



## The Wheel



### Mother's Day - 11th March - Sunday Lunch

2 Courses £21.95 - 3 Courses for £24.95

Our Bar menu will be similar to the A La Carte menu on the weekends.

### Pub quiz 30th March 7pm

Quiz £2 per person and cash prize

### Opening Hours:

**Pub: Monday – Thursday and Sunday 11am to 11pm**

**Friday and Saturday 11am – Midnight**

**Kitchen: Monday – Friday 12noon – 3pm and 6pm – 9.30pm**

**Saturday 12noon – 9.30pm Sunday 12noon – 4.30pm**

**Contact: 01233 712223 / [info@thewheelinnwestwell.uk](mailto:info@thewheelinnwestwell.uk)**

Pub Menu and A La Carte available during Kitchen hours.

Sunday: Roast 12noon – 4.30pm



# THE WESTWELL EYE

181

March

2018



**Top:** Left, Book club - see p13. Right, Extension on Hothfield Heathlands on a sunny February day. **Bottom:** GCN habitat works Hothfield Heathlands



**2nd March**

**4th March**

**5th March**

**11th March**

**12th, 24th March**

**13th March**

**30th March**

**10.30am Coffee in The Wheel - all welcome**

**3.30pm Messy Church - Westwell Parish Hall**

**7pm Parish Council**

**Mother's Day at The Wheel - see p20**

**1.30pm Painting Group**

**11am Book Club - The Wheel**

**7pm Quiz - The Wheel**

## March 2018

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Apr 1 3rd Sunday of Lent 8am Holy Communion St. Mary Westwell Messy Church- Hall	2	3	4	1 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	2 10am Iona Eucharist 10.30 Coffee Wheel	3
4 Mothering Sunday 11am Family Communion St. Mary Westwell	5 7pm Parish Council Parish Hall	6 7.30pm Players	7 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	8 Rc.F.T 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog training 7.30pm WI Meeting	9	10
11 5th Sunday of Lent 11am Family Service St. Mary Westwell 2.15pm Players	12 1.30pm WI painting 7pm Fitness	13 Book Club - p13 7.30pm Players	14 Ash Wednesday 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	15 R.F.W 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	16 7pm Quiz The Wheel	17
18 Palm Sunday 11am Eucharist St. Mary Westwell	19 7pm Fitness	20 7.30pm Players	21 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	22 Rc.F.T 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	23 10am Good Friday Service	24
25	26 7pm Fitness 1.30pm WI painting	27 7.30pm Players	28 11am Fistssteps - Dance as U Go	29 R.F.W Maundy Thursday 9.15am Pilates 10.30 Dog Training	30	31

## From the Editor's desk...

Nick Sandford is speaking at the Charing History Society this month; I'm sorry that the February issue had gone to print before I knew about the swap of speakers.

Read page 10 to find out when and how you can book tickets for the next Players' production.

This month's quiz at The Wheel is on 30th March, it's very popular, so do book your place.

Do look at the poster on page 3, many things have been organised for the Easter weekend.

Apologies for the shortness of this letter, but I have run out of time! This is largely because I have been spending a great deal of time sorting out a mess left by internet fraudsters. I was taken in by a phone call 'from BT' about my broadband. I thought I was sensible and aware, but as the police and Action Fraud have told me repeatedly, they are very clever and make a living out of fraud. Be VERY careful and read page 14, where a whole lot more scams are mentioned.

*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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### Telephone Numbers

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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, Charing and Challock, Dave Beckley	0797798199
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(Charing)	713177
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Parish Council (clerk, Sue Wood)	623902
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(Patient enquiries)	504112
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# Easter Fun



at

# St Mary's

## Easter Saturday



and in church  
from 10 to 11 am



Easter Saturday  
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12.30 in church



## Easter Sunday

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After Service



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## Lent Courses in G7 Benefice 2018

Please contact the leader if you hope to attend. All courses are open to people from the whole benefice. You will find more details of each course on leaflets in the churches.

