

West Farleigh's own

LIFE-LINE

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"Even the thinnest lifeline can be used to draw in a stronger rope" (Anon. 20th C.)



Illustration of All Saints'
after Harold Harbour.

Education set to become new major issue in villages like our own....

The difficulties facing parents because of the secondary schools admission policies were highlighted at the latest meeting of the Parish Council. Concerns that West Farleigh may be uniquely disadvantaged by changes in the procedure for admissions at local comprehensive schools are perhaps not fully justified, since many other villages are in the same position, but it does seem to be in an "admissions shadow area". The system gives the opportunity to make four choices (in order of preference) among the secondary schools hereabouts. However, if these schools are oversubscribed, then getting a place is governed by how close you live—the closer, the better the chance of getting in. Since no secondary school is very close to here, our children have a poor chance of achieving their choice. The situation has changed recently, in that Cornwallis School has had to alter its former policy of having a close relationship with certain primary schools, such as East Farleigh, in favour of the national policy based on proximity of the child's home. What is iniquitous about the current system is that parents, in West Farleigh and elsewhere, are presented with a choice – a "choice" which turns out to be illusory, since those living close to the good schools will always fill them, so that it matters more than ever where you live. The present school buses are also going to prove unsuited to the new pattern of admissions – with difficulties for some, until they can be adjusted. Ed.

Spring is staring us in the face....

Life-Line tries to avoid clichés normally, especially sentimental ones, but we cannot resist this new (ish) lamb which has been enjoying March's sunshine. Number 3 here is one of several to be seen off Lower Road or in other locations around the village and looks as though he thinks he's number 1! The photo was taken on Mothering Sunday, when plenty of human youngsters took the opportunity to thank their caring mums at All Saints Church.



May Deadline: April 26th 2009

Dear Friends,

The Gospel of John reports: 'on the first day of the week Jesus came and stood among them'. So it was Easter Day night. The disciples were unsure as to what was happening – some had said that Jesus was alive again – the women at the tomb had brought strange news; two men on the Emmaus road had encountered Jesus – and now, if doubt existed, doubt was to be removed, certainly for all but Thomas, for there was Jesus among them, though the doors were locked. Yes, Jesus accomplished many things in just a few minutes: He came to them – He spoke with the disciples – He showed them his wounds – He commissioned them and gave them a special gift.

Yes, the doors were locked, but Jesus still came to them. If death couldn't hold Him, locked doors couldn't! 'Jesus came and stood among them'. Jesus spoke to them: 'Peace be with you'. How the disciples needed to hear those words – those days of the past week were so totally perplexing, and yet, here was Jesus with them again, offering words of peace. And Jesus showed them his wounds, his hands, his side. There was no doubt about it – Jesus certainly suffered that cruel death on a cross; here was the cruel nails' impress.

The immediate result of this appearance of Jesus? 'Then were the disciples overjoyed to see their Lord'

Then came the commissioning: 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you'. Yes, Jesus had come from the Father with a special commission; that commission *had not* just begun at the birth of Jesus, it had begun before all time, and it saw its fulfilment in the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. So Jesus commissions the disciples.

The original Greek word is 'Apostello' – but it means more than just to 'send' – no, the disciples were being sent with a special mission: to teach, preach and baptise. We get the word 'Apostle' from this – a person sent with a specific goal and duty. This duty and goal could only be achieved with the very special gift that Jesus was to give. He breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven and if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'. It is no coincidence that these words are used at the Ordination of a new Priest.

So not in their own strength, but always in God's strength through the Holy Spirit, that gentle breath of God breathing life into all. Jesus 'breathed on them'. We can think of other instances of breath being the means of giving life and power, not least the story of creation when God formed man and breathed life in to him. So for you and I Jesus comes to us – He has come to you, for why ever else would you have faith? Jesus speaks to us – have you not heard in that still inner being the voice of He who calls and leads us? Jesus shows us – have we not 'seen' the Living Lord active in our lives and in the lives of others? Jesus commissions us too – 'so I send you'. We may not feel anything like those first disciples, but God has always had a plan for your life and mine. Jesus also gives us – He promises never to leave us, though we often leave Him – 'I will not leave you desolate' – what a desolate place the cross was for Jesus hanging there with the sins of the whole world on Him – yet he was never left there – the resurrection proved that. The Gospel writer says: 'These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name'. Jesus Christ comes into *our* upper room – *our* lives, and speaks words of peace and asks of us to live for Him and in so doing gives us the power to do these things. And we have the promise: 'Lo, I am with you always even to the end of time'.

