

# The Keston Magazine

News of our Parish and Village



June/July 2023

# Keston Parish Church

Church Rd., Keston, BR2 6HT [kestonparishchurch.org.uk](http://kestonparishchurch.org.uk)



## Rector

There is currently a vacancy

## Licensed Lay Minister & Parish Administrator Churchwarden

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## Verger

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Women's Institute	Helen Best	07715 880889
Beavers/Cubs/Scouts	<a href="mailto:gsl27thbromley@gmail.com">gsl27thbromley@gmail.com</a>	
Residents' Association	<a href="mailto:kestonvillagera@gmail.com">kestonvillagera@gmail.com</a>	
Village Hall	Tina Lupton	01689 602993
Coffee, Cake & Kids	Victoria Madden	07866 509696
Welcare in Bromley	Caroline Cook	020 8289 5768
Keston C.E. Primary School	Julia Evison	01689 858399
Friends of Keston Common	High Elms Country Park	01689 862815
	<a href="http://www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk">www.friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk</a>	
Keston Residents' Road Safety Group	<a href="mailto:krrsg@hotmail.com">krrsg@hotmail.com</a>	

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden  
to work it and keep it. *Genesis 2:15*



# Thought for the month



## Arboreal Resurrection

Every tree follows the cycle of the seasons, producing and shedding leaves, flowering and fruiting, growing slowly bigger. This natural cycle ends with the death, or the felling, of the tree. It may have lived for years, or even centuries, and its trunk, roots and branches are the sum of its life. But this is not the end.

Every tree has a resurrected life, or even lives, as it may be used in various ways.

Some trees are allowed to lie where they have fallen, and over the following years they are hosts to insects, bugs, larvae, fungi and moulds. These gradually consume the wood, and as it decays it feeds all these creatures, enabling the natural cycle of life to continue.

The smallest branches etc. may be used as fuel in someone's wood burner, on a garden bonfire, or to create a 'bug hotel'. Some trees are turned in to wood pulp, to become paper of some sort, or are processed into building boards of different kinds.

The 'best' wood becomes commercially valuable timber. Suitably sized branches, once the wood is seasoned, may be used by wood turners to make small, beautiful, and often useful, common items: a spoon, lace bobbin, pen handle, small bowl, cross, candle-stick, walking stick etc.

The use made of the main trunk will depend on what tree the timber came from. Different timbers suit different uses. Conifers and pines are used for joists, rafters, windows, pit-props. Ash, oak, elm and beech are often used for furniture.

So a tree which lived, as a tree, for 30, 90, 150 or even 300 years, may have as long a life in resurrected form. Trees give shelter, flowers, fruit and beauty in their first life, as a tree. In their second life they be as different as a butterfly is from the caterpillar it came from, but still be useful, and often beautiful. I wonder what our resurrected life will be like?

Deidre Morris from the Association for Church Editors

**Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die. *John 11:25***

**But someone may ask, "How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?" What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first. *1 Corinthians 15:35,36***

## From the Editor

I remember those pine trees featured on the front cover at Keston Ponds when I was a child, a friend of mine used to love climbing them – but I was no good at it! Talking of trees, I am hoping to try and use some flowers from the (rather untidy) Elder tree in my garden to make some of the Elderflower cordial using the easy recipe on page 21 of this issue.

I recently noticed a lot of new trees have been planted along Leaves Green Road, (and Bromley Common), presumably as the Council tries to plant more trees to offset the effects of climate change, to cool the atmosphere, absorb carbon and pollutants.

Watching the Wild Isles programme on TV presented by the amazing David Attenborough, (now 97 years old), I kept thinking what an incredible and wonderful world God has given us. The diversity and intricacy of every living thing is absolutely breathtaking. Apparently 5th June is World Environment Day. It seems a hopeless task to try and sort out all the environmental issues that are currently in the news, but if we can all take some small steps it will hopefully add up to quite a bit.

It's also World Giraffe Day on 21st June – the longest day – for obvious reasons!

Sally Churchus



## Cover Story

The cover photo was taken on the grassland above the second lake last year in July and shows the effects of the heatwave in June and the ensuing drought. John Bakker kindly offered to do some photos for me and I said I would keep them by for use in one of the summer of 2023 issues. He was a keen photographer and at one point did photo-journalism, drawing attention to issues using photos that told the story. You can read his Obituary on page 9.

The Ravensbourne Trail section on the Friends of Keston Common website ([friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk](http://friendsofkestoncommon.btck.co.uk)) states: In the early 20th century wood became a valuable crop again and pines were planted on parts of Keston Common, while in other areas birch/oak woodland has been developing since grazing stopped in the 1930s.





