full of people and her face lit up. Friends were a hugely important part of her life and she forged many lifelong friendships. In particular, Ann and Dennis Greig who were so kind to her over many years and the Melluish's (Anna and Mike) who were incredibly generous to Daphne especially after Alan died. She had a great sense of humour and a cheeky nature. She was fun when we were young and tolerant and non-judgemental when we were teenagers, welcoming everyone we brought home with open arms and an open mind.



Daphne was always wonderfully glamorous and elegant. Even well into later life, she took great pride in her appearance. She adored clothes and had a natural sense of style. She loved classical music and gardening but entertaining was her real love, being a very competent and imaginative cook. She was hosting lunch parties well into her 90's. She faced all the tough times in her life with such courage and was a true inspiration to her children.

Daphne was born on 13 May 1929 in Shanghai. Her father worked for the Chinese Maritime customs most of whose senior management were foreigners, mainly British. To join it was a pre-requisite that you could read and write Chinese which Jack (as he was known) did with great determination. Daphne's mother, Gwendoline, was half Welsh, half American. Daphne had one younger brother, David, who she was very close to.

Sadly her parents divorced in 1940. Her mother subsequently married George Fisher, an oil executive. Daphne was very fond of George – the divorce wasn't acrimonious. In 1941 George was posted to India and the family moved to Calcutta. They remained in India for the rest of the war. Daphne attended a school in Poona and then Hallett War School in the Himalayan foothills. In 1945 Daphne's mother and stepfather left for a new assignment in Puerto Rico and Daphne went to live in China with her father. They moved to Macao where he became Commissioner at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a short spell in Hong Kong where Daphne took a shorthand and typing course as her father said "you never know you might have to work"! (what an irony as she worked for many, many years after that). When her father's work came to an end in 1948 she left with him on the Al Sudan, to Marseille where they then caught the Blue train on to England.

Daphne's father married Ruth Marshall and bought a fruit farm in Appledore Heath, Kent while Daphne found digs in London and her first job with Knight, Frank & Rutley in Hanover Square. It was then, through a friend from the Hallett School, that she first met Alan Owen-Jones a medical student at Middlesex Hospital. They were soon engaged and married once he qualified. In 1955 they went to live in Newport, Rhode Island where Alan had a rotating internship and Daphne worked in the out-patient department at the same hospital. Alan became interested in anaesthetics and they made many friends and really enjoyed their time there. They bought an old car for $20 and travelled around the States from Niagara, to Chicago and on to West Virginia.

In 1957 Alan joined a practice in Edenbridge and they adopted Peter that same year. They spent the first two years in a cottage in Four Elms kindly lent by the Greigs, before buying Oak Tree House in Edenbridge with an acre of garden and an apple orchard. Daphne and Alan adopted Sarah-Jane in 1959. In 1962 Daphne's father died, then later that same year Alan tragically died aged just 33. Daphne's mother came to live in Oak Tree House to support Daphne and help with the children - who were only 5 and 3. Daphne managed to find part time work in an antiques shop in Edenbridge.

In 1970 she took a job in London with a firm of solicitors in Jermyn Street. In 1971 her mother sadly died. By then Peter and SJ were both boarding and her company generously allowed Daphne to work part time to be at home in the holidays. In 1977 she got a new job for solicitors Withers as PA to the senior partner and decided to move to London. A few years later she heard of a vacancy at Winchester College for a matron and spent several happy years there living in the school community. There followed a move to a village in Hampshire where she worked at The Wykeham Gallery in Stockbridge – happily surrounded by paintings and artists. After about a decade she moved back to Kent where she felt a lot of her old friends were, first to Langton Green and then in 2005 she came full circle and moved back to Edenbridge. She lived happily in Church Street until independent living became just too hard, so reluctantly she relocated to Edenbridge Manor Care Home where she spent the last two years of her life.

Sarah-Jane Lane & Peter Owen-Jones



it's a dog's life at Hever Castle

The Astor family were a family of dog lovers, evidenced in their inclusion in many family photos, and the small, gravelled plot in the castle grounds known as the 'Dog Graves'. This area is poignant especially when one learns that the Astor family walked past the graves every Sunday on their way to church via Church Gill.



Gavin & Irene Astor 1978

John Jacob and Violet Astor were particularly fond of Manchester Terriers, giving them names such as Jasper, Jeff, Jones and Jumbo. Though their grandson John Jacob 'Johnnie' Astor was less fond and remembers that in order to see his grandfather he had to '...get past the assault course of his dogs.. .'. JJ and Violet's son Gavin and, his wife Lady Irene, preferred Labrador Retrievers and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. Their eldest son Johnnie, the current Lord Astor of Hever, had a black Labrador called Jane, who would often sleep in his bedroom when he was in residence at Hever.



