

The Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



August/September 2021

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Words above the clock face:

For our time is a very shadow that passeth away.

The Wisdom of Solomon 2:5 in the Apocrypha

Front cover: View of Holwood House from footpath by Shire Lane by Sally Churchus ©

Thought for the month



A summer day out

Being summertime, albeit a British one, we decided to go to the coast for the day – to Rye in fact. After a lovely walk along the nature reserve next to the sea, spotting oystercatchers and avocets from the hides and a picnic on the pebbly beach overlooking the sea, we decided to head back into the town.

The church of St Mary's at the top of the town seemed worth a visit and we headed for it. The present building was started in the early 12th century and has many similarities with Keston parish church – including a Burne-Jones window. At this time the town itself and much of the surrounding area was still held, under a royal deed of gift, by the Abbey of Fécamp in Normandy. The church was severely damaged in 1377, when the town was looted and set on fire by the French. The following year the men of Rye and Winchelsea sailed to France and

recovered much of the loot including the church bells!

As we entered via the north door, (currently a one way system), you couldn't miss the huge 18 ft pendulum straight in front of you from the clock which dates from 1561-2 and is one of the oldest working church tower clocks in the country.

We opted to pay to go to the top of the church tower, although they did warn you that the climb was tight, (no kidding), and steep. It took you past the ringing chamber, the clock mechanism and up onto the small area outside from which there was a wonderful 360° view of the town and surrounding countryside.

Back down in the church the history leaflet revealed more interesting facts about the church and we saw the original Quarter Boys that strike the quarter hours, which stood above the clock face. Then, unsurprisingly, I visited the small shop within the church and bought a church magazine. (Called *The Pendulum!*).

Other 'tourists' were visiting this ancient building too; how easy it is to forget that it is more than just an historic monument, it is where many generations have come to 'be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe' (*Hebrews 12:28*). Worth taking a quiet moment to sit and give thanks and reflect on the mystery and wonder of God before heading out to see the clock face from outside and perhaps go for a cream tea before heading home.

Sally Churchus

From the Editor

You will notice that we decided to go for another bumper edition and give people a bit of summer reading!

The 'My Faith Journey' series has come to a natural end, when I looked I was amazed to see that it had started in the August/September 2015 issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to that, sometimes it is difficult to explain your faith on paper and to bare your soul.

A few weeks ago I had been watching an episode of Songs of Praise that I had recorded, and later that evening wanted to re-read some of the words from one of the hymns again. I took my old *Ancient & Modern* hymn book from schooldays off the shelf to look it up. I started to read the words of some of the other hymns – basically poems, and used them like prayers. A thought occurred to me that a new series 'My favourite hymn' might be an idea for the magazine. Tonia Crouch kindly agreed to set the ball rolling and I hope that it will prove to be an interesting series. If you would like to take part and say which hymn is your favourite and why, please do contact me, my details are on the inside front cover.

At the time of writing it looks like we are close to being able to sing again in church at long last. The last couple of Sundays we have managed to sing the final hymn outdoors as the weather has been dry. What a joy it will be; perhaps when you are unable to do or have something it makes you appreciate it all the more.

Sally Churchus



Cover Story

I took the photo of Holwood House, a grade 1 listed building, last August on a walk along the footpath by Shire Lane. Holwood House was designed by Decimus Burton in the Greek Revival style. It was built for John Ward on the site of an earlier building owned by William Pitt the Younger.

Cedars of Lebanon can be seen in front of the house and are the remains of a Cedar Grove of nine trees from Humphry Repton's planting over 200 years ago. There are many around the Holwood estate, and apparently it is questionable whether any other estate in Britain of equal size contains so many or so large specimens.

They are known throughout ancient art and literature as symbols of power and longevity and were greatly valued for their timber. The Lebanon Cedar is mentioned 103 times in the Bible, including in Psalm 92:12, 'The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like the cedar in Lebanon'. King Solomon also procured Cedar timber to build the Temple in Jerusalem.

Sally Churchus



A huge specimen elsewhere on the estate

Changes at The Village Stores



Most readers will be aware by now that the Village Stores closed on 18th July. Deepak and Susannah came five years ago, the successors to Helen and Don Ward. Deepak and Susannah would like to say thank you to everyone who has supported the business and they have very much enjoyed being part of the Keston community.

