

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

# Life-Line

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"A well-drawn Life-Line in the hand is a sign of vigorous and lively energie. But put not your trust in palmistrie.." -Anon

Illustration of All Saints'  
after Harold Harbour.



## A Merry Christmas to all our readers



### WEST FARLEIGH'S PRE- CHRISTMAS HIGHLIGHTS - YOUR ADVENT CALENDAR FOR 2007

The first events: Coffee morning at All Saints—December 1st 10 –12 am., with Bring and Buy, Cakes, Raffles, Preserves—all the seasonal flavours, plus pot luck. **December 2nd** Carol Service at the White House. Join the regulars at 7 pm for an evening of Wassailing.

#### TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE

On Sunday **December 16th** at 3.30 pm in All Saints. Music by the famed East Peckham Silver Band. Mince Pies and wine will be served to make this a truly festive occasion. Do come and make this a focus of the Christmas Season!

**Nativity Play** performed (naturally) by the children. See the age-old story with a new twist. All Saints Church on **Thursday 13th December** at 6.30 pm. All welcome!

**Annual Carol Singing.** Join the wandering minstrels for the evening of December 18th as they crawl the local pubs raising money for Charity. It ends at the Walnut Tree, where the Sports Club join in! **Singers (or just voices)** of all types needed!

#### Christmas Trees delivered to your door!

**In aid of West Farleigh Sports Club**

**5-7 ft trees £18, 7- 10 ft trees £20**

**Contact Tel on 01622 745744**

**Your support is appreciated**

**P.S. It might cost you a cuppa and a mince pie!**

This month's Life-Line includes a Questionnaire from the Kent Police. It is commendably straightforward and affords a welcome opportunity to make your views known—quite anonymously (as though the sheets are numbered they are randomly inserted into Life-Line -Ed.) We hope Hannah Percival, our PCSO will find the results of this survey useful when she looks at them—so please make the most of this opportunity.

**A big thank you to our tireless distributors who get Life-Line to you in all weathers and at all seasons—none is more exacting than this one - but we wish them an extra special Christmas!**



Dear Friends,

**'..The star which they had seen in the East went before them. till it came and stood over where the young child was....' (St.Matthew 2:9)**

A number of explanations have been given for the appearance of the star, each with its own difficulties. Amongst these are that the star was a supernova or a comet or a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Because Scripture does not explain or identify the star, we cannot state categorically what it was. It may simply have been the glory of the Lord – the same experience which the shepherds saw when the angels appeared to them.

The Bible often equates the manifestation of God's glory with some sort of light. (e.g: the book of Numbers 24:17 'a star shall come forth from the house of Jacob' or Revelation 22:16 Jesus is the 'Bright and Morning Star'). So we may well identify the light of the star as the glory of God.

The Magi or 'Wise Men' were not following the star for their entire journey because they had to ask where Jesus was born. It wasn't until the Jews told them of the prophesied place of Christ's birth that the star reappeared and guided them on to Bethlehem and the exact spot where the baby lay.

These wise men, being learned men and acquainted with the literature of their time, including parts of the Jewish writings, had correctly made the assumption that a star which they would see, would be the herald of the coming of the long awaited Messiah. The wise men made their long journey with one purpose in mind, to find the Saviour and worship Him. They were true seekers after God, and though they had limited spiritual light, they immediately heard God's voice and they responded in faith and obedience. These wise men had the type of genuine seeking hearts that God promises always to reward. ('You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart' – Jeremiah 29:13).

The coming of the Messiah was also the beginning of the New Age. St.Matthew, who is the only Gospel writer to report the journey of the wise men, uses a word in its original text meaning 'genesis'. He begins his Gospel: 'The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham'. If we look further in chapter one at verse 18 we read: 'Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way..' Here was beginning that the prophets had foretold. Here was the new book of Genesis being written – here was the arrival of the new Adam!

Rivals to power are not welcome. So it was with Herod, a cruel man who ruled Judea as king by grant of the Roman Senate from 37 to 4 BC. An ageing and failing tyrant he ordered the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem in the hope of killing the Messiah. The religious leaders of the day were indifferent. They advised Herod on the prophetic words of Micah:

'But you O Bethlehem who are little among the tribes of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel' (Micah 5:2). Sadly they rejected Jesus as the one they looked for – not even when he was born, not when he ministered among them, and not when he suffered and died and rose from the grave.