With Easter blessings

Peter

Advance notice

Rev'd Canon Gordon Oliver, the Diocesan Director of Training will be coming to the United Benefice on Saturday May 30th to lead an 'Away Day' from 9.30 am-3.30 pm. The purpose of this is to work out a vision for the future of the parishes. This is an opportunity for all parishioners to voice their hopes, aspirations and vision for the future as we seek the way forward. Please mark in your diaries now. More details to follow.

Peter Walker

Maidstone Bible Convention

Monday May 11th to Thursday May 14th, at 8 pm each night, at the Salvation Army Citadel, Union St. Further details follow.

Prior to the start of the meeting a parishioner highlighted the current admissions system for secondary school places that had resulted in her daughter not being offered a place at any of the four schools of choice. Following discussion regarding the problems of secondary school placement for people living in West Farleigh, Members offered their support.

- **Police Business**—PCSO Joanna Watts reported two incidents of theft since the last meeting and also advised of the increase in thefts of farm vehicles in the surrounding areas that has resulted in the Police instigating a programme of installing tracking devices to this type of vehicle. There followed discussion regarding the lack of a Police Officer for West Farleigh and Members agreed to write to Inspector Sandwell.
- **Resignation of Councillor** – Following the resignation of Cllr Underdown, Members noted the required Notice has been displayed on the noticeboards giving electors, being not less than ten, the opportunity to call for an election to fill the vacancy. To show their appreciation for his contribution to the Council, Members agreed to a gift of a meal for Cllr Underdown from the Chairman's Allowance.
- **PROW Bottom of Teston Lane** – Cllr Scott advised he had contacted the land owner but is awaiting a reply. Cllr Scott to follow up to get a definitive response for the next meeting.
- **Charlton Lane** – The results of the Speed Survey carried out on Charlton Lane by KHS were discussed and it was agreed to write to KHS to request the full results of the survey showing the actual speeds recorded.
- Members discussed the site meeting held with KHS regarding the problems at the narrower section of Charlton Lane and it was agreed to write to KHS to request an estimate for the cost of the repair and also to request the reason KHS were not agreeable to tarmac this section of highway.
- **Charlton Lane – Gritting & Salt Bins**– Members noted the position regarding putting Charlton Lane on the gritting route and also that KHS had advised there was no suitable location for the provision of a salt bin at the bottom of Charlton Lane. Following discussion it was agreed to write to KHS and advise a salt bin was previously located under the Charlton Lane street nameplate at the bottom of the Lane and also to write to Arriva for support in getting the Lane on the gritting route.
- Members discussed the re-routing of footpath KM21 between Teston Bridge and All Saints Church, and as the old route had been used since 1939 it was agreed to pursue the 20-year rule in trying to get the old route re-instated. **Stiles - Footpath KM21/1 and KM21/2** Members considered the offer from KCC to provide new wooden kissing gates on the footway and agreed they did not wish to install the new gates.
- **Community Centre** – Members agreed to the fee of £150 for the preparation of the Land Registry compliant plan by TruePlan of Tunbridge Wells, identified as a requirement by solicitors Whitehead Monckton. A parishioner was invited to express his views on the project and there followed some heated discussion regarding the plans for the new community centre and whether there is a requirement for such a building. The Chairman confirmed it is the Parish Council's intention to consult residents to establish views and requirements when the land at Charlton Lane had been secured.
- **Village Green n- Signs** – Members noted two further play area signs will be provided by KHS on Ewell Lane. Members considered a request to move the play area sign on Charlton Lane and agreed its present location was appropriate.
- **Posts** – Members considered alternative options and agreed Kentish Ragstone to replace the broken wooden posts on the Green and any further broken posts to be replaced by the ragstone as and when required. The Clerk to check with insurance and KHS that this would be acceptable.
- **Parish Council Wooden Chest** – Members discussed the wooden chest that is currently being accommodated by the ex-Clerk and Agreed to offer it in the first instance to the PCC and thereafter to advertise the Chest in Life-Line.
- **Councillors' Reports (Borough)** Cllr Wilson reported the increase of 4.46% in the Council Tax. Cllr Mortimer reported the probable increase in Sunday parking and Park & Ride charges in Maidstone and the withdrawal of the one-off bids for Concurrent Functions. Cllr Mortimer also reported a Public Meeting in Coxheath on 24th March to discuss the Traffic Calming Scheme.
- **(Parish) Cllr Morgan** reported the staggered junction sign is back on the post at St Helen's Corner and attendance at the KHS On-line Roadshow that demonstrated the new reporting system that can be accessed by Parish Councils. Cllr Bailey queried if there was a mirror at the top of Teston Lane and requested KHS is pursued regarding the change of priorities at Teston Lane with the junction of Lower Road. Cllr Hards reported a further meeting to discuss the Fair will be held on 26th March and requested assistance in manning a Parish Council stall at the Fair. Cllr Merritt reported the Tree Preservation Officer at MBC will conduct a survey of the trees at Court Lodge; one of the doors on the noticeboard at the Church is bowed and letting in water; the benches and tables on the village green need cleaning and the by-law sign adjacent to the Good Intent is hanging off the post. Cllr Merritt offered to attend to the benches and tables and the sign.
- **Request for Funding** – Members considered a request for financial assistance from Seekers and Life-Line and agreed a donation of £330 to each organisation. Members also considered a request from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership for a contribution towards the clearing of the footpath on the Farleigh side of Barming Bridge and agreed not to make a donation. *(The main argument being that the footpath was still a highway and therefore the responsibility of the Highways Dept.—Ed.)*
- **Date of Next Meeting** – The next Meetings are on Monday 18th May 2009 at All Saints Church being the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Council. All welcome.