# Water Quality



Monitoring on 12th April by (from left) Terry Pyle, Bob Harrop and Diane Muir

The Ravensbourne rises at Caesar's Well in Keston Ponds; it then flows north for about 11 miles, merging with the rivers Pool and Quaggy on the way, until it finally drains into the Thames near Deptford.

The Ravensbourne Riverfly Monitoring Initiative, (RMI), is a citizen science project which monitors the quality of the water in the Ravensbourne catchment area.

Established in 2016, it is part of The Riverfly Partnership, a national network of nearly 200 organisations who work together to monitor the water quality of our rivers. The Keston group was formed in February 2023 with volunteers from the Friends of Keston Common.

Riverflies are aquatic insect larvae which are at the heart of the freshwater ecosystem and are a vital link in the aquatic food chain. They are good indicators of water quality and of pollution levels.

Each month we collect and assess three samples of water at a designated spot on the river. Samples are collected by kicking up the river gravel upstream of a collecting net, and then decanting the contents into a specimen tray. The tray is inspected closely, assisted by a good hand lens, and the numbers of each candidate species are tallied. The tallies of all three samples are summed together.

The candidate species are the larvae (or nymphs) of caddis flies and of mayflies (or olives) along with adult freshwater shrimps (or gammarus). The freshwater shrimp is not a riverfly – it is not even an insect – but it is a good indicator of water quality, so it is convenient to include it in the sample.

We also find other species in our samples, such as stoneflies, leeches, flatworms and water lice. All of these are natural inhabitants of our freshwater rivers and streams.

Our counts are submitted to the RMI who use the data to inform interested parties, (such as the Environment Agency and Thames Water), of water quality in the catchment area and to highlight any concerns over the levels of pollution that may be indicated.

The Keston group's samples are taken closer to the source of the river than those of the other survey groups, with less opportunity for pollution from surface run off and from drains. Indeed, our counts so far show higher numbers of the key species at Keston than are to be found further down river.

Children take great delight at splashing about in streams, but older people are expected to show more restraint in their pleasures. The RMI survey gives us older types a chance to splash about as much as the children do, and all in the good cause of citizen science!

Terry Pyle

## Heavenly Chocolate



Sheila Adcock, Martin Chalker and Josephine Williams were the lucky winners of the three Keston Easter hampers. The raffle tickets sold raised £180 for church funds, so thank you to everyone who bought tickets. Looks like Josephine had a divine egg as well...

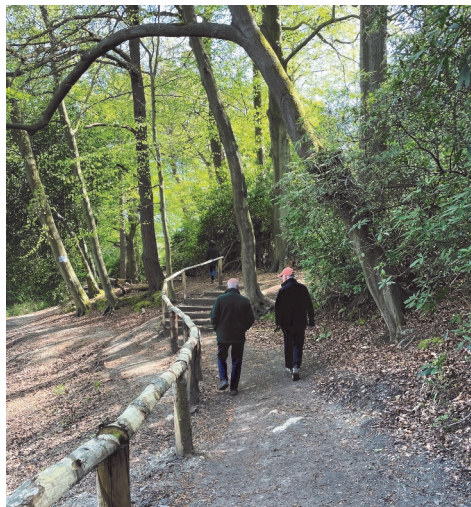
## Coronation Cream Tea Celebration



64 people enjoyed a fabulous Cream Tea in the Church Hall on Bank Holiday Monday



# Friends of Keston Common Update



## **Pond 3 Pathway (above)**

The Friends of Keston Common (FoKC) have continued with improvements to the new pathway at Pond 3. Post and rail has been erected to guide visitors along the water's edge and a new bench installed to view the ever changing wildlife. Over the coming weeks additional post and rail will be erected to further protect the bank and an interpretation board installed that describes the history of Forest Lodge, its boating pond and some of the wildlife that frequents the area.

## **Wet Meadow Pathway**

FoKC is most grateful to the Bromley Countryside Volunteers, who have replaced the post and rail between the two wet meadows. This work also included the installation of a new gate, which provides access to the meadow for its annual hay-cut in the autumn.

## **Pond 4 Interpretation Board**

Visitors to Pond 4 may have noticed

that the interpretation board is missing at the moment. Unfortunately, the frame has weathered badly over the years and as a consequence has had to be taken away for repairs. Rest assured it will be back once these have been completed.

## **Jubilee Parks Fund**

FoKC wish to thank residents who supported their bid to the Jubilee Parks Fund to make improvements to the children's playground close to the primary school. The bid is currently being assessed by the Council and we remain hopeful of a successful outcome.

## **Future Plans**

FoKC are planning to install a new interpretation board at Caesar's Well. This will help explain the hydrology of the area and give an insight into some of the recent history of the spring, being the source of the River Ravensbourne. FoKC are also planning to install more rustic benches across the site. These are planned for the Heathland area, the Valley Mire area and Padmall Wood.

