THE LINK

September 2026







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- and the Hort winners are...

and so much more

Parish magazine of Four Elms, Hever and Markbeech

£1

MIDLIFE

WOMENS FITNESS CLASS AT MARKBEECH VILLAGE HALL



with Midlife fitness coach Fiona Coppard

contact me smartnutritionandfitness@gmail.com

Mondays at 10.30am and Wednesdays at 6pm

Welcome to the September Link

"The corn is as high as an elephant's eye...." so goes the song in Rodgers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma. But not this year, with its record breaking NO RAIN as you will see from the rainfall chart on page 21. Golden labs and sheep have become hard to spot as they blend into the parched fields and farmers are using their precious winter hay way ahead to time to feed their stock. The crisp fallen leaves make it feel like autumn and indeed the nights are drawing in at an alarming pace - AI says that sunset on 21 September will be "roughly two hours and 17 minutes earlier than on 21 June" (not sure what is rough about this very precise figure). We will miss all this sunshine when it is gone, but only up to a point as far as I am concerned as watering the hanging baskets every day has been an absolute tyranny.

Still talking of the hot weather, Waitrose recently noticed a trend that it has dubbed "reverse comfort eating". During the heatwave it reported a 100% increase in sales of cottage pie and 68% increase in sales of South African red wine. This could be for comfort or because people are sick of salad or because they've started to miss pub classics, not going out to the pub as much because of worries about the cost. Strawberry trifle has also become very popular.

After much prevarication I have finally stopped feeding birds in the garden. The British Trust for Ornithology's research has found that any benefits from feeding are outweighed by the infection risk when bringing together species which would normally steer clear of each other. RSPB advice is not to start again until 31 October and even then feeders should be disinfected regularly and the ground underneath them kept clean.

So with the arrival of autumn there's a lot going on locally. We hope you will enjoy reading about it all here.

Joanna Wade,
thelink@hever.org



pet of the month



Pearl leapt onto the rear seat of the car and stared resolutely ahead. The message was clear: take me home, now, please!. We barely knew each other, but I was happy to oblige. A joyous new adventure was dawning. Yet it could have been so different. After decades of owning dogs, my wife Anita and I had decided we were definitely NOT going to get another one. Goodbye Tina, Jilly, and, more latterly, dear old Holly, you were all wonderful and kind companions in your own sweet way. But therein lies the problem. It's just too sad and upsetting to lose a much-loved dog. An integral part of the family. Gone forever. So why put yourself through it again?

Well, that was our reasoning anyway, after Holly, our 13-year-old labrador, died at Christmas, 2021. Yet over the long months that followed, our resolve to be dog-free-and-easy began to crumble like a crushed Bonio. We'd seen the future without a furry friend and it didn't look good. We decided to take the plunge again, only this time with an older dog, rather than a puppy that we might, let's face it, be too old to look after, long-term. And we weren't fussy about the breed either: just so long as it was a female labrador retriever, like our previous dogs.

So began our search of rehoming centres. But, of course, labs are a very sought after commodity, given their all-round nice guy/girl reputation. Then, just as it was beginning to seem Mission Impossible, we got word that a five-year-old lab had newly arrived at a rescue centre we had yet to visit. Pearl: Yellow/Cream Labrador, medium build, floppy ears, dark almond-shaped eyes. Part beagle, as it turned out. That drive home with Pearl on board was three years ago. We will never know her full history or exactly how she ended up as a rescue dog. She seemed to have had little or no training on the lead, and was initially wary of strangers and mixing with other dogs, but over time all that has changed. Happily, Pearl (aka Pearly) now enjoys daily walks (sniffing rather than boring old exercise), on-demand tummy rubs, playing with squeaky toys, and taking a nap with all four legs in the air. Most of all, she's keen on food. Very keen. Oddly, she won't cross bridges or enter tunnels. A touch eccentric, maybe, but she's ours, and we wouldn't be without her.

John Sebastian

Have you joined the Priority Services Register?

Recent issues with our mains water supply served as a sharp reminder of how quickly we can find ourselves in a tight spot. Thankfully, help is available. All utility companies—including water, electricity, and gas network operators—maintain a free **Priority Services Register** to offer extra support during disruptions. If you rely on off-grid liquid gas, suppliers like Calor Gas also have their own dedicated registers. You might be surprised by how broad the eligibility criteria are. You qualify to join if your household includes anyone who:

- has reached State Pension age
- Is disabled or has a long-term medical or mental health condition
- relies on medical equipment dependent on electricity or water
- has a hearing or sight condition
- is pregnant or has children under 5 years old
- needs temporary support, such as recovering from an injury or hospital stay

Signing up is a straightforward process. You can apply directly through your individual water and electricity providers or via the main Priority Services Register website www.thepsr.co.uk. Please note that you will need to register separately with your liquid gas supplier. Take a few minutes today to check your details and ensure you and your neighbours are protected.

