

The

Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



August/September 2025

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In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

Thought for the month



In harmony with Creation

When He made the world, the book of Genesis tells us, *'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.'* (Genesis 1.31) God's work of creation is a mighty wonderful thing, perfect in every way so that it is almost impossible for the human mind to get a grasp on how the world came into being. The Creation stories in Genesis, which saw the world created in seven days, remain a mystery, accepted as a result of faith in an omnipotent God. God's will for his world is that the Created will live in harmony with Creation and in close relationship with the Creator.

Living in Keston reminds me every day of the goodness of God and his plans to prosper this world when he gave his most sacred gift of Creation into our care. Keston is a beautiful oasis of calm and peace where residents and visitors alike seem to have a desire to engage respectfully with the natural environment, the animals and vegetation, especially those of the rare variety. Somehow, Keston seems to have got the balance right.

Elsewhere in our nation and in our world, the peaceful co-habitation of

beast and humans is being compromised with devastating consequences, which will not only wipe out millions of species of plants and animals, but also small communities, just like ours here in Keston. Climate change is neither a myth nor is it 'just' part of the normal twists and turns in the life of this planet, Earth. It is a direct consequence of humankind's selfish desires for unsustainable lifestyles, stemming from ever-increasing pollution, widespread deforestation and a ravaging of the earth's natural resources.

1st September – 4th October is celebrated as the Season of Creation. It is a good time to take stock and re-examine our relationship with our natural environment, to thank God for the gifts of Creation, to repent for the ways in which we have misused and mismanaged these gifts and to take action to return to a more just way of living that recognises the rights and diversity of beings that occupy God's earth alongside us. It is a time to resolve to live sustainably now, with one eye on the future. My baby grandson was born this May and I am delighted that he will grow up in Keston, but what will the world look like when he is fully grown? If we do too little or nothing, will it be a wasteland devastated by the destructive activities of humankind?

The late Pope Francis challenges us: 'What is the goal of our work? What need does the Earth have of us? Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is up to us.' *Laudato Si'*, 160

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor

Recently, I have had an increasing awareness and joy at the wonder of nature. During walks, including the Prayer Walks, there is time to pay attention to our surroundings rather than just rush past in the car without looking properly.



My two year old grandson is good at this, every little ant or butterfly is spotted and studied, dandelion clocks are blown and stray bird feathers examined. Of course diggers, men pruning trees and helicopters are also of interest! Everything seems to be a wonder to this happy little soul, what a shame we often lose that and take our beautiful surroundings for granted. Perhaps holiday time is a good time to slow down and appreciate the natural world a bit more. As a little sign in my aunt's house used to say "Don't hurry, don't worry, don't forget to smell the flowers".

Sally Churchus

Cover Story

This photo of the Keston Roman Tombs was one of a number of photos that I took of important Keston places to go in The Keston Calendar that I produced for 2019. It is a good opportunity to visit if you haven't been before as they are not open every year. See pages 8 and 9 for the history and details of the date and time.

Magazine Donations

If you enjoy The Keston Magazine and would like to make a donation towards the costs we would be very grateful. BACS transfers with reference 'Magazine donation' can be made to Sort Code 20-05-57 Account 30543683. Alternatively, scan the QR code below and select 'Magazine' to donate. Please use the envelope enclosed for cash or cheques made payable to **'Keston Parochial Church Council'**. If you are a UK tax payer and fill in the Gift Aid slip, we can recover an extra 25p for every £1. Thank you.



I wish to Gift Aid my donation to **'Keston Parochial Church Council'** to help meet the expenses of The Keston Magazine

Title	Surname	Forenames
House No/Name	Postcode	Date

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All change at The Greyhound



Keston welcomes Greg, Kariss and family as they take on the running of The Greyhound pub. With Greg's parents, Lisa and Greg Foreman helping out and grandparents Billy and Eileen Forsyth's guidance, it's definitely a family affair. Greg and Kariss are third generation licensees and are excited to keep the pub as a community, family and dog friendly pub – a quintessential country pub. Although the couple have owned the micropubs The Real Ale Way in West Wickham and Hayes for the last eight years, this is their first pub.