The family will be leaving at the end of July, but aren't going too far – they will be living in Orpington. Their daughter Riya is now 10 years old and will continue to attend Keston CE Primary until it is time to move on to Secondary school. The latest addition to the family, daughter Diya was born on the 17th May this year, and is doing well.

Deepak will continue in his role as Village Hall Manager and also do cabbage, which he enjoys and has been doing to supplement the shop income, so can still be contacted on 07717 899196 if you need his services!

We would like to thank Deepak and Susannah for all their enthusiasm and the many hours they put into running the shop, even during lockdowns, and

wish them well for the future. We do hope the new buyer will keep it as a shop, as it is a lifeline for many residents, and such a central part of village life, but you will have to watch this space and see...

Sally Churchus/Deepak Aryal

From Sue Sinton

I have worked in your village shop for the last 15 years, firstly with Don and Helen and latterly with Deepak and Susannah. I have enjoyed every minute of my time there, each day brings its surprises, challenges and fun. The majority of our customers have been a pleasure to welcome, and it has been rewarding getting to know the Keston residents over the years. I have made some firm friends and witnessed many changes amongst the community.

The shop has been in existence for nearly 120 years, and during the 1950's it served the Keston community alongside a butcher, a newsagent and a bakery. The current retail neighbours are a café, a hairdresser and a dry cleaning/ironing service. People's shopping habits have changed, and the recent pandemic has brought this into sharp focus. Many of our community were working from home, so we got to know even more of the residents. It was heartening to see so many of you pulling together and helping each other.

I have been very happy over the years to experience the expectation of meeting, assisting and chatting with both regular and unfamiliar customers and I am certainly going to miss being part of the rhythm of local life.

Prayer Walks now twice a month

On the first Tuesday of each month and now also on the third Wednesday of the month, we meet at 9.30am on the field opposite the Greyhound Pub for our prayer walk. We start with a simple prayer and then proceed to walk and chat as we make our way across Keston Common. We stop a couple of times for prayers that are creation themed, taking the time to appreciate the natural environment and water and wildlife around us.

We usually finish back at about 11am, when we join together for a cuppa at one of our lovely village establishments! Newcomers are always welcome.

Friends of Keston Common Walks

You are welcome to join us on the first Wednesday in the month for a walk round Keston, and/or surrounding areas of Hayes common and West Wickham common. We meet at 2pm at the Keston Village sign opposite The Greyhound pub. Parking is available in the car park off Commonsides. Walks last up to two hours and well behaved dogs on leads are welcome.

If you would like to help the Friends of Keston common maintain the beauty of the area, even just by litter picking, do come and join us at 10am on Fridays in the Westerham Road car park. See friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk.

Parish Walk

Sunday 5th September

Meet at 2.15pm in Keston Parish Church car park BR2 6HT. All welcome.

Takes about 2 hrs, refreshments in church hall afterwards (restrictions permitting).



Basking Terrapins



Yellow-Belly slider

There have been numerous sightings of terrapins at Keston Ponds, mainly on the second pond and frequently by the road. Although they have been seen other years, they seem more visible at the moment. Being reptiles, and therefore cold blooded, they bask in the sun in order to regulate their body temperature. Two species have been spotted, of which at least three are Yellow-Belly sliders and one is a Red-Eared slider.

In the UK the European pond turtle became extinct nearly 9,000 years ago, so how did these non-native creatures get there? Terrapins were a popular pet in the early 80's due not only to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle film and TV series, but they were sold as very small hatchlings the size of a 50p piece. So they were inexpensive and easy to accommodate – until they grew and could no longer be housed. They are also long lived creatures exceeding 30 years, similar to a pet tortoise or parrot. Changes in legislation in selling certain species, combined with difficulty in keeping them once grown, has resulted

in pets being illegally released over the years into local lakes and ponds. London is the densest area for terrapin abandonment. Having been brought up in captivity some may struggle to survive in the wild, and they are unable to breed in our climate – although who knows what might happen in the future with climate change!

