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THE WESTWELL FREE

170 April 2017



*Clive and Leah practising the 'Abdominal Thrust Manoeuvre'
Valerie and Catherine administering CPR to 'Annie'*

Emergency First Aid and Resuscitation training took place on Saturday 18th March to train people not only how to administer emergency first aid but to become familiar with the new Automatic Defibrillation Equipment, which will be positioned on the front wall of the Parish Hall, immediately at the top of the steps up from the road. The free of charge two hour course was considered invaluable by all those who attended and it is proposed to run a second course to get even more people familiar with the AED and basic emergency first aid. Anyone interested should contact clive.bainbridge@gmail.com 07720 908001.

**7th April
3rd, 24th April
9th-18th April
11th April
13th April
14th April
15th April
16th April**

**10.30 - 11.45am Coffee Jamieson's
1.30pm Westwell Art Group - p3
Hothfield Post Office closed
Book Club, Iris Freemantle p13
Maundy Thursday
Good Friday
Easter Craft Morning 9am-12noon - Charing - p13
Easter Sunday**

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
2 5th Sunday of Lent 8am Holy Communion St. Mary Westwell 3.30pm Messy Church-Parish Hall	3 1.30pm Painting	4	5	6 Re.F.T. 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training	7 10am Eucharist 10.30 Coffee, at Jamieson's	8
9 Palm Sunday 11am Iona Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	10	11 11am Book Club p13 Iris Freemanle	12	13 R.F.W.G. 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training 7.30pm G7 Eucharist 7.30pm W1	14 10am Good Friday Service	15
16 Easter Sunday 11am Family Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	17 7pm Fitness	18	19 11am Over 50s Fistepps	20 Re.F.T. 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training	21 7pm Finessa Dance As U Go an evening of dancing	22
23 2nd Sunday of Easter 11am Eucharist St Mary Westwell	24 1.30pm Painting (tutored session) 7pm Fitness	25	26 11am Over 50s Fistepps	27 R.F.W.G 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training	28	29
30 3rd Sunday of Easter 8am Eucharist - Charing 10.30am G7 Service - Little Chart St. Mary Westwell	May 1 Parish Council AGM	2	3	4 Re.F.T.	5	1

From the Editor's desk...

I didn't go to the last production of the players, but I gather it was very good, if different, and that congratulations are due to everyone involved and especially to Neil. The next production is rumoured to be a pantomime in November, so watch this space.

The morning devoted to the workings of the defibrillator, together with basic first aid, was very successful and will be repeated at a later date so more people can benefit.

Hothfield Post Office is being refurbished between the 9th and 18th April and therefore will be closed.

May 1st sees the first fund raising event for the revamped Church Restoration Fund, this time for loos and a kitchen, see page 13 for details.

Carolyn Thorneloe 

Stop Press: Two parish councillors had met representatives from Shepherd Neame to discuss The Wheel. The kitchen has been upgraded at a cost of £20,000 and additional work is needed to the fabric of the building. The brewery is then proposing to let the pub as a free house at a substantially discounted rent for 20 years: to offset the loss in rental revenue Shepherd Neame is looking into the possibility of building 2 houses in the pub garden. It was acknowledged that this would leave only a small garden. The brewery estimates the likelihood of getting a new tenant under these conditions as 75-80%, and has been asked for a written report that could be taken to the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th March. The Parish Council recognises the need to keep residents fully informed of the proposals.

The views of any contributor to this publication may not necessarily be those of the editor and team, nor can the Westwell Eye accept any responsibility in connection with any companies or organisations mentioned or any advertiser.

Correspondence to: Carolyn Thorneloe, Gaoler's Retreat, 5, Faversham Road, Lenham, Maidstone Kent ME17 2PN.Tel: 01622 859376, Email: westwellye@gmail.com

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Parish Council

The Parish Council met on Monday March 6th and began with the customary open forum, which gives residents the opportunity to raise items of concern. Matters raised included: recent Police activity in Watery Lane; proposed stoppage of a footpath at Wootton Manor Farm; The Wheel Inn.