Letter to the editor.

Dear Sir

In reply to John Morgan's letter in the March edition of Life-line, while not wishing to comment on the need or otherwise for a village hall, I would like to confirm that the church is available for rental. The chancel can be screened by curtains leaving the nave as a hall. The carpet makes it unsuitable for functions such as discos but with its stage, screen, pantry and toilet facilities for the disabled, it is a good venue for meetings, rehearsals and performances, both musical and dramatic. Since its reopening two years ago the Church, Parish Council and Sports Club have held events there but it is available to all. For costs and availability contact the Bookings Secretary, Christine Hill on 813019.

Yours etc.

Valeria Grainger, Churchwarden

Annual General Meeting of All Saints Church, March 17th 2009

At the A.G.M. of the All Saints Church, the business of the Church over the year was presented in a formal manner, with the Rector, Rev. Peter Walker, in the chair. He reviewed 2008—a year of steady progress, but marked by the departure of Rev. Ruth Bierbaum to a new appointment, after her recovery from her serious accident. He thanked the Churchwarden, Secretary and all officers and helpers at All Saints for their unceasing efforts over the year. The Church in the benefice was very dependant on the non-stipendiary Priest, the Rev. David Jones and on the lay readers, notably Hugh Grainger in West Farleigh. Churchwarden Valeria Grainger pointed to similar progress: the congregation had shown a very slight increase over the year. Treasurer Stephen Norman made a very clear presentation of the accounts. There had been a deficit of income against expenditure in the year. In spite of the credit crunch the position was expected to improve slightly in 2009. There followed reports from the other officers; for the Deanery Synod, the Electoral Roll Officer, Child Protection Officer, Seekers and Evergreens.

Following the reports, all the officers and sidesmen were re-elected unanimously to continue in their present roles.

NOTE. In spite of their similar names (and also dates of occurrence) the Annual General Meeting of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is not to be confused with that of the Parish Council, or the Annual Parish Meeting which will take place on May 18th. The P.C.C is concerned with the affairs of the Church and with its outreach into the community, whereas the Parish Council is the secular basis of local political, social and economic representation. T.H.

