



Life-Line

The FREE
monthly
newsletter for
West Farleigh

Some sort of periodical is an essential life-line in a village such as ours.

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December 2003 / January 2004

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN WEST FARLEIGH

CHRISTMAS is almost upon us - and what better way to get into the mood than by watching a traditional Nativity Play?

'Angels Up High' is this year's production, being staged in the Church on Thursday, December 11, starting at 6.30pm prompt.

The Campaigners and Logos have been rehearsing hard and this isn't just for Mums, Dads and friends - but for the benefit of EVERYONE in the village - and that means you!!

Children are especially welcome and will love this light-hearted look at Christmas. (It doesn't matter if they make a noise - the Campaigners are a pretty noisy bunch themselves!)

The play has all the usual characters: Arrogant Kings, narcissistic Herod, grasping Innkeepers, stropky angels, shepherds in tea towels and, of course, sweet Mary and Jesus. Same story every year - but that's what makes Christmas special!



There's another chance to join the village festivities at the annual Carol Service which takes place on Sunday, December 14, at 3pm. The organist will be Peter Bonnert from East Farleigh and there will be a joint choir from throughout the Benefice - so come along to share in all your favourite carols. Refreshments will be served afterwards, so you can mingle with your friends and neighbours and wish everyone a Happy Christmas!

If you fancy exercising your vocal chords a bit more, you will be more than welcome to join the merry band of Carol Singers who traverse the various village pubs on the evening of Wednesday, December 17, collecting money for Demelza House. Starting at the Tickled Trout, circa 7.30pm, the singers head from there to the Good Intent, then to The Bull, East Farleigh, around 9pm, to sing at the

Sports Club Christmas Draw, ending up at the White House, Hunton, around 10pm. Do join us!

FARLEIGH LOSES OUT IN RUGBY SCRUM

It may have been a great day for England, but the team's winning match v Australia put paid to high hopes of success for this year's West Farleigh Christmas Fair. The combination of the televised match and a bout of bad weather meant the what lacking, despite a great array of the generosity of those who attended we still managed to raise £400 - truly (or lack of it!) Santa Claus had most match in order to support the Fair Sarah and Emily Hunter of Charlton



usual village support was some-stalls and festive gifts. Nonetheless, (and some who didn't!) meant that amazing, considering the turnout generously agreed to miss the and is pictured here with twins Lane.

Next year's Fair has been pencilled in for Saturday, November 20 - please let us know now if there are any other international events planned on the same day!

MISTLETOE - BUT NO WINE!

Last month I wrote about berries and their relative abundance this autumn.

I hope to be forgiven if I again write about berries, but specifically about **Mistletoe**.

We all know the tough oval leaves and the poisonous sticky white berries, growing in the fork of the twigs, and we are all aware of what (important!) social use can be made of them! But unless we go out and gather some for ourselves for Christmas we perhaps do not look at the whole plant and where it grows carefully. As is well-known, it's a parasite, although not usually a very punishing one - I mean even a smallish host apple tree doesn't seem to suffer unduly for having a plant of mistletoe aboard. It is also a member of a very large family of plants - 1200 species in all, it is said - but it's the only species we have here. Presumably, the fact that it lived off another tree, and was green through the winter, was what caught the imagination of the druids. Such "magical" power, we suppose, led onto its use as a charm for kissing.

It is found on a variety of trees, and when I took part in a survey a few years ago I found it on apple, hawthorn, poplar and lime. This was around Shipborne, where I lived at the time. It will not grow at any real altitude in Britain, and I thought a bunch I found 108 metres above sea level was high. The national survey found it to be very rare above 600ft. West Farleigh is much more of a "hot spot" for mistletoe, especially in the Ewell stream valley, where there are big clumps on poplar mainly, clearly visible but too high to harvest easily.

The survey organisers had been worried about mistletoe: they thought it was becoming scarcer, but the results of the survey suggested the opposite, and it seems to me to be getting more conspicuous in our village. Perhaps it's global warming, for it is very common around Paris (whence most of our commercial mistletoe is supplied) and if summers continue to get warmer we should see more of it still.

The way it spreads is interesting, and may be still in need of further understanding. For one thing, Mistle Thrushes swallow the berries (from which they take their name), but they only digest the nutritious white flesh, and pass the actual seed through their gut. If it then lands in a crevice in the bark of a suitable tree it may take root, but blue tits (at least) search for the seeds, eat them, and they can digest them. So one species of bird aids the spread, while another hinders it. I have tried to grow mistletoe on an apple tree, by smearing the berries onto the bark, but I did not succeed, and I now realise that perhaps it was the blue tits which frustrated my efforts!

Tim Hill



COFFEE IN COXHEATH

Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath, holds a Coffee Morning at the Scout HQ, Westerhill Road on the second Saturday of every month, from 10am-12 noon. For just 70p, you can drink as much tea and coffee as you want throughout the morning whilst you chatter with friends, buy cakes or simply look over the 'bring and buy' stall.