Minutes of the January and February meetings were approved and matters arising taken. It was noted that the new access track to the parish hall was rutted, Frank Dwyer will carry out a temporary repair, quotes for a permanent solution to this frequently recurring problem will be obtained in the next financial year.

The Financial Report was presented and approved. A gardener has been engaged to weed the flower bed by the church wall, tidy up the parish hall shrubbery and weed the hedge in the Garden of Remembrance to enable it to become established. Quotes to install the village defibrillator have been obtained and installation is due in late March.

Planning applications were discussed at the February meeting and no new applications had been received. The revised draft of the Local Plan is expected in June, it is not yet known if there would be any further impact on the parish. The application at Bridgewood Farm will be decided by the Borough Council Planning Committee; the Parish Council has objected to the application and will speak at the Committee meeting. The Parish Council had been asked for its comments on the Wootton Manor Farm footpath stoppage proposal and supported the application.

Two parish councillors had met representatives from Shepherd Neame to discuss The Wheel. The kitchen has been upgraded at a cost of £20,000 and additional work is needed to the fabric of the building. The brewery is then proposing to let the pub as a free house at a substantially discounted rent for 20 years: to offset the loss in rental revenue Shepherd Neame is looking into the possibility of building 2 houses in the pub garden. It was acknowledged that this would leave only a small garden. The brewery estimates the likelihood of getting a new tenant under these conditions as 75-80%, and has been asked for a written report that could be taken to the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th March. The Parish Council recognises the need to keep residents fully informed of the proposals.

Correspondence: the beacon will be registered for the Beacons of Light event on 11th November 2018, to mark the centenary of the end of World War One.

Reports from Parish Council representatives were given. Appreciation had been expressed for the 3 new village signs, and compliments paid on the high standard of hedge cutting. Residents were encouraged to report potholes via the KCC website. Quotes are still being sought for relaying the crazy paving at the hall; Gordon Forster will sand and revarnish the hall floor free of charge, materials will be provided by the Hall Committee. The white posts are proving effective in preventing cars parking beyond the matting on the field, a chain is stored in the hall to delineate the matting edge when the field is very wet.

Roll-out of broadband in the parish: Information on provision parish-wide will be sought.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is 3rd May at 7pm in the parish hall, this is the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. All meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

Broadband availability / speed across Westwell Parish

The Parish Council is aware that broadband provision ranges from very fast to almost non-existent and we wish to explore this further and gain empirical data rather than hearsay about the poor provision.

Government policy states that superfast broadband (24Mb/s) should be available to 90% of the UK population by early 2016 and to 95% by December 2017 and that there should be universal provision of a basic broadband (2Mb/s) for everyone by December 2015.

We are therefore asking those of you with poor broadband provision to let us know, preferably by email, or if necessary by phone. The basic speed of 2Mb/s is sufficient for simple email and a level of simple use of the internet. However, it will not support streaming of TV / films, is inadequate for running even a small business and will have an effect on selling your property to someone who requires or is used to having fast broadband.

Although many and probably most houses within the Parish are now able to connect to superfast broadband the changeover is not automatic so if you have slow broadband it may be worthwhile for you to check whether superfast is available to your address. You can check by typing the following link into your browser <http://gosuperfastchecker.culture.gov.uk/postcode-checker/> For those of you who believe your broadband is slow but have no idea how fast or slow then go on-line, type the words "broadband speed check" into your browser and select one of the many checking devices that will come up such as broadband-speed-checker, Ookla, or uswitch.

Please send the information to clive.bainbridge@gmail.com who is collating the information on behalf of the Parish Council and if you have any difficulties please give him a call on 07720 908001 or 01233 712781

When we have a full understanding of where the pockets of poor provision are throughout the Parish, we can start to plan how the position can be remedied and the good news is that there are a number of possibilities if we all work together

1st Charing Scout Group

The building site is taking shape and we hope to have the foundations for our new headquarters in place this month. We then start on the frame of the building. We are doing this by volunteer workforce, so any offers of help will be most welcome, whether skilled or not.

