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11th August
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18th August
Burger night

25th August
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Top left: Czech visitors to airman's RAF grave in Westwell Cemetary
Top right: View of St Mary, Westwell from the Mill House lake, taken by Richard Scarratt
Bottom: Tony Bartlett laying a wreath at Thiepval. p10

- 18th August**
- 22nd August**
- 27th August**
- 27th - 29th August**
- 28th August**
- 11am Fête Meeting, p13**
- Clean up for Fête, p13**
- Clean up for Fête, p13**
- Beer Festival at The Wheel**
- 11pm Fête, p13**

	SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Sept 4							
7	Trinity 11 11am Family Worship - with baptism St. Mary Westwell	8 7pm Total Body Conditioning Parish Hall	9 Book Club The Wheel - see p13	10	11 Re.F.T No Pilates No Dog training 7.30pm WI	12 10am Eucharist 10.30 Coffee The Wheel	13
14	Trinity 12 11am Iona Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	15 1.30pm WI Painting 7pm Total Body Conditioning Parish Hall	16 8pm Players Social and Play Reading p14	17	18 R.F.W.G 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training 7pm Fete meeting The Wheel	19	20
21	Trinity 13 8am Holy Communion St. Mary Westwell	22 1.30pm WI Painting Parish Hall 10am Tidy up field p5	23	24	25 Re.F.T 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training	26	27
28	Trinity 14 No service Fête	29 7pm Total Body Condi- tioning Parish Hall	30	31	Sept 1 R.F.W.G 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training	2	3

From the Editor's desk...

What an improvement the recent weather has been, one has been tempted to complain about the excessive heat, but after the lousy summer we have had enjoyment prevails!

The Fête is here again, do read all about it and how you can help on p5 and give Christine a ring to offer any help you can, volunteers are always needed, don't wait to be asked.

School holidays are here again, keep children safe on the roads by driving through villages with care and attention and explaining to youngsters the dangers of the road.

There is a lot going on at the Wheel this month, do lend your support.

I have a plea to all contributors to the Eye. The deadline for copy each month is 20th – and has been for at least 8 years – while I am reasonably flexible I would be grateful if people could be more punctual – most magazines have a date in the first week of the month as the deadline! I aim do get the Eye into your homes by the first Sunday of the month, we fold on the last Wednesday of the month and therefore I send it to the printers on the Sunday, one week before the first Sunday, but do not appreciate spending the whole weekend doing the magazine, I do have a life!!

Must get this issue proof read and off to the printers!

Carolyn Thorneloe ✍️

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.

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Parish Council

The Parish Council met in the parish hall on Monday 4th July, Cllr Krause (ward member) was present. The meeting began with a report from Cllr Krause, who urged residents to submit comments on the draft Ashford local plan to 2030, this was agreed. The Chairman noted that there are 2 sites in the draft plan which will have an impact on the parish: Watery Lane (provision of pitches for gypsy and traveller families) and expansion of Eureka Park, which may affect that part of the parish in Sandyhurst Lane. The Parish Council will hold a workshop on July 16th in the parish hall to give information on the 2 sites, and offer help to those who are unsure how to submit comments. This will be a follow-up to the public meeting held on June 18th, which was well-attended.

Minutes of the May and June meetings were taken and approved; Matters Arising included a statement in the Annual Return of the Parish Council's accounts about risk. It was explained that this refers to financial and reputational risks for the Council, and although the Council has Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in place, recent advice recommends a Risk Register. A draft Register will be brought to the next meeting.

The Financial report was presented, including progress against budget to date. The Parish Council has taken over responsibility for the costs of printing the parish magazine, these were not in the budget for 2016-17 and are therefore being funded from the Parish Council reserves. In addition to delivery to every household in the parish by volunteers each month, it was suggested that the magazine is uploaded on to the new community website (shortly to go live), this will overcome problems for events early in the month caused by late delivery of the magazine.

Repairs to the church path and cemetery access will be carried out in mid July following acceptance of one of the quotes received. A grant application has been made to the Borough Council towards the provision of all-weather surfacing at the top of the playing field, this will be discussed at a meeting of the Borough Council grant committee on 6th July.