Larry Herbert, Chair FoKC (below)





# What will your legacy be?

Do you want to make an impact for decades to come, to create your own lasting legacy? You can achieve this by supporting your local church 'Keston Parochial Church Council' as a bequest or legacy in your Will\*. Any amount would be gratefully received and could either be for the general development of the church and community or you could designate it for a particular interest.

Such gifts or bequests are vitally important to us. Did you know that it was only through a generous donation/legacy that we have been able to extend our car park in recent years to accommodate more cars, and thus be more accessible and beneficial to the local community.

Another generous legacy, recently received, came from Beryl Bareham, for which we are most grateful. Beryl was a teacher who lived in Longdon Wood and used to be a member of Keston Parish Church.



In fact, a lot of our work is only made possible thanks to the generosity of people who donate to us and/or choose to remember us in their Will.

So in the years to come, let us receive a surprise legacy from you, to help secure the future of Keston church for generations to come.

Anna Bailey, Treasurer

*\*A bequest or legacy is exempt from Inheritance tax so every penny you give will be put to good use by us and not lost in tax.*

## I Have Seen Death Too Often

I have seen death too often  
to believe in death.

For it is like arriving at  
the end of the day,  
turning off the engine,  
switching off the lights,  
and gently closing the car door;

then walking up the path,  
up to the steps  
and into the light of home.

Unknown

## Where am I?

Which house has this cross on it?  
Answer on p22



# Obituary

(Adrian) John Bakker

22/2/1953-4/3/2023



John was born in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and went to school there. He was an only child and was brought up as an Anglican.

After school he gained degrees in Psychology, Neuroscience and Social work. He had a variety of jobs including working for a local authority, the Red Cross and the NHS, being a Director of Human Resources and a Management Consultant. He had been a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development for over 30 years.

John has two sons, Joshua and Reuben. He married his second wife, Marcela, who is Argentinian, 18 years ago. They met through mutual friends and were married in Malvern.

John had a huge range of hobbies and interests, including cycling and motorbikes, and bought himself a Harley Davidson. He loved climbing and climbed Kilimanjaro, Mont Blanc, Mount Kenya and Aconcagua as well as Scottish and Welsh mountains over the years. He did scuba diving, kayaking and loved listening to and playing music on his guitars and piano. He was an avid reader and collector of books and recently did a creative writing course.

He collected and crafted model trains and had a passion for steam engines. John had a love of animals and birds too. His claim to fame was being the owner of the original Dulux dog, Prickles, an Old English sheepdog.

He had also started studying for the Bishop's certificate in the C of E which is a one year course for anyone who wants to be more confident about what they believe and read the Bible with more understanding. He first came to Keston church when Rev'd Mike Keirle was the Incumbent in the 1990s and then returned to it after his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer in October 2021. He found comfort and hope in his faith. He was voted onto the Parochial Church Council in April 2022 and enjoyed church life, taking part in the Prayer Walks, Book Reading Fellowship and social events. He was also on the board that produced the Past Cases Review Report 2 into safeguarding in the C of E, which was released not long ago.

He was obviously a clever but also very adventurous man, a gentleman and always concerned for and ready to help others. He had an extremely positive outlook on life, even after his diagnosis, and characteristically bore his illness and all the treatment with great courage and positivity.

May you rest in peace, dear John.

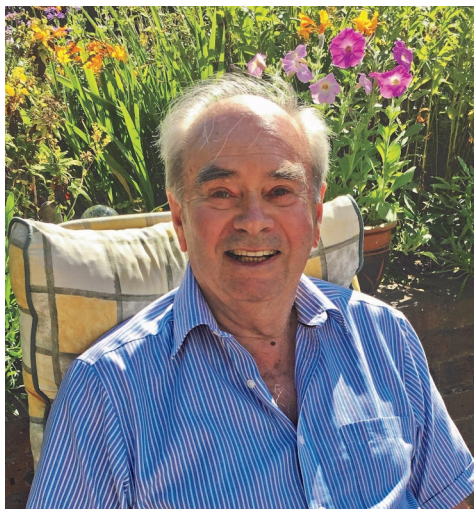
As told to Sally Churchus by  
Marcela Bakker and John's cousins

## Japanese Haiku Poem

"By Faith" is doing  
Trust God to support your acts  
You will change the world.

*(John wrote this following his core message in his talk to the church in morning worship on 14/8/2022, based on Hebrews chapter 11).*

# My Faith Journey



For the duration of World War II I was in Bombay, India, and attended a faith school set up and run by the Anglo-Scottish Education Society. It was attached to the Anglican Cathedral in the city. I sang in the cathedral choir whenever they asked the school to provide boy sopranos at Christmas, for weddings and funerals. Occasionally bridegrooms would give the boys a quarter rupee as a thank you and this would keep me in sweets for a fortnight!

