Welcome to West Farleigh's own

LIFELINE

WHATS NEW?

OUR VILLAGE WEBSITE







GOING LIVE ON AUGUST 3RD

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT IT. PLEASE EMAIL editor@thefarleighs.co.uk

WEST FARLEIGH EVENTS DIARY

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Written, managed, and distributed freely by West Farleigh residents. Edition 589 Editors: Stephen Norman, Helen Swan, Sue Birchall, Katie O'Connor Website: www.thefarleighs.co.uk Email: editor@thefarleighs.co.uk

Deadline for the next issue is 20th August 2025





Friday 22 August 10 - 1 Saturday 11 October 10 - 1



Smiths Hill Oast Smiths Hill West Farleigh ME15 oPG



rachelspreckleyart.com rachelspreckleyart@gmail.com

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NOT JUST FOR POTTERS

tay in our cabin and enjoy the beautiful Nedway Valley area of East Far Dog friendly and free use of dog exercise field.

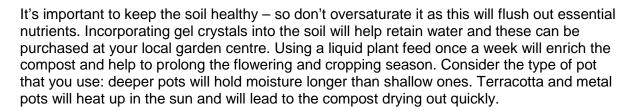
ITEMS FOR SALE IN OUR POP-UP STUDIO SHOP GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE

GARDENING NOTES BY TINA WOODHAMS

With prolonged spells of dry weather and a lack of substantial rainfall during June and July, long term forecasts suggest that drier than average conditions are also possible in August. In addition, South East Water has enforced a hose pipe ban with effect from 18 July. In view of this, here are some tips to manage our water in the garden....

Water planted pots daily, either first thing in the morning or last thing at night, to reduce evaporation. Water slowly, directly into the soil to get to

the root system and not onto the leaves. Fill the pot to the rim and let it soak into the soil before repeating. If the surface of the soil is dry, the water will overflow over the top of the pot and be wasted. Push small pots with drainage holes or a tube into the soil and water into them, these will contain the water and slowly release it.



Help to conserve moisture in the pots by applying a mulch of at least 5cm (2 inches in old money!) of organic material – use bark, woodchip, compost or straw to reduce evaporation but beware of using hay as this can disperse seed and encourage grass to grow! Grouping pots together will increase the air humidity in that area.

Using grey water, such as bath and kitchen water, is an environmentally-friendly option and will not harm your plants since potting composts are able to filter out contaminants such as soap and detergents.

Prioritise your watering in the vegetable garden. Keep tomatoes well-watered as not doing so can lead to blossom end rot (blackened areas at the base of the tomato fruit). Beans, peas and lettuces will cease cropping if not kept regularly watered. As with the pots, or indeed any area in the garden, applying a mulch will help to retain moisture in the soil. Established plants in the borders will generally require less watering – the more readily-available water there is for them will increase their dependency and so they can be left to dry out longer which in turn will encourage the roots to grow deeper into the soil in search for water.

Water butts are an effective method of collecting rainwater, a more natural supply than tap water, but of course this is only useful when we have had that essential rainfall! Perhaps a note in your diaries as a task for autumn or winter

Anyhow, all this talk of water has made me thirsty!

HAPPY GARDENING!



WEST FARLEIGH IN BLOOM TALLEST SUNFLOWER COMPETITION

It's great to see so many sunflowers around the village this year! Don't forget to enter yours into the tallest sunflower competition which will be judged on Saturday 16 August.

There are two categories, one for BIG people and one for those aged up to 16 years.

Please let us know if you would like your sunflower(s) measured by either emailing your name and address to bloom@thefarleighs.co.uk or putting a note through the door of Hoppers Corner, or No.1 The Green, Charlton Lane asking us to 'please measure your sunflower'.



Please specify which category of the competition you are entering.

Good Luck Everyone! Gabby and Tina

NB: don't worry if they have flowered early, prop them up and they will still be measured. [Ed]

EILEEN STERN

6th August 1933 - 22nd June 2025

Eileen was born in Lymington, Hampshire. Her parents, Ann and Edward Hinds were both in service, Edward as a butler and Ann a cook. Eileen moved to West Farleigh with her parents when she was 18. Her mother took on a job as housekeeper at Smiths Hall.

Eileen worked at Dunnings. One day cycling home from church, a young man on a motor bike crashed into the hedge beside her. That was the beginning of a lasting relationship! They married and moved into the newly built, Markham Cottages, where Eileen spent the rest of her life.



There they had two daughters and a son 15 years later! While looking after the family, Eileen worked in the fields and orchards, the children playing alongside all the other children. Happy Days!

Eileen was a grandparent and great grandparent, enjoying the children and spoiling them. She also enjoyed her trips to Evergreens, where she met up with old friends and made some new ones.

DOWN ON THE FARM WITH DAN

I intend to submit a regular farming update to Lifeline. West Farleigh is in a rural area and much of our land is used for farming. Have you ever passed a field and wondered what the farmer is growing there? Or when it will be harvested? Or wondered what machinery is being used and what it's doing? Hopefully this column will answer some of your questions.

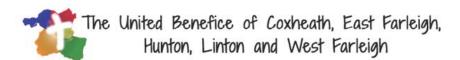
This month I've been talking with Karim Habibi, who manages Keepers Nursery on Lower Road East Farleigh. Keepers Nursery grows and sells a large range of

fruit trees, direct to the public. They sell over 1200 varieties of fruit trees, including rare or historic apple varieties. The Keepers Nursery website https://www.keepers-nursery.co.uk/ tells you a lot more about this unique and highly specialised local business.

Karim tells me that June and the first half of July tend to be relatively quiet months for him. The new rootstocks are growing. He will be "training" some of the trees, ensuring the grafted-on addition properly takes hold and is not out-competed by shoots from the original rootstock.

From the middle of July onwards, the current year's trees need to be chip budded. This is where the bud from the desired breed is grafted onto the rootstock. In effect, Karim can "custom build" a fruit tree to the customers own specification. He will carry out around 400 grafts a day, and it is around a month's work. He does this himself, there are no staff to help him.

Keepers Nursery have a fruit breeding program. In April and May they hand pollinated thousands of apple blossoms with specifically collected pollen to create seeds which will become new varieties of apples. The process usually takes between 5-10 years as apple trees only fruit after they have grown out of their juvenile stage. Of the hundreds of seedlings grown only a handful produce the highest quality fruit worthy of propagating and naming. Each year the nursery releases new varieties, this year 'Primrose Pippin®' and 'St. Helens' were released from seeds created in 2015.



Do you know of anyone who is housebound or lonely and would like a visit? If so, please ask them if you can give their details to us. We have both men and women on the team and we will be pleased to visit.

Call: 07437 544229 in confidence to speak to one of the Team. If there is no answer please leave your name and number or text your details. We will get back to you just as soon as we can.

You can also contact us online here: https://unitedbenefice.church/contact-the-pastoral-support-team/

Sometimes we just need someone to listen.



VISIT OUR NEW VILLAGE WEBSITE!

Coming Aug 3rd to: www.thefarleighs.co.uk

Great Walks. Village History with lots of photos. Information about things that are happening and have happened. Things that happen regularly and occasionally. Links to other village and local groups and events.

GOING LIVE AUGUST 3rd

The website and Lifeline team have been aware that the village website had some faults. The website builder we were using was clunky and cumbersome. It was not easy to put article/pictures etc onto it. We thought we should be using an easier and more up to date website builder but we did not have the knowledge, expertise, time and confidence to give it a go. THEN Alex Woodhams joined the team and we slowly realised that he had more knowledge of websites than the rest of us put together.

And the rest, as they say, is history!

The new website, still in "beta test", has an uncluttered look and feel. It is easy to get around, and yet all the history and relevant content has been painstakingly transferred across from the old one, including gardening, ornithology and canine contents from LIFELINE!

VILLAGE CRAFT CLUB



Our craft club is growing strongly, We meet every other Monday at the Good Intent.

Lots of projects are happening including poppies, Christmas Crafts and many attempts at various crafts. All are welcome, whatever skill level and whatever you would like to try. Just come along at 6.30pm on either the 1st, 15th or 29th August for some 'needles and natter'.



HAS SELECTIVE BREEDING DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

The evolution of dogs from wolves is a remarkable example of how domestication and selective breeding have transformed a species over thousands of years.

It's hard to believe that our cute Pomeranians and pugs once derived from wolf ancestors.

Early humans likely began to tame wolves, choosing those that were more docile and sociable, which eventually led to the diverse breeds we see today. This process not only shaped their physical traits but also their behaviour and

temperament, creating loyal companions that fit a variety of roles in human society.



The range of sizes, shapes, and characteristics in dogs reflects both their evolutionary history and the specific needs and preferences of humans throughout time. Humans have selectively bred dogs with exceptional abilities in various roles, such as herding sheep, retrieving game, protecting livestock and the humble companion dog.

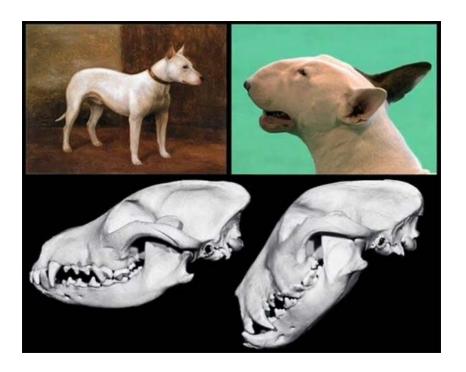
Selective breeding in dogs has indeed had both positive and negative effects on the health and appearance of various breeds, While, selective breeding can enhance desirable traits, it can also lead to significant health issues and extreme physical characteristics.



The English bull terrier stands as a striking example of how the pursuit of artificial beauty in dogs can result in lasting harm. With this particular terrier, Breeders initially focused on creating a dog with a strong, muscular build and a distinctive egg-shaped head. This unique appearance became a breed standard. leading to an emphasis on specific physical traits over health and function. As a result, some of the exaggerated features, such as the broad head and short snout, can lead to various inherited health problems and defects, including issues with breathing, dental problems, and skin conditions.

Moreover, the focus on aesthetics has sometimes overshadowed the importance of temperament and overall well-being. Some Bull Terriers may exhibit behavioural issues due to selective breeding practices that prioritise appearance over stable personality traits

Overall, while selective breeding has created visually striking dogs, it has also raised concerns about the ethical implications of prioritising looks over health and well-being, prompting calls for more responsible breeding practices that consider the long-term health of the breed that we claim to love.



[Above] How breeders changed the English bull terrier.







PASTORAL LETTER FROM LORNA FAULKNER

August arrives at our doorstep like a gentle friend, draped in golden sunlight and humming with the steady music of crickets. The fields, once emerald, now blush with the promise of harvest. Gardens bow under the abundance of tomatoes, beans, and sunflowers, while the orchard branches grow heavy with plums and early apples.



This is the month when the world slows in a warm embrace.

The mornings begin to cool, soft dew clinging to the grass; spiderwebs sparkling like tiny jewels. The heat of the summer afternoon sun, the touch of sun-scorched grass under our feet, calling us back to the endless, open joy of our childhood school holidays. Evenings invite us to linger with friends on doorsteps, or in gardens, sharing stories as the sun sinks behind golden fields. August, the golden heart of summer.

August is a time for gratitude and gathering—a season for picnics, and market stalls brimming with produce - inviting us to savour the beauty woven through simple days: the patient labour of the allotments and gardens, the cheerful hum of bees, and the comfort of friendships old and new – reminding us to treasure the richness of life while we can lay our hands on it. As we move through these golden days, may we remember to pause and cherish the blessings we have in our village communities – the land, the people, the gentle rhythms.

August reminds us that, even as autumn comes whispering to us in the misty mornings, and the rosehips and damsons begin to adorn the hedges, summer's generosity is at its height – it is there to be enjoyed, to be celebrated and to be shared.

Wishing everyone a blessed and abundant August.

Lorna

SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS

Sunday 10th August 9.30 Church open for prayer Sunday 24th August 10.30 Benefice Communion at All Saints



There will be no LITTLE ANGELS during the school holiday.

RIDE AND STRIDE

The Annual fundraising Ride/ Stride, to raise funds for the friends of Kent churches, takes place on Saturday 13th September. We would love you to join in. Sponsorship

forms from www.kentrideandstride.co.uk, or Helen Swan 007710 442971. Half of the sponsorship money raised, will go to a church of your choice. We hope you nominate All Saints West Farleigh!

If you are no longer a cyclist or walker, you could always volunteer to man the church, and sign in the visitors.

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	richard@pestpurge.co.uk	-
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castleportableloohire.	Facebook/Instagram	
co.uk	01622 817800	
Steve Millsom	@hairtraditional.maidstone	
07990 606067		
castleplh@gmail.com		



The Farleighs WI

At our monthly meeting in July we were pleased to welcome Catherine Bartholomew who gave an interesting talk on the history of traditional Egyptian dancing, a form of belly dancing, and then much hilarity ensued when we all dressed up and had a go.

As well as our monthly meetings, we continue to offer a wide variety of activities and social events for local women. We have an active arts and crafts group, where our members can learn new skills or continue to work on their personal projects. We are currently learning macrame and we love new ideas for any craft we haven't yet tried. The group is also open to any member who just wants to call in for a coffee and a chat.

Our darts group continues to meet at the Good Intent every Monday and our quiz team takes part in the Tickled Trout charity quiz each month. This month our book group discussed Big Sky by Kate Atkinson, and we about to embark on The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich. We also have an active lunch group, which does the rounds of local hostelries and eateries, and a walking group, as well as other regular opportunities for socialising with friends. Our monthly meetings continue to be the second Wednesday of each month, 6.45pm for a 7.00pm start at the WI Hall in East Farleigh.

We are open to women of all ages and new members are always welcome. Check out our Facebook page, email us at TheFarleighs@wkfwi.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

SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



FOOTBALL The new season is fast approaching, if you or anyone you know would like to play, do get in touch.



NETBALL

Our girls concluded their summer season last month overall a successful campaign. Dolphins came first, we lost in a good game, 45-30. This was followed by a victory. Beating Vixens 46-34. Finally going down 51-30 against Fusion Diamonds. We ended up in a very healthy mid table position.





CRICKET After a promising start to the season, our 1st X1 has hit the buffers and lost all four of their games last month. We began away to St Lawrence (70/71-0). Shoreham, Chiddingstone and Locksbottom all followed without success. Meanwhile our 2nd X1 didn't have good start and are still looking for their elusive first victory! They started with a thumping defeat versus Penshurst. (273/120) next Marden (259/69). Eynesford, where we had a good chance, the visitors chasing 130, we had them at 69-6, unfortunately they got the runs! After that, a defeat against Lenham.

Let's hope both teams can pick up before long.

CLUB NEWS

This month's lucky winners were:

102	lan Payne	£30
162	Bill Norman	£20
134	Yvonne Martin	£10

Yours in sport, Tel (07761 355518)

Taking your phone to the match? Why not send your pictures of our sportsmen in action to editor@thefarleighs.co.uk. We will credit you.

More sports news on www.westfarleighsportsclub.com/

FLYING around FARLEIGHS

Late again, but saved by the ... bottle?

As per usual, I receive the customary email from the editor pointing out that Lifeline is going to press the next morning and subtly alluding to the fact that I have yet to submit my copy. Without a hint of panic, I uncork a bottle of wine to help me think about what Farleigh Folk would like to know (or should be told) about village birds.



The answer lay not in the bottom of my emptied glass – it rarely does – as on this occasion it was stuck on the outside of the bottle in the name of the grape. So, can you guess the grape when you read on?

The birds in question, one of the UK's commonest and plentiful species, will be known to every resident who has spent time outdoors in their garden or simply enjoying a walk around the village. If they are of an age when they learned nursery rhymes from their parents – how many do nowadays? – they'll recognise it as the Blackbird.

It is one of the few species that has adapted well to human changes to the environment, its population has increased by 17% since 1995, including a 1% increase in the last year. But this increase masks a worrying situation, one that is being carefully monitored now by the government's Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

APHA is tasked with tracking new, potentially dangerous introduced species, like the Asian Hornet, that are a threat to our natural environment and/or human health. They are not just interested in the animal or plant itself, but in any pathogens, eg. a potentially harmful bacterium or virus, it may be carrying. Avian Flu is an obvious example, as is Covid-19, of the disastrous impact of an animal-borne virus spreading to other species and, in the horrific case of the latter, to humans.

So where do blackbirds fit in? While their national (and European) populations appear buoyant, it has suffered declines in some areas – notably in London and the Southeast (and the Netherlands). The cause is suspected to be infection with the Usutu virus. Originating in Africa the virus is slowly spreading north as the mosquito that carries it responds to our warming climate.

While the virus can transfer to humans, the flu-like symptoms are very mild in anyone infected. Indeed, it is likely they may have no symptoms at all. It may be that blackbirds will develop an immunity over time, along with other species that become vulnerable – it's thought London house sparrows have succumbed too.

However, as avian flu in large flocks (eg. in factory farms) eventually developed into a highly pathogenic variety that has spread to mammals, including humans on an American cattle farm, the government is spot on in ensuring that any pathogen appearing in the UK is carefully evaluated and tracked. Tracking fluctuations in bird populations is often the early-warning sign of something more sinister than just loss of habitat.



Now I'm not at all depressed by what I have written. I have enjoyed a pleasant glass of wine produced from my favourite grape. It is an early-ripening variety, allegedly much enjoyed by blackbirds (*merles* in French) – and named Merlot to reflect that fact.



Ray Morris





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EVERGREENS

Helen Swan told the members some interesting historical facts about East and West Farleigh and Coxheath, from the Romans quarrying in West Farleigh to the roundheads fighting on East Farleigh Bridge, via the Grand Old Duke of York and his huge camp at Coxheath.

So when we get to August 3rd, take a look at the history section of the new village website, there you will find this and much more local history.

A lunch of Jacket Potatoes will have completed the month's activities.

If you would like to join us email Katie katieeth66@gmail.com or phone Helen 07710 442971. We can offer transport to those living in East and West Farleigh.







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