Seekers

Seekers is a Christian club for children in school years 1 to 6. We meet on Thursdays in the church from 5.45 to 7.15 pm where we follow a programme of games, music, crafts, stories, drama and more games! New members are always welcome - come and give us a try.

Everyone is welcome to join us at our end of term service on Thursday, 2nd April at 6.30 pm. Joining in with the action songs is optional. Please contact Sue Walsh on 728252 for more information.

EVERGREENS

In March the Evergreens enjoyed a thrilling, fun packed afternoon at the races, no not at a local meeting but in Ann & Graeme McNaughtons' conservatory. The afternoon consisted of four races comprising an opening event for novices, one for 'three year old fillies' followed buy a Selling plate for 'old stallions' and finishing with a handicapped race over hurdles. There was very heavy backing in race 1 on Jim Patch riding Yellow Peril but he fell way behind from the start and never made up any ground.

In race 2 for 3 year old fillies Phyllis Smitherman proved a great stayer with a fast finish and romped home well ahead of the rest. Race 3 proved too much for the four male jockies (remaining nameless) and it well and truly lived up to its name 'The Knackers Yard Plate'. Race 4 proved to be the best race of the day with an exciting close finish. Heavy backing all round turned out to be a bad day for the bookie (a k a treasurer)

The venue for April's meeting is to be announced.

Terry Ayears

Churches Together In Maidstone are organising the following services:

Maundy Thursday 9th April at 7.30 p.m. A service at St. Nicholas Church, Poplar Grove will include a sharing of Holy Communion.

Good Friday at 10.30 a.m. there is a Walk of Witness from Knight rider St. Baptist Church (top of Earl St.) ending with an open air service. This is followed by a time of meditation and prayer at the United Reformed Church, Week St. Maidstone.

Good Friday 10th April at 7.30 p.m. Evening Worship at the United Reformed Church in Week Street. Coffee and hot cross buns will be served after the service.

West Farleigh All Saints, Church Lane

Palm Sunday

5th April 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

Good Friday

10th April 12.30 p.m. Hour at the Cross

Easter Sunday

12th April 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

19th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

26th April 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

East Farleigh

5th April 6.00 p.m. Music

10th April 9.30 a.m. Hour at the Cross

12th April 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

12th April 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

19th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

26th April 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

26th April 9.30 a.m. Matins

Hunton

5th April 11.00 a.m. Family Service

10th April 2.00 p.m. Hour at the Cross

12th April 9.30 a.m. Family Service

19th April 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

26th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Coxheath

5th April 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

10th April 2.00 p.m. Hour at the Cross

12th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

19th April 11.00 a.m. Holy Communion

26th April 11.00 a.m. Family Service

Linton

5th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

9th April **Maundy Thursday** 7.30 pm Benefice Holy Communion

10th April 12.00 noon Hour at the Cross

12th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

19th April 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

19th April 11.00 a.m. Family Service

26th April 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Clergy Contact Numbers:

Contact Peter Walker for Baptisms, Thanksgivings, Weddings and Funerals

Rev. Peter Walker at the Rectory 01622 747570
 Rev. David Jones 01622 741474
N.B. Peter's day off is Monday; David's is Friday.

"If the oak before the ash, We'll be in for a splash.

If the ash before the oak, We'll be in for a soak!"

If it were not a joke anyway, the old saw about the effect on the future weather must surely be complete nonsense, not least because in my experience the oak is always first! The ash only comes into full leaf when the temperature reaches 70 degrees F. However, there are changes in the sequence of flowering events in the spring, which seem to be dependent in some way on the subtleties of the weather. The relative speed with which plants respond to different aspects of the weather is a topic full of interest, aspects of which are still, perhaps, unclear. Plants can respond to temperature, light (which is automatically fixed by the calendar), sunshine (which is not) and rainfall (or the availability of moisture). Disentangling these factors is difficult.