Jane the labrador



Gavin Astor

Their love of dogs, and indeed all animals can be seen in the many artefacts that have been collected by the family, from grand statues of lions in the gardens to the toy dog collection on the top floor of the castle. These little dogs range from the 19th Century to the more modern and include many different breeds. In the cabinet can be found lead Bulldogs, and Jack Russell's, Greyhounds and Dachshunds, with the relatable inclusion of a Pug from the Wade Ceramics 1950's signature line of Wade Whimsies. For the more eagle-eyed there is also a Mountain Goat, a Badger and a Kangaroo to be spotted.

The appreciation for dogs at Hever continued when the castle was sold in 1983, and many members of staff have dogs, bringing them to the extensive grounds for walks and fusses. My own is a Miniature Schnauzer called Bean, who has just turned one, and adores Hever especially the Lake Walk. For the dog loving staff at Hever, nothing makes us happier then to see our four legged friends enjoying life and getting to do what doggies do.

Alison Palmer Curator
Hever Castle



Gill Lambert

Gillian Margaret Lambert (nee Scott) was born on 16th November 1936 in Cachar, Assam, India where her Scottish father was a tea planter, married to an English Irish daughter of a tea planter. Her husband of 34 years Christopher John Lambert died in 1998 and is interred at St Paul's Church. Gill and Chris lived happily in Four Elms for over 30 years and were known to and loved by many in the community. She is survived by three children: Catherine Whittle (Tony), Andrew Lambert (Linzi) and Joanna Ahearn (Michael), as well as five grandchildren Rebecca, Jennifer, Allison, Harvey and Connie and a brother David Scott (Ginger).

Gill worshipped at St Paul's Church, Four Elms for over 50 years and was a much-valued churchwarden for 20 years. She was a neighbour and friend to the late Richard Bennett. Christina Hodson remembers that Gill 'was devoted to St Paul's and was meticulous in the management of both the building and Christian mission of our small rural church'. She kept the church spotless for services at Christmas and Easter and organised hundreds of weddings and funerals. She was passionate about the flowers in the church and would often run a service in the absence of a vicar!



She was a proud member of the Women's Institute and former executive committee member of Crockham Hill WI in 1970's. Her children were brought up on WI produce along with fruit and vegetables that Gill and Chris grew in their beautiful garden. In 1999, Gill moved to Marlpit Hill where she embraced life in Edenbridge doing shifts at Edenbridge Museum, playing an active role with the WRVS, Ide Hill Country Market, Meals on Wheels for the Elderly, Harvest Suppers and more. Tuesdays and Thursdays she loved playing bridge with her friends.

She enjoyed all sports and played tennis until she was 80 at Crockham Hill/ Limpsfield Tennis Clubs, indoor bowls at FE Village Hall, outdoor bowls in Brasted, darts at The Royal Oak Crockham Hill. It was because of Gill's Scottish heritage that she loved dancing and was a member of Limpsfield Scottish Dancing Club, organising and enjoying many a Burns Night. After 23 years living independently in Marlpit Hill, in July 2021, Gill suffered a life changing stroke and moved to Bourne Wood Manor Nursing Home, Farnham to be near her daughter Catherine. She lived there happily for 4 years and died peacefully, surrounded by family, on the 7th November 2025.

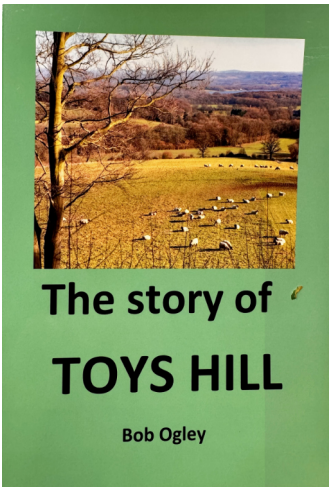
Donations: https://gillianlambert.muchloved.com/

a local historian



A hen-house flew past them in the dark and they quickly ducked back inside. It was the night of the great storm of 1987 and, on the top of Brasted Chart, Bob and Fern Ogley were in the eye of it. As dawn broke they met their neighbours climbing up the impassable roads, many in the direction of the Fox and Hounds, and across the flattened forest they could see Gatwick Airport's emergency generators glittering in the distance. As editor of the Sevenoaks Chronicle, Bob set out for work and his journalists were deployed to record the devastation. There followed a best-selling book "In the Wake of the Hurricane" following which Bob retired from the Chronicle and has gone on to write 21 more books, all supported by Fern, a former actress turned editor and publisher. These books have raised more than £114,000 for charity; there is one about wartime Biggin Hill and now Bob has turned his attention to Toys Hill.