Here we are once again on the threshold of the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour. History shows us three responses to this unrivalled act of God: Hostility, Indifference and Worship.

Hostility from Herod, Indifference of the religious leaders and the Worship of the wise men. These three characteristics of people's view of Christianity in the twenty first century are alive and well!

What may our response be to Him who was made known to the world by the witness of the wise men who followed a star to discover the Saviour? Christmas is a time when wise men and women see beyond the turkey and tinsel (as happy and enjoyable as those parts of the Christmas celebration are) to that which brings meaning to our existence.

*'O God,*

*Who by the leading of a star*

*Manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:*

*Mercifully grant that we,*

*Who know you now by faith,*

*May at last behold your glory face to face;*

*Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.....' (Collect for the Epiphany)*

With every blessing for a Happy and Holy Christmas from us both,

Peter and Diana.



**Jim Patch** needs no introduction to Life-Line readers, many of whom will know that he had what's euphemistically called an "interesting war". On page 4 you can see he spoke to the Evergreens about his experiences, but having heard he had made a trip to the Aegean to pay tribute to former comrades, we asked him to tell us about it....

## A Personal Remembrance

In October I went back to Leros.

"And where is Leros? "I hear you cry.

It is an island in the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey , one of the Dodecanese group in the south eastern part of that idyllic area and within sight of the Turkish coast.

Idyllic no doubt but in 1943 both Churchill and Hitler were thinking not so much about its beauty as the strategic position it occupied for possible future operations in that part of the world. The result was that fierce fighting took place for possession of the Island between Commonwealth and German forces who landed there.

Memories of those who were killed in the fighting are kept alive at well chosen sites in appropriate places along the island coast. The purpose of my visit was to lay wreaths at these spots where so many of my erstwhile comrades lay. The main cemetery contains about 200 graves and there are separate memorials to two warships sunk in the harbour, HMS Intrepid and the Greek destroyer Queen Olga. The cemetery and memorials are carefully and lovingly looked after by the island people. The wreath laying ceremonies were attended by the Naval and Military Attache from the British Embassy in Athens, the mayor and civil and church dignitaries, a Greek naval band, a detachment of armed soldiers who fired a salute , boy scouts and girl guides and lots of people. I was proud to be there.

Jim Patch

### REMEMBRANCE DAY November 11th 2007

Jim also read out the "Immortal Words" at West Farleigh's own remembrance service in All Saints Church last month. The service was well attended, considering we have no uniformed organisations to participate. The service was conducted by Eileen Doyle. Everyone was glad that the timing of the 2 minutes silence was pretty accurately related to the chiming of the hour on the restored (automatic!) church bell.

The Farleigh's History Society invite you to—

A Christmas Social Evening

With short presentations on:

Local Airfields of WW2

Norah Cluff, East Farleigh's 1<sup>st</sup> WW Nurse, and Christmas Traditions in Kent

Seasonal Refreshments and Quiz

The East Farleigh Club 7.30 pm Thursday 6th December 2007

Tickets: £2.00 on the door. Members Free

Everyone welcome

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## THURSDAY CLUB

This club for primary age children meets on Tuesdays in term-time. We will be preparing for our end of term Christmas service, so there will be songs to learn, sketches to practise and props and scenery to be made. We will be having lots of fun. Ring Sue on 728252 for more information.

Helen Swan

## EVERGREENS

Jim Patch told the Evergreens all about his wartime experiences. It was an amazing tale of bravery, hardship, stamina and determination. The members were enthralled by his tale. A very fitting talk for Remembrance week. Thanks Jim, for sharing your story with us. We shall be going to Spadeworks for our Christmas lunch on the 11th December and are looking forward to our trip to London in January to see Billy Elliot. Thanks to a grant from KCC we are able to do something a little different to our usual trip to the Hazlitt Pantomime.

H.S.

## Children's Nativity

Everyone is welcome to the children's dramatisation of the Christmas story.

Thursday 13th December 6.30 pm in West Farleigh Church.

This is suitable for both children and adults. Do come along and join in the traditional carols. The young people are working hard, learning their words, remembering where they are supposed to be and overcoming stage fright and the giggles! It should be alright on the night!

H.S.

## The Farleighs WI

Contributed by Pam Clark

Pub and nordic walks, line dancing—now the latest W.I. Activity—curling classes — what next!

