



The Newsletter and "What's On" Guide for  
Residents & Friends of Chelsfield Village

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## Auction of Promises

**For the St Martin's Spire Appeal**  
**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February**  
**Chelsfield Village Hall**  
**6.45 for 7pm dinner**  
**followed by the auction**

**What will make it a success ? - **YOU !****

Full details of the promises, showing pictures and detailing numbers of people able to participate, where appropriate, will be put onto the website by the middle of January.

[stmartinchelfield.org.uk](http://stmartinchelfield.org.uk)

Steve McCann – 01689 854119

See Page 7 for FULL DETAILS

*Wishing a  
Happy & Healthy  
2024 to all our  
readers, the  
residents and  
friends of  
Chelsfield!*

**Please get anything for  
February 2024 issue to:**

**[chelsfieldvillagevoice  
@gmail.com](mailto:chelsfieldvillagevoice@gmail.com)**

**by Monday 29th Jan 2024**

## Black Mustard

During November I found a wasp flying around my front room. All run-of-the-mill wasps are long dead at this time of the year so this would be a queen wasp looking for somewhere to hunker down for the winter and the warmth of my room had bought it out of hibernation. I collected it from my curtain using a glass and placed it outside in the garden – not really knowing what

else I could do with it! It was a cold night and I found to my surprise the following morning that it was still where I left it but very drowsy. Wherever it overwinters in the wild it will get cold so wasps go into a kind of suspended animation until the spring arrives. So I transferred her to my insect hotel that has a hollow area behind the usual hibernation tubes that smaller insects like to use over winter.

Placing her there I suspect she will now hide away from the rain and the worst of the cold until warmer times arrive. And yes, I know not everybody likes wasp and yes, I have been stung a few times but I don't like to kill any living thing given the option.

Now, during the depths of a British winter when all seems damp and cold, there are few plants to encourage me to write about them. There is the velvet shank mushroom I wrote about in April 23 and felt something a bit more 'salady' would be nice so plumbed for Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*). For all intents and purposes this plant would be confused with the common 'rapeseed' plant grown widely across agricultural fields, complete with the startling yellow flowers. This agricultural rapeseed plant creates mustard that is more to the liking of the British public but in France the black mustard is still grown. In 13th century France the seeds were ground and mixed with unfermented grape juice



Walther Otto Müller

(must) to create "moût-ardent" (burning must). This later became 'moutarde' or mustard in English.

I chose this plant as it begins to grow during mid-winter but will not reach its full extent until July when it may reach a full height of over 2 m. Its lower stalked leaves are broad and bristly but smooth and narrower towards the top. It is primarily a coastal plant but can be found inland and although annual, it can often be found to populate the same areas year after year. However, as with most cabbage family plants (which includes black pepper) this plant will extract minerals from the ground and if the plant grows on old industrial wasteland then toxic elements can be incorporated into the body of the plant making it dangerous to eat. Because of this ability, Black pepper can be used to 'clean' waste areas, a process called 'phytoremediation'.

Black mustard is the only wild mustard that is unequivocally native to Britain. There are five species of mustard (black, white hedge and hoary) found in Britain if you include Chinese mustard – all different in taste but all have the bright yellow flowers. The subject of this piece is named 'Black' because the seed pods are very dark/black although once ground up they are the usual yellow powder we associate with mustard.

This mustard has been in use for over 2000 years with Roman authors writing about how to prepare this plant pickled in vinegar. The leaves can be somewhat prickly but the newer, young leaves are more forgiving and just as peppery. It's a great salad plant but when cooked it can become bitter rather than peppery. If cooked within a dumpling it does however retain some of its 'kick'. As summer proceeds the leaves lose their palatable properties but by then the seeds

mature and they can best be collected while still immature and left to ripen at home. To collect fully mature seeds risks losing most to the ground unless a butterfly net is used. The leaves of the black pepper plant can be used to trick the uninitiated. One can offer them a leaf and invite them to chew. The leaf initially has a mild nutty taste. This is quickly followed by a peppery flavour that reaches inferno levels after about 20 seconds. Some love it, others hate it. Such plants as mustard and rocket are 'designed' to be distasteful to avoid the attention of browsers. Interestingly, the chemical that creates the hot taste is allyl isothiocyanate. However, this is itself harmful to the plant so it is stored in a harmless form but is created by hydrolysis once chewed and mixed with saliva. Hence the delayed sensation of flavour when eaten.