He tells many excellent stories about this attractive spot with amazing views and a tight village community; no one knows where the name came from, perhaps there was a farmer called "Toys". It was not an easy place to live in the nineteenth century as the nearest water source was down a steep hill. In the 1880s, as transport links improved, Victorian Londoners started making their way to the countryside - one was Harriet Yorke who invited her friend Octavia Hill to join her at Larksfield, a house with fine views across the Weald. Hill, a well known social reformer in London, arrived and turned her attention to her rural surroundings. It was here that the two friends, along with Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley hatched a plan to enable Londoners to enjoy the countryside - and the National Trust was born. One of its earliest acquisitions was a lovely plot at the top of Mariners Hill.



Octavia was nothing if not dynamic, and concerned about the lack of accessible fresh water, she organised the Toys Hill well, supplemented a few years later by a gravity-powered water tower which supplied piped water. When it fell out of use, the Trust preserved it as a home for natterer bats. There are many fine houses nestled in the woods, though some have disappeared - we wrote about Weardale, the footprint on the summit, in

April; it provided much local employment and the servants were kept on long after the house was abandoned by Lord Stanhope's widow.

Both Toys Hill pubs, the Fox and Hounds and the Tally-Ho on the junction with Scords Lane have long closed, as has the Post Office. The fine Arts and Crafts village hall with its ingenious "secret" partition revealing an altar is still going strong and has recently been restored with a lottery grant.

An ideal Christmas present, The Story of Toys Hill costs £25, please email Fern to buy yours (fernogley@gmail.com) - and Bob's next book is about Knole - watch this space!

Joanna Wade

Hever Christmas Fair Report

It's beginning to feel (a bit!) like Christmas after this year's Christmas Fair, hosted in the stunning grounds of Hever Castle. Thursday 6th November was full of magic, warmth and lots of happy shoppers – even the drizzle didn't keep them away. Thank you to all our local bakers for such delicious treats. Next year will be the 30th Christmas Fair which continues to raise money for our beloved Church and Primary School. Our deepest gratitude, again, to Hever Castle for allowing us to use the Pavilion and a huge thank you to Piper's Florist for sponsoring this event – without which the event simply wouldn't be possible. It might feel too soon to say but… Merry Christmas!

Megan Park
Chair of the Fair Committee





all aboard!

As the year draws to a close, so does the 200th anniversary of the modern railway - the first passenger journey on the new Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825 in the Stephensons' "Locomotion 1". After 20 years of hauling goods, the railway companies had worked out that the steam engine could carry people - and that this might be profitable!



The transformative effect of the railways was felt far and wide. Workers became commuters (the first known use of the word was in 1859) and the growth of once impossibly distant suburbia began. East Croydon station opened in 1841 and new homes sprang up immediately. The trains took a while to get to our local Kentish towns, presumably because of the tunnels which had to be excavated under the North Downs. Sevenoaks (Bat and Ball) opened in 1862 and Sevenoaks town in 1868, now it serves 3.5 million passenger journeys a year. Hever opened in 1888; the completion of the London, Brighton and South Coast railway's Uckfield line was delayed on its way to Lewes whilst it awaited the opening of the impressive Markbeech tunnel. Hever had a resultant housing boom in the shape of Pigdown (originally New Town), built to house the workers digging the tunnel. Hever now serves 40,400 passengers annually.



Another effect of railways was to enable fresh food to travel to often badly nourished people in the cities. For example, instead of saving up to keep a cow in their basement, people could now buy fresh milk from farms in the country. The down side was that milk, mixed into big churns from a variety of farms, which was infected by bovine TB took its toll on tens of thousands over the years until the BCG vaccination was rolled out.

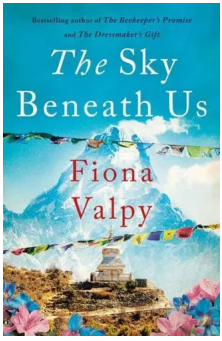
A tangled web of railways sprang up, often sponsored by local landowners who didn't see the point of cooperation as what they wanted was for the railways to serve their guests. The Lewes and East Grinstead railway, now the Bluebell Line, was the brain child of Lord Sheffield, his line had six stations, only one within walking distance of a village. Sheffield Park and the homes of the line's other sponsors were by contrast well served! London Bridge still confuses with its two different termini now linked by subterranean escalators as even they were the property of private companies.