A letter has been received from the British and International Sailors' Society thanking our members for the knitted hats they had made for seafarers.

The darts team has reached the Medway Valley WI District Final.

Barbara Skinner and Pam Clark have been compiling a scrap book and portfolio of The Farleighs WI 2007, for County and National competitions.

So eager are our members to have a look before the books are submitted for judging, that (wearing white gloves of course!) they will be permitted to look through them at the January meeting.

Martyn Harrison's "Music and Mirth of Harry Secombe" brought back happy memories of The Goons.

The Christmas production of "Let Us Entertain You" will be held at The Farleighs WI Hall, Forge Lane, East Farleigh on Friday, 14th December at 7.30p.m. and Saturday, 15th December at 2.30p.m.

Please phone Maidstone 728167, Maidstone 726704, Maidstone 743382 for tickets.

Not to be missed!

## CHARLTON LANE GARDEN WINS GOLD AWARD

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Henty's garden was recently awarded gold in the Kent Wildlife Trust's "Gardening with Wildlife" competition. The award was presented at a small ceremony at the Yalding Organic Garden, by the Deputy Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Denise Joy. Mr. Henty attributes his success not to any major scheme but to details such as providing scented flowers like buddleia and sedum to attract bees, butterflies, hoverflies and other insects. The judges were also complimentary about the mixed hedgerow of mainly native species, like hawthorn, ivy and damson, which is very "wildlife friendly". To clinch the title Mr Henty says that he sent his wife into the garden "to add to its wildlife interest" while the judges were present! Congratulations to them both!

In the same competition a different category was won by East Farleigh School which many of "our" children attend. It is good to know that they are diligently studying both gardening and wildlife.

## The compensations of old age.

On BBC radio last week the tale was told of an interview with a aged man—a 103 year old named Hubbard. He admitted to being sicked about his name, but when asked what was good about being so old, he immediately replied, "There's not much peer pressure!"



# Church Services

December 2007

# Not called the Grey Heron for nothing.....

## West Farleigh

## All Saints, Church Lane

|               |          |  |
|---------------|----------|--|
| 2nd December  | 8 am     | Holy Communion                         |
|               | 11 am    | Service of the Word at the White House |
| 9th December  | 11 am    | Family Service                         |
| 16th December | 9.15 am  | No service                             |
|               | 3.30 pm  | Carol Service                          |
| 23rd December | 11 am    | Morning Prayer                         |
| 24th December | 9.30 pm  | Holy Communion                         |
| Christmas Eve |          |  |
| 25th December | 10.45 am | Service for All                        |
| Christmas Day |          | + Holy Communion                       |
| 30th December | 10.30 am | United Benefice at Hunton              |

## East Farleigh

|               |          |                |
|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 2nd December  | 9.15 am  | Holy Communion |
| 9th December  | 8.00 am  | Holy Communion |
|               | 10.30 am | Morning Prayer |
| 16th December | 6.00 pm  | Carol Service  |
| 23rd December | 8.00 am  | Holy Communion |
|               | 10.30 am | Morning Prayer |
| 24th December | 4.00 pm  | Christingle    |
|               | 11.30 pm | Holy Communion |
| 25th December | 10.45 am | Family Service |

## Hunton

|               |           |                  |
|---------------|-----------|------------------|
| 2nd December  | 11.00 am  | Family Service   |
| 9th December  | 9.15 a.m. | Holy Communion   |
| 16th December | 6.00 pm   | Carol Service    |
| 23rd December | 9.15 am   | Holy Communion   |
| 24th December | 11.30 pm  | Holy Communion   |
| 25th December | 9.15 am   | Service for All  |
| 30th December | 10.30 am  | Benefice Service |

## Coxheath

|               |          |                          |
|---------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 2nd December  | 11.00 am | Holy Communion           |
| 9th December  | 10.30 am | Morning Prayer +Nativity |
| 16th December | 11.00 am | Holy Communion           |
|               | 4.00 pm  | Carol Service            |
| 23rd December | 11.00 am | Family Service           |
| 24th December | 5.00 pm  | Children's Service       |
|               | 11.15 pm | Holy Communion           |
| 25th December | 10.45 am | Service for All          |