The beers will remain mostly the same, but with a few more Shepherd Neame beers, a Kentish family run brewery. The food menu will feature a reduced selection of items until the couple are happy that they can achieve the high standard that they are aiming for. They will be using locally sourced food where possible and Sunday Roasts will be on offer in due course.

Entertainment wise, there will be music on a Sunday afternoon whilst food is being served and Play your

Cards Right evenings to start with. Although there will be no Sky Sports, terrestrial channels will be showing major events such as the FIFA World Cup next summer.

Enquiries about parties, celebrations and local events to be held at the pub are welcome.

By the time you read this, the family will have completed their move to The Greyhound from Bromley North. The children, Elsie, William and young Henry will eventually be transferring to Keston CE Primary round the corner.

Although the couple have a lot on their plate and limited time for hobbies, Greg is an Arsenal football fan, was a coach for his son's football team until recently, enjoys watching football and listening to music. Kariss enjoys baking, especially celebration cakes, and loves musical theatre.

We wish them well in their new venture and look forward to a new chapter in the history of the pub.

As told to Sally Churchus by
Kariss Forsyth-Foreman

Lord's Prayer top of recognised quotes



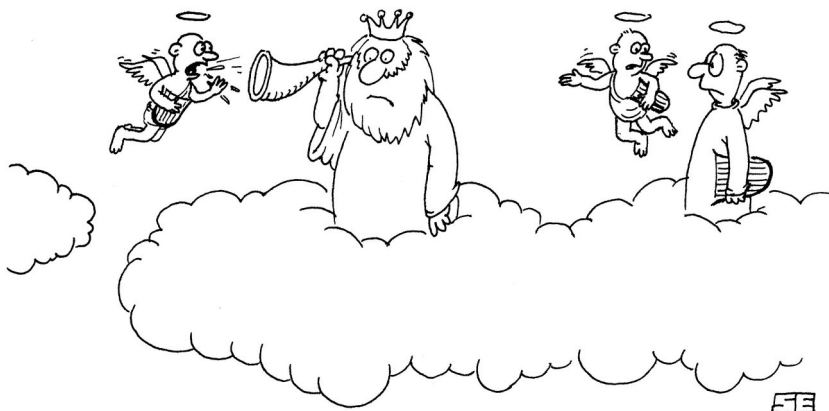
"Give us this day our daily bread" topped a poll for the most recognisable words in the UK narrowly beating "May the force be with you" from the Star Wars films. "Give us this day our daily bread" was recognised as coming from the Lord's prayer by 80.3% of the 2,000 people polled. Surprisingly 89% of people said that they had prayed The Lord's Prayer at some point, including 88% of those who claimed they have no religion.

The Most Rev'd Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, explained that the

meaning is actually quite challenging, meaning 'give me what I need for today and stop me wanting more than my fair share' and that 'The whole human race urgently needs to learn what 'enough' looks like: so that the world is fed, but also in order for the planet to be saved'.

Other quotes included in the survey included Churchill's "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"; "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens; "You'll never walk alone" from the Rodgers and Hammerstein song popularised by Gerry and the Pacemakers and sung by Liverpool football fans; "Happy and glorious, long to reign over us" from the National anthem and "to be or not to be" from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

The polling was done by Thy Kingdom Come, a global ecumenical prayer movement.



"He's been rather deaf since the big bang."

Our Faith Journeys



From left, Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, Brandon, Alison, Thomas and Rev'd Belinda

None of us came from a religious household, or truly understood the value, meaning or significance of Christian faith. We may have enjoyed the rare visit to church buildings and celebrated Christmas and Easter, but this amounted to nothing more than an appreciation of architectural history and a cultural yearly tradition.