Mandy Yarnold



Persian Silk Tree at Emmetts

hort show report

Hever Rose & Horticultural Society held its Summer Show on the 15th August at the Village Hall and inspite of the extreme weather we have all been experiencing there was a multitude of colourful entries. In our marquee the fruit and vegetable classes were well supported with many good quality exhibits in particular in the beans and onions classes. We even had a tie for the Longest Bean which has never happened before, Jane Rosam won 3 of the trophies in these classes including the Penman Cup



In the flower classes the Dahlia cup was won by Jean Mason and we had some lovely entries in the cultivated grasses, flowering shrub and mixed garden classes giving the hall a real splash of colour. The Rosemary Bayford cup for best floral exhibit was won by Sue Butcher for the fantastic Rock Trumpet pot plant. The



Jean Mason

for most points in the vegetable classes and the Reynolds Salad Cup. At the prize giving Jane echoed all our thoughts about how much we missed entries from Norman Greenaway who has been a stalwart exhibitor putting an enormous amount of effort into his successful entries over many years. We all wish him the very best.



Jane Rosam

flowering arranging classes were well received by the judge in particular the simplicity of the Ikebana arrangements but particularly the two entries from Sue Butcher and Helen Rahn in the “Seashore” class.

The photographic section is going from strength to strength with some wonderful interpretations of the given subjects this year including “Lights at Night2, “The Wild Place”, “Hot & Cold”. The Tolfree Photographic Cup was won

by Pauline Radford. Our four domestic classes were very competitive with some lovely truffles, small fruit cakes, preserves and tomato and pesto tarts. well done to all our entrants



The Arts and Crafts were really exceptional this year with great exhibits in all of the various classes. There were some really standout entries, Mandy Yarnold's picture of a Cat was so detailed it almost looked like a photograph, in the textiles section Sue Theobold's Rabbit was really impressive but the star of the show and winner of the Holland Salver was Karen Pope's piece of metal and glasswork. This drew a "Wow" from the judge who was really impressed with the standard of all the exhibits, well done all who entered.


Karen Pope


Sue Butcher

Our next event is a talk by Katherine Hook entitled " All things Sloe Gin & Chocolate" this is on 16th September at the village Hall starting at 8pm why not come along and enjoy an evening with us?

David Dutton

fire! fire!

Hever Road was burning, the engines were fetched and water poured on. The frightening wild fire in July, next to Romani Way on the edge of Edenbridge, was happily brought under control within nine hours; July saw many disasters across Europe and our local conflagration really brought home how fiercely and rapidly fire can spread.



The RSPB, reeling from the fire destroying much of Dunwich Heath (birds might escape but their food and habitat has become charcoal), points out that whilst the fires burn wildly, they are rarely caused by anything other than human carelessness. The seat of the fire is usually a person. And we were very lucky to have Edenbridge Fire station nearby, the crew part of a posse of ten engines which attended the scene. Vast amounts of water were used to extinguish flames and the fire engines came down to the Brocas water hydrant to refill, that being a reminder that we can help by keeping the hydrants visible and clear of obstruction. Unfortunately, as the hydrants started to run dry, Bough Beech reservoir had a major, and probably not unconnected, electrical outage as a result of which most of us were without water on Sunday and the Castle and other businesses had to close.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service has attended 8576 incidents so far in 2026 including quite a few grass fires and we are pleased to report that, contrary to rumour, the Edenbridge station, staffed by on-call firefighters is not listed for closure. Long may that continue!

Joanna Wade







Hever Village Hall

Saturday 12th September from 6.30 pm

A great family night out, barn dancing, BBQ, local beer and fancy dress competition

https://events.liveit.io/hever/hever-barn-dance-2026/

BARN DANCE

faith in uganda

Let's hand in my notice of 23 years working for the NHS and go to Uganda to volunteer as a Health Care Assistant. Oh my goodness, how naive and arrogant this turned out to be. Ninety minutes off the highway, down an unmade "African massage" bumpy, potholed, dusty road. Goats and cattle grazing, shoeless children carrying charcoal, colourful clad ladies seemingly walking miles, with a crown of banana leaves holding in place goods on their heads. Boda-bodas (their main mode of transport, lightweight Indian motorcycles) the whole family on board, helmetless, the coffin maker with his wares, lateral planks of timber you had to dodge, hapless chickens, even a pig… astride. Bicycles being pushed by sweaty men laden with heads of matoke (green bananas, their staple diet) which could tip over any time, or pineapples strung together like a woman's hair bun.