We are running the cake and savouries stall at Charing Races on Easter Saturday. If you are able to donate a cake or savoury snack we'd be delighted. Why not come along and say hello... and enjoy a fabulous day out at the races.

gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk **Terry Lister**

Hearing Loop

Westwell Church has now been fitted with a Hearing Loop. This is also called an induction loop and is a type of sound system that boosts the signal direct into someone's hearing aids. It helps those with hearing loss to focus on particular sounds, like a person talking into the Church Microphone system.

From: Westwell Community Watch Scheme

There is a cold caller operating in Godinton Park Estate and in Sandhurst Lane and its environs. He claims to be deaf and is selling paintings.

He may or may not be genuine, but you should be aware that there is a known scam involving cold callers claiming to be deaf and selling paintings at inflated prices.

Community News

Useful telephone Numbers

Age UK	642094
Ashford Volunteer Bureau	633219
Bees (swarming)	
Andy Bithell	740650 / 07933892413
Borough Councillor:	
Larry Krause	01233 643497
CAB	626185
Carers Support Group	664393
Childline Freephone	0800 1111
Cinema	0871 2208000
Citizens' Advice Bureau	626185
Cruse Bereavement Counselling	878225
Doctors (Charing)	01233 714490
(Hayesbank)	624642
Dog Warden	01233 330340
Hospital (William Harvey)	633331
KCC Community Warden for Hothfield and Charing - Dave Beckley	07811 271306
CROP	01622 851200
Library (Ashford)	03000413131
(Charing)	713177
MS Therapy Centre	01227 470876
NHS Direct	0845 4647
NSPCC	0800 800500
Parish Hall Booking	01233 712016
	doriscackett@btinternet.com
Parish Council (clerk, Sue Wood)	623902
Pilgrims' Hospice (Admin)	504100
(Patient enquiries)	504112
PCC Secretary (Heather Lister)	712981
PCSO	angie.burden@kent.pnn.police.uk
Samaritans	610000
Shopmobility	621196
Solicitor (Thorneloe & Co.)	01622 859416
Victim Support	0845 30 30 900
Water Supplies Queries	0333 000 0002
Water Leak Line	0333 000 3330
Wealden Wheels	01233 840000
Wheel Inn (landlord James Meire)	712430
Westwell Community Website:	
http://www.westwellpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/	

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Mystery Guest:

Who do you know who has survived a serious head injury from a golf ball?

Our Mystery Guest was born in Stirling to a full-time mother and solicitor father and lived in an old Scottish tower house outside Dunblane. She remembers a secluded garden with river at the bottom, which was magical for games played with her two sisters.

At Primary School, she recalls cross-country running, through muddy fields and woods, haggis every Friday and lots of drama. She started riding horses from 3 years old and had a pony called Twinkle when she was 7. She thrived on Pony Club activities with her younger sister and friends. Still 7, whilst on a dry ski slope, she was hit on the head by a ball from the golf course next to the slope, which cracked her skull, causing a blood clot too big to be extracted without brain surgery.

At 13 she moved to board at Kings School, Canterbury which she really loved, remembering hearing the bells of Canterbury Cathedral. She commuted by train back to the family home in Scotland. Her passion became rowing, cycling down the Sturry Road to Westbere Lake to row, soon going to major Regattas such as Women's Henley. She was part of only the second year of girls to attend King's from third form and was proud to join a very successful rowing team. The female rowers became phenomenally successful in their own right, our guest represented Great Britain in the Under 18 British rowing squad. Amongst other subjects, she went on to study the History of Art at 'A' level.

She met her husband-to-be at King's, he was a friend's brother, she recalls that he was small and perky with dimples and big '90's hair, romance was to develop only later.

Her gap year took her to Johannesburg, and a memorable History of Art trip to Italy. One of her most danger-filled moments was when she was white-water rafting on the Zambezi when she genuinely feared for her life.