**Charing: Wednesday 7.30 – 9pm** at Applewood House, The Hill, Charing. Leader Kevin Moon. To book: phone Kevin 01233 713894/email kevinmoon@g7benefice.org  
Course begins on 21st February. See leaflets in churches for more details.

**Charing Heath: Tuesday 6.45 – 8pm** Charing Heath Church: Leader Rev Richard Webb. To book: phone Richard on 01233 714663 / email richardwebb@g7benefice.org Course begins Tuesday 20th February. We will be looking at “Heaven – Finding Our True Home” (The meaning of the Cross)

**Cornerstone: Monday Evenings 7.30 – 9pm** Little Chart Church. Leaders – Diccon Spain, Pete Austin, Kevin Moon and Jenny Oliver. To book phone Pete on 01233 820860 / email petejaustin@hotmail.co.uk The course begins on Monday 19th February. We will be looking at the theme of ‘Hope’.

**Little Chart: Monday 10.30am – 12noon** at Home Meadow, The Forstal, Little Chart. Leader Rev Philip Cox. To book phone 01233 840274 / email philipcox@g7benefice.org Course begins on Monday 19th February. We will be looking at the first Letter of Peter – a pastoral letter to persecuted and frightened Christians. Please bring your Bible.

Other courses in the benefice yet to be confirmed. See leaflets in churches for further details.

## 1st Charing Scout Group

We are making huge progress with our new headquarters. The painting inside is finished and the flooring and kitchen ready to be installed. There is a significant amount of external work to be done to give safe access, but we are starting to feel that the finishing line is in sight.

With Easter approaching we are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Point to Point on Easter Saturday. We will be selling racecards and running a refreshments tents. Do come along and say hello! [scoutsgroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scoutsgroup@hotmail.co.uk) **Terry Lister. Group Scout Leader**

## Godinton House and Gardens



### Spring Week

9th - 13th April

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### Contd from p10

It is planned to hold a Deanery Information meeting on Sunday 18th March at 4 p.m. and Monday 19th March at 7.30 p.m. in the church extension at Kingsnorth Church at which we can learn more and receive brochures. Our price will be approx £1645 per person plus insurance and travel to and from the airport in the UK For further details join the Deanery meeting or contact us direct.

Canon Gilbert 01233 501774 e-mail [gilbert\\_spencer@hotmail.com](mailto:gilbert_spencer@hotmail.com)

Canon Paul on 01233 365176 e-mail = [paulmiller@roundisland.net](mailto:paulmiller@roundisland.net)

NB – Canon Gilbert Spencer will be the preacher at the G7 Benefice Service on April 29th and will be able to share more information then.

## WESTWELL WI

This month we were treated to a variety of short films made by the members of the Ashford Camcorder Club. Some were highly amusing, such as the spoof ghost story, the comedy involving a ‘souped-up’ stairlift and the Pam Ayres poem about packing. Others highlighted the wildlife and beautiful scenery of our county. One poignant film was that of a day out at Brockhill Country Park made by David Hooper, which included film of Kay who died last year and who had been a member of our WI for many years.

My favourite film was a very sad but informative one, telling the story of a lifeboat disaster that hit the Rye Harbour lifeboat ‘Mary Stamford’ in 1928. All 17 of the crew were killed, many of them from the same family, and the tragedy devastated the village.

Our competition was very different this month – the most items in a standard matchbox. Who would have thought you could get over 50 in one? Fortunately each entry came with a list – items such as a grain of sugar or a pinch of salt would be very difficult to count!

**Next Meeting:** Thursday 8th March 2018

**Kent Air Ambulance**

**Hostesses:** Mesdames L Haynes, I. Clifton, P Guy

**Vote of thanks:** Doris Cackett

**Competition:** A brass item

## Planning applications

**The following applications were supported by the PC a decision is awaited from ABC:**

18/00022/AS & 18/00023/AS Park House Farm, Westwell Lane, Westwell Change of use and conversion of agricultural barn and outbuildings to dwelling with associated annexe and parking provision with demolition and removal of cattle sheds, change of use and conversion of oast to dwelling, erection of associated covered parking and change of use of associated agricultural land to gardens