Faith came to each of us differently, at different times, through different ways. We discovered this infinite, fascinating well of wisdom in a book that carries just as much relevance today as it did 2,000 years ago. A book we had thought we knew without ever reading it. Inside we learnt about this figure of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the perfect man. A man who encourages us to have the discipline to lead by example, to help and love one another and strive for a higher standard within ourselves.

Since finding Christianity, we've noticed how much more peace and purpose we feel in everyday life. Our conversations, our choices, even the way we support one another have all been transformed.

Being Baptised together as a family was a celebration of all our spiritual journeys uniting into one beautiful event, and it marked the beginning of the exciting path still to come. We are grateful that we had the opportunity to share both the Baptism and Confirmation together with our congregation and we are thankful to Bishop Simon and Rev'd Belinda for the wonderful service and guidance.

Keston parish church welcomed us with open arms. Everyone has been friendly, kind and we were put at ease from the very beginning. We feel that we have found a place where we belong.

The Cridland Southcott family

Keston Roman Tombs Open Day



Circular and rectangular tombs

If you have some free time on Sunday 21st September, do visit the famous Roman Tombs off the Westerham Road at Brambletye, BR2 6AG. They will be open from 11am until 4pm and teas and cakes will be on sale in aid of the Kent Association for the Blind. Entry is free and there will be displays and guided tours. There is only pedestrian access, so best to park in the car park at the top of Heathfield Road and walk up. In a nutshell, this is the history:

Before the Romans

The site on the lower slopes of the now dry valley of the Ravensbourne was first settled in the Iron Age, c. 600-200BC, when a settlement was established. This later expanded with enclosed animal compounds and wooden huts indicating a reasonably affluent community living and farming in Keston.

Romano-British farmstead AD 50-160

Following the Roman conquest in AD 43 an extensive farm developed, with small scale pottery manufacture also taking place.

Re-organisation AD 160-200

The family living at Keston prospered and the farm expanded. Two large agricultural timber-framed structures and a timber daub villa house were built with a metalled road leading to the site.

The Villa Estate AD 200-300

The farm now developed into a large Roman Villa estate of about 500 acres. A new masonry villa-house was built with painted walls and plain tessellated floors, a bath suite and piped water. A large, new timber barn and fenced paddocks were created. Monumental tombs were also built – during the third century members of the Roman family were buried in a private cemetery located up-hill from the villa-house. Here were two monumental tombs, which today are the only part of the site that can still be seen by the public. The Heyworth family donated the tombs and a small area around them to the Borough of Bromley in 1927, although they are still surrounded by privately owned land.



Stone coffin

The circular tomb is 30 ft in diameter with six radiating buttresses and would have originally stood about 20 ft high. The thick walls, constructed of flints and tiles, were plastered and painted red on the outside. The inside of the tomb was filled with soil, on top of which were placed the main burials, almost certainly cremations (not surviving). Adjacent is a rectangular tomb, about 12 by 10 ft. This had one buttress and a tiled roof. It had contained a carved stone coffin, which is now on the site. Between two of the other buttresses of the circular tomb is an apsidal tomb, which contained the cremated bones of an adult in a decorated lead casket. A tiled, domed opus signinum (concrete) roof covered its chamber. About 20 other burials, both inhumations and cremations, were discovered round the tombs.

Decline AD 300-400

It seems farming activity contracted during the fourth century and one of the timber buildings was burnt down and not replaced, whilst the other was replaced by a domestic masonry building.

The End AD 400 and Saxon occupation AD 450-550

As elsewhere, following the retreat of the Roman army and government, the villa and estate were abandoned at the

end of the fourth century. The buildings, roads, fences, paddocks and fields lay in ruins. However, the site was occupied again in AD 450-500 when Anglo-Saxon farmers built a “grubenhaus” (dug-out hut) in the ruins of the Roman villa site. This too was eventually abandoned and the settlement moved 500 yards to near the present Keston Parish Church where it remained for the next 1,300 years. Since then the ruins of the once busy and rich Roman villa have remained buried under agricultural land.