On her return, she attended Durham University to study archaeology, she also continued rowing. Having graduated she decided not to be an archaeologist, moved to London and became a P.A. in an international head-hunter's firm for two years.

Looking for additional adventure whilst living in London, she joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. The organisation assists both the civil and military authorities during major emergencies, or events such as the firefighter's strikes, the London bombings and the London Olympics. The organisation provided an opportunity to indulge her passion for riding, show jumping on army horses in St John's Wood.

After a stint working for a member of the Royal Family, she decided that she wanted to pursue a more fulfilling career, gaining work-experience at a local primary school. Discovering that she loved it, she applied for teacher training at the Institute of Education in London, was awarded a place and, after completing a year's training, moved to her first job in a primary school in Shepherd's Bush. She spent the next 8 years there, during which time romance eventually blossomed with a young army officer and she married her beau back in Dunblane.

Some years later, after two children, they moved from Brixton to Westwell so that they could bring up their children in the countryside. There was a further family 'pull' as her husband's family were based in Kent and she had been so happy at school in Canterbury.

She now works as a teacher at Godinton Primary School, whilst also bringing up two little girls. Despite living in Westwell for 2 years, she has only just found out that her maternal grandmother was Liz Jamieson's godmother.

Westwell WI

This month we had a different kind of meeting, one in which our awareness was raised of the plight of orphans in Mongolia. It was given by Cliff Griebel who became involved when he was asked for advice on how to help the many children of former nomadic people who, through climate change, are no longer able to exist in the Steppes of the region. A large number of these children have become orphaned and live on the streets in a country that has a temperature range between 40° in summer and -30° in winter. We saw slides of the children and how they were surviving, and learned of the work being done to give some of them a home and education.

Doris gave her report on the recent ten-pin bowling evening when members were joined by some of the husbands. The event was won overall by Gail Hunt, although Valerie Hooper was awarded the title of 'Most Stylish Bowler'.

Members were informed that the WI had set up its own Facebook private members group where members could contact each other. To be included in this, members must contact Barbara to be invited to join.

The competition brought a wide variety of entries including a flower garland, gardening gloves and some rubber ducks!

Future dates for your diary:

Members Coffee Evening Wednesday 3rd May 7pm at the home of Marilyn Warner. There will be a raffle and a bring and buy stall.

Marilyn Warner

Next Meeting: Thursday 13th April at 7.30pm.

Talk: Tax, Care and Toy Boys - Chris Dingley

Hostesses: Theresa Wood, Margaret Carden and June Scarfe

Vote of thanks: Meg Lloyd

Competition - Green



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At Demelza we offer support to 650 children, young people and families across the South East, but that's just a fraction of families who need our help. The money you raise will go towards Demelza's care and therapy work. Often, no one can say how long a child will live - only that they need constant care.

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Westwell Community Watch Scheme

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Neighbourhood Watch

Despite a planned police drugs raid and the arrest of three men in Watery lane this has been a quiet month for reported crime in the Parish.

Whilst no apparent crime had been reported, the police distributed a useful warning about a potential scam by a so called "deaf" cold caller who was operating on the Godinton estate and its surrounding area. The warning included home CCTV video of the individual.

Our new, on-line Alert Scheme, using the Westwell Events database, quickly made our residents aware of what was going on and solicited an immediate response from a recipient that the caller was operating in the Boughton Lees area as well.

The Alert Scheme also showed its value in helping the police find witnesses to a road accident in Charing on 11th March when an elderly man was hit by a motor vehicle and sustained injuries serious enough to require the air ambulance to be called to take him to hospital.

If you want to get emails from the on-line Alert Scheme please send your name, post code & email address to me at:

westwell.community.watch@gmail.com

Also indicate whether you would like to get Westwell Events news including updates from the Parish Council

2-WATCH-4

From Kent Police

On the 13th - 14th March between the hours of 0500 and 0534, the side windows had been smashed on a white Citroen Relay van parked in Chapmans Close, Challock. A petrol disc cutter had been taken.

