

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

West Farleigh's own

LIFE-LINE

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"If you have to skate on thin ice—take a lifeline!" - Anon.

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Illustration of All Saints' after Harold Harbour.

West Farleigh Weathers Winter's Chill Blast!

The double-pronged attack of wintry weather hit the village hard

both before and after Christmas, but with flexibility in our plans and some sacrifice to comfort and convenience most of us contrived to have a Merry Christmas. There were no power cuts, and once people had got their food (and visiting relations) in, it was largely a case of the traditional stay-at-home family festival. This is not to say that all the local services distinguished themselves. Most post eventually arrived before the deadline, the refuse collection continued adequately, but the condition of the village roads was appalling. It was as if the Highways had never seen snow before. (Rumours circulating at the Parish Council meeting suggested the head of the department was on holiday and indeed never did see the pre-Christmas fall). Perhaps the accurate weather forecast had acted as an encouragement to evacuate the H.Q. Additionally there seems to be active discouragement for self-help in terms of snow clearing or gritting. In the New Year the performance was better, but many local people failed to make it to the "office" and had to work from home. This afforded a chance to appreciate the lighter and simply more beautiful aspects of such a pristine snowfall—see below for instance— but let's hope we don't get another lot!

PATRIOTIC SNOWMEN

These chilly but cheerful characters took up residence on the public bench opposite Smith's Hall in the bleakness of early January. A week or so later they had "melted into air, into thin air... And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, Leaving but a carrot behind."

(after Shakespeare)

It is thought that the grandchildren of a well-known local councillor had more than a hand in their creation.



Deadline for March Life-Line is February 22nd.

A double contribution of pastoral letters this month (because Life-line took a holiday last month)

January's letter is contributed by the Rev. Peter Walker

Dear Friends,

2010 dawns and what will the New Year bring? What resolutions are you making – or even breaking already?!

I know that I intend to have a go at reading the Bible through in one year.

There are some very good guides written to achieve this without feeling too weighed down by the sheer thought of such an enterprise. Let me know if you need some direction on this.

Why read the Bible at all? As Christians we need to consult the Maker's manual.

The Bible is full of all sorts of different styles of writing ranging across history, poetry, prophecy, and metaphor addressing mankind's needs. When we read that 'trees sing for joy and floods clap their hands' we understand that this is poetry. When Jesus told us to 'be as harmless as doves', we are not meant to lay eggs. When he told a story about a man falling among thieves it was a parable explaining a deeper truth.

The Bible is not a book of abstract philosophy – it is a book about life and about people in real situations. In our reading of it we should look expectantly – we may be shocked or surprised by some of the events recounted – but too we can expect to hear God speaking through these words with something for us, and when we apply the Bible regularly one of the great benefits is that we start to see the world in a Christian way.

Jesus enjoins us to act obediently to the Bible's guidelines. He said that when we hear and obey our lives become like houses built on a rock, safe and secure.

As we persist in reading the Bible thoroughly, worship becomes a living force, our work for God becomes a vital activity, and Jesus becomes a daily companion.

A man in prison was given a Bible to read. He used its thin pages to roll his tobacco in. He smoked his way through all the Bible and reached St. John's Gospel. Reading what he was about to burn he gave his life to Jesus!

Yes, the Word of God is very powerful – 'sharper than a two-edged sword' writes St. Paul.

Happy New Year and happy reading!

With prayers,

PETER

CLEANING

ALL SAINTS CHURCH

We would like to hear from anyone who is willing to clean All Saints Church.

We have asked for volunteers in the past but none has so far been forthcoming, so we are now prepared to pay. Hours are 2 per week to be put in in the last 48 hrs or so before Sunday.

To help your community in this way, contact Life-line editors in the first instance

Advertising

Jane Shotliff has decided to give up organising our adverts. Many thanks Jane for doing such a stalwart job for so long after such a stint as editor!

Do you have a product or service to sell in a village such as ours (including surroundings) which needs promoting? If so, contact the present editors by email, tim_and_chris@btinternet.com

5P Mens

The 5P Men's group is organised as part of activities within the Benefice of five parish churches - Coxheath, East Farleigh, Hunton, Linton & **West Farleigh**

We started the new year with an AGM meeting and quiz at The Bull East Farleigh on 18th January. The following events are planned for the next few months:

February

Monday 22nd 7.30 pm The Bull Pub, East Farleigh - **Street Pastors. Talk by Graham Tanner** - on the work of the Maidstone Street Pastors.