Joanna Wade

We published a special railways edition of the Link in October 2021 which you can find on hever.org



Book of the year as recommended by the Bowern Book Group



The Sky Beneath Us by Fiona Valpy

Set in Edinburgh, Kathmandu and beyond during the period 1927 to 2020, a young woman called Violet Mackenzie is living her dream of studying at Edinburgh's School of Gardening for Women. She later travels and lives out her life in the mountains in Nepal. In 2020 Violet's great niece Daisy sets out to retrace Violet's journey and piece together her story.

This is an inspiring uplifting story of love and loss, courage and adventure. Everyone in my book club loved it.

Carol Bowern
Bowern book group

news from four elms primary



We've had a fantastic start to our second term at Four Elms Primary School, filled with community spirit, creativity, and exciting learning opportunities. At the weekend, we proudly took part in the Edenbridge Bonfire Procession with our theme "Four Elms is Wicked". It was such a wonderful community event, with so many families joining the procession or cheering us on from the sidelines. We are thrilled to share that we came 2nd in the Junior Cup, and even more delighted that one of our pupils achieved 1st place in The Kiwi Cup for an incredible Tin Man costume! A huge well done to everyone involved.



Back in school, the learning has been just as inspiring. Class 1 have been busy retelling their own stories, developing confidence and creativity in their oral story telling. Class 2 have created fantastic fact files and storyboards, showcasing their growing research and presentation skills. Class 3 wowed us all with their exhibition on Vikings and Saxons at The Edenbridge Museum. They loved sharing their work with families and members of the public—it was a brilliant celebration of their hard work and historical knowledge. Meanwhile, Class 4 have been working hard on Canva, producing impressive presentations about Ancient Egypt and designing their own travel guides based on South America. Their digital skills and creativity have really shone through.

We also came together for Children in Need, celebrating with a fabulous Strictly Come Dancing-themed day. The children arrived in sparkles and bow ties, helping us raise money for this important cause while having lots of fun. As we move into the festive season, excitement is building for our KS1 Nativity, where our youngest pupils will shine on stage. We're also looking forward to sharing in the Trust Carol Concert and enjoying a trip to the pantomime - a perfect way to end the year with laughter and joy.

Thank you to our families and community for your continued support - it truly makes Four Elms a special place to grow and thrive. Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

Anna Cheddie
Co-Head of School



news from hever primary



One of the highlights on the Hever calendar is our annual Key Stage 2 Poetry Recital Competition which takes place in the beautiful setting of St Peter's Church. Poetry plays an important role in the National Curriculum for English, where children are encouraged not only to enjoy reading and writing poems, but also to learn them by heart. This helps them to understand how language works — the rhythm, the sound, and the meaning behind the words — and it strengthens their memory and expression. Performing poetry aloud is a valuable skill, helping to build confidence, practise clear communication, and connect with an audience.

All of our Key Stage 2 children choose and learn a poem that appeals to them, and are supported through feedback and encouragement to develop their presentation ready for the class heats. Children are selected to go through to the final in the church, where we were fortunate to be joined by Councillor Lynda Harrison as one of our guest judges. The children's performances were exceptional this year, with one visitor describing them as 'ambitious, smart, polite children really aiming high' and another saying, 'I was truly wowed by the children at the Poetry competition yesterday – every one of them recited their poems - some very long and complex - from memory and with such expression.' We were very proud of them all!



Our proximity to St Peter's Church is one of the joys of our beautiful location and we also shared a more solemn time there together for our Remembrance Service, when the children read aloud the names on the War Memorial to remember those who served from Hever village. Our head girl and head boy also represented the school in the Edenbridge Remembrance Parade, laying a wreath at the War Memorial.

Although it feels a little early for Christmas carols, our Year 6 children sang beautifully at the Hever Castle Christmas Fair adding to the festivities. We are very grateful to everyone involved in organising and contributing to this, and for the generosity of Hever Castle, as the school really benefits from this event.

You still have time to book a school tour if you are looking for a place for your little one for September 2026 and would like to know more about our school; please contact the school office (01732 862304 or email office@hever.kent.sch.uk) to arrange a time. Although our current reception class is full, we do have a few spaces further up the school if you are looking for a place for an older child. Please contact the office for more information.