There were no planning applications to discuss. The Parish Council agreed to engage the services of an independent planning consultant to assist in preparation of its comments on the draft Local Plan; the Parish Council will put forward substantive and rigorous comments on the the unsuitability of the proposals for the Watery Lane site.

Reports from Parish Council representatives were given. Highways was thanked for repairing 43 potholes at Potters Corner. Following a number of delays in the system, Highways has agreed the location of the 3 new village name signs, but it is unknown when they will be installed. The Tree Wardens have carried out a survey of all trees on Parish Council-owned land, advice will be sought as to the extent of the Parish Council's responsibility for trees in the closed churchyard at St Mary's Church. A working party will meet on July 5th to progress possible solutions to the problems in the parish caused by HGV parking; a countywide survey of overnight parking was conducted by Highways and showed that 300 trucks were parked in 40 locations in Ashford borough.

No other business was raised. There was a meeting to discuss planning applications in late July, and the next meeting of the Parish Council is on 5th September at 7pm in the parish hall. All meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

Do you know who used to live on a small holding, has flown around the world and has met various members of royalty?

Her mother had many jobs such as working in a post office whilst her dad worked as an electrician. They met in Bromley and brought their first house which they lived in comfortably.

This mystery guest was born in Bromley Hospital when her mother was twenty four, father twenty six and soon after moved to Maidstone where she attended primary school. Throughout her childhood she developed a love of netball and played for her local school. At twelve years old this mystery guest and her family moved to Herne Bay where her father brought a small-holding consisting of calves, chickens, ducks, two goats, pigs and a donkey called Ramsey – which was her favorite animal as they shared a unique bond; he would always follow her and only allow her to feed and groom him. However, in 1983 her parents divorced and as a result they sold Ramsey due to the difficulties of looking after him. Unfortunately she never saw her donkey again but forever regrets letting him go.

Whilst in secondary school she studied History and Human Biology as she had always dreamt of being a nurse and after working hard fulfilled this dream. On finishing school she applied to work in various hospitals and was successful in being accepted by Kingston Hospital in Surrey which was her first choice. She started as a trainee nurse and built her way to becoming a SRN (State Registered Nurse). Not only did she thoroughly enjoy three years working there, she also gained a peculiar talent of stitching patients' appendix due to her precision and neatness – what a talent! Alternatively, one of her worst memories includes watching a post-mortem owing to the large amount of blood involved; many of her colleagues fainted - however she managed to

bear the whole procedure.

Besides nursing, she had another dream of becoming an air stewardess as it was an opportune experience cultures throughout the world. Therefore at the age of twenty one she applied to various airlines in hope of fulfilling her dream and received an interview from British Airways. Out of sixty other applicants, she was the only one offered a job due to her smile and kind mannerisms. After working on short-haul flights she became an air stewardess for long-haul flights; Jamaica being her first long-haul destination. Her favourite place was Bermuda due to its culture and beauty, however the worst country she flew to was Pakistan due to an earthquake and the ongoing war as she and the crew had to be regularly escorted by military officers for their safety. Throughout her time working with British Airways she worked her way to First Class where she was assigned promotional flights with passengers such as John Major and royalty. The worst person she met was Ivana Trump due to her arrogance and rudeness, the best was George Michael.

Whilst working as an air stewardess this mystery guest met her husband on a night out in Ramsgate at the age of twenty one and describes it as 'love at first sight'. Shortly after buying their first house in Whitstable he started a business in the stone industry which has developed greatly ever since. They then moved to Charing Heath where they had their first daughter and three years later their second. At this time this mystery guest decided to become a full-time mother and now works part time at Egerton School. She and her husband moved to Westwell owing to its beauty and their love of the countryside and have lived here for fourteen years.

Can you identify this month's mystery guest?