If you have any information please contact 101, quoting ZY/10260/17.

The police also remind us that as the days get longer and warmer so our attention turns to our gardens, as does the thieves. They always see a sharp rise in the number of thefts from sheds and gardens at this time of year, usually ride on/push lawn mowers, other valuable tools and items such as expensive fishing tackle. There are some easy tips to follow to ensure your sheds and gardens stay secure.

Garages and sheds are often full of expensive tools to steal or used to break into the house. Do not leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. Fit strong padlocks and hardware to shed and garage doors. Make sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in. Garden tools and machinery should be permanently marked with your postcode.

Install a battery or mains-powered shed alarm and consider security lighting as a deterrent, and use plants such as thorny shrubs to act as a barrier at potential access points.

To report suspicious activity call 101 or use Country Eye – in an emergency call 999

Keep Vigilant - Tony Bartlett – WCWS Co-ordinator

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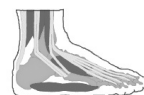
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Letter to the Parishes

Dear all,

This will be my last minister's letter to you all as I am leaving to become the Children and Families Minister at All Saints Church in Canterbury at the end of this month. In light of my departure I felt it necessary to use a Dave Walker cartoon to illustrate my parting words of wisdom to you all. In line with my *modus operandi* over the last three years it is mildly tongue-in-cheek, and suitably controversial. If you ever wonder why children aren't in church I wish to correct you. They do attend church via their schools: Egerton once a week, Pluckley three times a week and Charing once a term. In fact every day they experience and participate in collective worship, so I ask you the question: how often do you participate in an act of worship? This generation of young people, despite all the criticism of their culture of hyper-connectivity, I believe, will change the world. How do I know this? Because I've seen them adapt to the changing world around them and challenge the status quo when it seems like the world has gone crazy. They've watched us make mistakes but they haven't given up hope. Rather, they've enquired as to how they can help change negative situations. They've lived lives centred on love, charity, joy, courage, initiative and hope. Countless times I've been rendered speechless by their responses in collective worship, moved to tears by their prayers, and overjoyed by their energy.

I challenge you all to look for this. Every day, look for the beauty, the positivity, the love and the life. Look for Jesus in others: in children and young people but also all around you. And then I challenge you to live it and share it. I've centred my ministry on this and anchored it to the challenge set out by John's first letter which says "let us love, not with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

I leave you with that same challenge, and with my heartfelt thanks for your support and prayers.

With every blessing for the future,

Mim Oliver

Can I help? –

Rector G7 Benefice: The Revd Sheila Cox
The Vicarage, Pett Lane, Charing.TN27 0DL
sheila.m.cox@bopenworld.com 712598

Assistant Priests:

Revd Bonnie Appleton 01233 756354; appletonbonnie@gmail.com

The Revd Philip Cox
potager@tiscali.co.uk 840274

The Revd Richard Webb
revrichardwebb@googlemail.com 714663

Reader: Alan Duncan
alan.atthemoat@virgin.net 712632

Church Wardens: Martin Wyatt
martin.j.wyatt@gmail.com 712150

Sue Wood susanwood@uwclub.net 623902

Etc

Dates for your diary

April 9th.	Annual PCC Meeting in Church at 12.15
June 17th.	Safari Supper
August 28th.	Fete
September 17th	Harvest Festival
October.?	Harvest Supper.
December 2nd	Bazaar

Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at Underwood, Liz and Mike Jamieson, **Friday 7th April** from 10.30 - 11.45am. Before coffee there will be Iona Eucharist at 10am in St Mary's

Hothfield Post Office

Hothfield Post Office and Stores will be closed for refurbishment from 9th April and will re-open on 18th April.

Book Club March 2017

"The hitchhiker had told him her name was Gina. John had desperately tried to catch the eye of the young woman hidden behind a huge pair of sunglasses. For the umpteenth time since he had picked her up, Gina crossed her legs, shapely legs that seemed to go on forever. The silky rustle of her nylon stockings was torture".