The tombs were excavated and consolidated by the Bromley and West Kent Archaeological Group in 1967. The Group then spent 20 years excavating the nearby Roman villa which related to the tombs.

Brian Philp, Director Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit and introduction by Sally Churchus

Kent Association for the Blind

This charity works with over 12,000 people in Kent and the surrounding areas, and is one of the largest and most respected local sight loss charities in the UK. They work to prevent avoidable sight loss, deliver excellent support services and enable people to get involved and live independently.



**Kent
Association
for the
Blind**

Apologies if readers can remember all the history from the article in 2016!



BACK TO SCHOOL

Let's start this year with
excitement and joy!

Church Service
3pm Sunday 7th September
Keston Parish Church

Including prayer and blessing for a happy, positive and successful school year
All students welcome whether school, college or university

Church Services



First Sunday in the month

8.00am Holy Communion using
Book of Common Prayer
(1662)

10.00am Celebrational Worship
(non Communion)

All other Sundays

10.00am Holy Communion

Every Monday

7.40am Morning Prayer

8.00am Holy Communion (said)

But none during August

Second Saturday in the month

11.20am Healing & Wholeness Service
Anointing/Laying on of hands offered
and with the option of Holy
Communion (wafer only)

Except 9th August

Pet Service

3.00pm Saturday 4th October

Informal service with blessings for pets

From the Registers

Baptism

24th June – Arabella Rose Bentley
(born 19th February 2024)

Baptism and Confirmation

1st June – Thomas Oliver Cridland

1st June – Brandon Charles Southcott

1st June – Alison Claire Southcott

Funerals

15th May – Patricia “Tishie” Exon
(aged 88 years)

Burial of Ashes

13th May – Ann Cecilia Margaret
de Croos (aged 76 years)

16th May – Patricia “Tishie” Exon
(aged 88 years)

Keston Wildlife Boards and Mugs



Can you name these species? Answers on p22

The Friends of Keston Common are currently designing an interpretation board for the Ravensbourne Meadows. This board will highlight the flora and fauna that can be found there and explain the importance of safe-guarding these areas. It will include a map of the different wildflower meadows, (wet and dry), and show the pathways that visitors should use as wild flowers don't grow where footsteps go.

The board will contain illustrations of the various species found and we are fortunate to have amongst our membership the expert drawing skills of Yana Wolanski. Amongst the drawings will be various wild flowers, butterflies and insects.

Funding for the board will be made possible through both FoKC funds and a grant from the Bromley Friends Forum and we are looking at installation in the latter part of this year. In the interim period FoKC has produced a frieze of a number of the proposed drawings (details above) and used this to produce a mug for purchase at £8. Please email

fokc.support@hotmail.co.uk or contact Sally Churchus on 020 8462 8750 editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk if you would like to buy one. All proceeds will go to FoKC.

Larry Herbert/Yana Wolanski



For nature

*We thank you Lord of all
creation, for the wonder of the
world in which we live: for the
earth and all that springs from
it; and for the mystery of life
and growth.*

From a prayer by Basil Naylor

Fires



A vigilant resident spotted a fire and called the fire and rescue service on 22nd May

Common, especially the woodland and heathland areas. Fires can burn unseen underground through the peaty layer and unless doused with copious litres of water will continue to burn indefinitely. Please remain vigilant and if you see any signs of a fire, dial 999 and report it immediately to the fire service. Please remember barbecues are not allowed on the Common and the lighting of bonfires for recreational use is strictly prohibited. Thank you for your support.