Research is being done by the Turtle Tally Project to discover the impact the terrapins are having on native flora and fauna. They are suspected of eating ducklings, but currently there is no actual evidence of this. However, in order to bask, they do haul themselves out on nests made by waterfowl, which is being monitored. They are mainly carnivorous as young terrapins but as adults are more herbivorous with scavenging tendencies. They can actually be a beneficial part of an aquatic ecosystem – they have been seen to be seed dispersers, (germination is improved by seeds moving through the gut), they can keep aquatic vegetation managed by feeding on it and as scavengers they will eat dead animals in the water which would alter the water quality if left. Currently, experts believe that in small numbers they cause less impact than larger groups and removal is not encouraged unless they are sick or injured or are having a visible impact on native wildlife.

Sightings by the general public and also separately by anglers can be submitted to www.turtletally.co.uk, which will help with their research and where more information can be found.

Sally Churchus/Suzie Simpson, Turtle Tally Project Lead

Don't stop the music!



First socially distanced choir practice, before the rule of six came in

Tuesday March 16th 2020 found me seated at my computer in rather an emotional state! No, my computer was not misbehaving. With the world around me seemingly going mad, I had just composed an email to our church choir that said:

“Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would need to entitle an email “Suspension of church choir”. As I expect you have picked up from the news the Church of England has suspended all services for the time being. So it follows that our choir is suspended until further notice.

Little did I realise at that point that it would be some nine months before we could meet together again as a choir.

My immediate concern was that we needed to keep the choir together as a

group. Given the age profile of the choir and their IT skills, mine included, having Zoom rehearsals and making recordings seemed a non-starter. I therefore started to send out a weekly email updating everybody with what was going on and sending links to various online events that were being held by organisations like the Royal School of Church Music. Not all choir members were online so I took to phoning people at the time when we should have been having choir practice, checking up on them and having lengthy conversations.



Upon receiving our first lockdown phone bill these calls soon moved to the weekend!

This continued for many months. Services resumed in church, but singing and choirs were not allowed. Christmas was approaching and the thought of not having a Carol Service for the first time

We got some 48 hits and reports of the service being enjoyed in Australia, Canada and America. Keston had gone international!

in living memory was painful. Social distancing rules and the ban on congregational singing rendered such a service impossible. The Royal School of Church Music came to the rescue by publishing a simple framework of a service called “A Village Christmas during the Covid-19 Pandemic *Immanuel, God with us*”. For two emotional Friday afternoons in December the choir gathered in church in a socially distanced manner to rehearse and record some congregational carols. Rev’d Carol Morrison and Heather and John Molnar contributed prayers and readings. This was recorded by Neil Morrison on his phone and he did an amazing job editing it all together with fantastic images and all the words of the carols. The finished product was released to the world via the church website over the weekend when we should have had the Carol Service. We got some 48 hits and reports of the service being enjoyed

in Australia, Canada and America. Keston had gone international!

Any thoughts of choir and congregational singing resuming in the new year were soon hit by the second wave of the virus. It would not be until May that choirs could rehearse and perform again. But there was a problem! Overnight the government announced that choirs could only meet in groups of six. For the first time ever there was an advantage in having a small choir! I was able to split the choir into two groups which rehearse and sing alternate weeks. Most Sundays we have been able to sing a simple anthem. It has been great to get back to singing together, so much so that we decided to forgo our usual summer break!

As I write it seems that the government is going to “Let all the world in every corner sing” with “a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer’s praise” quite soon. Let’s hope this happens. It will be quite a moment when choir and congregation can finally unite in praising God after all these months of turmoil and stress.

David Cook, Organist and Choirmaster

Government restrictions on communal singing were lifted on July 19th. Keston Parochial Church Council is

discussing how best to reintroduce communal singing to our worship at their meeting on 20th July.



One of my Favourite Hymns



My favourite hymn has always been “My God How Wonderful Thou Art”. I first heard and sung it at school and loved it right away. We also sang it at the church I attended.

The words were written by Frederick William Faber, (1814-1863), a noted English hymn writer and theologian, who converted from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism in 1845. He was subsequently ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 1847.

It is full of emotion and reverence for God. All the verses are lovely but the last three stand out for me. Verse five is:

Yet I may love thee too, O Lord,
Almighty as those art,
For thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.

Because of this verse I chose the hymn to be sung at my Confirmation. And verse seven says:

Father of Jesus, love’s reward,
What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before thy throne to lie,
And gaze and gaze on thee!