THE FARLEIGHS W.I.

Margaret Knight gave tips on healthy eating to The Farleighs W.I. members at the November meeting, where we learned that our darts team has won through to the Medway Valley District Finals.

So popular was an evening at the dogs that that another has been planned for February 8, also a visit to Rheims and an Evening with Laverock Lea.

The District Carol Service this year takes place on December 2, at 7.30pm at St. Nicholas Church, Allington.

The Farleighs Christmas Variety Show will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at 7pm, for a 7.30pm start. This performance is for W.I. members and guests only, while repeat performances on Friday, December 12 at 7.30pm and Saturday, December 13 at 2.30 pm are open to all. Adults £2.50 and children £1.00 for each performance.

All shows at The Farleighs W.I. Hall, Forge Lane, East Farleigh.

UP AND RUNNING

A weekly toddler and minder group, with a Christian focus, held at Holy Trinity, Church, Coxheath on Thursday afternoons from 1.30 pm until 3.00 pm. Our last meeting for 2003 will be on Thursday 18 December and we start again in 2004 on Thursday January 8. For further details contact David Jones 741474.

EAST FARLEIGH PRE-SCHOOL

East Farleigh Pre-School is holding its annual Nativity Play and Christmas Bazaar in the Church Hall on Wednesday December 10, starting at 10.30am.

The pre-school is now open for six sessions per week, with a special session for four-year olds about to move up to primary school.

Morning sessions are from 9.15am-12 noon from Monday to Thursday, with afternoon sessions on Monday and Friday from 12.30-2.45pm.

Contact Gill Holloway for further information on 01622 726315.

EVERGREENS

The Evergreens will be sitting down to a Christmas lunch on Tuesday 9th December. Many thanks to Jan from the White House who is cooking it for us this year so that we can ALL sit down and enjoy ourselves this year.

We are sorry to have to say goodbye to Margaret Forrest, she is moving to a Residential Home in March, Cambridgeshire, to be nearer her son Christopher and to get the care and attention she needs and deserves. We have sent flowers to cheer up her new home.

ADVENT HOPE - LIVING THROUGH LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS

On my doormat this morning was an envelope with these words printed on it boldly : Advent Hope. It was, as it happened, an appeal from Christian Aid, but it set me thinking about the season of Advent and its message of hope.

Advent is a season which is too often trampled over in the commercial rush to Christmas. It starts at the end of November and ends on Christmas Eve itself. Traditionally, it is a time set apart to contemplate the expectation and excitement of Mary and Joseph, as they prepare to welcome God in the form of a baby. Consequently, it is a time to reflect on how much room we make for God in our own lives.

And within all this is the Advent Hope, that God cares so much about us, that he has made a plan to save us from ourselves. The plan is bigger than our personal relationship with the Almighty, and even the best theologian can only guess at its timescale. But the plan is good. And it is that one day, the chaos, darkness,

suffering and injustice in this world will be brought to an end and a new order of peace and justice will be established. A new order, a new kingdom, no more wars and no more death.

And the King? Well he will be that same child we remember Mary and Joseph welcoming each Christmas. As you go through this Advent - watch the news, live through the ups and downs of life, remember this hope and this promise which is for you, and perhaps weigh up how much room you are making for King this Christmas. The gifts he gives are the best you could hope for!

Ruth Bierbaum, Associate Rector

TRINITY MEN'S GROUP

The group meets regularly for a variety of events, with the aim of providing informal Christian Fellowship to those seeking a link with Holy Trinity Church, at Coxheath, now part of our Benefice.

The next meeting for Trinity Men will be on Monday, December 8 when there is a Christmas Get-Together, at the Victoria Pub, Heath Road, from 8pm and on Monday February 16, 2004 a private visit, with grog, to HMS Submarine Ocelot, Chatham Maritime Site 7 pm.

There are also plans to invite Revd Daniel Cousins to Coxheath for his Night of Colour painting exhibition and to speak at our Breakfast in February.

For further details contact Mike Marsh Tel 01622 745702.

EVENING ALTERNATIVE

On Sunday December 7 at 6pm.

"Christmas is Coming! Why?"

Come along to anticipate the excitement and meaning of Christmas past, present and future. There will be great music, some fun and games, a time to think, a time to meet others, and a time to pray.

Come and join us and find out why Jesus really came and whether his coming made a difference. This service is suitable for and enjoyed by young, middling and old alike.

You might not know all the songs BUT you soon will if you come along!