After the war ended my family and I returned to London and we rented a small basement flat near Regents Park. An Anglican High Church was within walking distance. I became fascinated by the sermons of a very old retired priest who preached once a month and all his sermons ended with the same theme “God is Love”. I was prepared for Confirmation by the Curate and served as an altar boy for the 7am services on Thursdays. I was Confirmed in St. Paul’s Cathedral with other “older candidates”.

After Sheila and I married at Reigate Parish Church our first house was in Bromley and we attended our nearest church which was Holy Trinity, Bromley Common. Sheila ran the Young Wives with a friend and I read the lesson on alternate Sundays. When our children were young going to church went on the back-burner for several years.

Our daughter Sandra’s strong faith and beliefs led us to Bromley Baptist Church where we worshipped regularly until the Pastor’s sermons were so long that we lost the thread and found them confusing. This coincided with us moving house to Keston and we started attending Keston Parish Church. We were warmly welcomed and we enjoyed the services so much that we switched churches permanently. Joining the choir opened a whole new chapter as did the privilege of being on the Parochial Church Council. We continued to enjoy the friendship of many for so many years and found the whole experience spiritually satisfying.

**all his sermons ended  
with the same theme  
“God is Love”**

My wife Sheila’s final illness had a profound impact on me and my faith. I felt the power of prayer and the depth of love of my family like never before, and likewise the church family and their support. I was comforted by my faith and belief that, in God’s mercy, we will be reunited with our loved ones in heaven.

Frank Netscher



# Church Services



Do join us, we have a variety of ministers come to take our services:

## **1st Sunday of each month**

10am Informal Communion Service

## **All other Sundays**

10am Holy Communion

## **Third Sunday of the month**

10am Holy Communion service plus prayer for healing and wholeness if wanted

## Coronations

We celebrated the Coronation at Keston Church with a special service on Sunday 7th May, for which the church was beautifully decorated with red, white and blue flowers. However, looking through the Keston Coronation Souvenir booklet from June 1953, (priced 4d), not so many events have been organised – they included a Special pre-Coronation Youth Service, a United Coronation Service, a Children's Coronation Service, Holy Communion on the actual day, TV in the Village Hall followed by tea and entertainment for children and a Torchlight parade by Bromley Scout Troop. There was also

flood lighting of the church, windmill and village hall; a Coronation Dance, Supper and Entertainment for old people, Children's Sports, games and films and a visit by members of the Over 60s Club to see Coronation decorations and the Lights of London.

Interestingly, the booklet gives information about the regalia used during the service, which hasn't changed at all. There are crosses on top of the orb, St Edward's Crown and sceptre symbolising the rule of Christ over the whole world. This is a reminder that everyone, including the newly crowned monarch, is there to serve God – the God who gave his only Son to redeem the world.

# The Leaves Green Dornier

It was with great interest that I read Richard Geiger's article on the Leaves Green Dornier. Like Richard, I live on Leaves Green Common and have walked past the site of the crash-landing innumerable times. In my book, 'RAF Biggin Hill – The Other Side of the Bump' I dealt with the circumstances of the arrival of the Dornier in some detail and have been asked to extract some of that text to 'flesh out' the story.

The aircraft was a Dornier 17Z-2 of 9./KG76 which was piloted by *Oberleutnant* Rudolf Lamberty, accompanied for this mission by *Hauptmann* (Captain) Roth. The unit was part of the 9th Squadron of *Kampfgeschwader* (Bomber Wing) No.76 based at Cormeilles-en-Vexin in occupied France. They were low flying experts and had gained a huge amount of experience during the invasion of Poland, as well as during attack on the Low Countries and the Battle of France. On the 18th August, 1940, they were to take part in one of two highly choreographed raids on Kenley and Biggin Hill airfields. The plan was that aircraft from KG76 would wave-hop across the channel, make landfall on the Sussex coast and then continue at tree top level until the pilots had to heave back on the stick to mount the North Downs and appear over the perimeter of Kenley airfield.

The object of the ultra-low flying was to avoid detection by British radar and to preserve the element of surprise. Certainly, they were flying low enough not to become a blip on a cathode ray



Rudolf Lamberty

tube but could not avoid the most secret and technical piece of equipment available to the Allies, the auto-focus, self-cleaning Mk 1 human eyeball. The Observer Corps began filing reports to their HQ at Horsham as the nine German bombers crossed the coast and held their northward course.