*Steve Fuller  
January 2024*

## **Jazz at the Five Bells**

Thursday 1st February from 8pm  
Live Jazz with Just Friends Sextet and guest vocalist Ruth Fahie

## Community Cafe



Community Café had a very joyful Christmas party, with lively carols led by Marion on the piano, a tricky little Christmas quiz and a raffle with some amazing prizes. The generosity of our patrons meant we were able to give a Christmas donation of £200 to the Open Kitchen at Christchurch. If you've not been before, come along in the New Year! Café meets on Wednesday 3rd of January and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January in the Village Hall from 2.30 onwards. Drop in for a cuppa, cake and conversation

## How Phil Lane Sees The New Year Inn



It's true. There's a shop on the Yorkshire Moors  
that only sells old pub junk!



## Career Reminiscences - John Oldershaw

If you travel north on the A1(M) through Yorkshire, if it's safe, just near Doncaster look to the right and you will see a green hill. It is not majestic nor particularly high but it is gracefully curved and, importantly, green. It is also artificial, created from the spoil extracted from Bullcroft Main Colliery and a legacy of the coal mining industry. When the pit closed in the 1960's it was regarded as a grey eyesore.

Several attempts had been made to "green" the slag heap, but with only partial success. Grass was growing in some places but not others. Trees were planted, but generally put on no growth or even died. Various courses of action were taken. Fertilisers had been applied and there was an attempt to enhance the structure of the spoil with "shoddy", a byproduct of the woollen industry, but more

research was clearly needed.

I was at that time a University of York student and became part of the Derelict Land Research Team within the Biology Department. I was given the task of collecting spoil samples from places where grass was growing, noting the percentage of vegetation cover, and where there was no growth. There was a rather crazy randomised method of sampling. I had to throw a metal grid over my shoulder as far as possible and then collect samples noting the vegetation type, if any, in the different quadrants. Carefully labelled and recorded the samples were brought back to the laboratory.

My role then was to carry out a chemical analysis of the samples and also carry out a statistical analysis, looking for any

correlations between soil content, the growth of specific plants and the percentage of cover. As with any research of this type there were clearly a variety of factors at play and my research was but a small part in the task of discovering how to create a green space.

Interim results from the team were presented at a meeting of The British Ecological Society and I was pleased to be mentioned amongst the list of researchers. It became the responsibility of others to decide what actions should be taken as a consequence of our findings.

I did not subsequently pursue a career as a research scientist, however, I am delighted that I have left a visible legacy from my work.

*John Oldershaw  
December 2023*

## Knit & Natter Evening

This month we are meeting on Monday 8th January at 8pm. Whether you are a knitting expert

or want to get started, you are welcome. Knitting, crocheting and other crafts welcome, or

just a chat, we'd love to see you. The venue for January is: 4 Bucks Cross Cottages.

## Chelsfield's Casualties of World War II

As I explained last month, I'm a little behind and have missed some 80<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of people remembered on our war memorial in the church porch. Next on the catch up list is:

### **Frederick James Smith**

5th Engineer Officer

Frederick James Smith of the Merchant Navy died on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1943, aged 23, when the MV Doryssa sank after being torpedoed off the coast of South Africa. He is remembered on the Tower Hill Memorial in London, which commemorates men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both World Wars and who have no known grave.

I didn't find very much about the assault on the MV Doryssa online, but there is a record that it was a fuel carrier which was torpedoed and shelled when enroute to the Persian Gulf. The crew were mainly from Hong Kong while the officers were British. I then found an entry in the church magazine for

October 1943 which gave a little more information:

'It is now confirmed that Fred Smith was killed at sea on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The crew managed to right the ship after it had been struck by two torpedoes, but a third hit the engine room with fatal results. His parents have lost an affectionate son and the Merchant Navy a promising young officer. April 25<sup>th</sup> pathetically enough, was his father's birthday, and he had wired his greetings home. A lover of the sea, though only 22, he had attained the rank of fourth engineer'.

Frederick Smith was the son of Harry and Letitia Smith of Chelsfield. On the 1939 National Register they are listed as living at Osbornes on Maypole Road and they continued to live there for the rest of their lives. Harry was a member of the Smith family who lived at Rounds in the village for several generations, and he was a market gardener.

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While looking through the

church magazines I also found more information on Edward Alford Wallace who I wrote about last month. Under Parish Notes the editor writes:

'Capt. Edward Alford Wallace, who fell in the Tunisian fighting, was a soldier of the finest type. Joining the Territorial Army before the war, he came safely through the fighting in Northern France and the Dunkirk evacuation. After a period of useful service at home he went to North Africa last autumn. Exchanging a comparatively safe appointment for more active and dangerous work, he was wounded and for some time in hospital. On returning to the front he gave his life for God and country. We may be sure that God will bless to him (and to all others like him) such a sacrifice. Our deepest sympathy will go out to his widow and to his father, Capt. Wallace, a member of our church council, in their sorrow.'