March

Monday 22nd 7.30 pm The Bull Pub, East Farleigh - **Aviation. Talks by Jonathan Barnes** about the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship and **Colin Brewer**, ex BA 747 pilot, (now on private jets) on his experiences.

If you are interested in coming to any of these events, would like more details about the events/5P Men or wish to be added to the 5P Men mailing list, then please contact Group Organiser - Mike Marsh on 01622 745702 or email 5pmen@talktalk.net - all welcome.

And February's letter comes from the Rev. David Jones

Dear Friends,

Oh dear! Just sitting down comfortably for a relaxing evening when the phone rings. 'Is it your turn or Peter's to write the letter for the Newsletter?' Peter's was my immediate thought and prayer! But no, when I looked at the list it was mine. Have you ever been caught out thinking all was well and that it was someone else's job? Well I have now and certainly it is not the first time I have fallen for mistakes like this. When I was teaching, I remember a member of staff forgetting to write all of his reports before the final due date when they had to be handed in to his colleagues. He was mortified and rushed round to every member of staff he was due to hand in reports to and apologised for his mistake and then set to that night to try to make amends. In my career I met other teachers who were forgetful in this way and they tried to cover up their mistake, leaving the recipients of the missing reports to chase them. We all make mistakes but it is what we do about it that makes all the difference.

Lent, which starts on Ash Wednesday, February 17th and goes on until just before Easter, is often thought of as a time to give up things. Well, I'm not suggesting you give up making mistakes - although for me I'm going to give up thinking that when problems arise it is a problem for other people to solve. No, I'm thinking that maybe I ought to be thinking about the problems that I cause other people by my mistakes. Saying we're going to do something to time, like many of the trades and professions we deal with, is one annoying habit we can easily get into ourselves. Do we always deliver on time and can we be trusted to complete a task we have offered to do? Are we reliable? Can people trust us to do what we promise? Are we lazy and reliant on others? There are so many things that we can look at in our lives that involve 'giving up' but also 'giving out' to others. Giving up chocolate might make the chocolate producers redundant!* All our actions, good and bad, have a consequence.

Surely an attitude of serving each other, being aware of others, is the message that Jesus encouraged his followers to live out. He encouraged people to love and to serve and to be aware of their actions. In the parable of the talents Jesus says 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.' We need to treat everyone with respect in our approach to them and maybe Lent is our opportunity to think about the ways we can 'give up' the things that prevent this happening in our lives.

Have an enjoyable Lent!

David

* And send a message to Kraft, almost certainly the new owners of Cadbury's?? -Ed.

Dates for your diary

Confirmation—7th February 2010

Five adults from the Benefice will be confirmed on Sunday February 7th. The service, at Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath will be conducted by the Rt. Rev. Michael Gear, who lives in Yalding, as honorary assistant Bishop in the Diocese. The service is at 10 am and will include Confirmation and Holy Communion. Please pray for these five adults as they take this step on their Christian journey.

Ash Wednesday – 17th February 2010

There will be a celebration at 7.30 pm of Holy Communion at St Mary's Hunton to mark this important day in the Church's calendar and also the beginning of Lent.

Lent Study 2010

Starting on Wednesday February 14th and every Wednesday during Lent (until March 24th) the Lent Course this year will be entitled 'A Lent Study on the Healing Ministry', led by the Rector, Rev. Peter Walker, and will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath for the whole Benefice. Each evening will commence at 7.30 pm and finish at 9.00 pm.

Evergreens

It was unfortunate that we were unable to hold our January meeting, but the hazards of the snow and ice were too great. We do however hope that we can meet in February on Tuesday 9th at 2.30 pm at Appledore, Charlton Lane. Do phone Terry on 814561 if you would like to join us and would like a lift. It will be a little late to have Christmas tea, but a celebratory tea for 2010 will be arranged.

Helen Swan

Now Available: *History of All Saints Church.*

A new edition of Harold Harbour's delightful (and definitive) history of All Saints Church has been prepared and printed. For the first time it has all-colour pictures of various features of the church. While preserving the original text, it is updated to record such recent changes as the removal of the pews to create a more adaptable space. At just a pound (£1) it represents excellent value. Make sure you have a copy by collecting one from All Saints or ordering one through any member of the Parochial Church Council.

PARISH COUNCIL. Here are extracts from the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the West Farleigh Parish Council held on Monday Jan. 18th 2010 in All Saints Church

- **POLICE MATTERS** PCSO Joanne Watts reported two crimes since the last meeting, being one incident of theft and one of burglary and advised members that farm machinery is being targeted by thieves.