Larry Herbert, Chair of the Friends of Keston Common

There has been a spate of fires in recent weeks on various parts of the Common, including the play area. It is possible that these were accidental but more than likely set deliberately. In these days of hot and dry weather, fires pose an immense risk to the whole of the



Fire by pond 3 where piles of cleared vegetation had been left for wildlife



Debris left by fire in the play area at the end of Lakes Road



Logs removed by pond 3 and then also the charcoal so it didn't leach into the stream

Keston National School Parts 7 and 8



Keston School circa 1930. A drinking fountain was erected in 1922 on the common and presented to the parish by the Anderson family of Hill House in memory of William Charles Anderson who was for many years a hard worker for the village and a school Manager. It was moved to the new Primary School in Lakes Road for safety after being vandalised.

Could Keston Voluntary Aided School Survive?

In the early years of its foundation a handful of wealthy subscribers were able to contribute sufficient to just meet the very small annual budget for running the school. In subsequent years, the number of subscribers and the sums of money collected steadily declined while the School roll slowly grew from an average of 60 to near 100 by the end of the century. As early as 1894, the Managers of the school were considering whether they could maintain their status as a Voluntary School given the serious financial difficulties they faced. However, in 1897 the Voluntary Schools Act was passed that provided extra funding of up to five shillings (25p) per child for all 'Voluntary Aided' schools enabling it to carry on as a Voluntary School.

The poor economic conditions prevailing after the First World War produced another crisis for Keston

School and in 1920 the Managers reluctantly made the decision to become a 'Board School' (a council school) under the control of the Kent Education Committee. Before this happened a solution to the situation came from events beyond the school or the parish.

At the height of the First World War the Ministry of Defence established the Army Air Corps and chose to create an aerodrome on some farm fields in Biggin Hill. This branch of the army soon became a separate arm of the Defence Department, renamed the Royal Air Force. By the mid 1920s the newly established Acoustical Research Department was also based at the airfield at Biggin Hill; the two departments grew steadily in size and numbers of staff, especially in the 1930s, and new houses were built to accommodate the families of married personnel working there. The impact on Keston School was dramatic; in Spring

1925 the numbers on the roll stood at 117 and based on previous years looked set to decline further, however, by the end of the year, there were 155 on roll, many of them from the ‘aerodrome’. In 1926, the Headmaster had to reorganise the classes and convert the cloakroom for use as an additional classroom. On 16th April 1926 the school log book recorded ‘15 children absent, no RAF tender arrived’.

Other events also changed the nature of Keston; the sale of most of the old estates between 1919 and 1928, Hollydale, Keston Lodge, Leaves Green Estate and Wickham Court Estate illustrated the changing social order so long established in Keston. These were years when more land changed hands in England than occurred during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1540s.

A new bus service operated by Metropolitan Omnibus Company from 1914 which ran between Bromley and Westerham Hill linked Keston to the outside world as never before. The service expanded in 1921, 1924 and 1933 when the route was divided, 146A to Downe and 146B to Westerham Hill. For the first time children of Keston



First bus leaving Biggin Hill
25th September 1913 number 95
Bromley to Westerham Hill



Entrance gates to Forest Drive from
Croydon Road early 1920s

need not walk to and from school in bad weather.

In these years new housing appeared all over the Parish. Frederic Rogers bought Keston Lodge Estate in 1923 and immediately began building Keston Park Estate. The sale of Leaves Green Estate and Old House Farm in 1925 saw the building of the first bungalows and council houses along Leaves Green Road and Blackness Lane. As a result of these and other new housing the population of Keston doubled in number from just under 1000 in 1919 to some 2000 in 1939.

By 1933 the School Managers were forced to halt all new admissions because of overcrowding and requested permission from Kent Education Committee to refuse all ‘out of parish’ admissions but this was not granted.

By 1936 the School finances bore no comparison to that of 1859. 99% of the capital costs and annual budget came from Kent Education Committee and just 1% from the Managers, most of which came from renting the school building from the Trust. Voluntary status had truly become all but titular.

Tudor Davies, edited by SC,
photos courtesy of Edward Williams

The Secret Life of Butterflies

We enjoy watching butterflies as they visit flowers to nectar and sun themselves, but each species also needs to find the right foodplant for its offspring and the right habitat for overwintering.