This year we had a real winter, with some snow, followed by lots of sun in march, but still with cool nights. This seems to have held back grass, while some plants, often those with bulbs or corms, like garden daffodils or crocuses, have done very well, standing proud above the grass. There are plenty of early violets around too, some white ones, for instance, along the verges of Lower Road. Such plants are not held back by a lack of mild damp days, but seem capable of responding to day length and sunshine. On the other hand, primroses, which can be out in small numbers at Christmas, were not showing in Quarry Wood (I know they were in the more favoured situation of gardens) until mid-march: they seem to like moist mild weather, but in any case have a protracted flowering period. Wood anemones, just coming into simultaneous bloom in Quarry Wood, follow the light levels closely and will be over much sooner. Living in places which will be densely shaded a little later in the year—but unencumbered by much other vegetation around them - they have to be regular in flowering time to be successful. Bluebells are waiting in the wings. They are less well adapted to heavy shade than wood anemones but being bulbous can persist for many years in somewhat unfavourable conditions. They respond to temperature as well as light levels and indeed don't like prolonged frosts, which limits their distribution on the Continent.

I have been surprised by one plant in particular—the marsh marigold—for it was out at the beginning of march. As it grows in such wet spots, it was perhaps enjoying some warmth, through the winter, from the temperature of the water around it, enabling it to respond especially quickly to the later sunshine. The leaves of ramsons have also shot up, well on time, though flowering, as with bluebells, remains a little way off yet.

© Tim Hill

Vacancy for Parish Councillor – following the retirement of Cllr. Frank Underdown, there is a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. (See page 3). More on this and of the procedure are on the village notice boards.

The Parish Council has found the parish chest to be surplus to requirements and is offering it for sale to the first reasonable bid. We understand it to be similar to a small blanket box, to be in good condition but unfortunately we do not have accurate dimensions. It seems an opportunity for a parishioner to acquire a useful item which is, although not old or antique, redolent of the history of West Farleigh. For further information, apply in the first instance to Parish Clerk, Mrs. Vikki Stancombe, 01622 842782.

The 5P Men's Group.

This Benefice-wide Church Group is going from strength to strength, with 41 men at a recent breakfast at a local golf club. This is a typical part of the programme, which is based around monthly meetings. West Farleigh Church recently agreed to make a financial contribution to the group, not all of whose activities are exclusively for men. Contact Mike Marsh at mimarsh@talktalk.net for further information.

2009 The Farleighs WI

Laughter and enjoyment for The Farleighs WI members when Exercising with Beverley and Eileen Bates at the March meeting. A great antidote to Winter blues.

Special events will be held for much needed funds for The Farleighs WI Hall starting with a quiz night on 28th March. The ever popular Chickory Tip will be performing on 26th September.

Weekly choir sessions are resuming on Tuesday evenings at 7.30 p.m. at Appledore, Charlton Lane, West Farleigh with Lynne Seeley again leading us.

A Dabble Day will be held in the hall on 18th April with crafts ranging from knitting, crocheting to felt making.

A new members getting to know us is on 22nd April at 11.30 am with soup and desserts lunch.

Cycling-or-walking Day at Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest, IT Training at Holmesdale Technical College and a Harp and Strawberry Tea at Matfield Village Hall are some of the many events organised by our County Sub Committees that we can enjoy.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8th April at 7.30 p.m. in The Farleighs Hall, East Farleigh when David March will be speaking on the Story of English Cheeses (with tastings!)

Come along and join us. You will be very welcome

Pam Clark Maidstone 726919

POTHOLES.

Here's a reminder that there exists a "Hotline" number for reporting holes in the road to Highways Department.

It is **0845 8247800**. We recently reported to this number a deepening pothole round a drain in Lower Road—and Highways, to their credit, repaired it within a few days. It is worth using! -Eds.

Adverts have lately appeared in the national press reminding people that the first tranche of **EHIC** National Health Insurance Plastic Cards have now expired—maybe including yours. Take care, however to use the right website when you go to the internet (if you do) to renew. There are sites which appear utterly official but which either involve premium rate lines or a charge for the renewal service. Via www.direct.gov.uk (and follow the links) the service is efficient and entirely cost free.