The original plan had been that twelve Junkers Ju 88s would make a dive-bombing attack on Kenley which would be followed, minutes later, by a high level saturation bombing by Dornier 17s. Minutes after this the nine low-flying bombers of 9./KG76 would arrive to attack targets of opportunity at Kenley which had survived the high level raid. However, things turned out differently as the first attack by the Ju 88s and the high-level raids were delayed by the weather and British fighter interceptions. The result was that the low-flying Dorniers arrived before the air raid warning had even been sounded at Kenley.

The situation had become clearer to the fighter controllers as the Observer Corps reports continued to log the

progress of 9./KG76. At Croydon Airport the pilots of No. 111 Squadron leapt from their chairs as the scramble bell clanged and they were vectored to intercept the Dorniers. The pilots were astonished to be told to head towards Kenley and to 'Make Angels one hundred feet, I repeat, make Angels one hundred feet'. Squadron Leader Thompson is reported to have replied to the instruction, 'Are you bloody mad? I could prune trees at that height!'. The comment would have been clearly heard on the radio by one of his flight commanders, Flight Lieutenant 'Connie' Connors in his Hurricane. Spotting the 'Bandits' as they approached Kenley, Connors swung in behind one of them and opened fire, continuing to chase the Dornier away from Kenley and towards Biggin Hill where it swung onto an easterly course, but was already on fire. Return fire from the Dornier's gunners had set Connor's Hurricane alight too, but he flew the burning fighter, still firing at the Dornier until the flames engulfed him and he crashed on Keston Fruit Farm, his body being thrown from the aircraft.

The desperate air battle was witnessed by a local man, 'Chippy' Manchip who related first-hand what he'd witnessed. He was on an exercise with the Home Guard and rushed to the scene to see if he could help the pilot but he was clearly beyond that. He and a colleague stayed with Connors' body until a sergeant appeared from RAF Biggin Hill to take charge. He cut the ID disks from the body and handed them to 'Chippy' to hold for a moment, he was able to read and always remembered the name 'Connors'.

Rudolf Lamberty, *Hauptmann* Roth and the other members of the crew were hospitalised at the Royal Herbert in Woolwich and then shipped to Canada as prisoners of war. Post war Rudolf Lamberty returned to his home town of Trier where he ran a cycle shop until his death some years ago.

After the mayhem of the bombing attack on RAF Biggin Hill had died down and the fire in the Dornier had burnt out, a couple things of local interest happened. In the middle of the afternoon the police were called to the Crown Inn at Leaves Green because someone had managed to loot a pistol from one of the German aircrew and it had gone off, making a hole in the ceiling. Secondly, the local Home Guard were tasked with guarding the wrecked bomber and managed to liberate one of the MG 42 machine guns, together with some cans of 7.92 mm ammunition. They held onto this throughout the war and it was discovered in the sixties on top of a cupboard in the old Keston Primary School, still in full working order!

Peter Osborne

Signed copies of Peter's book are on sale at the Biggin Hill Museum shop.



Stanley Connors



# Keston Butterflies of Meadows and Woods



Brimstone

From late April onwards is the ideal time for butterfly watching. You may have already seen some of the species that hibernate over winter, such as the lemon yellow Brimstone, golden brown Comma or gaudy Peacock, which can even appear on warm January days to stretch their wings, before returning to their cosy shelter when the cold returns. Look out for these few early emergers:

- The Green Hairstreak, with its iridescent underwings reflecting
- a vibrant metallic sheen, rests on gorse bushes on Hayes Common, ready to ambush rivals or chase potential mates.



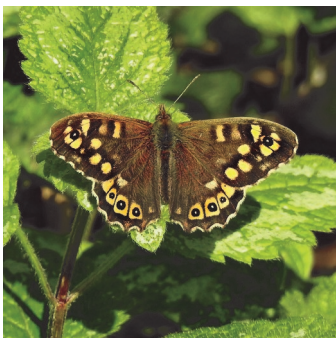
Green Hairstreak

- The Small Copper darts quickly among the grasses of the meadow close to the playground, almost impossible to follow its rich orange upper wings in flight, as it searches for the leaves of Sheep's Sorrel to lay its eggs.
- The demure Speckled Wood prefers the shady rides of Padmall Wood, catching the beams of sunlight on bramble leaves as it warms up for flight. Unusually, Speckled Woods do not depend
- on nectar from flowering plants,
- as other butterflies do, but sip honeydew, the sweet substance secreted by aphids.



Small Copper

- One of the most attractive heralds of spring are the Orange Tips, the males instantly recognizable with their bright orange wingtips. They lay their pointed eggs on the first Cuckoo Flowers in the Ravensbourne Meadows, or the white sprays of Garlic Mustard in the hedgerows and footpath edges.



