

“Some sort of periodical is an essential lifeline in a village such as ours”

Welcome to West Farleigh's own

LIFELINE



WEST FARLEIGH EVENTS DIARY

Tues 24th Feb	7pm	Tickled Trout	Charity Pub Quiz – call to book your table
Fri 13th March	7pm for 7.30pm	All Saints	Unsung Heroes film night with Philip Day
Fri 3rd April	TBC	Good Intent	Easter Fayre
Sun 5th July	11am – 5pm	Smiths Hall	Open Garden Day
Fri 17th July	6pm doors	Elmscroft	Much Ado About Nothing

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Editors: Stephen Norman, Helen Swan, Sue Birchall, Katie O'Connor

Website: www.thefarleighs.co.uk

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Deadline for the next issue is 20th February 2026

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Fri 20 Mar 10 – 1 Painting a Fox

Fri 15 May 10 – 1 Watercolour Techniques

Sat 16 May 10 – 1 Painting Kingfishers

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GARDENING NOTES BY TINA WOODHAMS

February may be a cold month but, on a sunny day wrap up warm and head out with a hot drink to either sit or walk around your garden. The earliest spring flowers are poking through, and it will cheer you seeing the first signs of the new growing season. There's still plenty to do, from clearing debris to winter pruning and sowing seeds.



Snowdrops are the stars of winter. They are planted as bulbs in



the autumn but can also be purchased 'in the green' for spring planting. They thrive in partly shaded spots with moist, well-drained soil making them perfect in woodland, garden borders and pots. When spring bulbs begin to emerge the foliage is short and not always visible, so mark these areas with garden canes to avoid them being trampled. On frosty days avoid walking on lawns as the grass is brittle and easily damaged, leaving

them open to fungal infection. You may not notice signs of damage now, however, this will become apparent later in the year.

Once foliage starts to show in the flower borders use a hand fork to gently break up the soil around the plant to introduce air and allow the new shoots to grow through any soil that may have become compacted after heavy rain or snow. Cut the leaves from hellebores to enjoy the flower heads and clear old leaves and remove weeds to make a head start! Check around the garden for any plants that may have been disturbed by pests such as squirrels and badgers, and replant if necessary to ensure the root systems are not exposed to the winter elements.



By the end of the month all winter pruning of apple and pear trees should be completed. Winter pruning is excellent for encouraging growth and key to maintaining the shape of the tree. Remember that stone fruit trees should be pruned in late spring but early flowering crops such as apricots, peaches and nectarines will need protection from frost so cover blossom with fleece overnight and remove during the day to allow pollinators to do their work.

Prune winter-flowering shrubs such as jasmine, forsythia and winter honeysuckle as soon as they have finished flowering. Remove any damaged, diseased or dead wood and prune the flowered growth by around half to encourage vigorous growth and improve flowering. It has been suggested that St Valentine's Day has become the time when the keenest of vegetable gardeners sow seeds such as tomatoes, chilli peppers, sweet peppers and aubergine! Keeping them warm may be challenging, use heated propagators and horticultural fleece to protect them. Sow lettuce and other varieties of salad leaf under cover for an early crop.

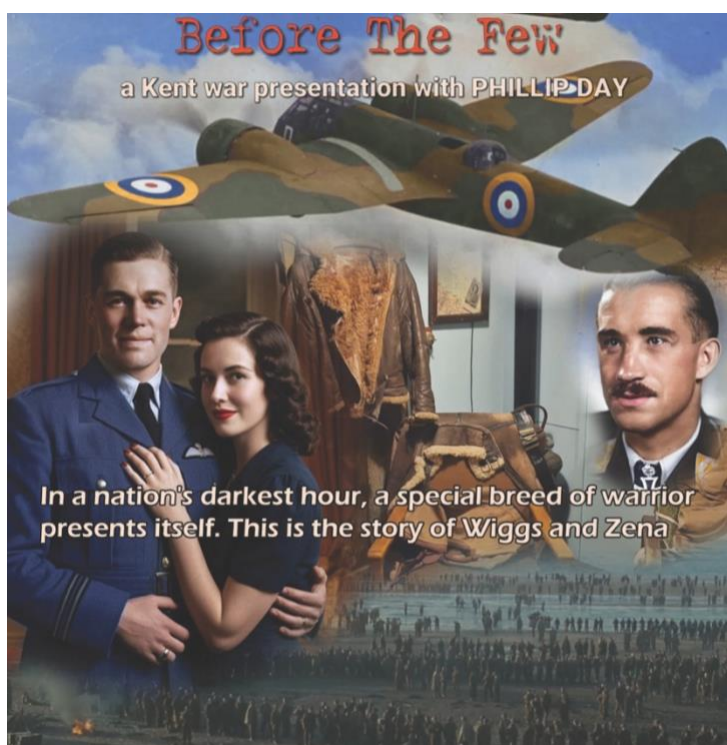
Seed potatoes will be available at the local garden centres. It is essential to buy prepared ones so as to discourage the introduction of disease. The ideal size of a seed potato is equivalent to that of an egg! Anything too big will not be as productive, so choose wisely!