*Philippa Rooke*  
*pjrooke@hotmail.com*

## **Auction of Promises**

### **For the St Martin's Spire Appeal**

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February – Chelsfield Village Hall - 6.45 for 7pm dinner followed by the auction

What will make it a success ? --- **YOU !**

You know February can be a really dismal month, so why not spend an evening doing something different!

We are hoping to make this a memorable night for all and there will be promises to suit every budget. Why not make up a table of six, so you can have fun with your friends? With some big items on offer you may wish to create your own 'bidding syndicate' to maximise your bidding power. If a whole table doesn't work for you and you want to come alone or with one or two other people we'll allocate a place for you.

Promises to be auctioned off already include:

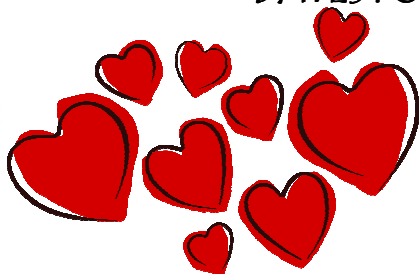
- a week in a house 200m from the beach in Marbella, Spain
- a week in a two bedroom apartment in Mijas Costa, Spain
- a cupcake making experience, from the topselling author of the book 'Cupcakes'
- a croquet and cream tea afternoon
- 15 Chocolate Chip cookies
- A4 pencil drawn portrait from a photograph provided by you
- a cake of your choice every two months
- a two-hour Reiki session
- two-hours of gardening
- round of golf for two at Sundridge Park
- four hours French or Spanish tuition – up to GCSE
- clean the outside of your car
- meat or vegetarian lasagne. 8 portions in any combination of sizes
- lady's haircut
- two one-hour ironing sessions
- two hours genealogy research

Full details of the promises, showing pictures and detailing numbers of people able to participate, where appropriate, will be put onto the website by the middle of January. [stmartinchelsfield.org.uk](http://stmartinchelsfield.org.uk)

The dinner: a two-course meal including wine or soft drink. Vegan option available. Although a glass of wine is provided with the meal you are invited to bring your own drinks and nibbles for the auction.

Tickets are £10 each. Please book your place(s) by emailing [spire@stmartinchelsfield.org.uk](mailto:spire@stmartinchelsfield.org.uk) Steve McCann – 01689 854119

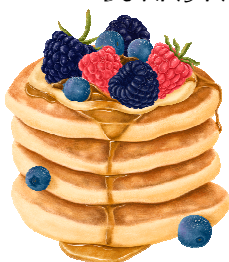
## DATES FOR THE DIARY



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THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY

BURNS NIGHT-Celebrate with Haggis, Neeps & Tatties



TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY  
SHROVE TUESDAY-Pancakes !

WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY  
VALENTINES DAY



SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH

MOTHERS DAY-Treat mum to a special lunch !

P  
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TAKE AWAY FISH & CHIPS  
available Monday to Saturday evening  
Throughout January



Hewitts Road  
Chelsfield  
BR6 7QL  
Tel: 01959 534457  
info@thebopeep.com

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS  
[www.thebopeep.com](http://www.thebopeep.com)



## Resolutions

Most, if not all, New Year's resolutions appear to involve a person planning to change their behaviour, activities or attitude but what always perplexes me that they want to wait and change later, in the New Year, rather than change immediately. If they've decided it's worthwhile changing there must be a recognition by the person making the resolution that their world, or their interaction with the world, can improve, resulting in them being happier or more stable or more something, than they are now. Maybe I'm a simple provincial chap but the questions that arise for me are - why delay the possibility of greater happiness and why not grab it immediately?

Maybe New Year's resolutions are like taking medicine – we think they should make us better but we suspect they might make us feel not so good when we actually start doing them. Perhaps the delay until the new Year means we have a secret and more pressing desire to continue enjoying the status quo for a bit longer before knuckling down and improving ourselves!

Or perhaps we're not convinced the resolution is really necessary and think that during the delay we'll decide life's not too bad and we won't change after all. Or maybe we want to wait for even more reason to change and a further endorsement the resolution is needed. However, if we do want to improve, shouldn't we just get on with it and forget that misguided saying of "no pain, no gain." There are plenty of ways to enjoy doing whatever we think is needed to make ourselves "better" in some way.

I'm not one for New Year's resolution (I'll come to that later) but from listening to conversations between friends and acquaintances it seems that most resolutions are enthusiastically made but the delivery frequently ends before February is reached. It's interesting that every year Martin Lewis, the Money Saving Expert, warns people about making a resolution to join a gym or attend fitness classes because, often, attendance quickly ends and subscription refunds are usually

unavailable. I'm sure this one example can be replicated with many others.