This is even before arriving at Kisiizi hospital 1650m high up in the stunningly beautiful rolling Rukungiri mountains where I was to spend the next three months. Living in this breathtaking (literally) subsistence farming community where every inch of soil was cultivated was certainly humbling and for me, life changing. They say Ugandan women are born with a hoe on their backs. These strong ladies put me to shame. The roadside stalls sold their tomatoes (tomato sauce became my go to meal), avocados (huge and just the best ever), sweet juicy pineapples (I never knew they grew on the ground.) If you were lucky you might get a cabbage and potatoes which they called "Irish." No dairy, but I did not have a fridge. The local butcher did the deed on a roadside wooden block with the goat then strung up in the sun...meat didn't really appeal. Running water came and went and you adapted to the "bowl" wash in the mornings.

Work is another story. The road to being trusted, that I was not, as an omuzungo (white person) going to tell them how to do their job, understandably took time. I was in awe of their resourcefulness. No fancy single packed dressings here. Sterile gauze, which we cut up and folded into different sizes were sent to the autoclave to be sterilised. Various

strengths of saline and iodine together with “strapping,” very sticky tape which I needed a scissor to cut, they didn’t... did the job. I was finally allowed to do dressings on amputations, Boda-boda road accidents and burns (they cooked on open fires.) I was shown how to prepare plaster of Paris… with a bucket of water. It was all happening and it was a steep learning curve.

I was then encouraged to move on to other parts of the hospital, pushing me out of my comfort zone. Rehabilitation and physiotherapy set up by an Irish team from Dublin. I spent time in their Ahumuza (meaning comfort) mental health unit. A much-needed resource as mental health is hidden from sight, viewed as being contagious and possessed by evil spirits. A week on the special care baby unit…tiny babies. A&E where patients were carried down the mountain on traditional wooden stretchers and dumped at your feet. No medical records. I was in my happy place there as I could be useful for once. HIV which wiped out my generation there was still very apparent, and I learnt to do the test by practicing on myself! I particularly enjoyed the days up the mountain setting up mother and baby clinics in random empty buildings and churches. Visiting schools, where often they had never seen an omuzungo. I would be joyously mobbed, they would touch my hair and skin. We gave talks on periods and handed out washable pads that were made by the hospital community … putting the poppers on the pads with a hand machine, was my contribution!

They have a tough life whether you are a doctor or a child selling mangos by the road. “Man up this is Africa” I was told once on my horror of taking cloths off and seeing maggots on a gaping headwound. Their broad happy smiles though and sense of humour (especially at my attempt to speak the local Rukiga) and gratitude for what little they had was humbling. Above all though, their faith is huge. God is a living God who they could not be without. Their days started at 8 in chapel. Nurses and doctors and management would gather, taking turns in preaching. Hospital meetings were tagged on to the service, we were then told we could go and serve. Gatherings commenced with lively and very loud uplifting worship. This is what has changed my life. It is this faith that tops the long list of what I have brought back from my short time as a privileged visitor and guest, in their beautiful country.

Helen Rahn



baaa humbug

At a time when domestic flocks of sheep have declined to an all-time low, the legions of people who strongly disagree with solar farms may have to eat their hats (in the absence of eating lamb as it has got so expensive). Solar grazing as it is known, the practice of grazing sheep in fields covered in black solar panels, has many advantages for sheep farmers: it's rent free, the field boundaries are maintained by the solar power companies and the sheep are guarded by the modern day sheepdog, CCTV.

The cost of maintaining the solar farms, keeping the undergrowth under control with heavy emissions-exhaling machinery, is minimised because our four-legged friends do not need equipment, nor do they need tea breaks. Indeed, sheep have proved so beneficial that there is even talk of farmers actually being paid to graze there. The offer of free grazing is sometimes not fulfilled by the less scrupulous companies who use its credentials just to get planning permission, but there are many examples of free grazing dramatically improving the profits of small struggling farms. And of course the panels give the sheep shelter both in the winter and in the hot summers - all very controversial I know, but worth having a small rethink?

