

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

Welcome to West Farleigh's own

# LIFELINE

## WEST FARLEIGH EVENTS DIARY

22 <sup>nd</sup> November	Teston Bridge reopens!!
6/7 <sup>th</sup> December	Open Art Studio see p.14
8 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am United Benefice service at All Saints
10 <sup>th</sup> December	Charity Quiz at Tickled Trout
14 <sup>th</sup> December	Father Christmas Grotto at All Saints p.7
15 <sup>th</sup> December	6pm Annual Carol service at All Saints
24 <sup>th</sup> December	9.30pm "Midnight Mass" at All Saints

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Deadline for the next issue is 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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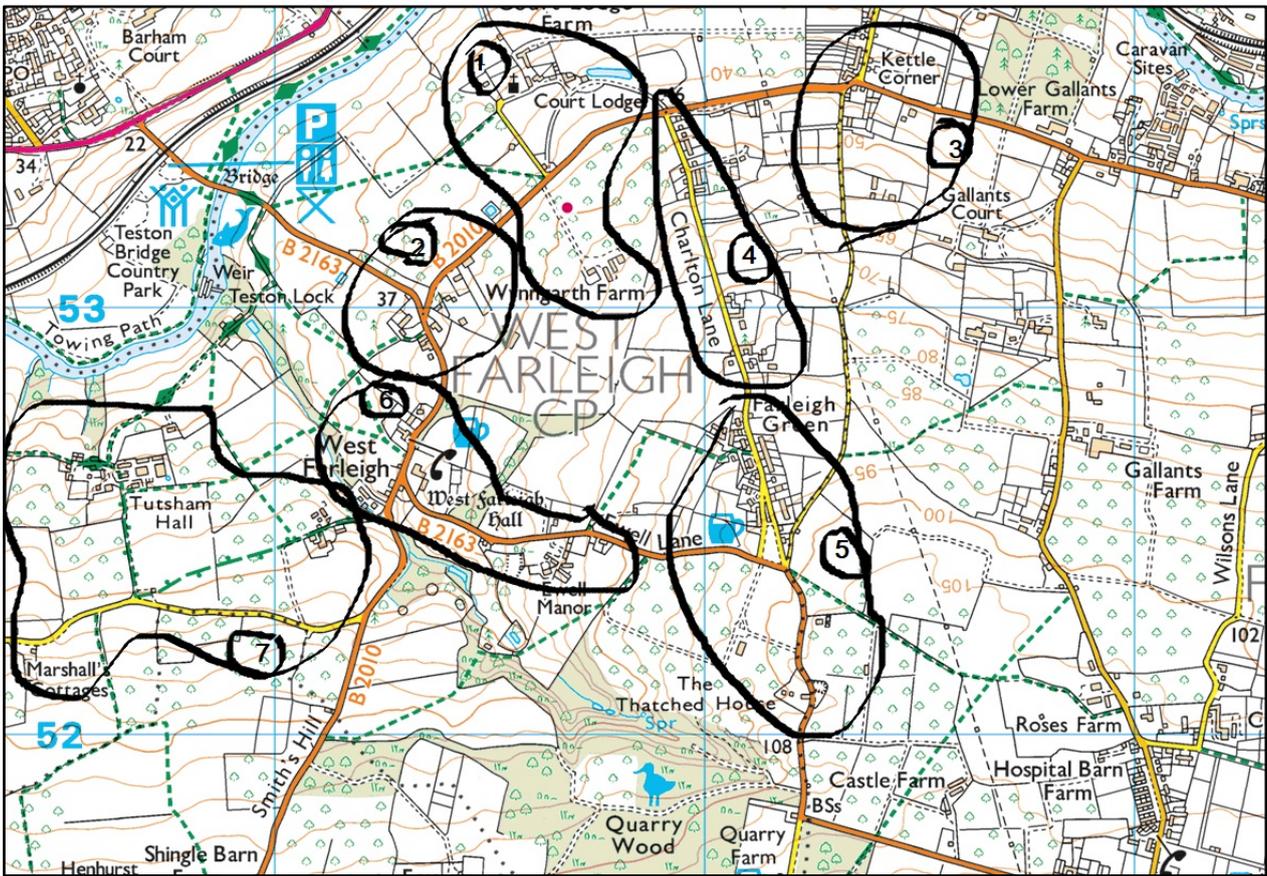
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## LIFELINE DISTRIBUTORS NEEDED...can you help?

Other villages have on-line magazines, or newsletters you have to pay for in the post office. But in West Farleigh, **every single house gets a free paper copy of Lifeline**, delivered through their letterbox. We think this is important to our community. But to do that, we need volunteers! Actually, **we need some new volunteers, to rebalance the load**. We have nothing to offer them except a decent walk once a month, a chance to meet new neighbours and a jolly party once a year. And of course the satisfaction of helping the community in our wonderful village.

Still, does it appeal? We need a couple more helpers to take LIFELINE round once a month. Do you know a likely candidate? Or couple? Or young person? Email [editor@thefarleighs.co.uk](mailto:editor@thefarleighs.co.uk) or text Stephen on 07921 684394 or Helen on 07710 442971 to volunteer. It's the healthy option.



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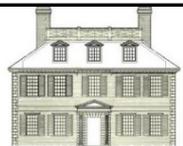
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## TINA WOODHAMS GARDENING NOTES

The glorious colours of autumn make way for the abundance of fruit and berries, Pyracantha, Euonymus europaeus, crab apples and of course the festive hollies and mistletoe. December may be considered a busy month of preparation for the Christmas period and gardening is a natural therapy, so take time away from the hustle and bustle for a few hours to immerse yourself in the great outdoors.



Use your creativity to plant up some winter pots with a festive sparkle that will continue into the new year. Evergreen skimmias, hellebores and winter-flowering cyclamen have wonderful foliage to enhance their blooms whilst variegated ivies and periwinkles can be used to trail over the planters. Add painted fir cones, bows, stars and even fairy lights to add interest.

During dry periods of weather, even if it is cold and overcast, don't forget to keep your pots watered as they are prone to drying out particularly if it has been windy.

Continue to plant bare root trees, shrubs, roses and hedging. Evergreen species provide invaluable habitats and food for wildlife as well as adding structure in the winter garden.

There are many winter-flowering shrubs grown for their fragrance and catching the scent of these on a cold winter's day can really lift the spirit; even several stems placed in a vase indoors can infuse a whole room. Try Viburnum x bodnantense, Hamamelis (witch hazel), Sarcococca (Christmas box) and Lonicera fragrantissima (winter-flowering honeysuckle) to name but a few.

To plant bare roots, dig a square hole twice the width and depth of the root ball, as a circular hole may encourage the roots to circle against the undug soil instead of spreading out. Mix the soil from the hole with an equal amount of compost and add a handful of bonemeal to promote healthy root growth. Then place your plant into the hole and, once in position, backfill the hole and firm in the soil with your foot. If planting a tree, drive a stake in at a 45 degree angle to the south-west side of the main stem (our prevailing wind direction) and use a rubber tree tie to attach the stem to the stake. Protect if necessary from damage by pests using a tree guard.

Between December and February is the time to prune apple and pear trees whilst they are in the period of dormancy. Do not prune stone fruits such as cherry, plum and greengage until springtime!

Prepare empty vegetable beds by weeding and manuring – either dig this in or simply place it on top of the beds for the worms to do their work.

An essential task for early winter is to clean out the greenhouse and wash it down with a suitable greenhouse disinfectant. This will deter fungi and parasitic insects and give you a good start for next year. If you are overwintering plants ventilation is important to keep them in optimum health.

If, like me, you are indulging in mince pies and sweet treats then some exercise and fresh air will turn them from a guilty pleasure into a well-earned reward! And what better time when you are happily munching away to write a wishlist for Santa – seeds for sowing next year, seed organisers, small tools and those much needed gardening gloves.

Wishing Everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Gardening Year!

## REPLACING THE SLUICE down at Teston Lock



The sluice (gate) is a vertical barrier inserted alongside the weir which can be moved up and down to allow more or less water to pass through. Here it is (the structure on the right-hand side of the picture).

It is a vital part of controlling the level of water in the Medway; all the locks along the river have a sluice gate. This one was installed in 1974 and it's in bad repair and is being replaced.

The gate is operated from the hut on one side, although it can be set to operate remotely through a system of floats set at

certain levels. The new system will allow much better control of the gate and manage river levels more effectively.

Removing it and bringing in the new one is a challenge because it has to be disassembled and transported across the lock and onto the site by the Teston country park from where it can be carted away. And the new one has to make the opposite journey.



This is being done by the big crane that has been here for a couple of months. [It was temporarily lowered today, due to worries about Storm Bert blowing it over] The crane is 83 meters (275 feet) high and weighs 250 tons, and it can lift 1 ton at a time, safely across the lock. The bottom end is parked by the Teston Country Park. Here's the rest of it...all 83 meters.



The budget for the construction element of the sluice repairs is £2.3m, and this work should be complete by December, when the crane and the project offices will be removed.

In addition, the Environment Agency is planning various conservation and other work around the site which will last into Summer 2025. This includes replacing

the fish and eel ladder, which we wrote about in 2017.

See more pictures on the website [www.thefarleighs.co.uk](http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk) under Special Feature on the left hand menu.

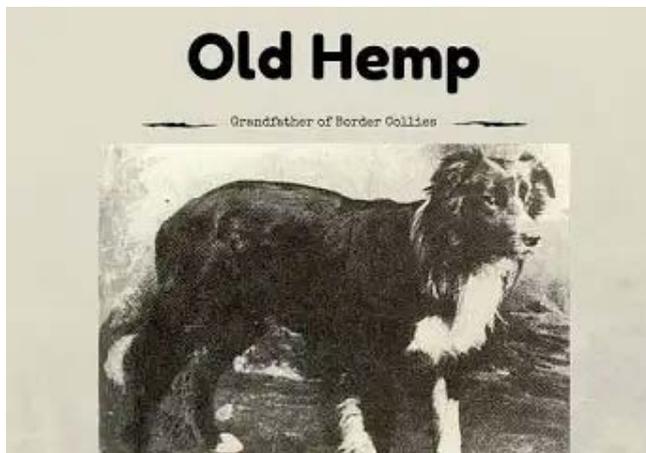
## CANINE CORNER WITH REBECCA

### The Border Collie

The name “Border Collie” reflects both the breed’s geographical origins and the breed’s main job. The term ‘Border’ refers to the border between England and Scotland, known as the borders. The area is known for its hilly terrain and sheep farming. Farmers on the borders needed efficient herding dogs to manage their flocks. The word ‘Collie’ is believed to have originated from the Old English word “Coll” which means “black.” Many of the collies were originally black and it was widened to describe distinct types of sheepdogs.



Border Collie means ‘herding dog from the border region’, specifically bred for the task of herding sheep. The name encapsulates the breed’s heritage, function, and the environment in which it was developed.



The border collie can be traced back as far as the late 19th century. One of the most influential breeders and development of the ‘Collie’ was Adam Telfer, a shepherd from Northumberland. His own dog “Old Hemp” is considered to be the founding sire of the breed that is today. He sired over 200 puppies between 1893 -



1901. He stood out to Telfer due to his style of herding that was unlike any other herding dog. He worked far more quietly and used his stance and intense stare as opposed to his bark to move the sheep, so Telfer was keen to adopt these traits along with the breed’s intelligence, hard working nature and tenacity into future dogs.

Although the generations have diluted some of the effects of this genius sheepdog’s genes on much of the population, Old Hemp was regarded as a shining example of the breed and will always be considered as the father of the Border Collie breed.

Today, collies are still valued for their herding capabilities and very much a vital part of the agricultural world. They are are however, also regarded as essential service dogs and use their eagerness to work in search and rescue missions, therapy work and service animals. As well as the traits already mentioned they are also incredibly loyal to their owners and make exceptional family dogs, but best suited to those who enjoy an active lifestyle due to their high energy levels and strong prey drive.

They require regular exercise and mental challenges to keep them happy and healthy. They thrive on problem solving games and engaging in interactive play with their owners. This drive however can make them prone to anxiety if they do not have enough physical and mental stimulation.

Collies respond exceptionally well to positive reinforcement and consistent training methods, where rewarding good behaviour with treats, praise or playtime encourages them to learn and follow commands. This approach helps build a strong bond between the dog and owner. With their loyalty, work ethics and unique personality, Border Collies continue to be cherished companions and remarkable working dogs.



### **Famous Border Collies**

Pickles was a famous Border Collie known for playing a significant role in a remarkable incident in the UK during the 1966 FIFA World Cup. The story of Pickles and the Jules Rimet Trophy is a charming tale of adventure and luck.

In March 1966, The Gold Trophy, which was awarded to World Cup winners, was stolen during an exhibition at Westminster Central Hall. The theft occurred just months before the World Cup was set to take place in England creating a national crisis.

A massive search was launched to find the trophy, with the police and public alike. The police offered a reward for information leading to its discovery.

In a stroke of luck, Pickles discovered the trophy while out for a walk in a garden in South London in April 1966. Pickles dug at the wrapped package and unearthed the trophy which was still intact. The discovery made headlines and Pickles became a national hero receiving significant attention. He was awarded a medal by the National Canine Defense League, and he rose to fame.

The cup was safely returned, and England went on to win the World Cup later that year, defeating Germany in the final. Pickles is often associated with this historic victory and is fondly remembered by football fans and dog lovers alike.

## **Father Christmas at West Farleigh Church**

**Sat 14th Dec. 11am to 3pm** £5 per child visit with Father Christmas and an early Christmas present.



Join in with other festive activities including:

- Children's craft table
- Elf shop to buy surprise presents for Mum & Dad
- Photo booth
- Guess the number of Lego pieces
- Post box for letters to Father Christmas
- Decorate a gingerbread man
- Festive Refreshments

- Plus more.....

To book your child's place please e-mail [sue\\_birchall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sue_birchall@yahoo.co.uk) with your children's name & age.

**Volunteers are always welcome to help, please contact as above.** Also if you have anything suitable for children's gifts or can help make refreshments etc do contact Sue, as above.

## CELEBRATING 21 YEARS OF DANDELION TIME



Dr Caroline Jessel founded Dandelion Time 21 years ago, raising money for the charity by sending out little packets of wildflower seeds that she put together on her kitchen table.

Last Wednesday, she retired as Chair of Dandelion, to become one of 3 patrons (along with writer Michael Morpurgo and Isabel Hardman). From its humble beginnings, Dandelion Time has grown steadily through some difficult times. This year its 26 staff members and 100 volunteers have helped 197 children and their families who are suffering from abuse, bullying or bereavement.

It has opened new centres in Shorne near Gravesham and Green Farm (Shadoxhurst) near Ashford, but its headquarters and primary centre is here at Bramley Barn on Charlton Lane. In an emotional ceremony at

Bramley Barn (which began with the planting of a Lime Tree in her honour) Graham Carpenter, the CEO of Dandelion Time, paid tribute to Dr Caroline for her vision, courage and optimism over the 21 years since 2003. She will be succeeded by Gilly Wilford, who has been a trustee of the charity for the last 5 years.

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**ALL SAINTS  
 CAROL SERVICE**  
**6pm Sun 15th December**

**ALL  
 WELCOME**

## PASTORAL LETTER from Lorna Faulkner

'Someday, I would like to go home. The exact location of this place, I don't know, but someday I would like to go.' I read these words by a writer called Henry Rollins the other day and it made me stop and think about what 'home' really means.

A house can be a home. But a home is so much more than the place we sleep at night, or eat our meals. It's the place we live. The place where we can be ourselves.



For me, there are some people who are home too, because when I am with them I breathe out; let my guard down; I can rest in their presence - I know I am safe.

But we are all too aware that life doesn't stand still: we lose loved ones; relationships move on; circumstances press in. And the safe feeling of home can feel a long way away from us. One of the Bible verses we so often hear read at Christmas services is from John's Gospel. Chapter 1, verse 14.

*'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...'*

The Message version of the Bible says he 'moved into the neighbourhood...'

This image of God becoming human and coming to make his home with us.. wow, well it blows me away every time I hear it. Christmas often means we're having visitors, or doing some *visiting*. But at Christmas we celebrate far more than a special guest: Jesus wasn't just visiting. He wasn't popping by, hoping to catch us at our best, then leaving when the edges begin to fray (or when Auntie Beryl has had one too many Snowballs...)

He was moving in... coming to live alongside us in all our humanity - in our joy, our work, our play, our tears and laughter, our mess and mistakes: All our everyday glory. He made his home with us, so that we could discover the home our hearts can find in him.

Whatever your circumstances at this time - be they challenging or cheerful - may each of be blessed by the warm, familiar presence of God in your hearts and your homes this Christmas.

### DECEMBER SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS

Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10.30am	Benefice Communion at All Saints (Lorna Faulkner)
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6.00pm	CAROL SERVICE (Lorna Faulkner)
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.30pm	"Midnight Mass" at All Saints

There are many services taking place across our Benefice in December. See <https://unitedbenefice.church/> and click on '2024 Christmas events' for a list.

## A VILLAGE WEDDING

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September, we exchanged our vows in the church. It was an intimate wedding, with family and friends in attendance. The bride did not have far to go, since we live on the doorstep of the church!

The service was conducted by Reverend Lorna Faulkner and was truly beautiful. Just as we were about to leave the church, we realised it was raining (they do say that it's good luck to have rain on your wedding day). Luckily, it was just a passing shower.

The celebrations continued at Bradbourne House, East Malling for our wedding reception.

We would like to thank Reverend Lorna Faulkner for all of her support in the run up to our wedding and on the day itself. We would also like to thank Marian, for playing the organ, Helen for ensuring that things were as they should be in the church, Tracy for organising the church flowers and everyone else who played a part in ensuring our day was as amazing as it was.



*Jordan Burniston Photography*

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## SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



**FOOTBALL** Win, draw and loss for our 1<sup>st</sup> XI last month. We began with a 2-0 defeat against Wateringbury. This was followed by beating St Lawrence 1-0 and finally we drew 1-1 versus FC Hertz. Meanwhile our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI are finding life tough at the moment and are now bottom of the table after losing all four of their games last month. We started off with a 2-1 defeat against TGFC, then a 4-1 loss versus Borough Green and then we lost twice to Tatsfield, 2-0 and 3-0. Let's hope we will have picked up some much needed points by next month.

### UNDER 14s

After a faultless start to their season our Under 14s have suffered their first defeats. We lost 5-3 against Chatham, but recovered after that to beat MPE 4-0 but then disappointingly going out of the Cup 5-4 on penalties after drawing 2-2 in normal time.



**NETBALL** A very good run of results for our girls last month. As a result, we find ourselves in a much healthier league position. We began by beating Lightning 39-28 and then Headcorn, 38-30, before going down 41-27 in a good game against Alchemist. Finally we played Vixens. It was another close game but eventually we lost 41-30. We have one game to play before the Christmas break, then we'll be ready to start again in early January.

### CLUB NEWS

Many thanks to all the villagers who helped out and supported our recent **fireworks evening**. It was another great success and we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

*PS. Please note that no road cones were injured or killed during the weekend!*

### Our luck ton-up winners last month were:

116	Farleigh Forge	£30
120	Claire Beck	£20
97	Lucas Shilling	£10

### ! - Yours in sport, Tel



**Christmas trees** – it's that time of year again! Trees for sale in aid of the Sports Club, delivered to your door. They are available from 11<sup>th</sup> December (although beforehand if possible). Call Tel on 07761 355518 to order.

Prices: 5' - £40, 6' - £45, 7' - £55

Trees can be collected after Christmas if required.



## THE EVERGREENS

At our first meeting of November, Dr Bob and Katie talked about bees and bee keeping. They brought along a beehive. No bees!

Katie modelled her full beekeepers outfit and told us although it was very protective she has still been stung several times. Dr Bob told her it was an occupational hazard and it will happen again!

He explained the life cycle of the bee and how and why they swarmed etc. Very interesting. He also brought along some honeycomb and we all had a taste of the honey. Lovely. He brought along some jars of honey for sale. Not many takers as it is a delicacy and very expensive.

Christmas tea meeting will be on 10th December. There will not be a lunch meeting in December as it falls on Christmas Eve. If you would like to join us email Katie O'Connor [katieeth66@gmail.com](mailto:katieeth66@gmail.com) or ring Helen 01622 814445. We can offer lifts to those living in East and West Farleigh. We meet in the WI Hall Forge Lane East Farleigh.

## THE FARLEIGHS W.I.



Those of you who passed by the WI hall in November may have seen the hall decorated with poppies for Remembrance Day, and the addition of Mabel, the Unknown Women in War Statue, commemorating the bravery and sacrifices of women in war. As November passes and the Christmas period is upon us, our crafters will once more be busy, this time decorating the outside of the hall with knitted and crocheted festive decorations.

As well as arts and craft, we continue to offer a wide variety of activities and social events for local women. Our darts group continues to meet at the Good Intent every Monday and we also have an active lunch club, a walking group, and a book club. We are always looking for new activities to try so if you have a particular interest that you enjoy and are looking for like-minded women to join you, come along and meet us.

Our monthly meetings continue to be the second Wednesday of each month at 7pm at the WI Hall in East Farleigh, and at the December meeting we will be having our Christmas party.

We are open to women of all ages and new members are always welcome. Check out our Facebook page, email us at [TheFarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk](mailto:TheFarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk), or just pop into our next meeting where we can guarantee tea, cake and a warm welcome.

Lynn Stout  
President, The Farleighs WI



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[www.kettlebridgeconcertinas.org.uk](http://www.kettlebridgeconcertinas.org.uk)

If you would like us to come and play for your event or group, please get in touch - our band can provide a singalong session of popular tunes, or a more formal concert. We don't charge a fee - although donations are always very welcome!

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# ~~FLYING~~ *around the* ~~FARLEIGHS~~ →



## Something to do on Boxing Day?

Once upon a time, before the Boxing Day Sales had been invented and it was still celebrated as St Stephen's Day, young Farleighs Folk may have practised the yuletide custom of *Hunting the Wren*. It was celebrated across England, southern Ireland and the Isle of Man, but was associated with Twelfth Night in Wales. A wren was killed and paraded, hanging on a pole, around the village. As with Guy Fawkes and Halloween, it provided an excuse to demand money, cakes or mugs of ale from villagers supposedly lucky enough to be visited. Good luck, of course, being the householders' reward for sending the young men on their way with the aforesaid goodies.

Despite being known in folklore as The King of the Birds, the wren also became associated with some historical bad luck stories and so became fair game for superstitious minds. According to one, prior to his execution, St Stephen had succeeded in freeing himself from his captors when a wren flew against the face of a guard who duly woke up and secured the escaping saint-to-be.

The customs varied, of course, depending on where the unfortunate wren found itself. Another Biblical excuse was that when Jesus was being hunted in the Garden of Gethsemane, the soldiers were alerted to his whereabouts by the bird's piercingly loud song. Once again, it became the villain of the piece and fair game for the superstitious.

In Ireland, protestant Orangemen seized upon the account of King William's army being saved from the approaching Catholic King James' men when, early in the morning, wrens landed on drums to peck crumbs left after their evening meal by the sleeping soldiers. Once again, the noise from a wren woke the soldiers and saved the day – or not, depending on which side you were on.

In Wales, the unfortunate bird was apparently paraded around the village at night, when young men and boys with blackened faces, visited the homes of couples who had been married in the past year. The husband was expected to invite the revellers in and provide them with generous mugs of Christmas ale. Failure to do so would result in the visitors singing a verse in Welsh meaning: 'May a raging wind come suddenly to turn the house upside down.' One can only assume that a wise husband would meet their demands as, no doubt inebriated on the ale that other husbands had provided, the wren hunters were likely to return in the early hours and sprinkle cold water on the sleeping couple.

The excuse offered by Manxmen for the ritual slaughter was that the bird was known to

change itself into a Siren and lead fishermen to their deaths.



## *Ou est le Bebe?*

*Darren Nicholls*

Curiously, the wren was venerated in Scotland where it was known as 'The Lady of Heaven's Hen' – so harming the wren north of the border would result in your cows yielding milk stained with blood. It is also known as poulette de Dieu (God's chicken) in France where it covered the baby Jesus with moss and feathers in his manger.

So, if you are fortunate enough to see or hear this endearing little bird in your

garden on Boxing Day, forget superstition and count yourself lucky you can enjoy its perky demeanour and loud song at the darkest time of our year.

**Ray Morris** ([lepiaf@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lepiaf@hotmail.co.uk))



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