These words alone make my faith stronger and my belief in the after life certain.

The tune is Westminster and was composed by James Turle, 1802-1882. It evokes an emotional response when I hear the words sung. One of those hymns that makes the hairs stand up on the back of your neck.

You can find the hymn in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* or actually listen to it on YouTube. There are seven verses altogether and each one is full of praise as well as surprise that a poor sinner is loved and wanted by God. That’s how I know that even if I stray, as I frequently do, God will always love me and welcome me back with open arms and a loving heart.

Tonia Crouch

From the Registers

Weddings

3rd July

10th July

Daniel Joy and Katie Warne

Daniel Brownlee and Hannah Chadderton

Church Services



As of 19th July, services will be at 10am on Sundays and booking is no longer required. We hope to be singing again and having tea and coffee in the hall afterwards, but we are still not taking communion wine, only the bread. Please do join us for worship.

Marriage Registration has Changed!

At the beginning of May this year the law was changed around how marriages are registered and what information is on the registration documentation. One significant and long-awaited change is for the mother to now be recorded. For a ridiculous amount of time the mothers of the bride and groom were not mentioned in any of the official documents.

This meant that the true demographic of a time and location could not be accurately determined – we all know what contribution women have given to the workforce for many years now, and how many have been lone parents. Now the new documents mean there can be up to four parents recorded if a couple have much loved step-parents.

The other significant change is that the officiating minister at the wedding service no longer registers the marriage. The church no longer keeps Marriage Registers or issues the certificate at the time of the service. What we now do is complete a 'Marriage Document' that is taken or sent into the General Registry office in Bromley, once they have received this the couple can then apply online for their marriage certificate.

The main issue for many couples is, can we still 'sign the register' during the service? Well, there is a signing, of the new document, by the couple and their witnesses and as a church we have acquired a new 'Marriage Services Register' – so the document is laid onto the book and any photos taken will look much the same.

With so many couples still rearranging their weddings from the delays of last year, we very much hope the new system will run smoothly for everyone.

Rev'd Carol Morrison



Kate and Dan Joy, the first couple on the new Registers system

Temple at Holwood House



Recent refurbishments at Holwood House have included the building of this Temple with seating for quiet contemplation. The Temple is an open structure and is illuminated in the evenings. It is at the highest point of the estate.

The current Holwood House design was commissioned by John Ward, a wealthy London woollen merchant, when he bought it in 1823. The new house, designed by Decimus Burton, was completed in 1827, together with Beckford Lodge located opposite Westerham Road car park, and soon followed by a second lodge, Poynter's, on the Croydon Road near Locksbottom. The Home Farm, near Bowen's Lodge, was relocated to the new Holwood Farm built on the corner of Shire Lane and New Road Hill. (Now Holwood Farm Shop, deli and café).

Decimus Burton was a very well renowned Victorian architect. His works include Kew Gardens, the Burton family mansion, The Holme, in Regent's Park; Hyde Park gate/screen; the Athenaeum Club and Wellington Arch in London. He also designed many houses in Tunbridge Wells including the Calverley Estate and Burrowswood Health and Wellbeing Centre (now closed), as well as numerous churches, amongst other places.

The current owner of Holwood House is Peter Waddell, founder and CEO of Big Motoring World.

For more fascinating history of Holwood, Simon Gooch has published a beautiful and detailed book called *Holwood, a stroll round the estate*, priced £75 (including p&p). Please contact him via his website www.simongooch.com if you are interested.

Percy – a Pheasant Companion



I first noticed Percy with his harem foraging in the garden about seven years ago. The hens were fairly timid and scuttled into the shrubbery when I approached but Percy was a braver soul. I occasionally tossed him some seed when I filled the bird feeders and he soon learnt that I was a soft touch!

Percy is in the garden most days and runs to greet me when he sees me and follows me around. Lately, one of the hens has plucked up courage to come towards me when she sees Percy coming but she is still quite wary and soon disappears. He, on the other hand, appears to have worked out that I can be found in the house. Sometimes I become aware that he is peering at me through the French windows and if he sees me leave the room he runs to the door leading to the garden and waits hopefully for me to appear.