Joanna Wade



What's On at Bore Place?

Foraging Walks



Guided walks learning to identify seasonal wild foods, along with tips and ideas for how to prepare them to include in your diet.

Autumn Foraging Walk
Sunday 11 October

Winter Foraging Walk
Sunday 08 November

NEW

Bread Making

Learn to make three very different breads from a single dough, and go home with the confidence to bake them again in your own kitchen.



Sunday 04 October
Sunday 30 January

Mindful Stargazing

Combining physics, wellbeing and astronomy, the practice of mindful stargazing is about immersing yourself in the experience of the night time.

Thursday 08 October

Family Bat Safari

A family-friendly, after dark adventure hunting for bats with bat detectors!



Monday 26 October

Stargazing Walk

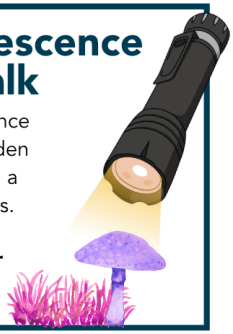


A guided night walk with Edenbridge and District Astronomers, learning to spot constellations in the night sky.

Thursday 19 November

Biofluorescence Walk

Explore biofluorescence and see nature's hidden world of colour using a UV torch and goggles.



Thursday 15 October

01732 463255
Bore Place, Bore Place Road, Chiddingstone, Kent TN8 7AR

More events and tickets

www.boreplace.org

Commonwork Trust (registered charity, no. 1160725)

business directory

to add your company email the Editors.
Just £30 per annum

Accommodation

Greyhound at Hever, Bed & Breakfast, restaurant for residents.		01732 862221

Building & Design Services

Andy Sayers Electrical Services maintenance and repairs		07836 256 146
APH Electrical & Property Maintenance		07816 291713
Beauproperty	house design and building	01892 249000
Causeway Joinery	bespoke joinery for the public and trade	01342 850170
Eden Valley Builders	extensions, conversions and general building	07778431470
HJM Plumbing & Heating	general plumbing, heating and maintenance	07908854881
G Moss	joiner & builder	07778 440 644
Jem Pickard	painting and decorating	07850 371558 or 01732 863062
M & M Walker	painting & decorating, plumbing, heating	07774 218 684
Michael Beall	bespoke carpentry and joinery	07796 175140
Richard A Maslen	Fine furniture and bespoke joinery	07930 341415
W Smithers & Sons	listed building, conversions, extensions,	01342 850 559

Dog Training

Claire Cook, Positive Reinforcement Dog Trainer in Edenbridge		07818 070672

Education

Chiddingstone Nursery School for children 2-5 years		01892 871315
Jade Johnson language tuition in German, French & English online or in person		07761 287517

Fitness and Health

BDHL private & group health insurance and corporate wellbeing		01892 891900
Flexi Foot Care, Diane Fletcher - home visiting podiatrist/chiropodist		0790 3293533
Hever Castle Golf Club	golf course	01732 700771
Step by Step, Michelle Hogan, mobile foot care practice		07786 038149
Falconhurst Cricket Club	cricket and training sessions	07771 892762
Paul Marro Cognitive Hypnotherapy www.htherapy.co.uk		01732 808211
Realign, osteopathy and personal training www.realign-osteo.co.uk		07841 776591
Smart Nutrition and Fitness personal training for midlife women & beyond		0771 8588847
Tennis by Nature	kids tennis coaching by Gary Markham	07802 842554

Food - Catering and Restaurants

Gorard Dean Catering -	all events undertaken call Melanie Dean	07710 005 635
Greyhound at Hever, Restaurant with rooms, open to non-residents		01732 862221

Funeral Services and Burial Grounds

Alex Jones funeral directors & monumental masons		01732 860047
Eden Valley Woodland Burial Ground on the Kent/Surrey border		07802 630012

Garage Services

Stuart Rieman luxury passenger car servicing & repairs		01883 715037

Gardening and landscaping

APF Trees	tree surgery and garden maintenance	07786 884924
Hever Landscapes	for all your garden projects	01892 740133
French's Fencing	gates, automation, fencing supply & fitting	0779 5551436
Richard James Landscaping,	all aspects of both hard and soft landscaping	richard@richardjamesland.co.uk
SA Landscaping	landscaping, garden maintenance, fencing, driveways and more	01732 671146
Thompson Tree Care Ltd,	tree surgery, tree felling, hedge cutting	07747345815