## Linton

|              |         |                |
|--------------|---------|----------------|
| 2nd December | 9.15 am | Holy Communion |
| 9th December | 8.00 am | Holy Communion |

Like very many of our readers, we have a garden pond. Ours is quite small – no more than 2 meters or so in diameter – and unfortunately it is in a position where we cannot see it from the windows of our house. So for years I have puzzled over a grey film that appears on its surface from time to time. Not unlike a film of oil – but without the rainbow effects – it is pale and utterly flimsy, but with what appear to be slightly thicker flakes scattered among it. It certainly doesn't look attractive: you can imagine it's a pollutant. Gradually I came to the conclusion that the film was associated with the grey heron, which often visits our pond, although as I've said I can't see it directly, unless it perches, as it sometimes does, atop an adjacent tree. I know that herons have a special method of preening. Typically birds have a preen gland which exudes a special oil which they spread over their feathers, like brilliantine perhaps, to help keep them neat and waterproof. The heron has a subtly different method. It grows special feathers which crumble away into "powder down" and the bird uses its bill to spread this on its feathers to condition and waterproof them, just as other birds use neat oil. I believe that the grey film on the pond's surface is this powder down, washed of the heron's feathers. The books I have consulted do not mention this, but a fellow writer of nature notes – a lady from Hertfordshire called Wendy Bathurst – has recorded this, and confirms this view, saying "The grey film always comes after the heron has been." It seems the heron produces an awful lot of the powder down, but I suspect that like oil it spreads until it's unimaginably thin. Chemists may like to know that the composition of preen oil is chemically very interesting, with points in common with commercially desirable waxy oils.

Needless to say, the herons visit the pond to catch the goldfish at any season and frogs in the early spring – they wreak havoc with both. I am uncertain whether my fish are now extinct: months go by without seeing any but then they are back, probably feeling free to surface as a heron hasn't been around of late.

Heron are a wonderful part of our birdlife and after the swan and Canada goose are our largest common bird. In addition to fish they often eat voles and can be seen standing in the middle of grassy fields. They can manage enormous fish, including flat fish on the seashore. Perhaps, like me, you have seen a heron struggling to swallow such a large and wide item, but they can stretch their neck wonderfully. Of course, I could net our pond against them, but I don't in the end begrudge them our fish. Herons have done very well in the last 40 years, thanks to mild winters and -yes- the spread of garden ponds. Also, they are easy to count at their communal nest sites, so we have known their numbers historically, with accuracy, for longer than any other bird. The nearest large heronry to us is probably at Cobham, but their steady flight can carry them across our skies very readily. Stray nesting attempts are probably made much nearer West Farleigh occasionally, so signs of this should be looked for.

© Tim Hill

## Linton continued

|               |          |                |
|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 16th December | 4.00 pm  | Carol Service  |
| 23rd December | 9.15 am  | Holy Communion |
| 24th December | 11.30 pm | Holy Communion |



## Youth Sport

Contributed by Ian Wratten



All our teams are riding high in their leagues and enjoying the sport!

### Under 8's

The u 8's had a fascinating match against Burwash and after going 3-1 down the team powered forward to win 8-4. This was followed by two wins against Great Chart. The first game was a comfortable 7-0 away win but the following week the reverse fixture was a tougher proposition. However, the Farleigh players came out on top with a 1-0 victory that puts them second in the league.

### Under 9's,

The u 9's have had three wins so far this month, winning 3-2 against Cranbrook, 2-0 against Tenterden and 3-0 against Great Chart. This puts them 4<sup>th</sup> in the league but within one win of second place.

### Under 10's

The u 10's sit top of their league after a 3-3 draw against second place Beckley, and wins against Smarden and Wittersham.

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## Further developments at All Saints Church

Those of you who have used the church for social functions will have realised that facilities would be improved by the addition of more tables, light portable chairs and some staging. The PCC are delighted that at a recent meeting of the Maidstone Local Board Planning Committee - KCC Committee - the members allocated £3,000 from the Small Community Capital Projects Fund towards the purchase of these items. Paulina Stockell, our local KCC councillor, has also given us £1,000 from her allowance. The PCC will provide the remaining £2,000. This will initially come from money set aside for repairs to the stonework until the time sufficient money has been raised. A donation made in memory of Janet Eastwood will be put towards this.

The tables arrived in time for use at the Harvest supper and it is hoped that the other items will arrive before Christmas.