Speckled Wood

- The Holly Blue can be seen around holly trees laying eggs for its spring brood, while the second generation in July prefer Ivy for their chrysalis to overwinter.

June brings the full spectrum of species with a riot of colours and different flight patterns. Watch for the courtship display of the Whites, as they spiral upwards chasing each other in a delicate pirouette. The rest of the Blue family mostly hatch in June, confusing the observer with the similarity of many of the species and differences between the sexes, and enriching the long grassy meadows with their flashes of sky-blue wings.

By July, almost all of the UK species will have emerged and bred, but you



Orange Tip

have to look carefully to see the more elusive ones of the UK's (roughly) 60 species, as some fly high in the tree tops and rarely come to ground. Perhaps the most spectacular of these, the Purple Emperor, has only been briefly photographed in Keston, as it descended to feed on some sugary liquid on a garden table in the Holwood grounds.

The lovely Silver-washed Fritillary is a more common sight, feasting on the early bramble flowers in sunny woodland edges on the commons, before laying its eggs where the caterpillars can feed on the dog violet leaves.



Silver-washed Fritillary

The Buddleia bush, although a real pest in the wild, can be a wonderful draw for all species in your garden. Red Admirals, Tortoiseshells, Peacock and Comma all love the long flower tubes with their abundant sweet nectar. Sit back and soak in that ever-changing canvas of bright colours and gentle wings floating on the summer breezes.

Bob Harrop

*Photos thanks to Bob Harrop and Pixabay*

# The Struggle

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. He took it home so that he could watch it come out of the cocoon. On that day, a small opening appeared. He sat and watched for several hours as the butterfly struggled to force itself through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making any progress and appeared able to go no further. It just seemed stuck. So that man in his kindness decided to help. Taking a pair of scissors, he snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily.

The man expected that at any moment, the shrivelled wings would enlarge and expand and the swollen body would contract and the creature

would flutter by. It did not happen! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around. It was never able to fly.

The man in his kindness and haste did not understand the restricting cocoon and the struggle required to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings, so that it would be ready for flight.

Sometimes, struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been. We could never fly!

Anon

I asked for strength...  
God gave me difficulties to make me strong.  
I asked for wisdom...  
and God gave me problems to solve.  
I asked for prosperity...  
and God gave me brain and brawn to work.  
I asked for courage...  
and God gave me danger to overcome.  
I asked for love...  
and God gave me troubled people to help.  
I asked for favours...  
and God gave me opportunities.  
I received nothing I wanted...  
I received everything I needed!



# The Darwins and Keston



**c.1866** Darwin on his cob Tommy in front of Down House,  
by Leonard Darwin.

*Reproduced by kind permission of John van Wylbe, ed. 2002 – The Complete  
Work of Charles Darwin Online ([www.darwin-online.org.uk](http://www.darwin-online.org.uk))*

Charles Darwin, his wife Emma, and their family lived in Downe from 1842. Keston was on their doorstep, and featured regularly in Darwin family walks. Some Keston residents were their friends, including the Bonham-Carter family at Ravensbourne House, and Louis Bruce of Heathfields in Keston, who assisted Darwin with his work on beekeeping.

There are many references in Emma's personal diaries to driving by carriage or walking to Keston, sometimes to visit friends and sometimes to enjoy the Common, often taking in a visit to Holwood or to High Elms as well. Following a walk from Keston Common to Downe with Charles' sister Catherine, Emma recalled how they had "enjoyed the gorse, which was just coming into full blaze and very sweet, and through Holwood".

It was in Keston that Darwin's Eldest son, William – a successful banker and one of the co-founders of Southampton University – met his American wife, Sara, in 1868 when she was staying with her brother-in-law, Charles Norton, at Keston Rectory. When William's brothers came home from boarding school at Clapham they would come by fly carriage to the Keston Mark and then walk from there to Down House.

Amongst Darwin's interests was the study of earthworms. In his notes on the subject, he describes walking "On Keston Common in the triangle between the Hayes and Keston-Mark roads, and north of the path that runs across from Holwood" where he "pulled up the heath and looked among the roots, and saw no trace of worms." He was also interested in the sundew

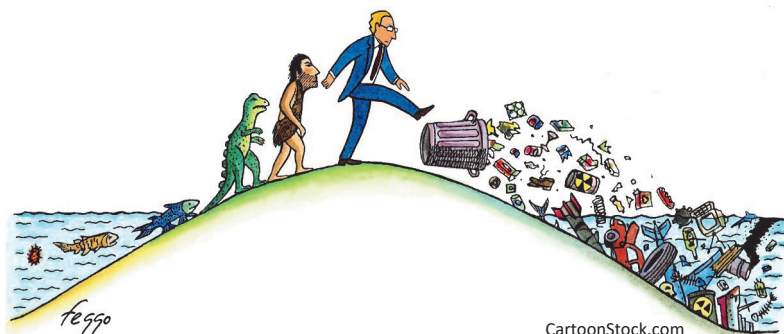
that was then to be found in the bog on the Common.