Home Services

Daren Wood	chimney sweep, pots and cowls fitted	01959 564263
MOLE CATCHER, Peter King		Mob:07432 813614 or 01892 520287
Pegrum	boilers, heating, plumbing & oil tanks	01732 463256
Sure Kill	pest control services	01732 863206
The Caring Fuel Collective, home heating oil suppliers,		www.caringfuel.com

IT

My IT Wizard Ltd	Computer problem solving	07779 285839
MR Computing computer repairs in your home, no call out charge		01732 590077

Local Produce

Allman Butchers	meat & groceries	01732 863214 or 700288
Falconhurst Farm Shop and deli		01342 850172

Taxis

Relyon Cars	local taxi company	01732 863 800

Venue Hire and Weddings

Falconhurst Weddings	01342 850526
Markbeech Village Hall	01342 850328



PENSHURST MUSIC FESTIVAL

SPONSORED BY

PENSHURST PLACE

CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, PENSHURST



FRIDAY OCTOBER 16TH

7.30 PM
Musical champagne reception

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH

11.00	A musician's life with D'Arcy Trinkwon
12.00	Sonic Wine tasting and lunch (Penshurst Village Hall)
15.00	Children's Concert: Peter and the Wolf and Other Musical Animals
19.30	Concert with songs and music from Grace Oliver, Penshurst Choral Society and D'Arcy Trinkwon

A new Music Festival will take place in Penshurst on 16th and 17th October. We start on the Friday evening with a reception in the church with nibbles, drinks and musical performances from a harpist and the New Eden Consort, a quartet of singers. Late Saturday morning, our internationally renowned organist, D'Arcy Trinkwon will submit himself for interview on his life in music. There will follow a musical light lunch in the village hall (numbers are limited so do book as soon as tickets become available). The lunch will include a wine tasting competition, musical pointers as to the country of origin provided by a string quartet.

In the afternoon there's a special children's (and adult's) concert with animal favourites from the classics including a specially arranged version of 'Peter and the Wolf' and a few pieces from Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals. A special guest singer and the Penshurst School Singers may also join us. Tea will follow the concert. The festival finishes with an evening of varied music from D'Arcy Tinkwon, the Penshurst Choral Society, and Grace Oliver, an up and coming new star from London.

For more information, please email me on robertrees3@aol.com

Hever Parish Council

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

At the recent Hever Parish Council meeting the Four Elms Pond was discussed as a revised Management Plan was required following the exit of EDAC. Steps will be taken to protect the pond environment and continue to reduce anti-social behaviour. These steps will include fishing being for residents of Hever Parish only, security resources and reduction of fish stocks in the pond. More information will follow on how to apply for a permit. The pond is currently looking much better and more natural with lily growth and a more encouraging environment for nature. A pond ecology report will be arranged to gain advice on how to support biodiversity and to help wildlife thrive. There has been a further accident at Four Elms crossroads. Kent County Council Highways and the police have been made aware of this.

We are pleased to announce we have a new Councillor for HPC who was co-opted at the meeting. Martin Keeler joins us and has lived in Hever for over 40 years and has a range of skills extending from business administration to forestry.

Don't forget, the Local Plan, 'Regulation 19 Publication', is now open for comment until 17 September. The new Local Plan will guide what can be built and where between 2027 and 2042. The Government has increased Sevenoaks District Council's housing target by 63% – meaning 17,460 houses must be built over the next 15 years which is a huge amount in our local area. Do have your say by visiting: Sevenoaks Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation or call 01732 227000 to request access to a paper copy.

Community Litter Picks have been arranged by your Councillors as follows:

Saturday 19th September – Four Elms
Saturday 26th September – Hever
Saturday 3rd October - Markbeech

Do come along and join in! Equipment is provided and a great opportunity to meet and chat with your neighbours.

The next Hever Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 14th September in Markbeech Village Hall at 7.30pm. The Planning Meeting will commence at 7pm.