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FOOTBALL:

A mixed bag of results this month for both our teams. The 1st XI started off with a 3-2 defeat against Sutton Saints, but we rallied with an impressive 3-0 victory over Saxon Chef. Unfortunately we then lost to Biddenden 3-2 and Aylesford 3-1, finally going down 4-0, conceding the last 3 goals in the final 5 minutes.

Our 2nd XI lost once again to Larkfield 4-0, but good news came in our next encounter, a ding-dong affair, with Farleigh eventually winning 3-2 versus Malgo. Next came Addington and a bad day, losing 4-0, and finally Parkwood and another 4-0 defeat.

CRICKET:

The cricket season is fast approaching. If there are any budding players out there please get in touch or go along to the net practice every Monday 7-8 p.m. at Sutton Valence School.

CLUB NEWS:

Our popular **Quiz Night** is fast approaching, on Saturday 18th April at West Farleigh Church starting at 7.30 p.m. Please let me know if you would like to come.

Yours in sport

Tel 01622 745744

Ton up Club Winners: March

1st prize -£25 No. 148 Vivian Jones 2nd prize- £15 No.111 Ian Pearce 3rd prize -£10 No.13 Neil Crighton

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

SATURDAY 2ND MAY AND MONDAY 4TH MAY 10 AM - 4 PM

AT THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

TONBRIDGE ROAD WATERINGBURY.

GOOD QUALITY PLANTS, REFRESHMENTS.

MINI FETE ON MONDAY 4TH MAY 2 PM - 4 PM

FURTHER INFORMATION 01622 813032

Credit Crunch Alleviation

Government (see below) has announced a scheme to improve the nation's self-sufficiency in food. All households will be required keep a lamb (see page 1), though those without adequate facilities will be called upon only to make a financial contribution to others who can raise it for them. An inspection to ensure universal compliance with the scheme (baa none) will take place on April 1st 2010.

Appeal — Smith's Hall—Open under National Gardens Scheme — May 17th 2009.

Calling all gardeners! The Spring Plant Fayre in aid of All Saints is to be held in the lovely gardens at Smith's Hall. Do you have plants to donate for sale to the public at this event? Could you sow any now in readiness? Are you willing to help in any way? If so, plants may be delivered to Lee Brayshaw (07966 142180) or you could bring them along on the day. It's not too late to sow a few seeds, and the process of splitting plants in your borders can hardly be far underway, so do remember this event which is seven weeks or so ahead. All proceeds from the Plant Sale are to go to All Saints Church.

"The Unbelievable Truth" is a comedy programme on Radio 4, but we want to tell you about a more serious item. The "Listen Again" facility on Radio 4 affords the opportunity to hear what is a programme of interest to any Kent Council Tax payer. "File on 4" (March 22nd—but listen again) looked at the activities of English councils in investing tax-payers money in now bust Icelandic banks, focussing not least on Kent County Council. £50 million pounds of your (taxpayer's) money is invested in these defunct institutions and the programme gives a fairly detailed insight into how this came about. Although some organisations warned of the potential shakiness of Icelandic banks over 2 years ago, Kent built up large investments with them, because of the very high interest rates they offered. Apparently the investment decisions were delegated to a "junior officer" who put a further £3m on deposit in Iceland just days before the banks collapsed, and a day after he (or she) had received an email from the council's investment consultants warning against such action. The trouble was, *the officer didn't trouble to open the email before investing.*

Internal auditors at K.C.C. reported in 2006 that poor systems, needing to be altered, meant that "inappropriate and unauthorised investments may be made." but nothing effective had been done.

Worse follows: the programme said that the collapsed banks will most probably only have funds left to pay less than 10p back for every pound invested—which means Kent losing £45m. Additionally no interest is being paid while all is being sorted out. Thus losses will be about £200 per council tax payer (your editor's rough estimate—based on inadequate data.)

Incidentally, we are sad to notice that the Icelandic owned Karen Millen shop in Maidstone has now closed... T.H.

The next large rubbish Freighter will be on the Green on Saturday 11th April from 1.30 to 3.15 pm.