However, it could be that simply the making of New Year's resolutions is the important part rather than their fulfilment. If resolutions are made then, presumably, they have arisen as a consequence of having thought about the state of our lives or heard (too much) advice from others about what they think we need to change in ourselves. Is it that just by making a resolution we can convince ourselves we're not drifting but actively taking stock and regaining control of our lives after considering how we can improve what we get out of, and give back, to the world? Or is it that by making a resolution we can temporarily pacify whoever has given us the advice that we need to change ourselves?

One of the benefits of considering New Year's resolutions, or any resolutions, is that thinking about them can lead to the sharing of our thoughts with others and that's clearly a good

thing. It's always better to chat to people about events that we've lived through, our own responsive behaviour to and feelings about those events and how we'll plan to cope in the future. It might also be helpful for the people we're chatting to to let them know what we think they might consider including in their resolutions, if you're bold and polite enough! There's always a consequence to us or others of trying to bottle up our feelings and not sharing our thoughts and we don't need Health professional to tell us it's good to talk - it's common sense.

As an aside, it's worthwhile mentioning that the Chelsfield Community Café (meeting details given elsewhere in this magazine) is a friendly forum for chatting about anything, and not just New Year resolutions, though I'm sure someone will be willing to talk about them. Until I went to the café, I hadn't fully appreciated the wide variety of experience, knowledge and advice freely available in our community. Since going to the café, I've learnt numerous things ranging

from the problems of living in and leaving Persia (Iran, as it now is), the way senior civil servants communicate with each other about significant events affecting the Royal Family, the professional way to plan for painting a room and what paint to use. However, I confess to being worried when told about the consultant who didn't amputate the right leg, until it was explained he did what was needed and expected and amputated the left leg!

When I was paid to work, rather than now and only getting "free" board and lodging from my wife and daughter, I came across a book called "Feel the Fear and do it Anyway." As the title indicates, it was about recognising there may be an element of fear before doing anything but that if we want to do it, it's best to get on with it and not hesitate. The book tried to shows how we can do virtually anything we want, we just need to start - no waiting for the New Year in that book.

Throughout my career I often chose to work for organisations that wanted to change their corporate

behaviour, often encompassing something fundamental like simply wanting to survive! Wherever I worked, I usually gave copies of the book to all my staff so they could begin to understand that most things are achievable, no matter how daunting they might initially appear, but they can only be achieved by taking the first step.

I was realistic enough to know some staff would dip into the book and absorb its messages, while others would dismiss it as, yet another, series of banalities and not open it. I think that scanning the book helped some (it would be audacious to say many) people, reawakening their interest in learning and life at work and in their private lives. I wasn't paid commission on book sales but feel the organisations I worked for got good value for money.

If you're into New Year's resolutions I hope they work for you but for me it's about taking a decision and then not about waiting but starting immediately.

*Rob Burn*

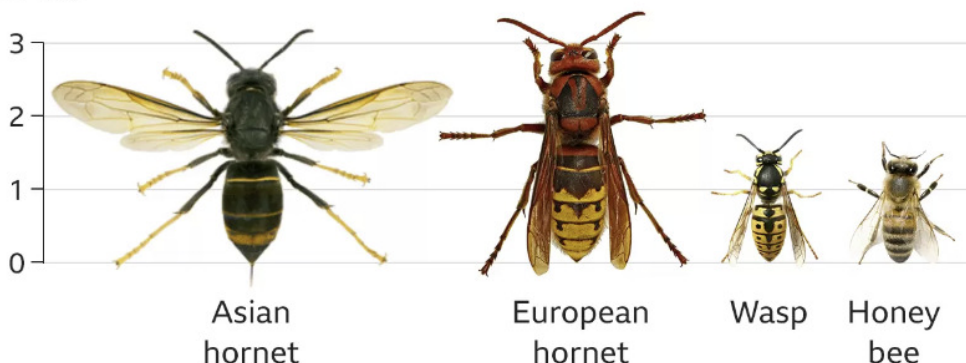
## The Wrong Hornet!

Apologies to readers of last months article on the Asian Hornet, we included a picture of the said Hornet on a bait

station, but the picture shown was actually the European Hornet! So, to clarify matters, please see the guide below

where the yellow legs and the different bands on the body of the Asian hornet are clear to see.

in cm



## National Trust: Orpington & Chislehurst Centre

The Centre has monthly evening lectures held at the

**Methodist Church,  
Sevenoaks Road,  
Orpington,  
BR6 9JH**

**starting at 8.00pm**

and afternoon lectures held most months at the  
**Methodist Church,  
Prince Imperial Road,  
Chislehurst,  
BR7 5LX**

**starting at 2.00pm**

There is also a regular programme of local walks, day trips, holidays and a variety of social events.

To find out more about the Centre and how to join please send an email to:

[ntocc100@gmail.com](mailto:ntocc100@gmail.com)

Membership is open to both members and non-members of the National Trust.

## LECTURE for JANUARY 2024

**Thursday  
25th January  
at 8.00pm**

**The Wild West  
a rail & road tour  
of six American  
States through  
Five National  
Parks**

## French Village Sign

Here is a lovely sign from a French village, with an English translation, sent in by Nick Wilkins - Quite simply "Take us as you find us"



## How The Exterminator Went to War in Chelsfield

Ninety years ago, on Friday 12 January 1934, with the rural spirit and way of life still strong in Chelsfield despite the inter-war creep of suburbia towards the Village, 25 men gathered at the Five Bells with some serious country business in mind – the extermination of agricultural vermin. Guided by retired Colonel Lionel D Henderson from

Eynsford and lubricated with a few pints, by the end of that evening they had formed a Rat and Sparrow Club, each member sworn to kill as many rats, grey squirrels, stoats, weasels, rooks, pigeons, owls, jays, sparrows, mice and moles as he could.

Col Henderson, a stalwart of Eynsford's Rat and Sparrow Club which had

existed for nearly 50 years – and, confusingly, met at the Chelsfield pub's namesake, the Five Bells in Eynsford High Street – explained how things would work and where the Chelsfield boundaries would lie.

A prize would be awarded each month to the man scoring most kills. Some species of vermin were worth three points, some

two, others one. Anyone who failed to kill enough to tot up a minimum of 12 points would be fined sixpence (2½p).

Evidence was required. A “paying-in night” was to be held at the Five Bells every month, at which members would proudly lay out their trophies on a table to be counted – rat tails, squirrel tails, sparrow heads etc.

Such clubs were originally formed as a community pest control service with farmers paying out for the catches. They attracted farmhands, labourers, rat catchers, farmers and even others further up the ladder because they often served as social clubs too.

A prime mover behind the setting-up of the Rat and Sparrow at Chelsfield was the very popular James Ponton Stewart, who was already a member of the Eynsford club. A relatively recent arrival in the Village, having moved into Skeet Hill House eight years earlier from Mottingham, Stewart was managing

director of a big shipping company, the Houlder Line, but was known and liked by every farmhand and gamekeeper in the district.

On that cold January evening in 1934 Herbert Parkes, landlord of the Five Bells, who also had links with the Eynsford club, was delighted to see a Chelsfield one formed on his doorstep. He agreed to be its treasurer and his son Doug, aged 16 and a cellarman at the Bells, took on the job of secretary.

Chelsfield's Squire, WA

“Bill” Waring, was elected club president and men with familiar Chelsfield family names like Margetts, Whitehead, Foreman, Smallwood, Bell, Chalk, Smith and Miller signed up eagerly to tackle the task of eliminating pests to protect crops, grain and food supplies.

Thirty people attended the new club's first monthly meeting on 9 February, with its chairman James Stewart presiding as the tally was taken: 266 rats, 147 sparrows, 119 mice, 15 moles, 13 stoats, 11



*Heads and tails -- paying-in night at the Bells  
Can anyone identify those present?*



rooks and one squirrel.

The prize for scoring most points went to George Whitehead Junior, a 19 year-old farmhand at Lilly's Farm, who bagged 44 rats, eight mice, three moles, one grey squirrel, one stoat and a rook.

September's paying-in night recorded 176 rats, 210 mice, 40 pigeons, 85 sparrows and eight squirrels, with regular top-scorer William Peaceful Moxham, a market gardener at Well Hill, accounting for more than 60 rats. One of Moxham's sons, James, was also an ace exterminator, picking up the monthly prize a number of times.

December 1934 saw the club deliver a whopping

tally of 800 rats – 466 of them bagged along with 25 mice by Alfred Winchcombe, a 60 year-old farm labourer of Shoreham Lane, Well Hill. Proceedings in the bar of the Five Bells that evening were enlivened by songs, with well-known local entertainer A Stanley Crouch pounding the piano.

On Friday 18 January 1935, the club celebrated its successful first year of war on vermin. Forty people gathered for dinner at the Five Bells and landlord Bert Parkes, who had been granted an extension of opening hours until 11.30pm, took the chair, revealing that over the 12 months members had dispatched a total of 3,746 rats and numerous other vermin.

Parkes, no mean rat and mouse-catcher himself, declared that the club's killer of the year was Alfred Winchcombe with an impressive tally of 2,354 points. Archie Bell, a jeweller from Halstead, then offered to donate a solid silver challenge cup and a pure-bred Irish fox terrier to be awarded to the ensuing year's top scorer. Whereupon, A Stanley Crouch struck up at the piano and three members performed songs and monologues to round off the evening.

Chelsfield's Rat and Sparrow thrived through the 1930s but seems to have disappeared after WW2. Eynsford's club, and others, survived for many years.

*Patrick Hellicar*

## **Receive Chelsfield Village Voice by Email**

To receive your copy of Chelsfield Village Voice by email each month, as soon as it's published, simply email your request to:

[chelsfieldvillagevoice@gmail.com](mailto:chelsfieldvillagevoice@gmail.com)

and you will be added to

the monthly email distribution list.

If you opt to receive Chelsfield Village Voice by email you will only receive two emails from us each month (unless any urgent issues should arise at any time), the

first to remind you of the upcoming deadline for articles to be included in the next addition, and the second, around the 1st of each month, will be the monthly issue. Our mailing list is not shared with any other persons, group or organisation.

## St Martin's Calendar of Services



The Benefice of  
Chelsfield with Green Street Green  
and Pratts Bottom



### **St Martin's Chelsfield & Well Hill – Services – January 2024**

All welcome! Come and join us any time. Please watch the church website for any updates

#### St Martin's

Wed 3 Jan	9.30am	Said Holy Communion CWO2 : SAJ
	7.00pm	Taizé Service
Sun 7 Jan	10.00am	Holy Communion CWO1 : MG
<i>Epiphany</i>	6.30pm	Choral Evensong BCP : MG
Wed 10 Jan	9.30am	Said Holy Communion CWO2 : MG
Sun 14 Jan	10.00am	Family Worship : SAJ
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> of Epiphany</i>	6.30pm	Sung Eucharist CWO2 : SAJ
Wed 17 Jan	9.30am	Said Holy Communion CWO2 : SAJ
Sun 21 Jan	10.00am	Holy Communion CWO1 : MG
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> of Epiphany</i>	6.30pm	Choral Evensong BCP : KIA
Wed 24 Jan	9.30am	Said Holy Communion CWO2 : MG
Sun 28 Jan	10.00am	Family Worship : KIA
<i>Candlemas</i>	6.30pm	Choral Evensong BCP : PS
Wed 31 Jan	9.30am	Holy Communion CWO2 : SAJ

#### Well Hill

Sun 14 Jan	10.00am	Morning Worship KIA
Sun 28 Jan	10.00am	Holy Communion MH

*Key: CWO1 – Common Worship Order 1; CWO2 – Common Worship Order 2; BCP – Book of Common Prayer; SAJ : Rev Susan Atkinson-Jones, MG : Rev Michael Gentry, MH : Rev Martin Hayward, KIA : Reader Ken I'Anson PS : Reader Phillip Southby*

## St Martin's Toddlers Group

Our happy, supportive Toddlers Group has gone from strength to strength in 2023 and we start again after the Christmas break on January 9th.

St Martins toddlers group welcomes all babies and toddlers and their carers each Tuesday from 10.30am -12 noon. We have an abundance of toys along with a craft activity and end with a story and singing plus drinks and biscuits for all. We charge £2 per child and ask that child minders bring a maximum of 3 children.

We meet in the Brass Crosby room at the back



of the church and there is ample car parking spaces.

We look forward to meeting new little ones on Tuesday mornings.

If anyone can volunteer with us occasionally please contact Rev Michael.

Val Hemmings

## Whatever Happened to Holly Berries?

Back in the 1950s/60s we were still decorating the family home in Chelsfield with basic decorations- paper chains, green and red raffia cords, a bit of mistletoe and the all-essential holly sprigs, which of course had to have berries! If any local trees had survived the birds, or more likely Travellers. (and here I must recall catching a family of itinerants acting

*suspiciously in the car park at our old church St Martin of Tours, in Chelsfield some years ago. The mother engaged me in an unconvincing conversation about the ' lovely old church', but her sons were hiding in Church Road with their car stuffed full of churchyard holly. No berries but it was still theft. As they roared off I didn't envy their prickly*

*journey back to New Addington, from whence they had apparently come according to the Police).....*

The traditional way to get berried holly in 1955 was to set off into Sussex. My father's favourite county was always East Sussex and the Downs, so early December we would trundle down via Ide Hill towards Ashdown Forest

area. A favourite spot was found to be a roadside old sandstone quarry approaching Hartfield. You could park anywhere in the 50's so Dad would pull off on to the verge in his Austin Seven and we would drop into this overgrown pit and collect several bunches. These would then be draped behind pictures, mirrors and over doorways. It would last well into few days after 25<sup>th</sup> as the house was cold apart from the rooms with a fire in. Mum never seemed to be too concerned about red stains on the wallpaper

as the berries dried out! For the past 10 years at least, the birds seem to strip the garden trees



bare, well before December, despite the milder winters. In 2016 Dad still had a huge tree in his garden that was laden -until 2 weeks previously, when every

single one was eaten ....or so I thought ....! I found 4 sprigs hiding under the canopy and brought them back here to Seaford where our solitary young female tree had just had its three berries eaten. Hey Ho! Is this perhaps why so many people have The *Holly and the Ivy* as their favourite carol? Now in 2023 our own holly has been laden with berries and we placed some sprigs on Mum and Dad's grave for Christmas. Dad died September 2021 aged almost 105.

*Phil and Jayne Lane.*

## Some Thoughts on Maths

Esperanto may have been constructed as an international language but did you know that numbers have been used as an intergalactic language in an attempt to attract and communicate with any aliens out there? The logic is that if there are alien civilisations numbers may be one of the ways we can initially make ourselves known because every civilisation, including all those established on earth in the past, needed numbers to develop. It is almost certain, as far as it

can be, that other civilisations would recognise and decipher some of our number patterns.

In 1974, attempts began to contact aliens by a radio telescope in Puerto Rico beaming messages to a galaxy 25,000 light years away in the hope that they, whoever "they" are, would detect our messages. Much of the information was numerical and included things like number sequences, the atomic numbers of the elements

that make up DNA and the population of the earth, as it was then. This was a more numerate message that its preceded of ten years earlier when Ukraine beaming signals towards space, and particularly Venus, with a message that included Morse Code signals for "Lenin" and "USSR."

Numbers are an intrinsic part of every civilisation and archaeologists have discovered a baboon's thighbone originating in the Stone Age which had

three sets of grooves representing numbers. It is believed the grooves, which appear to have been purposefully carved, provide evidence that around 20,000 years ago numbers were used. Some scientists believe that the grooves also show that not only did people use numbers to count but they also understood different aspects of numbers. I find this difficult to accept but there is some reasoning behind this belief because one set of numbers on the bone is 19,17,13 and 11 and in a second set the numbers is 9,19,21 and 11. With the exception of only one number (21) this is two sets of numbers that consist of what we call prime numbers – numbers that are not the result of two other numbers being multiplied together. This was latter was a controversial interpretation of the grooves and other scientists suggested the grooves were merely for decoration with the collection of prime numbers being merely chance.

When Stone Age hunter gathers used numbers it would have been natural

for them to express them by using their fingers and thumbs. Little has changed in this method of communication throughout the ages because it's just what we might do today if in a foreign country and unfamiliar with the language. Proof that Esperanto isn't the only international language and proof that numbers are a more easily understood than language.

Fingers haven't been the only indicator of numbers and some cultures reached higher numbers when counting by labelling parts of the body to signify numbers beyond 10. It has been reported that in some Islands near Australia, over 30 body parts are used for numbers including the left knee meaning 24 and the little toe on the right foot meaning 33. So, think carefully what someone scratching their ear is trying to tell you!

Around 10,000 years ago Neolithic people began to stay in one place for their lives and the frequency of needing numbers bigger than 10 increased. As people began to keep

and manage animals, for instance, shepherds needed to know all their sheep were accounted for and those who cultivated the land knew when to plant their crops every year by counting from key events in nature.

By 3000 BC villages and towns around the world were developing their economies and in order to function properly much bigger numbers were required. Progress included the arrival of the numerate scribes we now call accountants - was that progress? Rather than using a base of 10s the Mesopotamians decided to use a number system based on 60s because 60 has many factors (meaning lots of numbers go into 60) and it can be easily divided into parts. We are reminded of this by continuing to use 60 seconds and 60 minutes when measuring time. The Ancient Egyptians took things a step forward as evidenced by their skills in designing and building the pyramids. Apparently, the Great Pyramid was the tallest building in the world after its completion around 2600BC until 1311 when Lincoln Cathedral was



being built. That's almost 4000 years.

Whilst all this was going on, the Mayans in Central America were developing their own kind of mathematics.

Unfortunately, when the Spanish invaders came much of the history was destroyed but we know that the Mayans used their mathematical abilities in astrology and astronomy. However, I'm sure they made no attempts to contact aliens other than their Gods.

The Mayans produced their own calendars and familiarity with calendars brought the inevitable consequence of wanting to predict what happens in the future. It is no surprise that modern mathematicians have turned their skills to predict how long we will continue to inhabit the Earth. Some calculate that humans will be round

for approximately 17,000 years before we destroy ourselves or the sun burns itself out. However, depressing as it might sound, I've always known I won't last that long! Fortunately, looking on the brighter side other mathematicians who predict the sun will last for between 100 million and 2 billion years and I'm certain I'll not be around to find out who is correct.