Rachael Turner Clerk and RFO
077849 12645



church in september

The Choral Mass on Sunday evening 13th September is in collaboration with King Charles the Martyr, Tunbridge Wells. Please note that this year there will be a Harvest supper (not a lunch as last year) on 25th September. Our next Contemporary service with Cabin Worship will be on Sunday 4th October at 6pm in St Peter's Hever. Please watch out for any late changes with details of services below. Readings and full details are also at https://threespires.wordpress.com/diary/

Date & time	Service details	Sunday
6th Sept 10am	Holy Communion St.Paul's Four Elms with baptism	Trinity 14
13th Sept 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever with baptism	Trinity 15
13th Sept 4pm	Forest Church at St.Peter's Hever	Trinity 15
13th Sept 6pm	Choral Mass at Holy Trinity Markbeech	Trinity 15
20th Sept 10am	Holy Communion St.Peter's Hever	Trinity 16
27th Sept 8am	Said communion St.Paul's Four Elms	Trinity 17
27th Sept 10am	Harvest Family service Holy Trinity Markbeech	Trinity 17

Our Home Group will restart on 8th September and meets at 7.30pm on Tuesdays at various locations thereafter. Zoe Joannou's 'life group' is on alternate Wednesdays. The next Men's Discussion group is on 5th November. For details of any of these please contact Simon. Please contact any of us if you would like prayer or to talk to someone during this time or any other help.

Rector
Revd.Simon Braid
07802 809849
simonbraid@icloud.com

Administrator
Ana Roxburgh
beneficeemail@gmail.com

Wardens

Four Elms
vacancy

Hever
Mandy Yarnold
07976 281613

Markbeech
Lynnie Rowan
07881 482154

Nicki Talbot
01342 850526



our rector's thoughts

By the time you read this, we might have had some rain. The heat and drought across most of Europe seems to have lasted all summer and has broken all the records – even hotter and drier than 1976. Our green and pleasant land has been turned brown with a high risk of forest fires. My farmer friend has been able to make hay but the quality is poor. Is this yet another sign that climate change is a reality?

In our garden, we're having to water by hand as we have a hosepipe ban and even some of the trees are looking a bit sad. Of course, this sort of experience is far worse in many poor countries. The Holy land is a hot and dry place with 'the wilderness' surrounding Jerusalem and the Negev desert to the South. It's no surprise that many of the Psalms speak of the longing for water in the desert. Psalm 1 describes the godly person *'…like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither …'.* It makes me think of the deep roots which sustain our trees during dry seasons and having these roots into God's presence.

In the humdrum busy-ness of each day, how can we remain rooted in God? Brother Lawrence was a French Carmelite monk in the 17th century who was unhappy to have been assigned to the kitchens. But one day, whilst looking at a tree, the words from Psalm 1 came to him. He determined that he would seek God in everything he did no matter how mundane. As a result, the people around him found they wanted to know God the way he did. After he died a compilation of his letters was put into a book: 'Practising the presence of God', which is now considered a Christian classic. He had learned how to make his roots deep even in the ordinariness of life and this sustained him through the dry times.

If you are encountering a spiritually dry season; then why not try practicing the presence of God and seeing him in everything. In 1633, the English poet, George Herbert, wrote the following hymn: *Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see; And what I do in anything. To do it as for thee*. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, he said: *whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* (John 4:14). May we experience the same refreshing of our spirits – and yes some rain too, please Lord!

God bless you all

Simon

news from the pews

Four Elms

As this exceptionally hot summer draws to a close, we may be appreciating the cooler days, but also feeling increasingly concerned about climate change and its widespread impact. The sight of the fields bathed in their golden glow may be beautiful, but we think of those whose livelihoods are affected by prolonged heat and drought, especially our farmers as they face the increasing uncertainty of changing weather patterns. With the autumn season fast approaching, there is also a feeling in the air of a fresh start. A new academic year begins, holidays have come to an end and we settle back into our familiar routines. Perhaps it's also a good time to pause, give thanks for the changing seasons that we are lucky to have and to consider what new intentions or priorities we might have for the coming months.

Late September brings the celebration of harvest. Here in Four Elms, the Harvest Festival service is an All Age service on Sunday 4th October, when we'll gather and give thanks for our food and for those who work so hard to produce it. Do come along and join us, bringing any harvest gifts that you may have. Most of these are given to the Edenbridge Food Bank, although some are also distributed to neighbours. If you know of any household who would welcome a small box, please get in touch.

We also celebrate harvest time with our very popular harvest supper in the village hall, which this year is on Saturday 3rd October at 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets are £15 and do book early by calling 01732 700247 as tickets sell out quickly!

Serena Barker

Hever

Following the recent History Festival, attendee Karina Jackson shared intriguing research regarding the burial ground at French Street near Westerham—a site with surprising ties to St Peter's. Revd Edmund Balaam, our rector from 1602 until his death in 1632, consecrated those grounds and explicitly requested in his 1631 Will to be laid to rest there. As a Puritan, Edmund frequently clashed with the three Calvinist Archbishops of Canterbury presiding during his incumbency. In the 17th century, refusing burial in one's own churchyard was almost unheard of for a rector. His unconventional final wish was ultimately overruled, and Edmund was buried at Hever instead. Karina's discovery offers a fascinating glimpse into St Peter's spirited past.