17/01865/AS & 17/01866/AS (Listed Building Consent) Church Barn, Westwell Court, Westwell Replacement of 4 conservation rooflights

18/00155/AS Fallowfield, The Street, Westwell Proposed single storey timber framed garage

18/00158/AS 65 Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford Erection of a first floor extension, single storey rear extension, side infill extension and front porch

**The following applications were approved by ABC:**

17/01805/AS 102 Sandyhurst Lane Installation of rooflights and velux style roof terrace/ balcony to rear elevation to facilitate loft conversion

17/01836/AS St Mary's Church Single storey extension to north elevation to provide boiler room/WC facilities; new oak door to north elevation

**The following applications will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting:**

17/01443/AS The Wheel Inn, The Street, Westwell (amended application) Erection of a pair of 3 bedroom semi-detached houses, and one three bedroom detached house with associated car parking, hard and soft landscaping, and other associated works

18/00206/AS 3 Westwell Lane, Westwell Lane, Tutt Hill Demolition of existing conservatory and construction of two storey rear extension.

### Quotations for March

The stormy March has come at last,  
With wind, and cloud, and changing skies;  
I hear the rushing of the blast,  
That through the snowy valley flies...  
For thou, to northern lands again,  
The glad and glorious sun dost bring,  
And thou hast joined the gentle train  
And wear'st the gentle name of Spring.

~William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), “March”

I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might  
Become your time of day... daffodils,  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes...

O, these I lack,

To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,  
To strew him o'er and o'er!

~William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* [IV, 4, Perdita]

It is the first mild day of March:  
Each minute sweeter than before...

There is a blessing in the air,  
Which seems a sense of joy to yield  
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,  
And grass in the green field...

We from to-day, my Friend, will date  
The opening of the year.

Love, now an universal birth,

From heart to heart is stealing,

From earth to man, from man to earth:

—It is the hour of feeling.

~William Wordsworth (1770–1850), “To My Sister”

These, marching softly, thus in order went,  
And after them, the Months all riding came;  
First, sturdy March, with Brows full sternly bent,  
And armed strongly, rode upon a Ram,  
The same which over Hellespontus swam:

Yet in his Hand a Spade he also hent,

And in a Bag all sorts of Seeds ysame,

Which on the Earth he strowed as he went,

And fill'd her Womb with fruitful Hope of Nourishment.

~Edmund Spenser, *The Fairy-Queen*, 1590s

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## Westwell Community Watch Scheme

Keeping you Safe and Secure  
Neighbourhood Watch

SCAMS continue to be a major threat as villains either attempt to part us from our cash, get inside our homes or collect our personal details. We have had one report of a company offering free household visits to survey of our security systems, another claiming to be from BT that you are about to lose your internet, So far we have experienced two such calls, both from different, unrecognised, UK telephone numbers. Apparently from the nature of the call they are looking for user names and internet passwords.

Please be wary of ALL unsolicited calls. Most telephone service providers now offer a free service to block many unwanted calls (eg BT Call Protect, Plusnet Call Protect, Sky Talk Shield, TalkTalk Call Safe, etc).

Another scam involving persons impersonating police officers is described by Andrew Judd, our local NHW police co-ordinator:-

“We have received reports of a criminal claiming to be a police officer in order to gain personal details from residents. The criminal claims a fraudulent transaction has happened on the resident’s bank account and asks for their personal details. In some cases the resident has been asked to go to their bank to withdraw money from their account to stop further transactions. They are then advised to wait for a further telephone call and a plain clothed police officer will come and collect the money.”

Remember: The Police will NEVER ask for cash or personal details.

If YOU see or suffer anything suspicious call 999 (if urgent) or use Country Eye, phone 101 or log in to <https://www.kent.police.uk/services/report-online/>. to report it  
For further details of Westwell Community Watch visit our Police & Community Watch web page on the Westwell website at [www.westwell.org](http://www.westwell.org)

You can also indicate whether you would like to get Westwell Events news including updates from the Parish Council Kent Police

We have had an update from Sgt Jazz Bloomfield about some changes at Ashford in relation to his Rural Team policing and its resources allocations. He says “As you are all aware I lost half my staff last year owing to lack of call demand and other demands. I am delighted to share with you that my staff numbers are now increasing and I thank you for continuing to push the message to our communities that they need to report things in order for resources to be allocated to deal with issues, and to let us know what is happening.