Searching for the different life stages of each species (egg, larva and pupa) can be a fascinating pastime and the added bonus is in learning about the world of plants and habitats they depend on.

Here in Keston, we are primarily on acid or neutral soils, so the range of foodplants does not include the chalk loving flowers such as Horseshoe Vetch *Hippocrepis comosa*, food for the stunning



Brimstone courtship

Chalkhill and Adonis Blues, found on the downs at Shoreham.

However, we are rich in flower meadows and woodland edges containing many plants suitable for all families of butterflies, with oak, elm and shrubs such as blackthorn, the primary foodplants of the Hairstreak family.



Orange tip eggs on Cuckoo flowers

Often the first butterfly of spring, the male lemon yellow Brimstones emerge from hibernation as soon as the weather warms up and await the arrival of the females, (a much paler white), to start the next generation. She will seek out the new leaves of the Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus* (a common heathland shrub) to deposit her single eggs on the underside of the leaves. Brimstones are our longest-lived butterflies, as they will survive a full year as adults, until the new generation hatches in the summer.

Another early spring arrival is the Orange Tip, which overwinters as a pupa and emerges from its cocoon to coincide with the sprouting of its foodplants, Cuckoo Flower *Cardamine pratensis* and Hedge Garlic *Alliaria petiolata*.



Brown Hairstreak egg on Blackthorn



Brown Hairstreak adult in August

Its tiny orange eggs can be found easily on flower buds in the Keston wet meadows or along paths.

One uncommon butterfly that has been found here in recent years is the Brown Hairstreak. This species lays tiny white sea-urchin-shaped eggs on the young shoots of Blackthorn bushes, to spend the winter nestled in the crook of the protecting thorns. The larvae emerge in April as the Blackthorn puts out its new leaves, and completes its lifecycle in August when the adults emerge. Because they are very elusive, spending their time mostly in the treetops, the best way to detect their presence is to search for the eggs in winter. However, it has been discovered that the caterpillars will show up under UV light, making them easy to find after dark.



Purple Hairstreak

In the same family is the White Letter Hairstreak. Its larvae feed exclusively on elm leaves, and the demise of the English Elm has reduced its population. However, it also lays eggs on Wych Elm and the larvae can be found with careful searching, as they are wonderfully camouflaged.

Purple Hairstreak lay their eggs on Oak twigs, and with some patience, many trees will yield a few tucked in among the buds. You can see the adults spiralling up from the treetops on balmy summer evenings.



Birds Foot Trefoil

A real spring jewel is the Small Copper, appearing as adults in May. Its foodplant, Sheep's Sorrel, is a plentiful meadow species, with its distinctive red flowers and seed heads carpeting the ground.

Another early sight, the Common Blue uses Birds Foot Trefoil as its larval foodplant, and this is plentiful on both Hayes and Keston Commons. It overwinters as a caterpillar low down in vegetation, and times its emergence from the pupa to coincide with the flowers appearing in May.

Discover this mini world in your nearest wild space this summer!

Bob Harrop

The Story of Aspirin

You will probably have taken aspirin, in one form or other, many times. But how much do you know of its history?

It was over 125 years ago, on 6th March 1899 that the German pharmaceutical company Bayer first patented aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid).

But this is based on salicylic acid, which was used in herbal medicines as far back as Sumerian times, in 2500 BC. It was then that the Assyrians used willow leaves for rheumatic disease.

*The Rev'd Edward Stone
used willow bark to
successfully treat...
50 of his parishioners*

The Egyptians also used willow leaves, as well as myrtle, to ease joint pain or inflammation.

In Greece, Hippocrates (460-377 BC) recommended an extract of willow bark for fever, pain and childbirth. And even the peoples of ancient China, Rome, and Native America all discovered and used plants containing salicylic acid.