One of many readings chosen by hazard, pages from a book saved from the jaws of a book pulping machine, by the protagonist of Jean-Paul Didierlaurent's book: "The Reader on the 6.27".

Guylain reads pages that he collects to an audience and mesmerises them all, in this case at a retirement home! The story unfolds and engulfs us readers in a sea of optimism and laughter.

We met at Joan Richards's and had a lovely time. The hospitality was warm and the discussion flowed ..this story leaves one feeling optimistic and happy. A bit like the French film *Amélie*, it is about ordinary folk

with mundane jobs, who help each other and end up helping themselves. A fantastic read of another French book in its English format.

Our next meeting is at Iris's Tuesday **April 11th** when we discuss "The Pied Piper" by Nevil Shute.

And in May, "Hidden Figures" by Margot Lee Shatterly, the 9th at Liz 's..

Charing & District Local History Society
The Wedding Journey of Charles 1 and Henrietta Maria through Kent: A Diplomatic Rumpus. Speaker: *Sarah Wolfson*. The **newlyweds** made their way to London from Dover, feted by crowds, but this was one royal procession that did not go like clockwork.

13th April at Charing Parish Hall. 7.45pm for prompt start at 8pm.

Easter Craft Morning

Charing Barn Easter Saturday 9am - 12noon
For Children under 10. Child with Adult FREE. Child alone £2.50 Children under 5 must come with an adult

Book early as numbers are limited.

Find Out more from: Jacquie Wills 713275

Heather Lister 712981 hlist@hotmai.com

Family Fun Day

Monday May 1st 11am - 3pm at the Parish Hall and village green. Coffee and cakes bacon butties and burgers, cream teas and children's picnic boxes

Lots of family games to try out and enjoy. And, of course, the playing field equipment. Inside crafts if wet

Indian Meal.

Bina Patel is cooking one of her legendary Indian meals for a fund-raiser for Hothfield Church on 28th May. £20 for a three course meal and coffee in Hothfield Village Hall.

Book at the Post office 620841

Westwell Church Services for April

www.g7benefice.org

Sunday 2nd: 5th Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion

Friday 7th:

10am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 9th: Palm Sunday

11am Iona Eucharist

Thursday 13th: Maundy Thursday

7.30pm G7 Service - Charing

Friday 14th: Good Friday

10am Good Friday Service

Sunday 16th: Easter Sunday

11am Family Eucharist

Sunday 23rd: 2nd Sunday of Easter

11am Eucharist

Sunday 30th: 3rd Sunday of Easter

8am Holy Communion - Charing

10.30am G7 Service - Little Chart

Tuesdays:

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

Baptism

Adelyn Marina Patane Larkin was baptised at St. Mary, on Sunday 5th March.

May God make her home

Christian and loving

Family Church in April

April 2nd Messy meets again in Westwell Parish Hall 3.30 to 5pm. Crafts, games and tea with a bible theme. This month Preparing for Easter. Children under 10 welcome with an accompanying adult.

April 15th Messy Easter Craft morning in Charing Church Barn. 9am - 12noon.

Egg hunt, prayer rockets, Easter biscuits and more

Ring / email to reserve a place, space limited.

April 16th Easter Day 11am All Age service with Communion. Easter activities, Easter Egg Hunt, lots to do and join in with.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Don't forget to come to the Annual Meeting to hear all the news from last year as well as plans for next year. Come with your comments and your questions. The meeting will be held in church after the Morning Service on 9th April at approx. 12noon.