The church will now have all the facilities needed for a range of small functions from committee meetings to the performance of plays and concerts. Coffee mornings, a training session for diocesan workers, the Harvest Supper and other events have already taken place there. The building is now warm and comfortable and available for rental at competitive rates. It is **your Church**. Do use it! If you are interested in renting it please contact Christine Hill on 813019.

V. Grainger

N.B.. The Church is still seeking cleaners to spread the burden of this task more lightly among us. Can you help? Call any member of the P.C.C.

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**NEW YEAR EDITION OF LIFE-LINE:** Readers may recall that there was a short edition of Life-Line in January a year ago. We intend to do the same this year (though the content may not be identical). This would mean Life-Line editor hasn't had a break for some 15 months or more - but don't worry, it will come, and with little warning. Then you'll all have a peaceful month. ... Happy New Year everyone

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## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL WEEKEND FREIGHTER SERVICE 2008

**The freighter will be by the Green on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January from 9.15 to 10.45 am**

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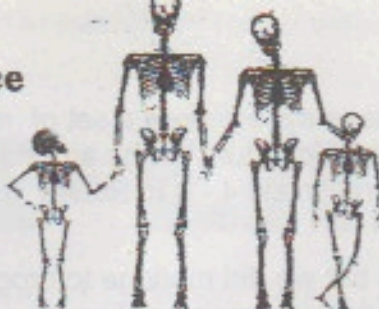
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## Sports Report:

### FOOTBALL

It has been a long time since our 1st XI footballers have experienced a set of results as bad as last month, but we have been there before and hopefully we can turn things around. For the record we lost 3 - 0 to Ditton, 6 - 0 to Downwood, 9 - 0 to Malgo and finally 4 - 0 to Eccles. Here's hoping we'll get a goalscorer for Christmas!

Our 2nd XI have also struggled to find winning ways but we did manage to progress in the Tunbridge Wells cup. This came in the form of a workman-like performance, beating Dowgate 4-0. However, although competing well at times in our other three matches we were unable to achieve another favourable result, losing to Headcorn 4 -2, Wateringbury 4 -2 and finally going down 4 -3 at Eccles.

Our forthcoming **Christmas raffle** is on Tuesday 18th December at the Walnut Tree, East Farleigh. Tickets are now available. Please let me know if you would like some. Your support would be appreciated.

Yours in sport - Wishing my reader a very happy Christmas!

Tel

01622 745744

#### Ton Up Club Winners November 1st prize - £25, 2nd -£15, 3rd-£10

**First—Don (Walnut Tree)**

**Second - Christine Back**

**Third - Ian Pearce**

#### Some points extracted from the Draft Minutes of the Parish Council's meeting of November 5th. 2007.

- The Chairman welcomed all present and introduced the new Clerk. Later in the meeting a presentation was made to the retiring Clerk, David Swan, and Councillors unanimously thanked him for his most valuable contribution during his long service to the Parish Council.
- The new noticeboards had been ordered and were expected to be delivered in about a month.
- The replacement of the damaged and rotten posts on the Green of which there were thought to be 23 would go ahead.
- A County Councillor had had a meeting with Alan Johnson at Maidstone Hospital regarding the serious problems of C-Diff and reported that there had been a reduction of incidences since the Government report.
- Village Gateways. The Clerk produced the cost for the gateway signs that Boughton Monchelsea had installed and there followed some discussion regarding the positioning and size of similar signs for the Parish.
- Crime Figures. Ms Percival reported there had been no reported crimes from 3<sup>rd</sup> September to date. However, Cllrs were aware that the Church had been broken into on 4<sup>th</sup> November with some damage to the door lock although nothing had been stolen.
- ... the pilot scheme survey of roads and speeds carried out by MBC will be completed shortly and results notified to each Parish.
- Next Meeting (all welcome) January 7th. 2008.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The Parish Council would like to hear from anyone interested in taking over the co-ordination of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. This is a significant and worthwhile activity within the village which could possibly be shared between a number of people, aided by our P.C.S.O. Hannah Percival.

Express your interest please to Vikki Stancombe Parish Clerk Tel: 01622 842782

On the matter of potential crime, two youths with bicycles were disturbed from the back of a house in Lower Road. The owners were gardening at the time and returned by chance. The value of locking the house when "up the garden" is evident.