Darwin enjoyed riding on his cob, Tommy. His daughter Henrietta describes how on one ride in 1869 “Tommy ... fell heavily with him on Keston common as they were cantering over the bit of grass by the side of the Mill. ... Some people in a cart who were coming by helped him on his horse, not perceiving how much he was hurt, and he managed to ride home in great pain and in a dazy state. ... No bones were broken or other serious injuries but there was a great deal of injury to the muscles”.

Darwin took a keen interest in the well-being of Downe parishioners. One of his initiatives was to secure the use of

Downe Village School for the use of working men as a reading room in the evenings. In this he had the full support of Downe’s vicar, Brodie Innes. When Brodie Innes moved to Scotland, his replacement, the Reverend Ffinden, felt differently and tried to put a stop to this arrangement. Darwin went over Ffinden’s head and appealed to the Education Inspectorate in London who gave Darwin their full support. Ffinden took against the Darwin family after this, being openly rude to them in the village. As a result, from 1871 and until her death in 1896, Emma switched her weekly church going from Downe to Keston parish church.

Terry Pyle



## Prayer for World Environment Day

God of life, we praise you for the beauty of creation, its richness and variety; yet, through greed and ignorance, we scar your world with plastic waste and throw so much away.

Make us more like Jesus, treading gently on our common home, and breathe your Spirit on us, that we may care more deeply for your Earth. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Rt Revd Graham Usher*

*Bishop of Norwich and Lead Bishop on the Environment*

# What I Do



Our family has had parrots since we acquired two Congo African Greys in 1972, whilst my parents and I were living in West Africa. They were from a friend who returned to England and one promptly flew away whilst the other, Charlie, stayed. I renamed him Kasuku, Swahili for parrot, or Suku for short. Much later he became a she.

After marriage to John, we ended up in North Africa where our landlord asked us to look after a (baby) parrot he'd bought in Malta as he was away for the weekend. This was a subspecies, a Timneh African Grey which has a very dark red tail, needless to say, he never asked for her return and we named her KoKo.

After a number of problems at customs and an overnight stay in a hotel when she did her party trick of unhooking curtains so they fell down, we also had Suku come to live with us. Unfortunately the two parrots hated each other so could not share a cage. The birds travelled around the world with us, but after John died my son David looked after them for his last year at Uni after which my daughter Anita had them for her last year until David parrot-napped them. KoKo was misdiagnosed/treated by a vet and died

at 39.5 years and Suku came home to me and fell in love with my partner Geoff. She was at least 47 when she died. (Parrots are very long lived, African Greys live from 40-60 years, although some have been known to live till over 70). They were both highly intelligent birds and great talkers and singers, in fact, true African Greys.

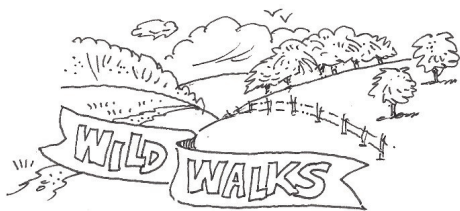
A few months later we bought another Grey having checked that Anita would take her on; as she said, she'd never known not having a parrot. As I am hopeless at names I named her Suku too. She came from a breeder in Spain, has a Spanish pet passport but her first family couldn't cope with her and a new baby. She is incredibly thick, talks very little but loves whistling songs, is scared of everything including Geoff if he is the other side of the patio doors and takes months not to see a new toy as an assassin. These toys are expensive and are bought for them to destroy; maybe after two years she might have a chewing frenzy.

In the morning she expects Geoff to uncover her and let her out. She's supposed to fly across the kitchen to him, several times but she can be very lazy and climb down her cage to a chair, across a work surface and climb up Geoff. She gets to open the curtains then come up to my room to count red cars and make sure I'm awake. One look and then she starts yawning at me which is very contagious. She is my parrot. She loves Geoff, tolerates Anita and hates me!



Sandi Flynn





## Spring has sprung!

Well, it's finally happened – spring has arrived! Officially it came sometime in March but did anyone notice – no of course not. The last few weeks we've been treated to every branch and bud bursting out, as the song says: "spring is bustin' out all over". I actually mowed my lawn, (and my neighbour's – aaah... how good am I?). Well, sad to say, she's in hospital as at 87 the struggle to keep going was becoming more and more difficult. We've been neighbours for 53 years so she's been like part of the family. Living in the middle house of a terrace of three means rear access is through one or both of the others. That way we have to get on with one another. "Can you lend us five bob luv, the rent man's coming today?"