Helene Bligh
Headteacher

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Eden Valley Builders	extensions, conversions and general building	07778431470
Clare Elizabeth	painting and decorating	0777 5328781
HJM Plumbing & Heating	general plumbing, heating and maintenance	07908854881
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
Jade Johnson language tuition in German, French & English online or in person	07761 287517

Fitness and Health

BDHL private & group health insurance and corporate wellbeing		01892 891900
Beauty By Molly- Massage, Facials, lash lift & tint, House of Health Hever		07516897225
Flexi Foot Care, Diane Fletcher - home visiting podiatrist/chiropodist		0790 3293533
Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 700771
Step by Step, Michelle Hogan, mobile foot care practice		07786 038149
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

Container Storage, low monthly rates - Gaywood Farm, Edenbridge		07973210361
Daren Wood	chimney sweep, pots and cowls fitted	01959 564263
MOLE CATCHER, Peter King		Mob:07432 813614 or 01892 520287
Pegrum	boilers, heating, plumbing & 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

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Hever Parish Council

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

Given the significant amount of development and the volume of new housing proposed, we are urging everyone to respond to the Local Plan Consultation before it closes on 11th December. Our local landscape is going to change. There have been a series of presentations for residents to attend and information is available on line: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/localplanconsultation A really useful video on how to respond effectively to the consultation (source: New Edenbridge District Residents Association) can be found at: https://nedra.org.uk/events/29-oct-2025-public-meeting

Our infrared camera is available for residents to borrow for free to help identify areas of heat loss from walls, roofs, windows and doors in their homes. Residents can then plan how to make their home more energy efficient to benefit the environment and their bills. Please contact the clerk if you would like to borrow the camera.

With the disappointing news the second runway was given the go ahead at Gatwick, local opposition groups are campaigning to stop the development. The airspace review is ongoing, with great concern for our area with increased flights, noise and pollution. For more information please visit https://cagne.org/ and https://www.gacc.org.uk/

On a positive note, the refurbished board together with a new map of the Parish has been installed in Hever and looks so much better. The long-awaited surface repairs to the Chippens Bank footpath are on the schedule to be carried out, according to the KCC PROW team, so hopefully they will be done soon. Life at Four Elms Pond seem to have quietened down which residents (and of course the wildlife) are pleased about.



By the time you read this, the rather splendid Christmas tree will be up spreading some festive cheer at Four Elms. As always, our thanks go to the generous Willerby Landscapes who kindly donate, install and decorate the tree for everyone to enjoy.

As Clerk, I have been busy preparing the budget for the next financial year, looking at potential options to improve the play facilities for younger children at Four Elms play area and supporting a request for an additional bus stop. We will also be rolling out a new website soon, so watch this space….

The next Hever Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 12 January in Hever Village Hall. For all information relating to your Parish Council, please visit www.hever.org . Agendas for meetings and the associated documents (including financial information) can be found http://hever.org/parish-council/agendas

Warmly wishing you all a peaceful festive season.

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

church in december/january

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/

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

Rector
Revd.Simon Braid
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simonbraid@icloud.com

Administrator
Ana Roxburgh
beneficeemail@gmail.com

Wardens

Four Elms
Christina Hodson
01732 700247

Hever
Mandy Yarnold
01342 850028

Markbeech
Lynnie Rowan
07881 482154



REGISTER
Weddings
30th August Four Elms Laura Crawford & Philip Bryant
6th September Markbeech Joel Downes & Laura Page
13th September Markbeech Abigail Carter & Sam Collingwood
13th September Hever Christine Fox & Mark Nisbett
Baptism
27th July Hever Jago Pax Joannou

Winter Fuel Payments SCAMS- Edenbridge & Westerham Citizens Advice warns that if you receive a text inviting you to apply for a payment do not engage with it and forward it to 7726. The Government will never ask for bank details by text. The Winter Fuel Payments Helpline number is 0800 731 0160

church in december/january

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
7 Dec 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	2nd in Advent
7 Dec 6pm	Contemporary service at St.Paul's Four Elms	2nd in Advent
13 Dec 5.30pm	Community Carol service at St.Peter's Hever	Saturday
14 Dec 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	3rd in Advent
14 Dec 3pm	Forest Church at St.Peter's Hever	3rd in Advent
14 Dec 5.30pm	Carols at the Kentish Horse	3rd in Advent
16 Dec 6.30pm	Carols at the Four Elms Inn	Tuesday
19 Dec 6.30pm	Nine lessons & carols at St.Peter's Hever followed by supper	Friday
21 Dec 10am	Said Communion St.Peter's Hever	4th in Advent
21 Dec 3pm	Carol service at St.Paul's Four Elms	4th in Advent
21 Dec 6pm	Carol service at Holy Trinity Markbeech	4th in Advent
24 Dec 4pm	Crib Service at St.Peter's Hever	Christmas Eve
24 Dec 11.30pm	Midnight communion at St.Peter's Hever	Christmas Eve
25 Dec 9.15am	Christmas Family Eucharist at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Christmas Day
25 Dec 11am	Christmas Family Communion at St.Paul's Four Elms	Christmas Day
28 Dec 10am	Said Communion St.Peter's Hever	Christmas 1
4 Jan 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Christmas 2
11 Jan 8am	Morning Prayer St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 1
11 Jan 10am	Eucharist Holy Trinity Markbeech	Epiphany 1
11 Jan 3pm	Forest Church at St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 1
18 Jan 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever	Epiphany 2
22 Jan 6pm	Choral Evensong at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
25 Jan 8am	Said communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Epiphany 3
25 Jan 10am	Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech	Epiphany 3