Fast forward to Chaucer's 14th century, and the Knight's Tale recommends the use of meadow sweet for pain, another source of acetylsalicylic acid.

In 1763, some science was introduced, when an English clergyman, the Rev'd Edward Stone, used willow bark to successfully treat fever 'ague' in 50 of his parishioners. He carefully documented it all for the President of the Royal Society.

In 1828, Johann Andreas Buchner, a Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Munich, purified salicin from willow bark.

In 1859, Professor Hermann Kolbe, at Marburg University worked out the chemical structure of salicylic acid and made it synthetically.

In 1897, Dr Felix Hoffman, a German chemist at Friedrich Bayer and Co, managed to produce pure stable acetylsalicylic acid (ASA). His discovery was the *first time* that a drug had been made synthetically, and so it was the birth of both aspirin and the pharmaceutical industry.

Finally, in early 1899 the new compound was named and registered Aspirin. The 'A' comes from acetyl and 'spir' from the first part of *Spirea ulmaria* (Meadowsweet) a botanical source of salicylic acid.

So next time you take an aspirin, think of the Assyrians chewing willow leaves, 4,000 years ago.

Source: Parish Pump

Interesting fact: Meadowsweet grows in the Keston meadows. It flowers from early Summer to early Autumn and prefers damp conditions.



Meadowsweet

Image by Gabriela Pink from Pixabay

What I Do



I am Steve and am very happy to introduce myself as your new church gardener and tell you a little bit about myself...I'll start back in my late teens and early twenties – a long time ago!

Having been a troubled youth, I ended up leading Punk bands, when Punk Rock was quite the thing (this was the late 1970s and into the 1980s). My bands became quite well known, particularly The Afflicted Man and the Accursed. When I became a Christian in 1984, I was amazed that the names of the punk rock bands reflected the state of being without faith. I became a committed member of a local church, where I married and had three beautiful daughters – who have now given me four just as beautiful granddaughters.

As a member of the church, I was invited to go to Rochester Youth Offender's Prison in February 1985, to play my guitar and to share my testimony. This started a life-long journey. I visited many prisons in the Southeast of England and then ended up travelling all over Albania shortly after the fall of the Communist dictator, Enver Hoxha. Over the four years that I visited Albania, I went into every prison in the country to share my faith –

always taking my guitar! I even featured on a BBC News special report about the race for souls in Albania – I was shown alongside Mother Theresa and the Pope!

As my work in Prisons became increasingly important to me, I trained at Spurgeon's College In Upper Norwood. I then went on to become an ordained minister through the Free Church and so began my work as a full time Prison Chaplain at High Down, Surrey. I no longer needed to travel the world to share the gospel, as the world came to me in prison. The justice system sent me inmates from all over the world and they came to my Bible Classes and many came to faith too.

Fast forward to now – I am retired from full time work but I love my gardening – which I see as a way of honouring this beautiful world we've been so richly blessed with. I am a long distance walker and enjoy many National Trails with my wonderful wife. We're currently just over half way through a walk of the South West Coast of England (only another 370 miles to go!) I still play my guitar daily and write songs – but added to this is a banjo I inherited when my uncle passed away three years ago.

I'm very happy to add Keston parish church to the other gardens I work in locally. I think it's very important to look after the beautiful church grounds and to take care of the cemetery. I like to think gratefully about all the past lives here. Finally, I'll leave you with two simple words from a song of mine, which help explain my love for gardening and this amazing world we live in... "Creation's calling."

Steve Hall

Richard's Ramblings



Field behind Richard's house with
runway in the distance

Phew – wot a scorcher! Or, as the *Daily Mirror* put it in its headline in 1942 (?) ‘Scorch Wot a Fuhrer!’, as the German armies were sweeping across Europe.

Thankfully we’re not at war at present, although we are painfully aware of the conflict in the Middle East. However, our battle is against climate change in all its forms and the impact it is having on the planet, and by definition, on all of us. I’m writing this during the current hot spell and hopefully, by the time you read this, it will have passed and things will be closer to the seasonal norm.