I have doubled my rural officers. I have also introduced a Task Team that will focus on district hot spots and emerging issues for anti-social behaviour and crime. They will also address ongoing issues such as school parking and speeding.”

We will have two PCSO dedicated to our area which we will share with five neighbouring rural wards.

Keep Vigilant - Tony Bartlett – WCWS Co-ordinator

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# Letter to the Parishes

## Rejoice!

It may seem an odd call when the church is in Lent – in the middle of our season of fasting and saying sorry to God for all the wrong things we have done. We are in that sombre season as we approach the cross on Good Friday. But before we stand once more at the foot of the cross and wonder at Jesus' sacrifice, we remember Mothering Sunday.

For the Church of England it falls on the fourth Sunday of lent. But you won't find it in the bible, or even the deeper parts of church tradition. Because Mothering Sunday is a tradition which only started about 450 years ago, in the 16th Century.

However, it falls on a celebration which stretches further back – Laetare Sunday. Laetare is from the Latin, which means To Rejoice! Laetare Sunday is a celebration which breaks up the fast of lent. On Laetare Sunday flowers are allowed on the altar and we take a break from fasting. If you fancy it, you are allowed to get married in church on Laetare Sunday too – unlike the rest of Lent.

In the 16th Century it became a custom for children as young as 10 who had been sent away for service or an education to return to their home parish to partake in the celebrations. This was a return to their 'Mother' church, and Mothering Sunday was born.

On their way home children would often pick the first wild flowers of spring for their church. As time went on, they would also pick some for their mothers. By the early 20th Century the practice of Mothers Day was born. This gathered pace with the arrival of American and Canadian soldiers in World War 2.

For many it must be acknowledged that Mothers Day, with all the cards and trappings of commercialism, can be quite tough. You may not have had the greatest mother, or your mother may have died. My grandmother died on Mothering Sunday, and for us the day is tinged with sadness.

But perhaps we are called back to the origins of Laetare Sunday. As we continue our Lenten journey towards the cross of Good Friday we should look beyond the commercialism, and return to that simple truth, that Mothering Sunday is a day to rejoice. Not necessarily for our earthly mothers, important though they are, but for the gift which Jesus left us. He left us an eternal salvation and a place in heaven, given by the Grace of God. Rejoice!!

*Jack Bateson* 

## Etc

### Dates for diaries

**May 19th** Fun afternoon. Details to follow

**June 16th.** Safari Supper

**August 26th.** Fete

**December 1st** Bazaar

### Coffee at The Wheel Inn

Coffee at The Wheel, **Friday 2nd March**  
from 10.30 - 11.45am. All welcome.



**Charing & District Local History Society**  
**Godinton House:** This month the speaker is: *Nick Sandford*. A brief history and behind the scenes look at the house and gardens. **8th March** at Charing Parish Hall. 7.45pm for prompt start at 8pm



### WAGS

**12th, 26th March**



### Book Club Feb 2018

**Elena Ferrante's 'My Brilliant Friend'**  
This was a book not everyone liked. Set in late 1940s Naples, the story of a friendship between two girls, neighbours and school friends, of modest means. It charts their growth and

development, their moods and means of coping in a difficult neighbourhood. The parents have to make choices when secondary school years are looming..should they send their daughter to school paying for extra lessons in Latin and Greek, or keep her to help the family earn their living?

The two girls grow together and with a set of friends of both sexes. The families are charted in the first pages of the text and it is sometimes difficult to keep track of who is which family's child and why they are behaving the way they are, as bullies, as good friends, or as show-offs. It is a Mediterranean tale of growth and development. Do you study, or hope to marry as soon as you are 16? The tale is part of a four-book saga, by an author who remains anonymous to date. Has been highly praised but not everyone's cup of espresso! Next we discuss a very British tale: **'The Radio Girls'** by Sarah Jane Stratford. All about 'Auntie'. Second Tuesday of March, 10:45 at the pub, to get our coffee and lunch orders before discussion. Always warm at the Wheel!