Izzie Cole

Turn into page 16

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)	620649
(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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Hothfield Heathlands in August

The heather that covers the open lower slopes of the heath starts to flower in August, carpeting the poor sandy soil in purple. Work over recent years to keep bracken and birch at bay has helped the heather maintain its hold and slowly increase. Heather produces large quantities of seed and this summer plenty of low young plants of a fresher green can be seen spreading out from the main area. Cattle will graze the soft tips of the young plants. The heather here is *Calluna vulgaris*, also called Ling. Cross-leaved heath, *Erica tetralix*, flowers earlier, and is restricted to the wetter areas. Bell heather, *Erica cinerea*, the other British species, doesn't occur here.

Weather permitting, insects and butterflies will be foraging over the heather and other flowering plants and grasses, and their larvae will be munching away, including in the heather. Look out for dragonflies and demoiselles hunting and mating over the wet areas, there are fourteen regular species which includes the Broadbodied Chaser in electric blue, plus the Keeled Skimmer which in Kent only occurs here.

For a shady walk head for the Triangle behind the main car park, the woods on the top of the ridge or on the far side of the heath beyond the lower bogs. On the open slopes, the springy close-cropped turf is perfect for sitting and just watching and soaking up the sounds and fragrances of summer. You will still hear the song of the yellowhammer and white throat, as they display from the top of a gorse bush or small tree. You might not be the only creature basking in the sun, lizards, slow worms and grass snakes might be about too. The bog on the slope is still spectacular, with yellow marsh St John's wort now in flower, as well as the spotted marsh orchids, sundew, cotton grass and yellow spikes of bog asphodel. Asphodel flowers have amazing woolly stamens with orange tips. It grows in the wettest soil, so indicates where not to walk, and the seeds have long tails at either end to help them float. Asphodel's botanical name describes the shape of the flowering head – little rod, from the Greek narthex. The specific name *ossifragum* means bone-breaker from the belief that sheep who ate the plant developed brittle bones, although the real cause was the calcium-poor soil they grazed on.

The Heath is very popular with families and children at this time of year and dogs under control are welcome, please just remember to clean up after them. There are bins at the main entrances.

You can get regular updates on the where cattle and sheep are grazing ask to be put on the circulation rickardsian@yahoo.co.uk. The Konik ponies are working on other KWT sites as the cattle and sheep are currently producing much better results for our heathland restoration. You can find details of events in the Ashford area by visiting <http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/whats-on> or telephone 01622 662012

Margery Thomas

Plans

KC/AS/0065/2016 Tarmac Works, Watery Lane, Westwell A decision is awaited from KCC
16/00667/AS Court Lodge, Eastwell Lane, Westwell Approved by ABC

The Parish Council had no objection to the following applications:

16/00812/AS Court Lodge, Eastwell Lane, Westwell Alterations to existing ground floor bathroom and creation of new first floor bathroom and replacement down pipe. Approved by ABC

16/00789/AS & 16/00790/AS Swinford Cottage, The Street, Westwell Replace tiles on cat slide roof, alter roof slope 5 degrees, raise eaves on rear elevation. Approved by ABC

16/00826/AS Court Lodge, Eastwell Lane, Westwell Repairs and alterations to brick and timber outbuildings

16/00519/AS 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 Downsview Cottage, Westwell Lane, Westwell Recladding of existing external walls with rendered finish

The following was discussed at a meeting in late July (after the Eye had gone to print):

16/00980/AS 1 Malthouse Cottage, Westwell Lane, Westwell Rear infill extension of alterations to replace existing glazed conservatory - amendment to approved roof design on consent granted under

Sparrows

I have been asked to put this in:-

“ It has come to my notice that someone has been killing young sparrows. Apart from this being illegal it’s an awful thing to do. If it carries on I will name and shame”.

Mystery Guest
revealed:
Amanda Cole



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Sunday August 28th is..

Westwell Fête Day!

1pm – 4.30pm on the Playing Field

Birds of Prey back by popular request

Dog Show - lots of classes, Children's races, Face painting

Tug of war , Cow pat, Egg Throwing and more

BBQ, Pimms , Westwell wine , Ice cream

Putting, bowling, crockery smashin, coconut shy, roundabout

Produce, books, Bric-a-brac etc. Tombola

Great raffle prizes : Port Lympne Safari day, Gliding experience , Westwell sparking wine; Leeds castle Family ticket , Hamper , Simon's chopping board and lots more.