I do try to ignore him sometimes as I feel he has become altogether too tame for his own good; just recently I left the front door open for a few minutes and

when I came back Percy was sitting in the hall.

During the recent hot weather in mid June if I had the temerity to sit down in the shade in the garden Percy came and pecked at my feet as if to say “move”. He received a sharp reprimand but soon came back to try again.

I read recently that a pheasant’s lifespan is little more than a year because of predators, including humans. I have no way of knowing whether the hens I see now are the same hens that have been visiting over the years, but Percy is certainly the character that has been following me around for at least seven years now. He is easily recognisable not only by his amusing habits, but also by his slightly deformed beak.

Percy’s companionship certainly kept me entertained during lockdown, but I am under no illusions that it is only cupboard love!

Valerie Burton, resident of Holwood

The Rumour

In ancient Greece, (469-399 BC), Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom.

One day the great philosopher came upon an acquaintance, who ran up to him excitedly and said, “Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?”. “Wait a moment,” Socrates replied. “Before you tell me, I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Test of Three. Before you talk to me about my student let’s take a moment to test what you’re going to say.

The first test is truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?”. “No,” the man replied, “actually I just heard about it”. “All right,” said Socrates. “So you don’t really know if it’s true or not. Now let’s try the second test, the test of goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?”. “No, on the contrary,” was the reply. “So”, Socrates continued, “you want to tell me something bad about him even though you’re not certain it’s true?”. The man shrugged, a little embarrassed. Socrates continued, “You may still pass though because there is a third test – the filter of usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?”. The man hesitated and said, “No, not really...”.

“Well,” concluded Socrates, “if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good, nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?”. The man was defeated and ashamed and said no more.

No wonder Socrates was deemed a great philosopher and held in such high esteem.

Christian Aid Thank You!



Coronavirus has impacted us all. It meant that we couldn’t deliver envelopes to homes in our parish, sell cakes, or serve up cream teas – but despite this, you’ve shown great love for your neighbours near and far. We handed out tubes of Smarties in church and asked our congregation members to eat the Smarties and fill the tubes with £1 coins, or silver coins. Everyone rose to the challenge and our church congregation collected an incredible £857.87 – so a very big thank you to everyone who helped with this amazing charity. Do visit their website, if you missed out on giving:

www.christianaid.org.uk

Tricia Coward

Wrap Up!

Wrap Up is a project run by various Rotary Clubs working in partnership with Hands On London. Its sole aim is to provide coats that go directly to people across the UK who struggle to keep warm during the winter. Keston Parish Church will be having a collection in the autumn, so please save any unwanted winter coats. Thank you! See www.wrapupuk.org.

How climate change could affect your cup of tea

Now here's something that will send you straight to your kitchen to put the kettle on: the Great British cup of tea may not taste quite so good in the future. It seems that extreme weather and rising temperatures could lead to inferior leaves in the future, according to Christian Aid.

Kenya, the world's foremost exporter of black tea, is now affected by erratic rainfall, floods, droughts, and rising temperatures. India, Sri Lanka and China, also major tea producers, face climate change problems as well.

Climate change has been predicted by some as likely to cut production in Kenya's best tea-making areas by as much as a quarter by 2050. Even areas of only average growing conditions could see production fall by 39%.

As one tea farmer in Kenya's Western Highlands, explained: "We cannot predict seasons anymore. Temperatures are rising, rainfall is erratic, often accompanied by unusual hailstones and longer droughts. If this continues, it will make growing tea much harder".



Photo by Rumman Amin on Unsplash

Is this your cup of tea?

It's an age thing, of course, but having been cornered into having to pay what seemed an exorbitant price for an item I didn't really need, I found my mind was commenting, "**Money for old rope**", and it was then that I began to wonder what impact that phrase would have for the English speaking folk of today. Perhaps not the befuzzlement I sometimes experience when coming across acronyms like LOL, FOMO, NBD and so many more, but that's probably due to my position **over the hill**, and I began to wonder if it might be both interesting and fun to make a collection, wondering how many of these once well used phrases have become completely obsolete. Would we describe any acquaintance these days as being **toffee nosed**? Does anyone **jump the gun** to speak out when they are feeling **beside themselves** with rage or frustration, having been **ridden roughshod** over? Of course, it can prove to be **a godsend** when discussing a contentious issue to find we are all **singing from the same hymn sheet**, and what, **in a month of Sundays** is really **beyond the pale** these days? Something declared **straight from the horse's mouth** that would have been better left unsaid?