### Charing Gardeners' Society

**Wednesday 14th March at 7.30: Clematis Through the Seasons, a talk by Everett Leeds**, in the Church Barn. Market Place, Charing, TN27 0LP. All welcome, £3 for non-members includes a cuppa after the talk. Raffle, seed swap and plant stall. Annual membership of £3 includes our annual, packed with articles, show schedules and details of members' events.

For a concentrated taste of Spring come to the Charing Gardeners' Spring Show on **Saturday 24th March** in Charing Parish Hall; viewing, cuppa and cake from 2 to 4 pm, or try your hand at entering. Full schedule details at <http://charinggardeners.org.uk> and in the members' annual.



## Parish News

Westwell Church Services for March  
[www.g7benefice.org](http://www.g7benefice.org)

### Friday 2nd:

10am Iona Eucharist

### Sunday 4th: 3rd Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion

### Sunday 11th: 4th Sunday of Lent/Mothering Sunday

11am Family Communion

### Sunday 18th: 5th Sunday of Lent

11am Family Service

### Sunday 25th: Palm Sunday

11am Eucharist

### Thursday 29th: Maundy Thursday

7.30pm: G7 Eucharist with footwashing -  
Pluckley

### Friday 30th: Good Friday

10am Good Friday Service

### Tuesdays:

9am Charing – The Eucharist

7pm Charing Heath – Prayer and Bible Study

### Baptisms

**Jaxon River Ready** was baptised at St. Mary, Westwell on Sunday 4th February.

**Lydia Caroline Ralph** was baptised at St. Mary, Westwell on Sunday 11th February.

*May God make their homes  
Christian and loving*

### Funerals

**Mark Hilliger** died on Sunday 24th December 2017 aged 45. His funeral took place at St. Mary, followed by burial in Westwell cemetery, on Wednesday 31st January.

**Gwynfor Lloyd** died on Friday 5th January aged 90. His funeral took place at Charing Crematorium, on Monday 22nd January.

*May God enfold Mark and Gwynfor in his  
tender love and care.*

### Easter Lilies

Please contact Joan Richards on 01233 624009 if you would like a memorial lily for a loved one to be placed in the Church for Easter. They need to be ordered 3 weeks in advance

## Family Church in March



Messy Church is in the parish hall on **4th March**, 3.30 to 5pm. Theme:- Spring into Mothers Day. All welcome to an afternoon of fun, crafts, activities, a story, songs, prayers and tea.

We shall be making Mothers Day treats ready for the following Sunday. Come and join in.



All age service **11th March St Mary 11am**. Come and celebrate Mothering Sunday with a family friendly service and lots to join in with, or sit quietly if you prefer!

All Age Service **18th March**. Theme Rainbows

Easter Sunday **4th April** at the Church 11 am All welcome to a morning of fun, crafts, activities, a story, songs, prayers, refreshments and of course **The Easter Egg Hunt**.

**No April Messy it's Easter!**



### Church Cleaning Rota.

Cleaning. Melanie Major

Flowers. Lent

Brass. Sheila Filmer

## Sir Charles Igglesden

### Sauntering Through Kent

On the 22nd April 1899 there appeared in the Kentish Express under the heading “A Saunter Through Kent with Pen and Pencil” an article about Kennington, “a picturesque parish not two miles distant from Ashford”. The author of this first article although unnamed, was Charles Igglesden (1861-1949) who was Editor of the Kentish Express and the Illustrator was Xavier Willis. Little could they have expected that the series would run for over 45 years with the same men wielding pen and pencil. By the time the last article appeared in October 1944 their peregrinations around Kent had covered 242 villages and one town (Ashford). Such was the demand that the articles were published in hardback book form and altogether 34 volumes were published between 1900 and 1946.