HIGHWAY AND FOOTWAY MATTERS

- **Public Right of Way KM21**

Cllr Hards reported meeting with the Officer Manager of Rookery Estates who did not see any reason why the footpath could not come out on *(at the very bottom of—Ed)* Teston Lane. Rookery Estates will get quotes for getting the path cleared.

The footpath is now designated as the Medway Walk and it was suggested that a Dog Bin should be provided at the Teston Lane/Church Lane end of the footpath. The Clerk was asked to apply to MBC.

- **PROW KM34**

Members **Noted** that East Farleigh Parish Council has obtained costs for the installation of the kissing gate on the boundary between the two parishes and will be proceeding with the project.

- **MBC Road Safety Working Group Report**

Members considered the recommendations of the Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the "Fit for the Road – Maidstone Road Safety Review" and disagreed with recommendations (a) to refer to incidents as "crashes" rather than accidents and (b) to contact Highways with the road safety problem of a site rather than a potential solution and agreed with recommendation (c) to contact the Fire and Rescue Education Team about areas where young people were gathering in cars.

- **Roads and footpaths & Salt**

Members discussed the service provided by Kent Highways during the recent bad weather and the problems for residents in West Farleigh. Members noted that the Parish Council is no longer able to purchase salt bins but must make a request to Highways.

RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS Community Centre

- Members noted that Whitehead Monckton has confirmed the lease has now been finalised for the land at Charlton Lane and the Title registered with Land Registry. Members agreed that a meeting of the Working Party will be arranged to discuss the next stage of the project. Regarding the Ewell Lane site, Members noted that Lambert & Foster had made a final offer of £1205 and that Gullands has reduced its fee from £1500 to £500. Members agreed to accept the offer from the Cornwallis family and to send an appropriate letter of thanks to Mr Gulland.

- **Village Green Play Area:** Members noted that following the Clerk's letter of complaint to Play Safety Limited regarding discrepancies with the Annual Play Area Inspection Report, Play Safety has advised that the Head of Play Safety will visit the site to inspect the surfacing and carry out a further full inspection.

- **Village Sign.** Cllr Merritt reported that following a routine risk assessment the Village Sign is leaning and the main post appears to be unsafe. Members discussed how to resolve the problem and Cllrs Martin, Merritt and Scott will arrange to meet at the Sign to assess the problem.

- **Refuse Collections**

Members discussed the Refuse Collections during the recent bad weather and felt the service was acceptable considering the weather conditions.

- **County and Borough Councillors' Reports**

Cllr Wilson reported on KCC's long-awaited Integrated Transport Review "Grown without Gridlock" that included a brief paragraph on the Freight Transport Strategy and advised that Geoff Mee, Director of KCC's Transportation Department, had promised action on this long-standing problem. Cllrs. Mortimer and Wilson reminded Members of the Devolved Budget Grant and the Clerk will make a formal request for assistance with painting the play equipment.

- **Individual Councillors Reports**

Cllr Martin reported problems with overhanging trees on Ewell Lane between Hunt Street and Smiths Hill Drive on the bend just after Dove Cottage and offered to meet with Kent Highways to discuss the problem.

Cllr Johnson reported problems with flooding at the same location.

- **2010/11 Budget and Parish Precept**

Members **Noted** the Concurrent Functions Grant for 2010/11 will be £4,531 and discussed a budget paper produced by the Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Bailey **that the Budget is accepted with the removal of £1,000 for the Play Area and the Precept is set at £10,000 for the forthcoming year, an increase of £0.61 per year for a Band D property**. This was agreed.

Date of Next Meeting: The next full council meeting is on Monday 15th March 2010 at All Saints Church.

(see page 6 for brief note on significant planning applications –Ed)

Church Services February 2010

West Farleigh	All Saints, Church Lane	
7th February	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
(This is the only service in the Benefice this day apart from the Confirmation at Coxheath.)		
14th February	11.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
21st February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
28th February	11.00 a.m.	Morning Worship

East Farleigh

7th February	See Coxheath	
14th February	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
	11.00 a.m.	Family Service
21st February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
28th February	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
	9.30 a.m.	Matins

Hunton

7th February	See Coxheath	
14th February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
21st February	11.00 a.m.	Family Service
28th February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Coxheath 7th February 10.00 am

Confirmation and Holy Communion Bishop and Rev. P. Walker

14th February	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
21st February	11.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
28th February	11.00 a.m.	Family Service

Linton

7th February	See Coxheath	
14th February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
21st February	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
	11.00 a.m.	Family Service
28th February	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Day of Prayer for Africa on Saturday February 13th in S. Peter and S. Paul's Church, Aylesford. All are welcome. For more information telephone Iris Neel 01622 710634.