Farewell to Mim Oliver

In March 2014, Mim Oliver was appointed for a three-year term as Youth and Families Minister spending much of her time working here in the benefice but also with a wider brief to serve in the deanery and in the diocese. What was originally envisaged as a role working solely with young people and families has blossomed into a wider role. Not only has she worked alongside two of the Family Service teams in the benefice and held a leadership role in Cornerstone as it managed change from Refresh and relocated into Little Chart Church but she has also been a member of the benefice Ministry Leadership Team. She will be missed by very many people, especially by the three schools in the benefice where she has invested much time and energy. However, all this experience will go with her into her new role as Children and Families Minister at All Saints Church in Canterbury and, of course, we send her off with our prayers and grateful thanks.

There will be an opportunity to say farewell to Mim at a gathering in Egerton Millennium Hall on Thursday April 20th. Drop in any time between 5.30pm and 8pm for a drink and very light refreshment. A formal farewell will be made at 7pm. If you would like to contribute to a farewell gift for Mim, please put your donation in an envelope marked MO and either give it to me or to your churchwardens.

Sheila

Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning Tanya French

Flowers: Rosemary Heddle

Brass: Suzanne Pier



Jack Bateson – An introduction

‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God’ Colossians 3:16 Perhaps the title of this should read ‘Introduction from the new Curate’, but I thought that might be a little presumptuous given the list of training assignments still on my desk, and the need to get them finished before June! My name is Jack Bateson and I will, God willing, be joining you all on the 1st July when I am ordained deacon in Canterbury and appointed to be your new curate.

Who am I? Well, my parents came from Tunbridge Wells, and I was born and raised in Faversham. After reading Classics and Computer Science at the University of Kent I ended up working for Houchin's in Ashford. It was at university that I became a Christian and after working for Houchin's I made my way to Trinity College Bristol to study the bible in 2002. At Trinity I met Tracey, who became my wife in 2003.

Tracey was ordained deacon in Winchester and we moved to Bournemouth for her curacy. Following her curacy she became an Army Chaplain and we were posted to Germany. After Germany came Tidworth, and then Pirbright (near Woking). It was in Tidworth that our son John was born in 2011 and I became a full time parent. From Pirbright we left the army and Tracey became Bishop's Missioner to Faversham.

Like my Christian journey, my journey towards ordination has been a very circuitous one! It took 9 years to discern if the church was calling me to ordination, and our family circumstances meant this would probably be as a self-supporting minister. However, God often ‘smiles’ at the plans we make, and just before Christmas everything changed and I have been offered a full time curacy in the G7 Benefice.

So this summer Tracey and I will be changing roles. Myself as curate, and Tracey as full time parent and part time author as she works on her next book. I'm very excited to be joining you all. I have seen Charing and Pluckley many times as we journeyed to and fro from Tunbridge Wells in the past, and I now look forward to stopping and sharing the next stage of our Christian journeys together.

Oh, and please be kind! I finish at St Augustine's College (West Malling) in June and come to you a keen and green curate who will probably make more than a few mistakes.

Jack, Tracey and John





Westwell Players

Can you believe it! Another successful show is all wrapped up and put to bed! Life Goes On was aired to three very appreciative audiences and Westwell Players would like to thank all those who came for their support and enthusiastic reception, we have such a loyal following and we are all so grateful to you, maybe we didn't play to a packed house but it was quality over quantity this time and a big THANK-YOU to all who came and laughed and egged us all on. All who took part worked very hard over many months to bring the Show forward and there were lots of people who worked hard back stage and at the back of the Hall, on lights, on the bar, front of house, raffle sellers and ticket sales, props, prompt, stage Managers, wardrobe, make up – the list is endless ; then there are the many hours that the cast had to burn the midnight oil to learn their lines and my, it was a wordy show, with so much to learn. Those that took 4 or 5 parts were particularly brave and deserve an extra pat on the back, it is amazing how many of our ladies became gentlemen in the twinkling of an eye and then back to their true gender a few minutes later! Classic! The final figures have yet to be worked out but we made a profit and part of that will go to The Pilgrim's Hospice in memory of Chris Pitt who was there with us in spirit I am sure with his photograph on the back page of the Programme and a tribute to him on the last night – from Neil Cackett our Chairman.