Charles Igglesden was appointed Editor of the Kentish Express at the tender age of twenty-three in 1884 and served for over 64 years. His peers in Fleet Street and beyond recognised that he was an exceptional journalist and a figure of some national importance, so in 1927 they appointed him President of the Institute of Journalists, this was quickly followed in 1928 by a Knighthood for services to journalism and public services.

In 1928 by invitation of the Carnegie Peace Institute he was one of fourteen prominent British Newspaper Editors invited to tour America to observe first hand how civilised America had become since the Wild West days. He observed the new New York skyscrapers with disdain, but approved of the wide boulevards and public parks in Denver and other old wild west towns. Included was a trip to Hollywood where he met Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford. His tour was reported in weekly episodes in the Kentish Express and published as a book “A Mere Englishman in America”. Such achievements would have been enough for most men but for Charles Igglesden this represented just one part of the eclectic mix of interests which included sporting distinction, wider literary achievement as a novelist and a man of public affairs who was a part of Kent public life for over 50 years.

He played cricket and rugby for Ashford and represented Kent at lawn tennis and he famously twice beat Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the final of the Authors Billiards Championships.

In addition to the 34 Saunters books he wrote 13 other books including five romantic novels. He was a Kent County Councillor and Alderman for over 30 years and was Chairman of the Kent National Insurance Committee from 1912-1947. By complete contrast he also represented Kent at Chess and was an accomplished violinist attending the Paris Conservatoire. He served on numerous other committees and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Kent.

At the personal invitation of Lord Kitchener he was one of the first journalists allowed upfront during the first world war and famously supported the feminist and birth control advocate Marie Stopes appearing in Court on her behalf on a famous libel case and also took part in a public debate at the Wigmore Hall London on the issue of birth control.

Malcolm Horton has written a biography celebrating the life of Sir Charles Igglesden which is to be published in April 2018 which will also contain Volume 35 of his Saunter series villages that appeared in the Kentish Express between 1942-1944 but never found their way into hardback form. The villages featured are Selling, Stalisfield, Stowting, Postling, Bonington, Otterden, Oare, Norton and Luddenham.

The book contains a foreword by the Celebrated Kent Historian Dr Martin Latham author of “Kent’s Strangest Tales” and “Londonopolis”.

## Westwell Players

Westwell Players have had a most enjoyable month, reading the new murder, mystery script, not being allowed to see the last two pages. playing the guessing game as to whodunit, we even had a box and specially printed ballot papers with the name and the reason for the dastardly deed! In the final meeting when we were given our last two pieces and heard the dreadful truth it was fascinating to hear that four of our number got it right so there is hope for our audiences!

I modestly admit to being one of the four although I also admit to submitting two separate papers, each with a different person's name on it, I have always been a great believer in 'hedging my bets'!! All this is to show you that you must be ready to come along to the Hall to see

**'Death By Paintbrush'** A mystery by Lesley Gunn, to be performed on **Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 26th, 27th and 28th April 2018 – Time– 7.00 - to include a meal** and with a licensed bar (hence the early start). Tickets will be available from:- Tracey Faulkner from 18th March for players and friends - and from 25th March for the public. at **'Alicia', Watery Lane, Westwell TN25 4JJ** and please include a stamped addressed envelope for return of your tickets! Or by e-mail if you prefer to collect them, :- [Boxofficewestwellplayers@gmail.com](mailto:Boxofficewestwellplayers@gmail.com). We would also like to suggest that our audience dress up in 1920's style if they so wish!

**Tickets cost £15. to include your two course meal and coffee and mints plus a play** and your chance to question the 'suspects' and submit your decision/guess as to who is the guilty party. The audience will be seated on tables of eight (not in the usual rows – so if you can make up an eight with your friends all to the good), if not, we will make up the tables for you and you might make some new friends! We are sure you will have a fun evening and on Thursday and Friday **You will be asked to sign the secrets act not to disclose the murderer until Sunday!!**

**Please note the early start time**

*Mary Anne Pitt* 

### **Passion Play at Oberammergau**

The Oberammergau Passion Play will next take place in 2020, and the Ashford Deanery will be leading a tour to see it. The dates will be July 31st 2020 for a 7 night trip flying to Munich and staying in the Austrian mountain village of Maria Alm for 5 nights before driving to Oberammergau via the Ettal monastery for 2 nights. It will be on a half board basis in Maria Alm and full board in Oberammergau. It will include excursions from Maria Alm to Salzburg and a Pilgrimage Walk on the Way of St. James.