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.

Nature Notes: Winter of Discontent

The question on the lips of all those interested in nature at the moment is "How are the birds faring in this harsh weather?" Then there's a discussion to be had on the species which have come to the bird table, or the kitchen door in search of food or warmth. Our own garden has received loads of Redwings, and some Fieldfares as visitors. All these are normally to be found in our fields and woods, having flown in from Scandinavia or points east to feed on fruits and invertebrates in our soft climate. Redwings in particular came right to our door when the cold was at its worst and all food was covered by thick snow, perhaps seeking some warmth where our central heating boiler vents itself. Song Thrushes we have all year round of course, but I am convinced that the large numbers around in the snow were not British but were part of an influx from the Continent. They were especially concentrated on the Medway banks.

Less numerous, but therefore more exciting, were the three Woodcock I have disturbed in our garden—three times as many as I've ever before recorded in it. In Quarry Wood, I found them roosting (for they are nocturnal) on the pond edges, where the ground was still green or brown. I think they moved there because they are so superbly camouflaged against the background, while they stand out against snow. Nevertheless I have been able to pick one or two out without disturbing them. Woodcock can be found in Kent all year round, but not, so far as I know, just close to Farleigh, and again these are of north European origin. They need soft earth to probe with their flexible beak, and will have found things hard of late, as will the Green Woodpecker, which feeds mostly on the ground on ants. Since the weather relented somewhat I have seen a good number of these however, so perhaps the snow cover did not last long enough to diminish the population. Other species seem to have disappeared altogether, though. Have you seen a Wagtail, either pied or grey lately? I suspect they have just flown off to France, or further, or perhaps just a town centre, for the pied is famous for roosting en masse on large buildings like air terminals.

I do think though that this plastered snow has been very damaging to small woodland bird populations, since many species rely on finding insects and spiders, and their tiny eggs, on bark, twigs and evergreen leaves. I haven't seen a Goldcrest for three weeks (though Long-tailed Tits are still to be found) and there is a lot of concern for them. Last year in Scandinavia was harsh and very few have even arrived in Britain this winter, so a second severe season may be having marked effects on their global population.

To me, a couple of the interesting questions are: has the run of very mild and un-snowy winters left us with a bird (and perhaps mammal population) that has no experience of coping with these conditions? Secondly, given that berries and insects are both available in autumn / winter in finite quantities, has the hard weather come early in the season while there is still food supply to be found? It is said that a hard March is most difficult to cope with since "autumn's bounty" has all long gone. Against this, by that time days are longer: December snow occurs when days are at their shortest, so time to find food to give heat energy to survive the long nights is most scarce.

Whatever the mortality which this winter may cause, bird populations have an ability to bounce back with amazing speed. Herons, Wrens and Dartford Warblers were greatly affected in 1963, but a few years later their numbers were back up at record levels. We shall see! © Tim Hill

Junior Sport

Owing to the weather, football activity for the Juniors has been much curtailed. No doubt there'll be a large backlog of fixtures for the end of the season, if they can be re-arranged. In any event, don't forget that we always welcome new boys as footballing recruits. Just turn up at the field off Charlton Lane on a Saturday morning – parents taking care to park neatly, of course!

Ian Wratten



KERRRRRAASSSSHHHH! Another accident by the Thatched House.

This one was on December 13th, when the Josephs took the picture, dismayed by yet another oh-so-predictable accident outside their home on Heath Lane. It had been preceded by a similar incident on December 9th – and of course by countless others over recent months and years. Your editors themselves by chance saw the results of one last Autumn, involving a very expensive new Mercedes.

Despite numerous representations, Kent Highways Dept. continues to sit on its hands and do nothing about this cornucopia of incidents, which usually do not result in injury (for how long?). We wonder if the insurers have yet got together to examine how much of their expenditure arises on this one corner?

Sorry about the grinding **KERR etc.** above. It's inspired by the edict of the Maidstone Road Safety Review (See Parish Council Minutes) to refer to accidents, incidents etc as "Crashes". So here's a one word description for them to savour! No-one has any particular problem with the word crash, to be sure, but when bodies seek to dictate vocabulary one begins to worry, as did George Orwell. We should all (and this includes our representatives) describe things in the most appropriate words available to us at the time. Let us call a spade a spade if it seems natural and sounds right!