February may be in the depths of winter but we can look forward to longer days and the promise of Spring!

HAPPY GARDENING!

EDITOR'S FILM REVIEW: "Before the Few - Unsung Heroes"

The Battle of Britain was fought over Kent in August and September 1940 (see 'the Mystery of the Missing Spitfire' and 'Henri Lafont' in the **History section** of www.thefarleighs.co.uk). Philip Day is a local filmmaker who has - with amazing energy - brought those days to life on the screen, producing non-commercial films packed with aeroplanes, pilots, artifacts and maps, interviews and documents and always a robust soundtrack to match.



His most recent film "Before the Few – Unsung Heroes" takes his storytelling to a new level. It leads us through the dark early days of WWII, the invasion of Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands and finally France and Dunkirk. The film is richly illustrated with maps and old photography brought to life. Woven through these historical events are the lives of Zena and Wiggs, both born and raised here in Marden and Collier Street.

Wiggs is a pilot – an unsung hero – who flies with the Coastal Command, trying to protect British troops on the beaches of Dunkirk from the air,

hopelessly outgunned in their Bristol Blenheims by the Messerschmitt 109s, and Zena is his wife, equally determined to help the war effort.

I was gripped by this film. I wish that every young Briton could see it, both for the dramatically illustrated history and the heroism of the Unsung Heroes.

You can see "Before the Few - Unsung Heroes" presented by the filmmaker himself at All Saints Church on Friday 13th March, 7pm for 7.30pm. Entrance is free and so is the bar (donations welcome!).

Don't wait for LIFELINE!
 VISIT www.thefarleighs.co.uk and subscribe to our
monthly newsletter to keep up with local events.
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Find the answers on the
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How old is Teston Bridge?

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History of the Good Intent?

Where can I see the Roman arch?

What is that huge ruin by Teston lock?

Why hops? And who were the hoppers?

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PS. Join The Farleighs Facebook group and share local news, events and water outrage!

PPS. Editors are looking for a graphic artist. Yes, really. No pay, just fun.
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Page 5

PASTORAL LETTER FROM LORNA FAULKNER

You may be familiar with the classic children's story, Pollyanna? In this charming tale, a young orphan, the child of missionaries, is sent to live with relatives in a small American town.

Pollyanna has a unique way of managing the things life throws at her. It's called the Glad Game. She chooses to find something to be glad about in every situation. Even being glad that she was punished by being given bread and milk in the kitchen with the maid instead of dinner – because she likes bread and milk - and she also likes the maid!



She shares this philosophy with all sorts of folk in the town – including the more difficult ones – and even thaws the frosty heart of her strict guardian, Aunt Polly.

When Pollyanna loses the uses of her legs in an accident, even she can't find anything to be glad about, but, slowly, the people whose lives she has brightened in the town come and see her and encourage her to rediscover her spark. She blesses them, and they bless her right back.

What a lovely message about the difference we can make to one another in our communities - if we make time to notice, to care and to engage.

I want to encourage us to look around our village communities this month. What – and who - do we notice? What is there to be glad about? And how can we share that with others? Get a few neighbours together over a cup of something and chat about all the good things about your community - goodness knows we all spend enough time complaining about the things that aren't so great!

I am writing the letter this month because I still haven't managed to get a rota out to the ministry team. And, do you know what? I am glad I was disorganised because I've cheered myself right up.

Hoping for a positive and encouraging February for you all!

Lorna

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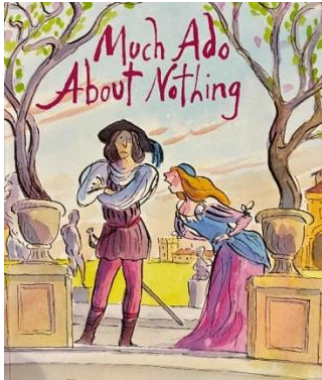
Sunday 8 th FEB	9.30am	Communion	Clinton Davis
Sunday 22 nd FEB	9.30am	Morning Worship	Clinton Davis



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.

‘Much Ado about Nothing’ at Elmscroft House Friday 17th July



Following the successes of Present Laughter (2024) and Twelfth Night (2025), the Changeling Theatre is coming to Elmscroft House for a third time to perform this Shakespeare play.

You can buy tickets on-line at

www.tickettailor.com/events/westfarleighvillageevents/2039113

or in person from Alex at Elmscroft House.

£25 per adult, £15 per youngster 12-18 yrs.

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ARE YOU RETIRED?

COME AND JOIN THE EVERGREENS

We are a group of retired men and women, who live in or around the Farleighs. We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays.

We meet at 2.30pm on the second Tuesday. We will have a speaker or activity, followed by afternoon tea and lots of conversation! We meet at 12.30pm on the 4th Tuesday for a home cooked lunch and more conversation and laughter. Obviously, there is a charge. No joining fee, just pay on the day. £5 for afternoon tea where there are cakes to die for and £7 for lunch.

If you are unable to get to the hall, we can arrange a lift for you. Friends from outside the villages are also welcome, but they must arrange their own transport.

February:	Tuesday 2 nd	2.30pm	Dr Tony Jones (Retired GP)
	Tuesday 24 th	12.30pm	Jacket Potatoes (Choice of toppings)

If you would like to join us or would like more information contact Katie at katieeth66@gmail.com or call Helen 07710 442971.



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SPORTS REPORT BY TEL BAINES



FOOTBALL

Not easy going for our football lads lately: in the last eight games we have suffered seven defeats and a draw! Our 1st XI began with a 5-3 defeat to Green Court, followed by further defeats versus Tatsfield 4-2, Harkenbury 3-1 and finally Sutton Dynamos 7-0! Meanwhile, our 2nd XI started with a positive result against Kemsing 2-2 but this was followed by three defeats: versus Barming 4-1, Nomads 5-1 and Kings Hill 3-1. Fingers crossed that our luck will change in the second half of the season!



NETBALL

Just the one game to report on after the Christmas break – we played second-placed Fusion Diamonds. Our girls put on a tremendous performance and, with only minutes to go, we were on level terms, however, we eventually went down 34-29.



CRICKET

Net practice is starting in the near future – dates aren't yet finalised but if you are interested you would be **very** welcome! Please get in contact (07761 355518).

CLUB NEWS

Our lucky ton-up winners for December and the Christmas jackpot were as follows:

	108	Harley Harold	£30
	89	Sharron Tucker	£20
	24	Geraldine Baggott	£10
Christmas Jackpot	138	Bev Hards	£50
	13	Jason Brookes	£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/



The Farleighs WI continues 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.

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 Fellowship of Puzzlemakers* by Samuel Burr and our film club will be watching *The Greatest Showman*. Our walking group is hoping for drier weather in order to recommence its walks around the local area.

We also have an active lunch group, which does the rounds of local hostelrys and eateries, 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@wkwfi.org.uk, or just pop into our next meeting (11th February) where we can guarantee tea, cake and a warm welcome.

Lynn Stout
President, The Farleighs WI

FLYING AROUND THE FARLEIGHS

Garden Diplomacy

Our garden is a bit too big for us now that we are getting on a bit. Whereas at one time it would have been a hive of human activity (mine) it is now more often just me watching it grow and change with the seasons. Concentrating on the seemingly haphazard, but very ordered, goings-on around me, is sometimes instructive too.



It's big enough for multiple robin territories, so we regularly witness boundary disputes between the neighbouring pairs, especially around the bird feeders. Ours contain enough food to double the BMI of half the robins in the village, but are often the scene of stand-offs of swaying, puffed-up red breasts intended to intimidate the opposing bird - why can't they learn to share? They don't seem to realise that while they engage in their playground posturing the local starling mob move in and snaffle it all anyway.

We sometimes catch sight of a 'just passing through' robin too. Possibly a Scandinavian bird on its way back north after coming here to avoid the harsh winter - remember them? - that northerly parts of Europe still enjoy/endure* (delete as applicable). It bides its time, unseen in a bush, until the victor of the puffed-up breast competition chases off the vanquished opponent. The interloper then launches a smart smash-and-grab raid to carry off a sunflower heart, in what could be the general direction of Sweden.

Standing in the garden today I was joined by two of 'our' robins. They were curious about me, but almost within touching distance of each other on several occasions, so a likely sign they are a pair and that I was a bit close to their nesting area. They are impossible to sex on

sight, but courting and mating behaviour generally makes it obvious which is which; males are well known for 'courtship' feeding juicy grubs to their mates, not just to reinforce the pair bond but to help the females build resources for egg laying. Otherwise, they need to be in your hand for closer and intimate scrutiny to tell the difference. The former method offered no clues, and the latter was not possible, so a pleasant few minutes were spent just watching and trying to deduce where in this part of their territory they were planning to build their nest.

It was a mild morning and other species were singing, a sure sign that spring is in the air and that our pair could well have decided on a suitable site, and will have eggs in a completed nest that is completely hidden in a familiar bush or behind some discarded garden equipment by the time you read this. The first of several broods if all goes well for them.



Photo by Caroline de Souza

Robins of course aren't the only birds or species of animal that makes a big display of who's boss (or of who wants to be boss) and they do sometimes come to the avian equivalent of fisticuffs. But it's not in their nature to get carried away and do themselves or their opponent serious harm - that's far too risky as both are likely to be seriously damaged by the conflict and rendered unable to take full advantage of what they have apparently gained.

A thought worth bearing in mind perhaps in these troubled times?

◀ Is this the ultimate Peace Prize?

Ray Morris

DID YOU KNOW....

Following recent SE Water outages and problems in our area, we thought we would bring it to our readers' attention that if you are somebody who would particularly struggle in a water shortage situation you can contact SE Water and be added to the company's Priority Delivery List.



FARMING IN THE FARLEIGHS

This month we feature Warnhams Farm on Hunt Street.

The fields either side of Small Profits have swapped crops. Field beans are where the wheat was last year and vice versa. Crop rotation is a way of preventing weeds, diseases and other pests from becoming established. It also maintains the health of the soil because different crops take from and give back to the soil in different ways.



There are grass weeds around the young field bean plants. If this isn't dealt with soon the grass will out-compete the beans. Once there is a suitable calm and dry spell the farmer will spray the field with a selective herbicide. This will kill the grass without collateral damage to the beans. Herbicides like this work because grass processes them in a different way to bean plants. It interferes with the way grasses take up nutrients from the soil, starving them without affecting the bean plants.

The field near the farm entrance has three different crops. Nearest to the hedge on Hunt Street is a strip of land that has been sown with wildflower seeds. This is part of the Sustainable Farming Initiative. Flower-rich field margins provide pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies. They also provide habitats for pollinators such as hover flies that feed on pests like aphids. In addition, they provide shelter and invertebrate food for farmland birds and their chicks and their seeds will become food for farmland birds in autumn and winter. By planting this strip next to the hedge it provides wildlife with a range of habitats.

Beyond the wildflower strip there is a hectare of legume fallow crop. This won't be sold. It's another part of the Sustainable Farming Initiative. Why would a farmer plant legume fallow I hear you ask? Well there's lots of reasons! It improves soil health as these plants naturally fertilise the soil by drawing nitrogen out of the atmosphere and depositing it in the soil. Also a dense legume fallow smothers and chokes out competitive weeds. The plants provide essential pollen, nectar and habitat for pollinators and insects, plus food and shelter for farmland birds. This supports biodiversity. It also encourages the natural predators of crop pests, breaking pest cycles and reducing reliance on pesticides. The variation improves nutrient cycling and availability, making subsequent crops more efficient. And it gives the land a break from intensive arable farming, resting the land. With all these benefits it's not surprising that there's more legume fallow planned for the section next to the public footpath. This will be planted soon. The existing cover crop will be sprayed - then soon after the new seeds can be planted.