Moving on, we have a Panto already chosen with Sarah Whiting and Gordon Foster to produce – a new team who need lots of support old and new, so if you have ever wanted to be part of this happy band, now is your chance. The Panto will be in November 2017 and is called 'Once Upon a Time' but there will be much more news next month with dates for your diaries. Our AGM is on Wednesday 10th May at 7.30 in the Parish Hall and all are welcome to attend – so see you there

Mary Anne Pitt ✍

Plans: 17/00150/AS Kingsland House, Kingsland Lane. Erection of a new 3 bay timber framed garage and extension of existing tarmac driveway
17/00148/AS Bridgewood Farm, Watery Lane. The continued use of the land as a gypsy caravan site.

The P C objected to both applications and a decision is awaited from the Borough Council.



*Mystery guest
Saskia Leigh Pemberton*



April on Hothfield Heathland

There is a quiet race taking place on the reserve as Spring creeps or leaps in. As the sun strengthens and daylight lengthens, the lattice of leaves on deciduous trees and shrubs is thickening, overshadowing low-growing early flowers such as the celandine and violet. Both plants have evolved strategies to ensure their survival below their sturdier companions.

The native lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) was in flower by March, catching the sun through bare branches and on sunny banks. To up its chances of pollination in cold temperatures with few flying insects, the celandine produces many flowers over a long period before dying down to dormant bulbils (mini bulbs that develop at the base or on the leaves). The sturdy enamelled petals are shaped so that they reflect the sun inwards, raising the temperature in the bowl of the flower. The added rewards for hungry queen bumblebees and other early fliers are the nectar sac at the base of each petal and the pollen. In case the weather is awful and little seed is set, every bulbil can grow into a new plant.

Gardeners may not like thuggish celandines but there is always a corner for the surprisingly useful violet. Two species flower on the reserve from April on, common dog violet, *Viola riviniana*, and marsh violet, *Viola paulstirs*. They attract longer-tongued visitors such as butterflies with nectar, guiding them with exquisite markings to the flower's throat. To ensure survival after a dodgy Spring, they produce cleistogamous or self-fertile flowers in summer. Seed is catapulted from the seed capsule and dog violet seeds are spread further by ants who eat the oily fleshy structures (elaiosome) attached to the seed. Ants don't do bogs so marsh violets put energy into growing runners rather than elaiosome. Violet leaves last through the year and several of the rarer fritillary butterflies, sadly not seen on this reserve, lay their eggs on or near the leaves, which provide food for the caterpillars and in some cases shelter for overwintering pupae.

A more audible race is that of the birds to reproduce. Blackbirds are probably our earliest nester, in shrubs and dense trees. Other early nesters are the long tailed tits, creating intricate nests of lichen in gorse and brambles, although they may not have brood until late April; tawny owls in large holes in trees and nuthatches adapting old woodpecker holes with mud to make the hole just the right size. Hopefully by April some of the migratory warblers will be moving in. At home, please help nesting birds by avoiding trimming hedges until early Autumn.

Layered clothes in the hope of sunshine and sturdy footwear, or wellies for puddle-lovers, are all you need to enjoy a breath of fresh on the heathland, which is open to all, including dogs that are kept in check. The noticeboards at the entrances give the location of the livestock, the noticeboard down the main slope from the Cade Road car park gives recent wildlife sightings. For email alerts on the location of the livestock, or to join the volunteers who help maintain the reserve or check the cattle contact the Warden on ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk, tel 01622 662012. *Margery Thomas*

Konik ponies return to Hothfield Heathlands We currently have a herd of Konik ponies carrying out conservation grazing across the reserve. The ponies have spent the last few years at another Kent Wildlife Trust reserve, Oare Marshes. The ponies are particularly good on wet ground, and do a good job of eating tough vegetation like hard rush and Yorkshire fog grass. We always welcome additional livestock checkers, whose role is to ensure all of our livestock are happy, safe and where they are supposed to be. If you would like to get involved please contact Ian Rickards on ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk