CHRISTMAS EDITION

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

Welcome to West Farleigh's own

LIFELINE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

FATHER CHRISTMAS GROTTO	**Saturday 10th December 11am start (see Page 5)**
CAROL SERVICE	**Sunday 11th December 5.30pm**
"MIDNIGHT MASS"	**Saturday 24th December 9.30pm**
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	**Monday 16th January 2023 Bramley Barn 7.30pm**

***** NEW ON WEBSITE: amazing life of Henri Lafont, WWII Free French Pilot *****

Distributed freely in December 2022 Edition 550

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Deadline for the next issue is 20th January 2023

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Pastoral letter by Lorna Faulkner

Christmas is coming! People the world over will soon be celebrating this 2000 year old feast in a variety of ways – and here in the UK Christmas is traditionally celebrated as a time of joyous giving (well, yes, and eating!) I remember learning an old folk song. I was very small. We performed it on the little stage in the assembly hall of my Primary school. Someone was definitely dressed up as a Christmas pudding. You may know, it goes like this:

'Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat
Please put a penny in the poor man's hat
If you haven't got a penny,
A ha'penny will do
If you haven't got a ha'penny then God bless you.'

(Apparently, the Muppets once recorded a calypso version of it with John Denver. I digress, but Google is your friend!) The message is a simple message:

If you can give a lot, give.
If you can give a little, give.
If you have nothing to give – then receive. (I am optimistic that the 'God Bless you' also came with the gift of a penny or a ha'penny!) Just stop for a moment and imagine a world where we lived by those simple principles…

Many among us are approaching the winter this year with trepidation. Worrying about how to make ends meet. How will we feed the family? How will we stay warm? How many kettles can I afford to boil? All that brings enough worry in itself, let alone trying to celebrate Christmas too. Perhaps this year, for those of us who are able, we might consider how we can extend our seasonal giving. As well as giving to friends and family, perhaps we might find it in our hearts to give a little (or even a lot!) to those for whom this is shaping up to be anything but a time of peace and joy.

Here are a just a few places to be found locally who are working to support those in need. I am sure they would be delighted to receive a gift from you. So, if you have a penny or a ha'penny to share, look them up?

Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter: www.maidstoneshelter.org.uk
Salvation Army: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/maidstone
Samaritans : www.samaritans.org/branches/maidstone/
Make a Difference Maidstone: www.madm.org.uk/
The Princess Project: www.princessproject.co.uk/
British Red Cross: donate.redcross.org.uk/

(And if you are one of those who doesn't have a ha'penny, well, please reach out – let someone know you need help.) And, whoever you are, whatever you have or may not have, this year, may you receive this most precious of gifts: the priceless presence of Jesus, Emmanuel, God who is with you, in your heart and in your home. May God bless you.

Lorna

Christmas Services at All Saints

Sunday 11th December	**5.30 pm**	**Carol Service**
Saturday 24th December	**9.30pm**	**"Midnight Mass"**

Parish Council news

The Parish Council are concerned that there might be villagers, who are struggling to cope, in these difficult times. If you are struggling, DO ask for help.

Contact the Parish Clerk, Amanda, who may be able to help on

01634 681689 or westfarleighpc@gmail.com

The Parish Council will be planting an oak tree on the Green to replace the Field Maple which came down in the storm. This will be part of the Queens "Green Canopy". A flowering cherry will also be planted. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at Bramley Barn, Dandelion Time, 7.30pm on Monday 16th Jan, 2023 and you are welcome to come along.

It's all Doom and Gloom……..Or is it?

(Some wise words from a local resident)

Listening to the News channels can sometimes be soul destroying. The terrible war in Ukraine, the debt to us all from Covid, the cost-of-living crisis, the climate crisis, strikes and protesters, and a government that seems unable to organise anything except a good old fashioned booze-up during lockdown! All very depressing and likely to send us all into a downward spiral of doom, gloom, and despondency!

However, after watching the BBC's latest attempt to pull me down into the depths of misery on their morning Breakfast Show, something caught my eye on one of the social media sites on my phone. It was a picture of five or six very wet and bedraggled people with spades and forks in their hands. These people had spent a very rainy Sunday morning planting bulbs around our village with a view of making it a brighter, more colourful place for us all to live in. These villagers worked in appalling conditions for absolutely no recompense (other than being able to enjoy the fruits of their own labours) for the benefit of all who live in or pass through our village.

That got me to thinking. So much else has happened in our village that we can all take pride in and enjoy this year, (and previous years), all of which has been provided by willing volunteers. What a fantastic firework display we had this year! There have been Quiz Nights, a Car rally, a sumptuous Harvest Supper, a working party that created a stunning new footpath for us all to use. We have groups in the village that cater for most age groups such as Evergreens, Little Angels, the W.I. We have a list of drivers/helpers who consistently offer their services to those who may need it and the list could go on! (Sorry for any group or activity I may have missed). We are even lucky enough to have journalistic talent to provide this monthly update on what is happening in our village.

All the above has been provided by villagers on a voluntary basis so I think West Farleigh should give itself a huge pat on the back, one that is thoroughly deserved. So, BBC, and other news outlets, do your worst. I live in West Farleigh and I'm all right Jack!

Peter Hards

Village Events

The Harvest Supper was a fun event and well enjoyed by all who attended...

The harvest supper hosted by Jackie and Tracy was a real treat helped by the fanatastic location!

The evening began with some games and a home cooked supper helped down by a well stocked bar. We were then treated to the mellow sounds of the saxophone played by Pete from Climax Celiidh, followed with some Appalachian percussive dancing with the lovely Kerry from Folk Dance Remixed, a challenge that some of us tried our best to master. The final event a raffle. The event raised £ 1,201! Thank you to Jackie and Tracy and all of the helpers, no mean feat to put this on and roll on next year.

Following on from this a great time was had by all who attended the Fireworks display on 4th November. The fireworks show was spectacular and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The weather was kind and it was fantastic evening, thank you to the sports club for again hosting this very popular local event.

FATHER CHRISTMAS GROTTO AT WEST FARLEIGH CHURCH SAT 10TH DECEMBER FROM 11AM, MAY STILL BE SPACES IF YOUR LITTLE ONES WISH TO VISIT – please mail events@thefarleighs.co.uk

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Sports Club Report

Football- This season is proving tough for both our teams and last month's results emphasise that we may be in for a long season! Unfortunately not a single point was gained for either team, our 1st XI lost to Halls United 5-0, Holland and Blythe 4-1, Whitstable 9-1 and Ashford 4-1. Our 2nd XI were defeated by Westerham 7-0, Cudham 2-0 and lastly Wilden Wolves 5-2. We have suffered years like this in the past, let's keep battling for better results on the way.

Netball - just the two games for our girls last month but sadly we carried on the theme by losing 22-14 to Kent Warriors and after a really tough game against a good Popi side 53-17.

There is no **cricket** news this month but the club would like to thank those who supported and helped at the recent fireworks and bonfire party. A fantastic evening despite the damp conditions!

Ton-up: Our lucky ton-up winners last month were:

2. Helen Swan £30 33 Paul Baines £20 140 Elle Harold £10

Yours in sport – Tel

PS. May I wish my reader a very happy Christmas and peaceful New Year ☺

Christmas trees in aid of the Sports Club....

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Wish List from M.A.D.M. this Christmas

As you prepare for Christmas, I would ask you to remember please those for whom this time of year will be particularly tough. It is hoped during the colder months places will be found for those living on the streets in our area providing somewhere warm and dry for them to sleep either at Church Winter Shelters or in bedsits or hotel rooms. Cooking facilities are few in this temporary accommodation and often only a kettle for hot drinks is provided. With this in mind M.A.D.M. would particularly welcome donations of food ready prepared or just needing hot water added to make a ready meal e.g. noodles, tuna pasta salad, tinned meat etc. Basic household items are also needed e.g. saucepans, cutlery, sheets etc. All donations can be left in the porch at Campana, (the fifth house from the bottom of Charlton Lane) or please contact Sue O'Donnell on 07429 491022 to arrange collection. Thank you for your generosity.

M.A.D.M. are also pleased to announce the opening of the Living Word bookshop at their old charity shop 49, Church Street (rear of the old Marks and Spencer store in Week St.). It offers a wide selection of second-hand Christian books, cards, gifts and jewellery and a quiet place to sit and meet friends over a cup of tea/coffee. Currently open on Saturdays from 10.00 until 1.00pm but it is hoped to open more often when more volunteers are available to run it! For all volunteering opportunities please phone 01622 687414 or 07769 268962 and ask for Amanda.

Merry Christmas!

THE FARLEIGHS W.I NOVEMBER 2022

The November meeting saw author **James Lee**, giving a talk on his recent book "Licking the Taliban's Flip-Flop". James was part of the Army Logistics team and travelled extensively, it was interesting to get another perspective on Army life and roles within the service.

Our Open meeting on Wednesday 30th November 7pm **Tony Harris** – has **sold out** ! We look forward to seeing everyone on what should be a really enjoyable night.

Our December Christmas Party meeting is a **MEMBERS ONLY** affair. Music, games, good and fun are planned. January and February Meetings will be on Zoom to avoid dark nights and bad weather driving. We will be holding catch up lunch meetings on Tue January 17th and Tue 7th February. Bring your lunch and join us for Coffee and a natter at the Farleighs W.I. Hall, Forge Lane, East Farleigh.

If you are interested in meeting others, like craft or art, darts, walking or just talking- come along and join the other 200,000 women who are the W.I If would like more information on the W.I or any of our events please e-mail Thefarleighs@wkfwi.org.uk

Diane Scott- President.

EVERGREENS

The Evergreens enjoyed a very interesting talk about Roman Industry in our area. Brian Cushing talked, with illustrations, about how the Romans excavated large quantities of ragstone from the South side of the river. Quarries can be seen in Quarry Wood in West Farleigh, at Boughton Monchelsea and in East Farleigh. The ragstone was transported to London by boat.This was followed by a great afternoon tea. We will have enjoyed a Lasagne lunch and be looking forward to our outing to Brick Lane Music Hall, with Christmas lunch on the 1st December. We are very grateful for the donation from the Sports Club, which helped pay for this outing.

New members welcome. You can see we have interesting meetings and outings. Ring Helen 01622 814445

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Heathside Electrical	Electrical	www.heathsideelectrical.co.uk	Sam Sephton	07976 895001	heathsideelectrical@gmail.com
D. Ward	Plumbing & Heating services		Darren Ward	07973 314266	darren@dward.biz
Pest Purge	Pest Control	www.pestpurge.co.uk	Richard Lee	07758 615101	richard@pestpurge.co.uk
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Castle Portable Loo Hire Ltd	Events	http://www.castleportableloohire.co.uk/	Steve Millsom	07990 606067	castleplh@gmail.com
Hair Traditional	Hairdressing & beauty	Facebook/Instagram @hairtraditional.maidstone		01622 817800	

At about 12:40pm on 29 October 1940, a 12-year-old Teston resident, Geoff Cox, witnessed a forced landing by an RAF fighter in a nearby field close to the river. It was also seen by the father of Farleighs resident Jack Martin who was three years old at the time. Jack's dad carried him to the field, where they found a downed Hawker Hurricane. The pilot was sitting on the wing, smoking a cigarette. He was a 20-year old Frenchman called Henry (Henri) Lafont. His escape from occupied France and his subsequent career make fascinating reading…the full story can be found on our village website at **http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk**

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FARLEIGH FEATHERS by Ray Morris

Water off a duck's back

A phrase that came to mind in a recent long journey home from holiday, driven in torrential rain.

It's generally accepted that ducks are waterproof and shed water easily, but I confess it's not something I've ever given a lot of thought to. A duck's front is waterproof too. Underneath the waterproof outer feathers is a layer of fluffy down feathers that trap air. This not only insulates their body from cold air and water and keeps them warm, but it also provides buoyancy to keep them afloat. As it will for dunnocks and doves too, should they find themselves briefly immersed!

Feathers are engineering marvels, constructed from a hollow central shaft with a vane made of barbs that zip together and repel water. As well as being tightly zipped-up, a layer of water-proofing oil is applied during the hours spent preening each day. With deft beak movements (hard to imagine with a duck's spatula-shaped bill, but not the pinpoint bill of a robin) any vanes that have become unzipped are carefully rearranged, then smeared with the oil produced from the bird's preen gland. This is located at the base of its tail, which is why they appear to be rummaging behind them, then poking amongst their breast feathers and under their wings. I dare say they have a good scratch too while they're at it as, like all animals, they will carry blood-eating parasites – and feather mites that will feed on the feathers themselves.

A word of warning, though, if you put food out to help your garden birds through the worst of winter weather. It's important that any scraps from the table (or from cooking) that have vegetable oil are avoided. As oil remains liquid it will interfere with the birds' natural preening oils. This could be fatal for a bird trying to remain dry, and therefore warm, in wet weather. Fat (such as lard or suet) remains solid so is not a risk to the birds' plumage and is loaded with calories. However, if this has come from cooked meat it is likely to carry a high concentration of salt so, as birds cannot process salt, fat straight from the roast tray should be avoided too.

The good news is garden birds love crumbled Christmas cake and pudding. So, do your waistline a favour by giving your second helping to them.

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IN THE GARDEN with Sara CUSHING

December has come upon us, it seems, so quickly! As gardeners, we have had an unprecedented year, with temperatures hitting record highs, and then flooding in November. The pond garden I was creating at one of my sites got totalled by what looked like a tsunami and even the established, robust Gunnera got flattened. And yet in another garden I manage, the lavender is about to burst into flower again and Gazania are still blooming!

So this last twelve months has been an epic learning curve for us all. Even the professional growers such as David Austin Roses have decided to retire some of the English varieties that are unable to cope with the drier conditions these days, A Shropshire Lad among them. But varieties are being bred to cope with the change in climate, and semi self-pollinating Runner beans, for example, are now available which are able to deal better with heat. Many of us found our crops developed later than usual, and this was due to overnight temperatures being too high to allow effective pollination. So it's down to us to adapt and see what next year will bring!

In the Veg Patch

December is a great time to get a bit of a head start on next year. Winter lettuce can be sown under cover and varieties such as Winter Gem have been bred to germinate at lower temperatures, so in a coldframe or unheated greenhouse is best. Broad beans can be sown outside.

Currant bushes can be pruned, as can apple and pear trees to allow light and space to the centre of the plants, removing any diseased or dead stems.
Any remaining leeks or parsnips can be lifted and heeled into a trench to keep them for the next few months. Trenches can also be dug and then filled with veg peelings/compostible kitchen waste for next year's beans. This will break down over winter and give a good medium in which to plant.

In the Garden

I was wondering about sweet peas this year, as last year's got totally fried! But I am trying again, mainly because I have so many seeds left. So if, like me, you are the eternal optimist, these can be sown this month. Hardwood cuttings can be taken, Buddleia, Cornus, Rose and Mock Orange can all be grown in a prepared trench and left over winter. Trees and shrubs can still be pruned, side shoots on Wisteria can be taken back to 2 or 3 buds, Birches and Acer can be shaped now without risk of bleeding. Do leave hydrangea heads on until risk of frost has passed as these give protection to next year's flowers.

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

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