Beyond the wild flowers and the legumes there is some winter wheat growing.

Dan Robinson

TALES FROM THE CHURCHYARD



While looking for a second tale from our churchyard, I happened upon the Fleet family who are buried together behind the church. William and Eleanor were living in our parish with their family over 200 years ago. Eleanor was born in 1778 and William in 1780. Perhaps they married at All Saints church around 1800 when Eleanor would have been 22 and William just 20?

They waited 8 years before their first son, John, arrived in 1808 when Eleanor was already 30 years old – I would imagine quite an age for a first-time mother so long ago! Then they had to wait another 8 years before being blessed with their baby

daughter Jane, who was born in 1816, by which time Eleanor was 38. Sadly, little Jane died at the tender age of only 5 in 1821.

Fast forward to 1830, 9 years after this tragedy, and I'm sure the family were somewhat shocked (Eleanor was 52 and William 50), but hopefully delighted, to welcome a third and final child, William – named after his father. I like to think that William's arrival brought much happiness to the little family who lived then as a



family of 4 until Eleanor's death in May of 1844 aged 66. Her widower, William, and their eldest child John, who was by now 36 years old, suffered another terrible blow just 5 months later in October, however, when they lost William at just 14 years old!



The three family graves show that William was buried with his little sister Jane while William the elder was reunited with Eleanor and buried beside her in 1853 (aged 73). Finally, John was laid to rest beside the first two graves when he died in 1865 aged just 57.

WEST FARLEIGH BASED JEWELULTRA WINS AWARD

Our local car care company, who advertise on the back page of Lifeline each month, create and manufacture products for protecting paint, fabric and leather under their Diamondbrite brand.



Jewelultra has just won the national prize of 2025 Best Warranty/Added Value Insurance Provider of the Year for another of their products: Restore - cosmetic, alloy and tyre repair plans. Marketing Director Lance Boseley said "We are incredibly honoured to receive this award. This recognition reflects the hard work of our team, our dedication to innovation and the trust our partners place in Jewelultra and the Diamondbrite brand."

Following the awards night at Grosvenor House Hotel, Jewelultra received a congratulatory visit to their offices on Ewell Lane from Katie Lam MP to admire their trophy!

DANDELION TIME - CHARITY HALF MARATHON



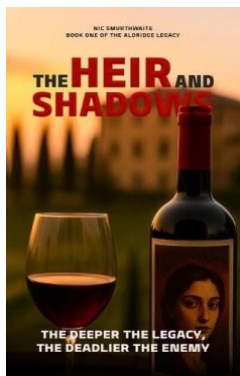
Dave Murray works at Dandelion Time in Charlton Lane and, although he's "definitely not a runner", he's volunteered to run the London Landmarks Half Marathon on 12th April for the charity! He admits that he'll be going from zero running to running the 13.1 mile course in just 12 weeks and that it's going to be quite a challenge.

He has a fundraiser page at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/dave-murray-dt> which shares his story.

"On 12 April 2026, I'll be taking on the challenge of running the London Landmarks Half Marathon. Running 13.1 miles through central London is a huge challenge for me, but I've chosen to do it for a cause that truly matters. I work at Dandelion Time, a UK charity based in West Farleigh that supports children and families affected by trauma, neglect, and abuse and I'm fully aware of the life-changing impact our therapeutic, nature-based sessions have on the children and families we support."

NEW AUTHOR IN WEST FARLEIGH

Nic Smurthwaite is a West Farleigh-based writer whose stories are grounded in history, place, and strong character arcs.



The Heir and Shadows (you can find it on Amazon, Kindle and Waterstones) is his first novel. Drawing inspiration from Kent's landscapes, London institutions, and Australia's southwest coast, Nic crafts stories that blend 'personal legacy with modern threats and moral complexity'.

Nic recently held a book signing event in the Tickled Trout and has recently published a sequel, *The Inheritance of Shadows*, which continues the Aldridge saga with darker revelations, higher stakes, and deeper family ties.

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