our rector's thoughts

Like me, I imagine few of us like waiting; whether it's being stuck in traffic or waiting for a hospital appointment. There are many in this world for whom waiting can be grim, for example, those waiting and longing for peace, such as in Ukraine, or in prison or oppressed awaiting freedom. These can be very dark places. We often read Isaiah 9:1 at Christmas: *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.* It's a prophecy to an oppressed people, which Christians see as fulfilled in Christ, 'the light of world'. It is symbolised by the lighting of the final white candle on our Advent wreaths as we pass midnight on Christmas Eve.

Advent is a time of waiting and so we have Advent calendars and candles to help us with the count-down to Christmas. Nowadays this season seems to focus on shopping, getting the Christmas tree and decorating our homes, offices and churches. But traditionally it was a 'penitential' time, without decorations: a time for reflection, repentance and prayer. Then when Christmas Day arrived, the twelve days of feasting began! Whatever we may be waiting for, how can we engage positively with the waiting rather than indulging in constant distraction so as to just get through it? As we await the New Year, the world around us can seem to be a very dark place. This is nothing new. In the aftermath of the First World War WB Yeats wrote the following: *Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world…the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.*

The message of Christmas is that into the darkness, the light has come. We can look into the dark with hope. It's like a child afraid of the dark, whose door is left ajar so that a shard of light falls through to remind her of the presence of her parents. Christmas is all about the presence of Christ, who is Emmanuel, which means 'God with us', driving away the darkness and our fear.

Here are some words of a contemporary worship song:
Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness, opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you.
Hope of a life spent with You
King of all days, oh, so highly exalted.
Glorious in Heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created. All for love's sake became poor

I wish you all a very joyful Christmas and let's pray for peace and the presence of Jesus, the Light of the world, now and in 2026.

Simon



news from the pews



Four Elms

We were blessed with a beautiful crisp sunny morning for our Remembrance Service. After the service many chatted over refreshments with stories of relatives who had participated in the World Wars. Thank you to all involved.

As we approach Christmas many of us look forward to the festive season but there are also those who are not so fortunate and don't have family and friends to cheer and feed them. That is why half our collection at the St Paul's Carol Service is donated to the Crisis charity. Before Christmas, Advent is a time of reflection. Rev. Simon takes Bible study during this period which can help us focus on the true meaning of Christmas (yes I love the Christmas advertisements as well!!). At the start of Advent we have our Christingle service, this year at St Paul's. Its a magical service for everyone, with the congregation lighting of candles. Do join us on 30th November at 10am.

In December we have Christmas carols in abundance. We welcome the Four Elms Primary school for carols at "Enjoy a Cuppa" on 9th December. On 16th December join in with carols and Christmas songs at the Four Elms Inn, with thanks to Mark and Wayne. And on 21st December our annual carol service in the church with the Edenbridge Town Band followed by mulled wine and mince pies welcomes everyone. Christmas Day we have all age Communion at 11 am. So in addition to other Churches in the Benefice we have something for everyone.

At the beginning of November we learnt with great sadness that Gill Lambert, a much loved member of St. Paul's Church, passed peacefully away. We remember Gill as churchwarden and friend to many and send our condolences to her family.

It goes, without saying, we wish you all a very happy Christmas and may we have peace in 2026.

Christina Hodson
Churchwarden



Hever

As the year draws to a close, it is a wonderful opportunity to pause, reflect, and express our deep gratitude for all the help and support we have received throughout the past twelve months. Our church community simply could not run smoothly without the hard work and dedication of our wonderful volunteers. Their tireless commitment strengthens our community and is a blessing to us all. Thank you to every single person who has offered their time and talent this year!

We are looking forward to celebrating Christmas with a variety of services and events. Our popular Carol Supper will follow the Nine Lessons and Carols service on Friday, December



19th, and this will be held at the Village Hall. Please book your food in advance. Tickets will be paid on the day and cost £12 per person or £8 per child (Year 6 and below). Don't miss our Christmas Parish Lunch on Thursday, December 11th, starting at 12:30pm for a 1pm meal. Everyone in the Parish is warmly invited. To help us with catering and any special dietary needs, please let Joanna Wade or Jane Rosam know if you plan on attending. Please avoid parking on the paddock if the ground is wet.

Please note that the church will be taking a short break for daily visitors in the New Year. The church will be closed from Monday, January 5th until Wednesday, February 12th, except for scheduled services and occasional offices (such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals).

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events! Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

November has been busy, starting with a beautiful Choral Evensong including All Souls at Hever. It was a moving service, appreciated deeply by all who attended. The hospitality of Hever Church was also kind and generous.

On November 5th, the Markbeech choir joined again with Withyham to sing evensong at Chichester Cathedral. It was a long day but an enormous honour in such wonderful surroundings. Most recently, all three churches have had Acts of Remembrance, with Markbeech having a Eucharist before it. The Irens family joined with Simon in making it meaningful for all of us.

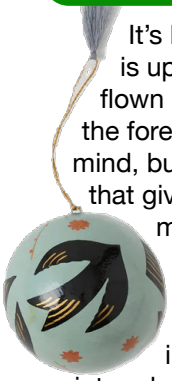
We have two baptisms to look forward to, one on the 23rd November and twins on the 14th December – always great to welcome new members to our churches. Also on the 14th December are the normally well attended Kentish Horse Carols with drinks of course. They begin at 5.30. On the 21st December, we have the Service of lessons and carols at Holy Trinity Markbeech at 6pm. There will also be drinks and nibbles including mince pies in the village hall afterwards. Please join us.

As January is also included, I should mention that on Thursday 22nd January 6pm, Choral Evensong will take place at Holy Trinity for the week of prayer for Christian Unity. On the 25th January will be the popular Family Service.

I hope in the meantime, that the Women's Meeting tonight has gone well and our Markbeech Bazaar in the Barn, together with Father Christmas has been well attended. Wishing you all, and your loved ones, a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Janey Cooper
PCC Secretary

gardening



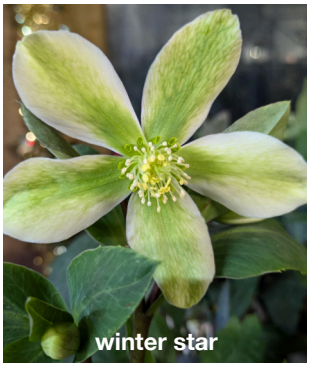
It's hard to believe that Christmas is upon us and another year has flown by! December may not be in the forefront of every gardener's mind, but there are so many plants that give joy even in the darkest of months with their scent, flowers or stem/foliage interest. We may not necessarily be out, immersed in our gardens, so winter plant positioning is vital so borders or containers can be enjoyed from the comfort of your home.

Here are some of our favourites for enhancing your garden this Christmas:

Sarcococca hookeriana 'Winter Gem' A fabulous evergreen shrub with glossy, dark-green foliage with vanilla scented white flowers. Can grow up to 70cm and prefers a shady aspect. Hellebores are a wide genus of winter flowering perennials that can flower from November all the way through until April. They are available in many colours and forms. Some of our top varieties include **Helleborus x hybridus 'Pretty Ellen Series'** (Flowers are slightly upward facing) **Helleborus ericsmithii 'Winter Star'**, a brilliant new cultivar with star shaped white flowers that fade to pale pink.

Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Grandiflora' is a majestic winter flowering shrub. Being deciduous, it really shows off its unusual large nodding yellow flowers and has the most amazing clove scent. Can grow 1.5 x 1.5m and prefers a well-drained, fertile soil and partial shade.

Galanthus elwesii (the Giant Snowdrop) This is an earlier flowering variety starting in December and has larger flowers than the common Snowdrop (Galanthus nivalis) and can be planted in swathes and allowed to naturalise. **Cornus alba 'Nightfall'** is a superb, brand new Dogwood shrub that has striking bright red stems in winter and dark, brooding foliage throughout the summer. Another stunner is **Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire'** with vivid orange, red and yellow stems, giving a fiery winter display. Plant in full sun/part shade.



winter star

All the above can make wonderful Christmas gifts to be enjoyed for years to come. They are just a small selection of what will be available at our annual Christmas pop-up shop here at the nursery. Take this rare opportunity to visit a strictly trade nursery and growers to the Chelsea Flower Show. Our opening dates are Monday 8th – Friday 12th December and Monday 15th – Thursday 18th December 9am-4pm. Our winter wonderland shop will also feature gift ideas from local artists. All that's left for us to say, is Merry Christmas and here's to a happy and successful 2026 in the garden!