For Action now:

Save the date!

Help on the day:

Do a slot on a stall,

contact Christine on 627087 or text 07796930430

Help Now:

Count Down to Fête Day

Thursday 18th, 7pm pre - Fête meeting at the Wheel

Monday 22nd, 10am Playing Field tidy up:

bring snippers and a rakes.

Saturday 27th, Grass pick up and marking out

Sunday 28th, Set up 9.30am – 12noon.

1pm Opened by High Sheriff, Kathrin Smallwood

2pm Dog show, races etc.

4.30pm Raffle Draw

From 6pm after-fête party at the Wheel

Westwell WI

Our meeting this month was a talk entitled 'Wrinkles Don't Matter' by Helen Tobias-Kendal. It was not only a very entertaining talk but also very enlightening. We heard how, throughout history women have strived to improve their looks, from Cleopatra bathing in asses milk (which acts as an exfoliator but also a moisturiser) through to Elizabeth I using a makeup containing arsenic to whiten the skin. We heard of some strange 20th century fads that might have improved appearances. We also saw the results of some of the 21st century endeavours whereby women have mutilated their faces in an effort to look more beautiful.

Helen also highlighted how women today naturally look younger than earlier generations simply by the use of modern hair products and moisturisers.

Helen then went on to discuss how we can simply and realistically improve our appearance. Her suggestions ranged from basics such as ensuring the body is fully hydrated, ensuring a healthy diet, through to the clothes we wear with emphasis not only on style but also colour.

The competition this month was 'silver' and was won by Marilyn Warner with a pair of silver mussels (for eating one's moules marinieres!). There was also a pretty silver trinket box, a musical box and a napkin ring.

Marilyn Warner 

Next Meeting: Thursday 11th August at 7.30pm.

Talk: Mysterious Marsh – Marian Eaton

Competition - Steel

Hostesses: Terry Roach, Mary-Anne Pitt and Teresa Wood

Vote of thanks: Joan Richards

Ashford Local Plan 2030 Consultation

Reminder : the deadline for comments to ABC is 5pm on August 10th

If you missed the parish meeting last month or want some guidance on how to comment contact Sue Wood on 623902.

Policy S44 of the local plan proposes that the Traveller site in Watery lane be made permanent and extended to 5 pitches. Policy S20 proposes a further large extension to Eureka Park that could bring development on Sandyhurst farm up to the back of Sandyhurst lane properties.

B & B in Westwell The Lodge - at Glebe Cottage



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Westwell Players

Things are starting to buzz at Westwell Players, we had our first reading of the new musical farce and it seems like a great romp from beginning to end. Called "Act Your Age" the basic story is of a Health Farm, down on its luck that manages to attract a superstar as a client, at the same time the nearby Old People's Home has to be evacuated because of a burst main and moves in on the Health Farm. Lots of fun songs and great comings and goings ensue with not too much to learn for any one person and I am certain that the rehearsals are quite likely to be a riot although Neil has always been able to keep us all to just below riot level, so that we have fun but manage to get some work done as well! Bring it on!!

We have our Players Picnic on **Sunday July 31st at 'Hurstway' Westwell – Start 1pm.** This is open to all who are interested in joining in for 'Act Your Age' whether front or back stage, please come along and bring something to add to the picnic, we put it all on the dining room table and you also bring a plate and knives and forks which you take home afterwards thus meaning no-one has to spend their afternoon clearing up! If this weather keeps up, we will be swimming and playing tennis so bring the necessary gear. However you may get this magazine a little late for this in which case the next Social occasion is at the Hall on **Tuesday, 16th August** from 8 until 9.30pm and will include a bit of Play Reading and a lot of chat so that we get to know each other better before we plunge into rehearsals proper **On Tuesday, 6th September and Every Tuesday** thereafter! Emma Jones is our new Secretary and is already mustering the troops and getting us organised with an article in the paper in the hope of bringing more interested people into our happy little band. However, we would love to have some more Westwellians join our ranks so if any of you are interested please e-mail me on maryanne@uwclub.net – I look forward to hearing from you! May I close by saying how much we all appreciate what Carolyn Thorneloe is doing in continuing to produce such a super village magazine with interesting articles and photos and to thank her on behalf of Westwell Players for printing our article each month – brilliant Carolyn, many thanks!!