So where was I? Oh yes – it's spring and over in the woods by the West Kent Golf Club the trees in my favourite patch are playing catch up. When the sun is out it's particularly beautiful as the fresh leaves still let in the sunlight and after a rain shower everything is sparkling. The ground cover is able to get enough light and consequently the bluebells and little yellow celandine are producing a stunning display. In one or two places there are even primroses, but these are now being smothered by the increase of general ground cover. A few weeks back they really stood out against the less

vigorous growth of the woodland floor.

One of my walks recently took me past the rookery, of which I wrote a year or two ago, and into a little square wood opposite to my normal patch alongside the airfield. The footpath led upwards and then parallel to the golf course until it turned right and down again through the trees to emerge in the valley. From here, I skirted the golf course and rose up again by the airfield. This now being an open field with fresh spring corn I walked back along the edge and found a fallen tree that had blown down in a winter's gale and had been pushed aside by a tractor to lie along the edge of the field. Ahh, I thought, sit and have a rest after the climb up from the valley.

To my amazement I could hear walkers across the valley speaking quite normally. It was just like being in an amphitheatre. Obviously I didn't catch actual words but the effect was remarkable. Never a dull moment! PS. I'm told that a cuckoo was heard recently in the same wood. Ooh!

Richard Geiger



Keston Bluebells by  
Rev'd Carol Morrison

# Elderflower Cordial      Regular Events



The flower heads are best gathered on a warm, dry day, just as the many tiny buds are beginning to open, and some are still closed. Keep the flowers upright, place carefully in a bag and have a good pick through at home to remove any bugs rather than washing them. Trim stalks off.

## **5 heads of elderflower**

**500g caster sugar**

**4 tablespoons quality runny honey**

**2 unwaxed lemons**

1. Place the sugar and honey in a large saucepan with 1 litre of water. Gently bring to the boil, until all the sugar has dissolved, then remove from the heat.
2. Finely grate in the lemon zest and add the elderflowers upside down, making sure they are completely submerged.
3. Squeeze in the juice from one of the lemons, then slice the other and add it to the pan, too. Pop the lid on and leave to one side to infuse for 24 hours.
4. Strain your cordial. Line a fine sieve with muslin, (or good quality kitchen towel), place over a large bowl and pour through the cordial.
5. Store in sterilised bottles or jars and drink diluted with water, soda or Prosecco. Keep in the fridge.

*By Georgina Hayden on [www.jamieoliver.com](http://www.jamieoliver.com)*

## **Prayer Walks**

We meet on the Green opposite The Greyhound pub at 9.30am on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Wednesday in the month. We usually return about 11am.

## **Men's pub social**

Do join us at 7pm at The Greyhound on the 3rd Wednesday of the month for social chat, a few drinks and a meal for those who want it. More details from Martin Becker on 07484 609102.

## **Book Reading Fellowship**

Come and discuss books with some Christian content that you have read at 2pm on Monday 12th June. Please let Sally Churchus know on 020 8462 8750 or [editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) if you would like to come.

## **Keston Book Club**

Our meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in The Fox. More information from 07503 268001 or [angelahollamby@gmail.com](mailto:angelahollamby@gmail.com).

## **New Keston WI**

We meet from 1.30pm-3.30pm in Keston Church Hall on the 2nd Wednesday in the month.

## **Friends of Keston Common**

We meet in the Westerham Road car park at 10am on Friday mornings for activities such as scrub clearance, tree/shrub pruning, pathway restoration and structural repairs. Please do join us.

## **Mental Wellbeing Coffee Morning**

Join us for chat over tea/coffee and cake with a mental health professional at hand. We will hear tips about how we can keep ourselves well on Saturday 3rd June from 10am-12 noon in Keston Church Hall.

# Magazine Deadline

Please send photos and articles for the August/September issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, by Friday 7th July at the very latest via email: [editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

# Laughlines

## ☺ Life Abundant

Two students from a theological training college decided to spend part of their holiday in the countryside doing outreach. They stopped at an old farm house and proceeded up the path through a group of screaming children and a washing line heavy with wet clothes. When they got near the door,

the woman of the house stopped scrubbing the steps, brushed her hair and perspiration from her brow, and asked them what they wanted. "We'd like to tell you how you can live forever," they answered.

The exhausted woman hesitated for a moment, and then replied, "Thank you, but I don't think I could stand it!"

## ☺ True local newspaper headlines:

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash,  
Expert Says  
Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes  
Over  
Miners Refuse to work after Death  
Juvenile Court to Try Shooting  
Defendant  
If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May  
Last Awhile

*Where am I answer: Olive's Mill on Commonside*

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