In time of political correctness would it cause offence to declare you were **welshed on** by somebody? **A nod's as good as a wink** on that one. Perhaps you, honoured reader, would assist us to compile a Keston collection of your favourites... to appear in the magazine?

MC

The Watchmaker's Epitaph

Here lies in horizontal position
The Outsize case of
GEORGE ROUTLEIGH,
Watchmaker
Whose abilities in that line were
an honour
To his profession.
Integrity was the mainspring,
And prudence the regulator
Of all the actions of his life.
Human, generous and liberal
His hand never stopped
Till he had relieved distress.
So much regulated were his motions
That he never went wrong
Except when set agoing
By people
Who did not know his key.
Even then he was easily
Set right again.
He had the art of disposing his time
So well
That his hours glided away
In one continual round
Of pleasure and delight
Till an unlucky minute put a period to
His existence.
He departed this life
Nov 14 1802
Aged 57
Wound up
In hopes of being taken in hand
By his Maker
And of being thoroughly cleaned,
repaired
And set-going
In the world to come.

If you are lucky enough to manage a holiday this year, and are in Devon, St. Petrock's church, Lydford would be worth a visit to see this epitaph. It appeared on the grave of George Routledge, a watchmaker who died in the village of Lydford, in 1802 aged 57.

For some time, it was thought that George had written his own epitaph some years before his death but it is now known that the words were published in an American almanac in 1797, the work of a black American astronomer called Benjamin Banneker who was also a clockmaker. However, in more recent years, an even earlier version has been discovered as having been printed in the *Derby Mercury* in 1786, but in this one the deceased's name was 'Peter Pendulum'!

Over two centuries, the stone lid of the outside grave on which the epitaph was inscribed became so worn by the elements that it was in danger of being lost, so the decision was made to bring the original lid into St. Petrock's church where it now hangs on the wall. The grave in the churchyard has been re-covered with a replacement stone – it's obviously much visited as there is a small track worn into the grass.



John Baker/St Petrock's Church CC BY-SA 2.0

"Farmer Wilson" by Chalkpit



The view that John Wilson took back with him to show his future wife

In 1908 with the sudden death of the 16th Earl of Derby his widow became responsible for the running of the 1,000 acres of Holwood Estate. The Dowager did not hesitate to request John Wilson to leave the Stanley Estate at Witherstock Hall, Westmoreland and take on the larger task of managing Holwood Home Farm. Before accepting the position in Kent John wished to know whether his future bride, (sensible man!), would be happy with what would be their future home together so he therefore returned to Witherstock Hall with a photograph to show her. It obviously appealed as John married his sweetheart Hannah Prickett and came to Keston – in 1913 their daughter, also Hannah was born. The family never returned to Lancashire remaining in Keston for the rest of their lives.

The farm was a large responsibility for Farmer Wilson as he became known

to those of his acquaintance. Under his control were the farm work horses, dairy cows, sheep, pigs and fowl whilst on the arable side wheat was grown as well as root crops and other vegetables. One of the most important crops was a very high quality hay which was required for the family's hunters who were stabled close to Holwood House. Fox hunting was a very important part of Holwood social life and took place both on the estate as well as in the local countryside. Also included in Farmer Wilson's daily care was ensuring the smooth running of both the Dairy and the Laundry. The farm's small herd of Jersey cows produced a supply of rich creamy milk for the Dairy which was under the care of Mrs Luck and her daughter. It was their responsibility to churn and produce butter that was moulded into rounds and stamped with the Derby Crest. The Laundry was

required for washing and ironing large quantities of linen which, together with fresh meat, vegetables and dairy products was sent once a week to 'the house on the hill' or to the Stanley's London home at Upper Brook Street. John Wilson, his wife and daughter were all very proud to be associated with their employers and John was meticulous in all dealings with the Dowager and her son Lord Stanley. This was reflected in his dress for he never went without collar and tie, removing his jacket but retaining his waistcoat, even when working on the hottest summer day. The diaries he kept of everyday life on the farm 100 years ago and which I was fortunate enough to be left by daughter Hannah together with accounts and letters all give a clear insight into farm life. The statements then produced for the Dowager in his clear script show his character for neatness. Notes from 'His Lordship' on House of Lords notepaper, curtly referred to as "Wilson" highlighted problems in the economy in agriculture. Inside information revealed that the price of coal was going to increase and "Wilson" was advised to order extra as a precaution as this was necessary for the boilers in the Laundry. One note, not dated, apologises that he can only afford a 25p pay rise which then meant John's weekly wage amounted to £3.27½ p equivalent in today's money, (he started in 1908 at £1.00 per week!).

