Welcome to West Farleigh's own

# LIFELINE



Painting by Brian Cushing

#### **WEST FARLEIGH EVENTS DIARY**

Mon 6th Oct	6pm onward	Craft Club at Good Intent (Mondays)	
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	9.30am	Harvest Festival service All Saints	
		Live music dinner at Tickled Trout	
Tue 21st Oct		Quiz Night at Tickled Trout	
Sat/Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	10am – 3pm	<b>Open Studio at Smiths Hill Oast</b>	
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	11am – 2pm	Father Christmas visits W Farleigh	
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4.30pm West Farleigh Carol Service		

Written, managed, and distributed freely by West Farleigh residents. Edition 591 Editors: Stephen Norman, Helen Swan, Sue Birchall, Katie O'Connor Website: <a href="www.thefarleighs.co.uk">www.thefarleighs.co.uk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:editor@thefarleighs.co.uk">editor@thefarleighs.co.uk</a>

Deadline for the next issue is 20th October 2025



## CHRISTMAS

Saturday 22 November Sunday 23 November 10-3pm

Smiths Hill Oast, Smiths Hill West Farleigh ME15 oPG

rachelspreckleyart.com rachelspreckleyart@gmail.com



Smiths Hill Oast Studio

Saturday 11 October 10-1pm

**Christmas Workshops** 

Friday 28 November 10-3pm (Full)

Saturday 29 November 10-3pm



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#### **GARDENING NOTES BY TINA WOODHAMS**

Autumn is in full swing and it's time to enjoy the wonderful colours from the leaves to berries in our gardens and surrounding landscapes, and taking in the harvest of fruits and vegetables.

This month marks the start of the annual leaf drop. Keep lawns, borders and pathways clear by regularly raking up fallen leaves and store in a leaf mould bin or heap to rot down. Remember to clear fallen leaves and moss from guttering, including the greenhouse and shed to ensure maximum rainfall collection in water butts.

Empty pots and hanging baskets with summer bedding by removing all dead and decaying plant material, and plant up for autumn colour. Cyclamen, dwarf chrysanthemum, pansies and biennials such as wallflowers provide a pleasing display. Add some springtime interest by planting small bulbs between the bedding plants – miniature narcissi, crocus, anemone and iris – these can also be planted in pots containing shrubs and small trees.

Remove any pot saucers and raise the pots off the ground using 'pot feet' (bricks will also work well) to prevent waterlogging and frost damage. It is still important to water, but do so more sparingly as the temperatures cool.

Check the local weather forecasts in case of early frosts and be ready to move tender plants under cover.

Protect your plants from the strengthening autumn winds by staking firmly and reduce the height of shrub roses to prevent windrock damage over the winter months.



In the flower borders, cut down perennials and divide. After a few years these may become overcrowded and have a tendency to develop weaker growth – by lifting, dividing and replanting in freshly composted soil the healthy new plants will improve in vigour. Crocosmia corms will multiply and grow too close together, reducing nutrient intake and leading to less flowers. By separating out congested clumps the corms will be reenergised and more likely to put on a showy display next year.

Tender plants such as penstemon, fuschia and salvia should be left unpruned so that this year's stems protect the crown from frost and then cut back in spring of the following year. After cutting down, mulch the borders with well-rotted manure and garden or mushroom compost. Not only providing protection from frost, this aids improved plant growth by adding nutrients, reducing water loss from the soil and suppressing weeds.

October is a great time to get ahead in the vegetable patch so make early sowings of hardy cultivars of onions, shallots, garlic, broad beans and peas to give an earlier crop next season. Spring cabbages can be planted out now, together with new rhubarb crowns and any existing crowns may be divided.

Harvest the final crops of beans and courgettes as well as squashes and pumpkins. Cloches can be used to cover salad leaves to prolong the cropping season and now is the time to use up any open packets of seeds before they expire.

Clear away any other old crops to deter pests and diseases, and also to give the soil some air before planting season next year.

Pick the last of the tomato crop and ripen indoors, although if they are still growing in the greenhouse and the plants look healthy you may be lucky enough to enjoy them for a few more weeks!

#### The History of Dogs by Rebecca Hawkins.

Whilst we can state from the offset that we know more than ever now that dogs are not mini wolves,

there is no denying the origin of dogs, and so a study of wolves was inevitable. There remains a great deal that the dog inherited, certain drives and instincts, and to ignore this would be ignorant. Some believe that the domestic dog, Canis Familiaris, is the descendant of a now extinct European, dingo-like wild dog. However, no fossil of this animal has ever been found, and all genetic, behavioural and anatomic evidence firmly supports the belief that our dogs are descended from a small sub-species of wolf. The wolf, Canis Lupus, has the same number of chromosomes as our domestic dog (seventy-eight). This differs from other canids, like jackals and foxes. For generations, those studying wolves have commented on their childlike quality, their playfulness. Adolph Murie (the first scientist to study wolves) describes how adult timber wolves, or the grey wolf, will suddenly jump out of hiding places and scare each other for no apparent reason, other than



play. They bring things to each other, especially food, and will prance and parade around with sticks in their mouths. Sound familiar? This is the genetic, sensory, morphological, hormonal and

Dog Wolf Ancestor

Artificial selection (10k-40k years ago)
Useful behaviours

Artificial selection (150 years ago)
Evolved into modern breeds

Diagram drawn by Ffion Hawkins

evolutionary root stock of the dog, and to understand a dog's mind, it's essential to understand how we came from wolves, to the hundreds of breeds we have now.

How did domestication happen? Some scientists suggest that the dog broke away from the wolf genetically, and as a separate subspecies tens of thousands of years ago. They also suggest that the dog chose us as apposed to us enslaving them. They loitered around the camp fire, begged for food, ate our waste and we literally couldn't get rid of them.

As they began to adapt towards scavenging from us, the jaw shortened and the teeth became overcrowded for a time before gradually 'catching up' evolutionarily speaking.

In Israel a 12,000-year-old skeleton of a puppy was found in the arms of a man. Ancient carvings and pictures depicting dogs have been found from around 100,000 years ago but it's generally accepted that

dogs have been what we call 'domesticated', for around 20,000 years. Tracing the history and

geography of both dog and human DNA shows the nomadic people brought dogs with them when they settled.

A date most generally accepted is around 14,000 years, skeletons from this period have the shortened jaw and crowded teeth, which sets them apart from wolves. We have been breeding dogs for over 1000 generations but back then dogs were more 'types' rather than specific breeds.

A study in 2020 by ancient dog DNA by Anderson Bergstrom et al, shows that 11,000 years ago there were at 5 distinct dog groups scattered around the world.

By Roman times these six types existed.

Villatici - house or guardian dogs Pastorales Pecuarii - shepherd dogs. Venatici - sporting dogs Pugnaces/ Bellicosi - war dogs Nares Sagaces - scent hounds Pedicure Celeres - sight hounds.

The notion that some modern day breeds such as Salukis have lineage that go all the way back to the Pharaohs is largely fantasy. There were dogs that had similar looks but they were not Salukis or Mastiffs. Some even theorise that such breeds were later created to resemble the dogs seen in ancient paintings. Most of our modern breeds actually started off life no longer than a couple of hundred years ago. In 1870 the Kennel clubs were founded and began to keep certain types and breeds 'pure'.

Today we have over 400 different breeds all adapted by human intervention and selective breeding.





#### Down on the Farm with Dan

October is pumpkin season, and West Farleigh had its very own pumpkin field this year. It is between Kettle Lane and Gallants Lane.

Pumpkin seeds are planted mechanically, in rows carefully spaced so that they can later accommodate the harvesting equipment. A pumpkin farm needs busy bees! That is how the plants are pollinated.



Picture by Sue Birchall

Pumpkins need a lot of irrigation. It is best to keep the leaves dry, as this helps protect against fungal diseases. A sprayer is not suitable for this task. Drip line irrigation systems work better. Imagine a very long flexible black plastic tube, about 14mm wide, with pinholes every 30cm or so to let the water drip out. The lengths of tubing can be connected in various ways using push-fit plastic connectors, enabling the farmer to construct an irrigation system suited to his crop and his field.

Almost all the pumpkins grown in the UK are intended for sale in late October. Farmers use varieties such as Mars or Harvest Moon, bred for decorative carving rather than for culinary purposes.

Harvesting takes place in mid-September so that it beats the first frosts and so the crop has time to "cure". A 20cm stem is left on the pumpkin, which prolongs storage life. The harvesting is done by specialised machinery. Have a look for Pumpkin Harvesting Machines on You Tube and prepare to be amazed at what you see.

Then the crop is loaded into strong wooden crates, taken to a dry and warm greenhouse (around 28 degrees C) and left there for 10 days or so. It toughens the skin, as it's important to avoid any damage in transit. Then it's off to cold storage (about 12 degrees C) until the pumpkins get taken to the shop. They will keep for several months in cold storage but to generate any worthwhile revenue they all need to be sold before the end of October.

The economics of pumpkin farming are not for the faint hearted. It's highly weather dependent, and weather affects the available growing time. Pumpkins like moisture but not cold. The seeds will have been planted in late spring, and all the farmer's revenue comes several months later during one narrow window with an immovable deadline. If the crop isn't sold before the 1st of November it becomes almost worthless. The harvesting equipment is specialised and expensive -- once the pumpkins are picked there's nothing else the equipment can do the rest of the year. Understandably some farmers decide that Pick Your Own is a way to reduce the risk and the cost.

A medium sized 21cm pumpkin weighing around 5kg sells for approx £2 retail. The farmer will not get anything near this amount. Yield per hectare varies but can be up to 30 tonnes. (A hectare is 100m x 100m, ie 10,000 square metres.)

The field off Kettle Lane now has no trace at all of the pumpkins that were growing there. When you buy your carving pumpkin, have a think about the planning and the effort required to get that pumpkin from seed to shop. It didn't get there by magic.



#### WELCOME PERSEPHONE

To Persephone Roisin Mills-Bourne, born on 1<sup>st</sup> June to parents Rob and Catherine, of Tethers End, Charlton Lane.

#### DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

60 guests and the ancient stones of All Saints were witness to an unusual and joyous celebration on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, the 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of David and Helen Swan.



Helen and David were married at St Nicholas church in Rochester on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1965. They had met four years before, at a 6<sup>th</sup> form discussion group. David was a pupil at St Joseph Williams mathematical school, Rochester and Helen was at Chatham Girls Grammar School. David went on to become a civil servant, alternating between government roles in Kent and in London and Helen worked as a biomedical scientist in local hospital laboratories.

They moved to Charlton Lane, West Farleigh in 1984 and have been tireless supporters of the village and its institutions ever since. David was Clerk to the Parish Council for 15 years, and Churchwarden for 8 years with John Day. Helen was also on the Parish Council, and has helped and continues to contribute to the WI, the Evergreens and the church. They both enjoy

singing and have at various times sung in the All Saints choir, the WI choir and local singing groups.

The 60 guests included their daughter Alison, 2 grandsons, 6 of David's cousins and amazingly both of Helen's bridesmaids and David's best man from their wedding sixty years ago. Guests were treated to a proper afternoon tea with sandwiches, wedding cake and a glass of bubbly for the toast. The afternoon started with a welcome from the rector, Lorna Faulkner, and included prayers, some favourite hymns and reflections on their lives by son-in-law Peter Brook and a reading by grandson Finlay Brook.

The wedding cake was a model of the original, baked by Helen and decorated by their daughter Alison.



#### PASTORAL LETTER FROM DAVID JONES

#### **Dear Readers**

Referring back to last month's letter from Sue I can truthfully say that I can remember my first day in school in 1947. I also have a photo of the event, standing next to my big sister (only a year older) with short trousers, a blazer, sandals, no socks and my 'piece' in a paper bag in my left hand.



My 'piece' you ask?

Yes, something for playtime, in this case a piece of homemade shortbread baked by my granny which by playtime would have made the paper bag go almost transparent with the grease! That 'piece' accompanied me daily right up to the age of 18 when I left school.

Who'd a thought back then that in 2025 I'd be marking the 25th anniversary of my ordination, married for 42 years, a teacher for 35 years then ordained for another 25 years, a father and grandfather. A rich life Indeed!

I wonder how many anniversaries you've had? For a few years now I've had a lovely long letter once a month from a lady who use to live in Coxheath but is now in a retirement community in London. She gets her carer to write – her scribe as she describes her – and I often wonder as I read her letters what the scribe must be thinking as the two 'ancients' share memories. Her memories are clear, happy in some ways but also the worrying times when her children grew up. Each letter is so full of life and memories.

Well, I wasn't going to say anything this month as I felt depressed by so much happening locally, nationally and internationally. But then her letter arrived, full of memories and hope. I thought I'd share with you just the thought that when we get older and our joints remind us of the years, life is still worth living with the rich memories of the past and those who both share and remind us of them.! As the evenings draw in. don't be in a rush to pull the curtains and turn on the light. Sit still and dwell for a moment or two and the memories will come back as darkness falls.

The day thou gavest Lord, Lord is ended, The darkness falls at thy behest; To thee our morning hymns ascended, They praise shall sanctify our rest.

#### David

#### **SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS**

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 9.30am Harvest Service David Jones Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Oct 9.30am Morning Worship Lorna Faulkner



#### **LITTLE ANGELS**

A mother and toddler group in West Farleigh Church 1pm every Friday in term time. From babies to pre-schoolers. Mums, Dads, Grandmothers, Grandfathers and carers all welcome.

Coffee for adults, lots of toys and fun for the youngster



#### FATHER CHRISTMAS TO VISIT WEST FARLEIGH

Father Christmas is once again pausing his busy schedule to visit West Farleigh, this year on 6 December between 11 and 2pm.

This year's theme is the Elves Workshop where there will be magical crafts to try as well as a few Christmas stalls and of course the chance to see the big quy.

Tickets remain at £5 per child for the Father Christmas visit and slots can be booked by e-mailing <u>sue\_birchall@yahoo.co.uk</u> with your child/rens name/s, ages and anything else you think we should know.

We look forward to seeing you there.







#### SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



**FOOTBALL** After many friendlies and much training our lads have kicked off another season. Our 1<sup>st</sup> XI began with a promising victory over Fleetdown 2-0 and then narrowly missed out the following week going down 3-2 away to Tonbridge Invicta.

> Not such a good start for our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI losing 6-1 in their opener versus Staplehurst and again losing 6-1 in their next game at home to Kings Hill. Early days!



#### NETBALL

Despite our girls losing our first match 41-31 to a good Fusion Diamonds side we bounced back the following week, beating a determined Headcorn 40-31. With some new blood in the squad we look forward with hope to an enjoyable season.



**CRICKET** Our 1<sup>st</sup> XI rounded off their season, winning two of their remaining three fixtures. However, it was not enough to prevent us from being relegated! We began with a terrific victory over St Lawrence but then lost to Otford the following week. I am very pleased to say that we finished on a high, beating Chiddingstone on our final game of the season.

> Meanwhile our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI unfortunately went through the entire season without gaining a single victory, all credit to the players who kept the team going (most of the time!). Our last two games we lost to Penshurst and Marden. There still remains two friendlies against Snodland and Teston. Let's hope with a little luck we can end up with a victory or two!

#### **CLUB NEWS**

This month's lucky winners were:

98	Neil Tillott	£30
42	Lance Boseley	£20
104	Farleigh Forge	£10

Yours in sport, Tel (07761 355518)





#### The Farleighs WI

At our monthly meeting in September, we were pleased to welcome Shruti, who gave an interesting talk about Indian dress for women. Members had the opportunity to try on a sari and we

concluded with some Indian dancing.

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 preparing a range of craft items for our autumn fair on 5<sup>th</sup> October. 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 are reading The Girls who Disappeared by Claire Douglas. 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.

members are always welcome. Check out our Facebook page, email us at

cake and a warm welcome.

We are open to women of all ages and new TheFarleighs@wkfwi.org.uk, or just pop into our next meeting where we can guarantee tea,

Lynn Stout President, The Farleighs WI





#### FLYING AROUND THE FARLEIGHS

### Tawny Owls – sleepless nights and mixed metaphors?



The beginning of Autumn is bad news for insomniacs and babies. The former must bear the additional night-time burden of hooting owls as it's this time of the year when Tawny Owl families start preparing for their next breeding season. This involves a lot of intrusive *twitting and twoo-ing*, loved or hated in equal measure by nature-lovers and the superstitious among us.



It's good news for the nature lover as, to begin with, a *twitt* followed by a *twoo* means both male and female are present – a *sine qua non* for a successful coming breeding season. The call often rendered *kee-wik* is the female, answered by the *who-oo* of the male. This signifies both partners have survived another year – an adult owl has a seventy-five percent chance of annual survival, a typical lifespan being four years. Even though only one in three of their last year's young is likely to survive the winter, it's time for it to move on, and the male's hooting serves notice of this: 'move on and find your own mate and territory please'!



Photo: Maria Mak

And the babies? It was well known by the Ancients that owls drank their blood at night – not that there were many reliable contemporary eye-witness accounts. But if Shakespeare is to be believed, the hooting of an owl has always been a portent of doom. Being associated with nighttime too there would naturally be superstitions about death and the devil, the latter sometimes warded off by nailing an owl to your door. A bit like us warding off intruders by displaying a pretend notice about CCTV on ours.

It's supposed that owls can see in the dark of course. They can see little better than us, but they have evolved acute stereoscopic hearing (their ears are asymmetrically located in the facial disk to achieve this) that allows them to pinpoint small movements of their prey – mainly rodents or small birds. And an occasional baby perhaps. Operating under the cover of darkness is a sure-

fire way of persuading the superstitious that owls are up to no good, so the birds were readily linked to nefarious nighttime activities. Owler was a name given to Kentish smugglers bringing in illicit brandy, and many a Farleigh ghost story would have resulted from an encounter with a screeching barn owl in a foggy winter churchyard, by Chequers ale house (now the Tickled Trout) revellers on their drunken homeward stagger.

It's an easy step from wailing to wisdom. Why else have we so many Wise Owls and owlish literary figures that amuse and comfort small children while our ancestors viewed them with suspicion? Even the Owl who sailed away with the Pussycat had a sad side. Edward Lear

wrote the comic poem to cheer up a little girl struggling to understand the reasons for her rich parents' unhappy marriage; her father was having an extra-marital affair of the kind that got Oscar Wilde imprisoned.

It seems that, when left to their own devices we think owls are wonderful. It's only when they come close to humans that they take on a sinister air. Perhaps our ambivalent attitude to these splendid birds is best explained by Winnie the Pooh's wise friend in the Hundred Acre Wood. How could anyone be harmed by someone wise enough to spell his own name Wol?

Sleep well.



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