Mary Anne Pitt 

1st Charing Scout Group

I am writing this before The Great Charing Firewalk, so I am assuming it was a great success. There was certainly a huge amount of work involved. Anyone who still wishes to sponsor the firewalkers can still do so on justgiving.com/1stcharingscoutgroup

We now get down to the huge tasks of building our new headquarters and raising the enormous amount of money still needed for this. Any offers of help will be hugely welcome

gsl_charingscoutgroup@hotmail.co.uk

Terry Lister, Group Scout Leader

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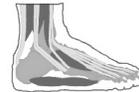


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Letter to the Parishes

Greetings from your Youth and Families Minister!

I have a brave confession to make: I am an avid Aviation Geek. This may not be news to some of you. I came very close to getting my pilot's licence and my hot air balloon licence. Lack of funds and a desire to seek greater career fulfilment at a lower salary were all that prevented me from finishing both. Still, I have a couple of "apps" on my iPad that fuel my "geekdom". If you're of a technophobic disposition, please bear with me. One is called "Flight Radar 24" and essentially tracks all flights across the globe in close enough to real time as possible (it's a bit like looking at a large map but with aeroplanes floating across it). The other is called "Live ATC" and you can listen in on Air Traffic Control and radar units across the globe (within reason). There are a few countries that are not featured, the UK being one of them. But that's okay – I have an airband radio for here anyway. If anyone has ever listened in on conversations between Air Traffic Control and pilots you will probably wonder what on earth they're talking about. It's a whole new language. But it is a service that serves to keep the skies safe and maintain adequate separation between all aircraft. I am fortunate to hold a Flight Radio Operators Telephony ("RT") Licence so the language is no longer alien to me. It means I am legally able to operate a flight radio. I obtained it as part of my flight training.

One of the things I enjoy most is the amazing parallels I find between my passion for aviation and my passion for God. For example, sometimes when I struggle with what to do in my role I know I have a God who, like an Air Traffic Controller, sees everything on his radar and can direct me. He isn't necessarily going to direct me out of trouble – sometimes the "flying" can be challenging e.g. over "rough terrain" or "heavy cloud" where I can't see the way out – but it makes me rely on God/ATC a lot more. The point of having ATC is to maintain two-way conversation also. Sometimes it is a three-way conversation as other pilots can relay a message to each other if one is having difficulties hearing the ATC unit. Sometimes we need another "pilot" to relay God's message to us. Sometimes we hear directly from Him. The point is – He is there and He sees all. I also believe that, contrary to ATC, He doesn't talk in jargon or a specific language that we have to learn in order to communicate. He speaks on our terms, on our level, in words we know and understand.

In this era of change that we are experiencing both in our Benefice and our country, I for one find great encouragement from the concept that God is, in fact, in control. He gives guidance and direction on the paths we choose. But we are not automatons. It's up to us, as the pilots, to pursue that path. Have a great summer and see you around! Feedback on this is always welcome: miriamjoliver@gmail.com

Mim

Etc

Future Fund Raising events.

Fête. Sunday 28th August.

Harvest Supper and Auction of promises Saturday 1st October.

Bazaar. Saturday 3rd December.

Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at The Wheel **Friday 5th August** from 10.30 - 11.45am. Before coffee there will be Iona Eucharist at 10am in St Mary's



Book Club,

We met at the pub though there were only 7 of us! Small group for a very short novella. Monsieur Linh and his Child, by Philippe Claudel (translated from French) is a beautifully-written story about a migrant who has lost all his family when his village was bombed. We hypothesised about where he was from. Probably Vietnam. He clutches his only belongings in a bag, and his tiny granddaughter. He is constantly misunderstood. Finally he meets and befriends a man who speaks a different language but sympathises with him. Their friendship is true although they don't speak the same language.. They find solace in each other. The story shows the plight of displaced people who are uprooted and find themselves in a new place without family or knowledge of how to survive. The only purpose he has in life is to guard his child. Very touching and absorbing study. Our next book for **Tuesday 9th August** at 11am is 'any work by HE Bates'. And it seems summer is finally here! Happy reading .