When Copernicus developed his Principle, his assumptions, including that the earth circles the sun, suggested that our environment is nothing special, being commonly replicated in space, and humans are here temporarily by chance. Partly based on these assumptions and statistical analysis it is now thought by many mathematicians that it is a certainty other life forms exist somewhere in the universe.

If other life forms do exist there is no reason to think our brains are more developed or our thinking more advanced than might be the case elsewhere. Astronomers have detected mysterious blasts of radio waves some of which have taken 8 billion years to reach Earth. Fast radio bursts are intense, millisecond-long bursts of radio waves and this long travelled fast radio burst is one of the most distant and energetic ever observed. The first FRB was discovered in 2007, and since then, hundreds of these quick, cosmic flashes have been detected coming from distant points across the universe. Some ideas about their origins have been proposed but who really knows?

Is someone trying to call us?

*Rob Burn*

## **Aid of Ukraine Appeal Sunday Lunch**

The Mayor of Bromley's Traditional Sunday Lunch in Aid of Ukraine Appeal is to be held on Sunday 21st January 2024 at The Warren, Croydon

Road Bromley BR2 7AL.

Price £35 per person.

**Featuring a special appearance by King Henry VIII.**

Contact The Warren  
020 8462 1266  
For bookings or more information

Our thanks to **versapak** who are currently funding the printing costs of Chelsfield Village Voice

## Dates For Your Diary

### WEEKLY EVENTS

Every Tuesday  
Brass Crosby Room  
**St Martin's Toddler Group**  
10.30am - 12 noon

Every Tuesday  
Five Bells  
**CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT**  
8.30pm

Every Thursday  
The Chelsfield Pub  
**QUIZ NIGHT**  
from 7.30pm

### INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Wednesday 3rd January  
Chelsfield Village Hall  
**Chelsfield Volunteers**  
**AFTERNOON TEA**  
2.30pm-4.30pm (page 4)

Wednesday 3rd January  
Five Bells  
**Open Mike Night**  
from 8.30pm

Saturday 6th January  
St Martin's Church  
**Churchyard Working Party**  
from 9-11am

Monday 8th January  
Call Sophie 07983 656022  
for this months venue  
**Knit and Natter**  
8pm (see page 5)

Wednesday 10th January  
Five Bells  
**Bingo Night**  
from 8.00pm

Tuesday 16th January  
Chelsfield Village Hall  
**Evening WI**  
7.30pm-9.30pm

Wednesday 17th January  
Chelsfield Village Hall  
**Chelsfield Volunteers**  
**AFTERNOON TEA**  
2.30pm-4.30pm (page 4)

Wednesday 17th January  
Five Bells  
**Open Mike Night**  
from 8.30pm

Sunday 21st January  
The Warren, Croydon Road,  
Bromley  
**Sunday Lunch in Aid of**  
**Ukraine Appeal**  
£35 per person (page 19)

Wednesday 24th January  
Five Bells  
**Bingo Night**  
from 8.00pm

Thursday 25th January  
Methodist Church Sevenoaks  
Road Orpington  
**National Trust Lecture**  
**The Wild West**  
from 8.00pm (Page 11)

Thursday 1st February  
Five Bells  
**Just Friends Sextet Live**  
**Jazz**  
from 8.00pm (see page 3)

Saturday 17th February  
Chelsfield Village Hall  
**Dinner & Auction of**  
**Promises**

Friday 23rd February  
Crofton Halls, York Rise,  
Orpington  
**The Mayor of Bromley's**  
**Annual QUIZ Evening**  
7pm

Saturday 24th February  
Coolings Garden Centre  
**Knockholt Farmers' Market**  
from 10am - 3pm

## Recycling Bin Collection January 2024

Wed 3rd January  
Tuesday 9th January  
Monday 15th January  
Monday 22nd January  
Monday 29th January

Plastic, Glass and Tins, Food Waste.  
Non-recyclable refuse, Paper & Cardboard, Food Waste  
Plastic, Glass and Tins, Food Waste.  
Non-recyclable refuse, Paper & Cardboard, Food Waste  
Plastic, Glass and Tins, Food Waste.

Every week

Batteries, Small Electrical Items, Textiles (please only present one small transparent bag each week, and re-present the following week if it is not collected)

Every 2 weeks (Mar-Nov)  
every Month (Dec-Feb)

Green Garden Waste is collected fortnightly or monthly only from households that subscribe (£60 per annum) to the Bromley scheme (Telephone: 0300 303 8658 for advice)