Simon Sutcliffe
How Green Nursery

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	41.0	23	39	152	122	109	797
2024	58	122	94	61	49	27	64.0	28	165	86	77	78	909
2025	89	61	4	36	13	28	57.0	38	49	85			460
HEVER													
2023	80	2	111	93.5	37	33.5	58.5	23.5	59	152	131	110	890.5
2024	73	136	81.5	57.5	48.5	25	73.5	31.5	183	82.5	62	52	906
2025	126	54.5	4	29.5	14	31	71.5	27	52	103			512
MARKBEECH													
2023	90	4	123	105	31	34	56.0	32	48	161	142	106	932
2024	80	139	95	71	61	29	62.0	44	186	77	79	60	983
2025	114	71	4	25	21	33	52.0	22	71	115			528

HALL BOOKINGS

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



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a) 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.
b) If you can't send by bank transfer then please send a five pound note with your name and address to 1 Triangle Cottage, Hever Road, Hever TN8 7NL or
c) Send a cheque payable to the Link to the above address for **£5.50** as we now have to pay bank charges of 50p per cheque
A copy of The Link can be viewed in The Link section of the community website www.hever.org



december/january diary



Eden Valley Museum celebrating 25 years with two exhibitions 'Discover History through 25 Objects' and 'Explore Change in the Eden Valley'

2nd & 4th Wed each month **Bore Place 'Wilder Wellbeing'** nature sessions for adults – free, book online www.boreplace.org/whats-on

Women's Fitness Class Mondays at 10.30am and Weds at 6pm Markbeech Village Hall

29 and 30 Nov **Open Studio**, Brook Cottage, Chiddingstone 10.30 - 4pm
30 Nov **Wreath making workshop**, Falconhurst
1 Dec **Hever Christmas postbox opens at Brocas**
5 Dec **The West End Jerseys at Christmas**, Guthrie Pavilion, Hever Castle 7pm
6 Dec **Rustic Christmas Wreath and lunch,** Bore Place adult £67.50 10–.30pm
6 Dec **Handel's Messiah and Carol Concert**, Penshurst Church 6.30pm
6 Dec **Bach's Christmas Oratorio**, St Swinthun's, East Grinstead 7pm
7 Dec **Carols in the Barn at Bore Place** with campfire adult £7, child 4.50 3-5pm
8 – 12 Dec **How Green Nursery Christmas Pop Up Shop**, Hever 9 - 4pm
9 Dec **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms with carols from FE school 10.45am
11 Dec **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever VH with carols from Hever School 12.30 for 1pm
12 Dec **Christmas Cabaret with Sarah Boo**, Guthrie Pavilion, Hever Castle 7pm
13 Dec **Hever Village Carols**, drinks at the Henry then carols St Peter's at 5.30pm
14 Dec **Kentish Horse Carols**, Markbeech 5.30pm
15 – 18 Dec **How Green Nursery Christmas Pop Up Shop** Hever 9 - 4pm
19 Dec **Service of 9 lessons & carols at St Peter's Hever** followed by Carol Supper
21 Dec **Carols with Edenbridge Town Band at St Paul's Four Elms** 3pm
21 Dec **Service of 9 lessons & carols at Holy Trinity MB** then drinks at the Village Hall 6pm
8 Jan **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall 12.30 for 1pm
10 Jan **Volunteer day – plant an orchard** Bore Place+lunch, sign up online 10-2.30pm
12 Jan **Hever Parish Council meeting**, Hever Village Hall 7.30pm
13 Jan **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms from 10.45am
16 Jan **Hever Village Film Club – Widow Cliquot**, Hever Golf Club 7.30pm
17 Jan **Volunteer Day – community hedge survey** Bore Place+lunch sign up online 11- 3pm
29 Jan **Get to know your Telescope** at Bore Place, adult £10/child £5 6.30-8.30pm
10 Feb **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms from 10.45am
12 Feb **Hever Parish Lunch**, Hever Village Hall 12.30 for 1pm
13 Feb **Hever Village Film Club – Big Night**, Hever Golf Club 7.30pm
5 Mar **Evening of Mindful Stargazing**, Bore Place adult £5 6.30-9pm
7 Mar **Introduction to Rag Rugging**, Bore Place, adult £60 10-4pm
13 Mar **Hever Village Film Club – Paddington in Peru**, Hever Golf Club 7.30pm
15 Mar **Spring Foraging Walk**, Bore Place adult £37 2-4.30pm
9 May **Fermentation Fundamentals**, Bore Place adult £63 10-2pm
17 May **Introduction to Beekeeping**, Bore Place adult £80 10- 4pm