-Eds

PLANNING MATTERS (Overflow from Council Meeting Minutes)

Applications: 1. MA/09/2304. To extend the time limit for major developments at Ewell Manor site. Parish Council recommendation: Refuse 2. MA /09/1061. The construction of Spanish polythene tunnels at Marshall's Farm. Recommendation: Refuse.

Decisions - by Maidstone B. C.. MA/09/0603 Tutsham Hall. Holiday/equestrian accommodation: Refused.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST. According to the Downs Mail, a giant wind turbine is planned for the village outskirts—Castle Farm at the top of the hill off Heath Lane. It is said it will be 48m tall—that's about three times as high as the church tower, so it will cast a long shadow. Let us hope that M.B.C. agrees with us that—first, an environmental impact assessment is necessary—and then that the turbine is not.

-Eds.

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Sports Report:

FOOTBALL

Two months of results to report but due to the weather not that many games have been played. Our 1st XI have only played 3, beating Eccles 9 - 0 (!) and Lenham 1 - 0, but then they came crashing to Downswood, losing 8 - 1. Meanwhile our 2nd XI have beaten Hollingbourne, twice winning 8 - 3 and a marvellous 7 - 5 victory in the cup after extra time. We also beat Sutton Saints 8 - 1. Our only defeat came at the hands of the Walnut Tree 5 - 4.

CLUB NEWS

Many thanks to those who supported our recent Christmas raffle: another successful and enjoyable evening was had by all. And thanks to those who supported our Christmas trees this year. Hope they were up to standard!

Yours in sport

Tel 01622 745744

Ton-up Club Winners: December and January

December

£25 Jack Martin

£15 Ian Payne

£10 Jan Morris

Christmas Bonus Draw

£50 Reg Oldfield

£30 Paul Robson

£20 Dave Sharp

January 2010

£25 Ruby Malthouse

£15 David Eltringham

£10 Christine Back

The Farleighs' History Society.

The first meeting in 2010 of the Farleighs' History Society will be on Thursday 4 March at the usual venue, The Bull, Lower Road, East Farleigh at 7.30 pm. This time we have an illustrated talk by Graeme Calver on the *Maidstone Typhoid Outbreak* and this will be followed by a short AGM. Admission is free to members or £2.50 on the door. Everyone welcome. Dates for the rest of the year are:

Thursday 3 June with Andrew Clarke giving an illustrated talk on *Old Firms of Maidstone*, 2nd September when Graeme Johnson will present *Kent - An Unusual View*, and 2nd December with Geoff Dole and Mick Lynn presenting *A Dickens of a Christmas*, featuring stories and songs reflecting Dickens' ties with Kent. We also have a summer outing planned and details will be given later in the Spring.

Any enquiries to Jenny Finch 01622 726312 or jenniferfinch@hotmail.co.uk

News of Events in Wateringbury

"GHANA -

PEOPLE, PUMPS AND POVERTY"

A talk with slides by Bob and Anne Ede on Saturday 13th March at 12 noon at the Church of St John the Baptist, Tonbridge Road, Wateringbury.

Tickets £5, to include a cafe style lunch, are available from 01622 813032

Over the past 2 years Bob and Anne Ede have been involved with a small charitable organisation in a life saving operation to bring clean drinking water, sanitation and health training to the rural villages of the Ashanti Region of Ghana, West Africa.

The Farleighs WI Christmas 2009

Christmas 2009 was celebrated in fine style by the Farleighs WI. A pot-pouri of entertainment presented to enthusiastic audiences included Bit Parts, performed by our drama group, author Barbara Skinner and produced by Maureen Ludford. This was followed by the WI choir, trained and accompanied by Lynn Seeley, and concluded with A Musical Journey by the Song and Dance group, Musical Director Gary Poleykett, choreographed by Marianne Valencia and produced by Bridget Ovenden. Congratulations to them all, who included new members treading the boards for the first time, and the many backstage and catering helpers.

The WI choir took part in the West Farleigh Church carol service.

The New Year meeting was held on Wednesday 13th January 2010 in the Farleighs WI Hall, Forge Lane. Every month new members are joining us and we are always delighted to welcome more. For further information please contact me on 01622 726919.

Pam Clark

With Your Life-Line This Month

is the Parish Council Newsletter—fulfilling the Parish Council's drive to communicate effectively and become a Quality Council.

I'll be your Valentine—if you'll be mine: Next Freighter visit for large rubbish in the village is 16.00—17.15 hrs. on 14th February by the Green.