Please Help!

An American group of baptist pilgrims are passing through Westwell on August 10 to 11 and staying the night in the parish hall. There are 10 members, 5 male and 5 female including 3 leaders. Could you offer a chance to use a shower? They are walking from Lenham so will arrive hot and sweaty. They are on foot so any offers will have to be near the hall.

We are also looking for mattresses and pillows to help.

Any offers please contact Heather Lister. 01233712981 or hlist@hotmai.com

New-Look Westwell Website

The new community website www.westwell.org will "go live" on 28th August Please take a look!"



Harvest Supper and Auction of Promises

This ever-popular annual event in aid of St Mary's Church, Saturday 1st October at 7pm Enjoy a traditional home-cooked 2 course supper, with a choice of main dishes and the abundance of puddings.

Tickets £12.50 per head, available from Sue Wood 623902 susanwood@uwclub.net. bring your own drinks, If you can donate a promise please contact David Harding dharding37@btinternet.com Numbers are limited so early booking is recommended!

Glastonbury

Graham Hutchinson thanks everyone who popped along to Glastonbury in the Wheel garden. £300 was raised for Cancer Research.

Parish News

Westwell Church Services for August

www.g7benefice.org

Friday 5th: 10am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 7th: 11th Sunday of Trinity

11am Family Worship - with baptism

Sunday 14th: 12th Sunday of Trinity

11am Iona Eucharist

Sunday 21st: 13th Sunday of Trinity

8am Holy Communion

Sunday 28th: 14th Sunday of Trinity

No Service

Tuesdays:

9am The Eucharist - Charing

7pm Prayer and Bible Study - Charing Heath

Baptism

Jack Peter Brandreth and Charlie Frederick Brandreth were baptised at St. Mary, Westwell on Sunday 3rd July.

May God make their homes

Christian and loving

Family Church August 2016

Sunday 7th August 11am

All age service Baptism



**No Pet Service This Month,
Moved To September**

No Messy This Month, School Holidays.

Messy will return in September

All Age service 4th September 11am

Pets!!!



Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning: Liz Jamieson

Flowers: Penny Knatchbull

Brass: Valerie Hooper



Care Group.

Below is a list of the **Care Group**. If you know of anyone who you feel may benefit from some support please contact one of us.

Rosemary Harding, 634126

daveslaptop37@gmail.com

Tracey Faulkner, 623531

nickandtrace07@gmail.co

Mary Penwarden, 713839

marypenwarden@icloud.com

Jane Richards, 712566

jane.richards58@googlemail.com

Can I help? –

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

Assistant Priests:

The Revd Philip Cox

potager@tiscali.co.uk 840274

The Revd Richard Webb

revrichardwebb@googlemail.com 714663

Youth and Families Minister:

Mim Oliver

mimoliver@g7benefice.org 07725 112141

Reader: Alan Duncan

alan.atthemoat@virgin.net 712632

Church Wardens: Martin Wyatt

martin.j.wyatt@gmail.com 712150

Sue Wood susanwood@uwclub.net 623902

Building the New Ashford College.

The long-awaited new campus for Ashford College in Elwick Road moved forward on Thursday 14th July when the Borough Council's Cabinet agreed recommendations to include additional funding support to assist delivery of this exciting project.

The development of a new Ashford International College Campus within Ashford town centre has been an aspiration for all partners over the last 10 years.

Cllr Gerry Clarkson, Leader of Ashford Borough Council, said: "This is one of the Council's Big 8 projects, identified as a priority within the Council's Corporate Plan. One of the key challenges to economic growth and greater prosperity within the borough is the improvement of the relatively low skills base. The delivery of this project will support improved educational provision within the borough, supporting improved prosperity for both residents and businesses alike, therefore supporting a stronger future economy within the area. In addition to the improved education provision, the movement of the College campus into the Elwick Road site will also bring footfall and activity to this town centre site. With over 1,000 students and over a hundred staff in this location, within easy walking distance of shops, services, bars and restaurants within Ashford town centre, this development will also have a positive impact on local businesses through the potential for increased visitor numbers and turnover".

Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, Hadlow Group Director of Finance and Resources, said: "We are delighted that ABC is engaged and supporting this key project for Ashford. This is more than just a project for education; this is a symbol for the significant regeneration programme for the town and is a fundamental part of the Big 8 project.

"The new campus is designed to fulfil the current and future needs of students, staff and our many stakeholders. I would like to pay tribute to the co-operation, help, advice and support received from Council Leader Cllr Gerry Clarkson, and his team – a superb example of sectors working together effectively to fulfil a much-needed project". Paul Hannan, Hadlow Group Principal and Chief Executive, said: "The new campus will play a very significant part in ensuring our provision complies with the high standards we set ourselves."

Ashford College is part of the Hadlow Group comprising Hadlow College (graded Outstanding). Ashford College, West Kent College, Betteshanger Sustainable Parks, Hadlow Rural Community School, Hadlow Community Pre-school and Produced in Kent *(the last in partnership with KCC.

Ashford College and West Kent College were formed when Hadlow College took over the failing and bankrupt K College on 1st August 2014. Just 18 months later Ashford/West Kent College were awarded 'Outstanding' financial performance. **Report by Pat Crawford.**



Reflections of Thiepval

At 10:30 on 1st July 2016, Wendy and I took our seats to join some 6000 other invited guests at the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme in Thiepval, France. Held at the memorial on Thiepval Ridge, built to remember those 72,000 who lost their lives in the battle of the Somme but have no known grave, including my maternal grandfather, the event proved to be one of the most moving experiences of my life.

Our journey had started some nine months earlier when we saw an advertisement inviting applicants to enter a lottery for tickets for the forthcoming commemoration. As my grandfather had been one of the 1.2 million allied soldiers killed during the 141 days of the Battle of the Somme this offer was a "must do." Historically unsuccessful in lotteries, to our amazement some three months later we were notified that we had indeed been granted two tickets. From then on the organisation by the War Graves Commission proved impeccable, even down to the coffee and croissants provided for breakfast on arrival on the day.

Going to France a couple of days earlier had given us the opportunity to visit two of the major Somme battle museums. One in Albert, the site of the first battle of the Somme offensive, and now the centre of the Commemoration events, and the other in nearby Peronne, which had been the focus of some of the most intense fighting of the campaign. We also found the small War Grave memorial site in Pozieres, the nearest one to the spot where, in October 1916, my grandfather had reportedly been killed.

As we entered the arena our attention was irresistibly drawn to the allied soldiers still mounting Vigil on the plinth of the memorial. Vigil that had started at sunset the night before. As the venue filled we were entertained with martial music played alternately by the French Fusiliers band and the band of the Welsh Guards. After enjoying the band music, and playing spot the celebrity as dignitaries, representing both sides of the conflict walked past less than 10 metres away, we finally saw the President of France accompanying Prince Charles, Camilla and Princes Harry and William, together with David Cameron and the President of Eire, as they made their way to the rostrum.

With the formal ending of the Vigil, the ceremony of Commemoration itself started. The hour long programme interspersed contemporary readings, music and poems and ended with a short service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Most will have seen this on TV, but the sense of history in participating was overwhelming.

Unfortunately, the earlier weather forecast eventually proved accurate and the heavens opened. Through the forethought of the organisers our welcome packs all contained plastic ponchos. In fact we were better protected than the VIPs who had nothing but the shelter afforded by the Memorial Arch. The rain did not dampen the final singing of Abide with Me and two verses of the National Anthem.

After the dignitaries had dispersed we were invited to visit the Memorial, lay wreaths and walk around the 600 graves upon which 300 French, and 300 British, children had just laid posies. On behalf of my cousins I laid a wreath at the only known tomb to bear our grandfathers name. Very poignant, and a fitting end to a memorable day.

Watching the event as recorded on TV when we got home gave us a new insight into its grandeur, but nothing would ever compete with the humbling sense of privilege we both felt by actually having been part of it. **Tony Bartlett**



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