In 1935 a survey of the farm was carried out to suggest ways of improving productivity and increasing profit. As this advice was not put into action immediately, with the death of Lord Stanley in 1938, any possible

investment or advice unfortunately passed away with His Lordship. At the outbreak of War in 1939 Lady Stanley gave "Farmer Wilson" the choice to remain as Bailiff, an offer he declined, taking retirement instead. He then rented the smaller Lower Hook Farm close by in Shire Lane and when the Holwood Estate was sold in 1951 he was able to buy the farm.

I wonder how "Farmer Wilson" would react if he were to return to Holwood – shocked to see the land mostly neglected and astounded to see the farm buildings being used so differently than in his time!



John and Hannah Wilson
on their wedding day

What I Do

My tame wild swimming

A 15 minute drive and a 10 minute walk through managed woodland to a clean man-made lake complete with life guard wouldn't be many people's definition of 'wild'. Not to mention that the gentle strokes I make around the lake once, (or twice now that it is warm), can hardly be called 'swimming'! But nevertheless, it appears that I'm now one of the UK's growing band of wild swimmers. And all from the safety and comfort of Beckenham! Beckenham Place Park, to be exact, which used to be primarily a golf

course but with the help of lottery money is now a wonderful public space with woodland, open grass, some old formal gardens, the mansion that houses a café – and a lake complete with ducks but no rats! The lake is managed by a company called

www.ptpcoaching.co.uk which has its pros – such as provision of life guards and avoiding overcrowding, as well as cons – such as limited accessibility to the lake and cost (which is low, to be fair).

The lake this morning was absolutely gorgeous and it's wonderful to be there in the water with the sun shining and feeling like you're in a lovely river in the south of France somewhere. Which is even more valuable this year when that holiday is clearly not going to happen! The only fly in the ointment was having to 'pick up our camping chair and walk'

after our allotted hour. As I said, not very wild!

In my defence, however, I did start the whole open water swimming thing in the autumn when it was cold both in *and* out of the water! The photo is from the New Year's Day swim where I was the first one in the water with my friend! Winter is a lot more challenging and I suppose you could say 'wild' but there is always a great sense of camaraderie amongst the brave souls on the lake's cold and muddy bank as to preferred attire for *in* the water – which in my case is neoprene all the way from hat to booties! – to 'equipment' for changing

and warming up afterwards – which is key to survival! Do you bring a bin liner to stand on? Do you prefer a swimming poncho towel or a great big changing coat? Do you bring coffee or hot chocolate in your flask and do you bring a chair etc. etc! To be

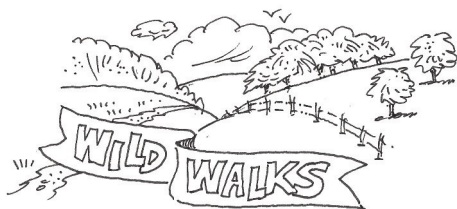


honest, I do find the changing afterwards a little stressful, (there are no changing facilities), but once I'm in my chair with my dry socks, boots, coat, hat and gloves on with my hot chocolate in my hand it's actually wonderful to enjoy being by the lake post-swim – even in the rain!

So what about the *swimming* in the not far-off freezing water? Well it's amazing! True, I'm one of the neoprene wimps but it's still quite 'fresh'! The health benefits of cold submersion are becoming quite well known with studies

on the positive effects on the heart, body fat and even dementia to name but a few. Who knows – my wetsuit probably protects me from the benefits of the cold water as well as the cold water itself but actually my real motivation for going is just the pure relaxation and beauty of being in the water in such calm and peaceful surroundings. That, and the hot chocolate afterwards! It may not be very wild but it *is* magical! Try it this summer and you'll be hooked by winter!