We are still looking for interior pictures or photos dated prior to the 1894 Victorian refurbishment. Do you know of any interior photos of the church taken before 1894? There are none in the Maidstone archives, so we would love to know if any exist in local family collections.

We joyfully welcome Evelyn and Jessica into our church family

through their Baptism service this. May God surround them both with His love, grace, and protection as they begin their journey of faith, and may our congregation continue to support, guide, and pray for them and their families as they grow in Christ.

Our next Parish Lunch takes place on Thursday 10th September at 12:30pm. Everyone is welcome to join us for a simple meal, fresh fruit, and delicious homemade cake. Please RSVP with any dietary requirements to help us with catering. Finally, dust off your cowboy boots and get ready to do-ci-do at the annual Hever BBQ & Barn Dance on Saturday 13th September. Please see the advert on page 7 for booking information.

Mandy Yarnold
Churchwarden

Markbeech

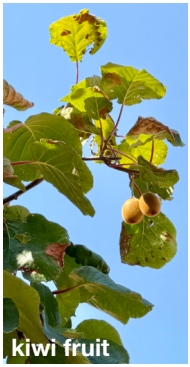
When you read this, I am hoping there will not be another heatwave and we, the animals, the grass and the plants can all cool down a bit – and pray for rain. At Holy Trinity, Simon has given us two sermons which certainly need reflecting on. Simon and Susie are inspirational in their faith and the way they naturally and openly show it. We are reminded to keep praying, we need to.

Now, coming dates for your diary: On 12th September, if anyone feels fit enough – we have Ride and Stride. I gather electric bikes are acceptable! But it is all for the churches in the Benefice, so please, limber up and contact Ricky Calvocoressi who is in charge for Markbeech, or just look in the porch on the day where she will kindly be leaving drinks, pencils and paper. On Sunday 13th September, at 6pm, there is going to be a Choral Eucharist at Markbeech, which has taken a lot of planning. The King Charles singers, from King Charles the Martyr in Tunbridge Wells, are coming and they are magnificent. It will be different from our usual services, but special, please join us. On the 25th September, in Markbeech Village Hall, will be our Harvest Supper. We have some exciting entertainment after it, in fact their last appearance was a complete sell-out with a long waiting list. You have been warned. It starts at 7pm and the tickets will be £20 each. Please apply via this link. The Harvest Festival Service will be on 27th September at 10 am in the Church.

The Diocese of Rochester has produced a free magazine, entitled Together. It is well worth a read. I believe they are also organising the Big Knit on 10th October at the cathedral between 10-1pm. Bring with you a newly knitted or crocheted item. I believe St Luke's church in Sevenoaks is also holding the same event the day before, which might be more convenient? It is run by a charity – makingmiracles.org – helping people who have lost a baby. So necessary considering the impact on families.

Janey Cooper
PCC Secretary

gardening with Neil Miller, Head Gardener Hever Castle


kiwi fruit

Now a toughened veteran of the fifth 35 degree heatwave of the summer, Neil is telling me to embrace the heat, and not only because these conditions are here to stay. Looking on the bright side, kiwi fruit and figs are thriving as never before and the roses have had a very good year. There is no damp to create black spot and most of the aphids are hiding from the heat. After careful mulching in the spring and plenty of dead heading plus a little bit of irrigation in the early mornings, blooms such as Nostalgia, pictured here, are thriving.

At home, we shouldn't hold back from putting bath and washing up water on our gardens. While the Castle has a 150 foot deep bore hole and three large underground reservoirs built by the Astors, it is still careful and has allowed its lawns to parch and crack. Indeed, Neil says never even think of watering your lawn: grass is so resilient, even if it looks dead an established lawn will spring back. And, if you do have patches of long grass, don't cut them yet, go for the meadow not the manicure and give the wildlife some shelter. The downside is that some thugs such as dandelions are moving in and they will need to be dug up when the lawns re-emerge. On the few areas of grass that are irrigated, for example a couple of the greens on the golf course, the badgers are taking advantage. It is hard work digging up bugs from baked earth and when they find a nice soft green circle, what is a badger to do but move in?!