PARISH COUNCIL FACES CASH SQUEEZE

The Parish Council is having to tighten its belt. With only about £250 being added to its reserves at the end of the financial year, total assets are around £1730 - an insufficient amount, it believes, to adequately serve parishioners properly. Major renewals to the play equipment on the Green would cost significantly more as would professional advice for any major developments which may be proposed in the village. What do readers think? Any comments in writing please to the Clerk, David Swan at Appledore, Charlton Lane, West Farleigh Maidstone ME15 0NL. Nonetheless, the Council agreed to make its usual annual grant of £330 each to Campaigners, Evergreens and Lifeline - three important village activities - while grants from Maidstone Borough Council will be used for new seating on the Green, refurbishing the village sign and the popular information boards which are deteriorating. Next year's budget (up to March 2005) will be set at the January 18 meeting and all parishioners are welcome to attend.

The Council is currently involved in several road and pathway issues, including enforcement of the width limit on Teston Bridge, improvements to the Millennium Walk, and (with several other parishes) the South Maidstone Quiet Lanes Traffic Management Scheme.

LIFE-LINE DEADLINE

Your Editor is taking a rest over Christmas and New Year, so the next Life-Line will appear in February 2004, the deadline for which will be

Saturday January 24.

Have a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year!



MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

WEEKEND FREIGHTER SERVICE

The freighter will be by the Green on
Saturday January 17 from 09.15 to 10.45

A CHANCE TO RECYCLE YOUR XMAS TREE!

SPORTS REPORT

FOOTBALL

Farleigh footballers seem to be dreaming of Christmas and Silverware at the moment, having done well so far in in the cup competitions but struggling in the league.

Our 1st XI games last month were victories over St Lawrence (cup) 2-0 and a terrific 6-0 thrashing over Knoxbridge.

However, we lost narrowly against The Rose 2-1.

Our 2nd team won comfortably over Shipton (cup) 4-1 and a marvellous victory over local rivals Hunton 3-2, after being 2-0 down. Unfortunately, we had two defeats - 1-0 against Blue Eagles and 3-1 against Wheatsheaf.

Our 1st XI lost 4-2 to Westerham in the Kent Junior Cup but the good news was that the 2nd XI secured a great 1-0 away victory over Hawkhurst, again in the Kent Junior Cup.

CLUB NEWS

Tickets are now available for our Christmas Draw, to be held at The Bull, on December 17. Please give us a call if you would like some, in support of the club.

Tickets are also on sale, at £10 each, for our Chairman's 1995 N-reg Audi A6. It has a full main dealer service history, tax and MoT. Buy on the night or call Peter Baggott on 01580 892010.

We held our Race Night at the end of November, which was yet another successful and enjoyable evening.

Many thanks to all concerned for their help on the night. Even though it's not yet Christmas, we are already on the look-out for someone in the village who may be prepared to make cricket teas for some or all of next season. You would be most welcome - please call me on the number below for more details.

Finally, as ever at this time, may I wish my reader a very happy and peaceful Christmas!

Cheers

Tel

(M/stone 745744)

MOTHER'S UNION - Coxheath Area Branch

The MU holds its annual Advent Service on Wednesday 3 December in Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath.

Do join us for Mince pies and coffee at 7.30pm before a short time of reflection on the meaning of Advent and preparation for Christmas.

The meetings are open to all - contact Lesley Marsh for more details on 01622 745702.

100 CLUB WINNERS

The All Saints 100 Club winners for November were Sheena O'Kill (£25) and John & Sue Day (£10). Due to the lack of response, the 100 Club is being wound up at the end of December. Members will be notified by post and are reminded to cancel their standing orders from the New Year.

SERVICES-DECEMBER 2003

7 8am Holy Communion
- Rev David Jones 
6pm Evening Alternative
- Ruth Bierbaum / Helen Swan

14 3pm VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE
- Rev Roger Castle

21 9.15am Sung Eucharist
- Rev David Jones

24 9.30pm Holy Communion
- Rev Roger Castle

25 10.15am Family Holy Communion
- Rev David Jones

28 10.30am Holy Communion -
ST MARY'S, HUNTON.

PLEASE NOTE, this is the ONLY service in the Benefice on this Sunday.

JANUARY 2004

4 8am Holy Communion
-Rev Roger Castle
6pm Evening Alternative
- Ruth Bierbaum / Helen Swan

11 11am Family Service
- Rev Roger Castle

18 9.15am Holy Communion
- Rev Ruth Bierbaum

25 11am Morning Prayer
- Rev Roger Castle

NB: For details of other services in the Benefice, contact Rev'd Roger Castle on Maldstone 747570.

For arrangements for Baptisms, Thanksgivings or Marriages, please contact Revd. David Jones on 741474

BENEFACTIVE UNITED

A monthly open evening bringing together members of all five churches on **Tuesday December 9 at 7.30pm** at the Coxheath Centre (behind the Bell PH). The subject for this month has been changed from that advertised. It will be 'The Homosexual Debate Continued'. A discussion document has recently been published which will help us to focus our discussions.

We will follow our usual programme, so please bring some food to pool as a buffet supper at the start of the evening, which ends at 9.45pm. This is a good place to meet with those from the other churches and we hope to see you there.