The tour will be led by Canon Paul and Mrs Lynne Miller and Canon Gilbert and Mrs Mandy Spencer all of whom have seen the play and led tours on previous occasions.

The Passion Play was first performed in 1634. In the middle of the Thirty Years War after months of suffering and death from the Plague, the villagers of Oberammergau in the Bavarian Alps swore an oath that they would perform the play of the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ every 10 years.

In 2020 the community of Oberammergau will perform the play they have presented for 380 years for the 42nd time. There will be 102 performances spanning the months of May to September 2020. All the actors in the world's largest amateur dramatic performance come from the village. They must have been born there or lived there for at least 20 years.

Our journey will include return flights to Munich, coach travel around Germany and Austria as well as half board in Maria Alm and full board in Oberammergau with first class tickets to see the Play. **Contd page 16**



## March on Hothfield Heathlands

Spring has been in the air for a couple of weeks, and thanks to some major habitat restoration work over this winter, the stronger sunshine is already reaching parts of the lower or north-westerly bog that in other years it didn't reach. This bog has been slowly disappearing under a sea of alder trees, *Alnus glutinosa*, native to most of Europe. Alder is a pioneer plant, able to germinate easily on wet, poor soil, then through symbiosis with a nitrogen-fixing bacterium in the root nodules gradually improve the fertility of the soil, providing nitrogen for the next wave of plants. That's great if the land needs improving, but as Warden Ian Rickards explains, in this rare and fragile habitat, defined by lack of nutrients, alder is particularly troublesome. As it grows it sucks more and more water out of the bog, shading out the important species that use it as their home - southern marsh orchids, ragged robin and water mint, dragonflies, newts and grass snakes - so populations of dragonflies and amphibians are declining rapidly. As alder is unpalatable for the cattle and ponies, the volunteers had to clear huge amounts of alder scrub here late last year. In late January an excavator was hired, which pulled out the alder roots and moved them to the side of the bog. Dams have been built to raise water levels and create pools and ponds. These mini habitats will soon be colonised by a myriad of bog loving creatures. Some sandy scrapes also created on the drier parts of compartment 4, by removing the richer layer of topsoil to reveal the poorer subsoil to make habitats for less vigorous, specialised wildlife.

At the end of the project, Ian expects to have considerably less trees re-growing across the bog. The area is looking a bit muddy and

messy but he says that it will recover quickly in the spring, and wildlife sees the disturbance as a new opportunity. The birds enjoying the mud created by the excavator work include wagtails, little egrets and stonechats picking out the disturbed invertebrates.

Walkers will be aware of the area fenced off as a bird sanctuary, four acres of bog and heath, which staff enter as infrequently as possible. Ian saw a collection of 50-60 snipe, which were feeding in the soft mud. These birds are very sensitive to disturbance, and will take flight if they detect danger 20-30 m away. Reserve-wide, lesser spotted woodpeckers, that weren't seen over the summer, were spotted (sorry!) by an eagle eyed visitor in December. At time of writing, there had still been no sightings this winter of the big flocks of redwings that we often get, they may yet arrive. A small species of the thrush family, Redwings breed in Scandinavia and Russia. Night-time flyers, they migrate southwest at for winter. Flocks returning from southern Europe may break their spring flight north in eastern England.

The KWT website has details of talks, courses and guided walks for 2018. The Wild About Gardens Scheme has tips on encouraging more wildlife into gardens, the garden awards and volunteer advisers. Hothfield Heathland is open to everyone. Please keep dogs in check and clean up. Various trails are signposted and indicated on the maps at entrances, which also 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 on Hothfield, or to join the volunteers to help maintain the reserve or check the cattle contact the Warden on 01622 662012 or [ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:ian.rickards@kentwildlife.org.uk).

**Ian Rickards,**

**Margery Thomas**