One of the great mysteries of Hever Castle is how the many hostas, particularly in the Italian Garden grottos, remain intact whereas the slugs have turned mine into lace. Neil isn't sure why his survive so well, although he says that two varieties, King Henry and Big Daddy, are so tough that most slugs give up. Also, the profusion of birds in the gardens will help to keep numbers down. And then he reminds me that of course we are now to love slugs as a valuable part of the ecosystem.



He is also keeping an eye on the new tree on the School corner, donated by the castle. It isn't happy but people are watering it and he will feed it. Watch this space.

Joanna Wade

benefice monthly rainfall in millimeters

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
FOUR ELMS													
2024	58	122	94	61	49	27	64.0	28	165	86	77	78	909
2025	89	61	4	36	13	28	57.0	38	49	85	66	87	613
2026	162	90	25	4	14	42	1.0						338
HEVER													
2024	73	136	81.5	57.5	48.5	25	73.5	31.5	183	82.5	62	52	906
2025	126	54.5	4	29.5	14	31	71.5	27	52	103	61	107	680
2026	187	88	22	2	20	55.5	0.0						374
MARKBEECH													
2024	80	139	95	71	61	29	62.0	44	186	77	79	60	983
2025	114	71	4	25	21	33	52.0	22	71	115	63	116	707
2026	183	92	28	3	19	51	0.0						376

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

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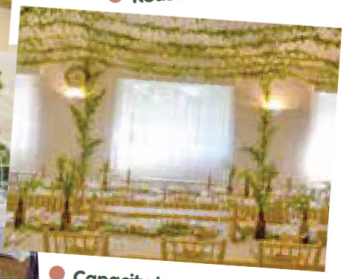


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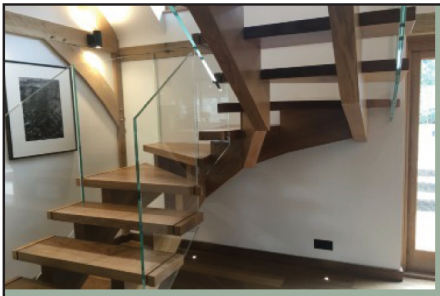
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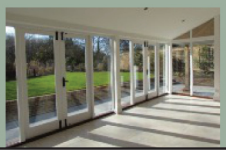
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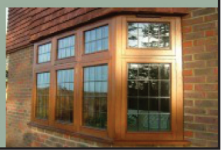
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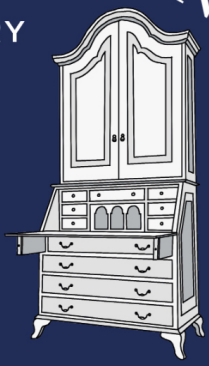




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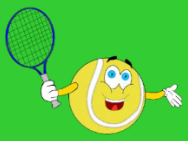
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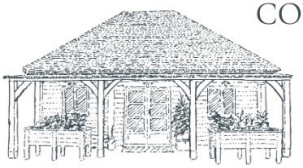
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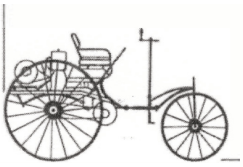
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10 Sept **Bore Place Feast**, celebrating 50 years of Bore Place tickets £80 6-9.30pm
12 Sept **Ride and Stride**
12 Sept **Hever Barn Dance**, Hever Village Hall 6.30pm
14 Sept **Enjoy a Cuppa** at St Paul's Four Elms from 10.45am
14 Sept **Hever Parish Council meeting**, Markbeech VH, planning 7pm, 7.30pm
16 Sept **Hever Hort talk 'All things Sloe Gin & Chocolate'**, Hever VH 8pm
19 Sept **Community Litter Pick** Four Elms
25 Sept **Markbeech Harvest Supper**, MB Village Hall, tickets £20 each 7pm
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16-17 Oct **Penshurst Music Festival**
26 Oct **Family Bat Safari,** Bore Place, adult £15 child £8 6-7.30pm
19 Nov **Stargazing Walk**, Bore Place, adult £15 child £8 7-8.30pm
21 Nov **An evening with Anne Boleyn and her many namesakes**, St Peter's Hever 6.30pm
27 Nov **Hever Film Club**, The Queen, Hever Golf club supper 6.30, film 7.30pm
22 Jan **Hever Film Club**, Bringing up Baby, Hever Golf club supper 6.30, film 7.30pm
26 Feb **Hever Film Club**, As Good as it Gets, Hever Golf club supper 6.30, film 7.30pm
26 Mar **Hever Film Club**, The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery, as above