Elizabeth Anker



I recently met Mr Bean – well, not *that* Mr Bean but the bean man. He was making his way through the bean fields which cover the area from the now defunct Milking Lane farm across to the Downe road; quite a large tract. “I’ve met you before” I said. It was the pretty little brown and white collie dog that reminded me. “It was back in the autumn or sometime and you were checking out the crops towards Downe”. Well I wasn’t wrong and he then explained how the roots of the beans put nitrogen back in the soil. The pods darken and the stems and leaves wither away and almost turn to dust. That’s the time to harvest them. I await to see.

Numerous camomile plants grow along the footpath and emit a lovely sweet scent. I was lucky enough to see two beautiful Marbled White butterflies



on them. My book informs me the butterflies are seen from July to late August and like chalk and limestone soils. They are creamy-white with distinctive black markings and have a white scalloped margin. Males and females are usually alike and the larval foodplants are various grasses such as red fescue.

On that same footpath are, at present, numerous ant activities. They seem to create little volcanoes of fine earth and paths leading from them – also lined with fine earth. Are they preparing for the migration of the queens? One can’t help but marvel at their activities. On the edge of a cornfield further towards Downe there are several large constructions of fine ‘ant’ earth with little holes up the side. These can be up to 12", (yes, inches), high and are built up around tall grasses.

Back in the springtime when the beans were tiny I was aware of lots of ladybirds scuttling to and fro. What were they up to? Many years ago whilst decorating the outside of ‘The Village House’ in Brasted I discovered the over-wintering site of ladybirds – I’ll tell you about it another time.

Richard Geiger

Holwood Farm Shop Recipe



Pixabay.com

Chicken and Seafood Paella

Ingredients for 4 servings

50ml olive oil
400g paella rice (any short grain rice will do such as Spanish Bomba rice or Italian Arborio)
400g chicken
400g prawns or mixed shellfish
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves
100g vegetables – peas, runner beans, and French beans work really well
1 large red pepper, chopped
2 medium chopped tomatoes
1L chicken or fish stock
1 pack Saffronsa spices for paella
1 lemon

- 1) Heat the oil in a large shallow frying pan or paella pan. Once hot, brown the chicken and remove from pan.
- 2) Stir fry the seafood for a few minutes then remove.
- 3) Turn down the heat and add the onion and the red pepper to the pan.
- 4) Once browned, add the chopped tomatoes. Cook the mixture for a

minute or so, whilst stirring regularly.

- 5) Now add the vegetables, chicken and shellfish back into the pan.
- 6) Mix the Saffronsa spices in with the stock, and add to pan.
- 7) Stir once, and cook on high heat for 5 minutes.
- 8) Turn the heat right down and continue to cook for a further 8-10 minutes.
- 9) Turn off the heat, cover with foil and let the paella stand for 3-5 minutes.
- 10) Serve with lemon wedges.

A good recipe to evoke that Spanish holiday feeling! Everything you need for the recipe can be found at the Farm Shop, as well as the fishmongers there which are open from 9am-2pm Tuesday to Saturday.

Keston Forest Pre-School

Opening this September, this fully outdoor pre-school is the first in the London Borough of Bromley and there has been lots of interest. Please email enquiries@kestonforestpreschool.co.uk for more information and to book a visit to the site.



Photo by Juan Encalada on Unsplash

Magazine Deadline

Please send copy for the October/November issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, by 5th September at the very latest. Email editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Magazine Donations



Laughlines

☺ **Apt names** Having the surname of Churchus, I sometimes get asked if it is my real name as I am quite involved with church matters, including being Chairman of The Association for Church Editors. However, I recently came across some much better ones in *The Times*: Keith Weed, president of the Royal Horticultural Society; Donald Buttress, former surveyor of Westminster Abbey and Deputy Chairwoman of the Wine Society, Eleanor de Kanter. I also found the following on the internet: Sara Blizzard, Weather Forecaster; Thomas Grieve & Son, Funeral Directors; Les McBurney, fireman; Dr David J. Mitten, Hand surgeon; Matthew Correspondent, BBC Correspondent; Tom Kitchin, Chef; Rachel B. Pullin, Dentist and Aaron Farr, runner.

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