My morning visit to the woods with ‘the dog’ have been interesting. The bike ride across the fields – through ripening corn – have been enjoyable as I see the ears of corn growing day on day and now ripening rapidly. Entry into the woods, by foot, is a pleasure and a contrast – out of the hot bright sun into the dark cool woods. My route takes me

towards Milking Lane which runs, or used to, from the King’s Arms pub on Leaves Green, (which is up and running again – good), through to Downe past the West Kent Golf Club in the valley and on towards Downe. It was at this point in the woods that Canadian troops encamped prior to the fatal Dieppe landings in 1942. This information was imparted to me by my good friend, (now deceased), Frank Goodrich, who was a boy living in Downe at the time. He also told me of an incident of a doodlebug being caught on its wing by a barrage balloon cable and spiralling down to explode on impact and kill several Home Guard personnel!

It was only in the 1950s that the airfield was extended with the coming of jet aircraft, thus severing the direct connection with the village of Downe. The remnants of the lane are still visible but with an iron gate at each end. How times change.

Richard Geiger



‘Corn’ ripening on 1st July

“We look forward to the time when the power of love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.” William E. Gladstone

What's On

Prayer Walks

First Tuesday & Third Wednesday 9.30am

The Green opposite Greyhound pub

We usually return about 11am. Well behaved dogs welcome too!

Men's pub social

Third Wednesday 7pm The Greyhound

Join us for chat and drinks, plus a meal for those who want it. More details from Martin Becker on 07484 609102.

Keston Book Club

First Wednesday 7pm The Fox

More information from 07503 268001 or angelahollamby@gmail.com.

Friends of Keston Common Walk

First Wednesday 2pm from Keston Village

Sign opposite The Greyhound

Walks last up to 2 hours. Well behaved dogs welcome. Good footwear advised.

New Keston WI

Second Wednesday 1.30pm-3.30pm

Keston Church Hall

Contact Helen Best on 07715 880889.

Book Reading Fellowship

Monday 29th September 2pm Gravel Rd

Come and discuss books with some Christian content that you have read over tea/coffee and cake. Please let Sally Churchus know on 020 8462 8750 editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk if you would like to come.

Harvest Bring and Share Meal

Sunday 5th October 12 noon

Keston Church Hall

Bring a dish of food to share.

KestFest Cancelled

Everyone was prepared and looking forward to this year's KestFest on Saturday 7th June, but plans were scuppered when an amber weather warning was announced the day before. The Events/Fundraising sub committee of Keston Village Residents' Association, Chaired by Shelley Sturdy, were obliged to cancel the event for safety reasons due to the risk of thunder and lightning on all the electrical equipment.

Most stallholders were still able to use their wares for other events, including over 130 sweetie pots that were destined for the Keston Parish Church Children's Tombola. They were donated to the PTA at Keston CE Primary to be sold on Friday afternoons, (when sweets are normally on sale), to help raise funds for new microphones and other items needed by the school.



Parish Lunch

Sunday 14th September

12 noon - 3pm Keston Church Hall

Tickets £18 from Chris 07988 712873

Bring your own drinks and glasses

Magazine Deadline

Please send material for the October/ November issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Wednesday 3rd September by email to: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ Encore!

The new Curate had visited the local prison and taken along his electric guitar. He was so pleased with the applause that he responded: 'Thank you very much for your appreciation. I so hope that I will see you all back here again next year.'

☺ Churchyard Notice

Churchyard maintenance is becoming increasingly difficult, so it would be appreciated if parishioners could cut the grass around their own graves. Thank you.

☺ New Amazon Scam

Beware of the new Amazon scam. I asked my husband to order me some expensive jewellery, but motorcycle parts came instead! Thankfully, they fit his bike.

Answers to species on p6
From left to right: pyramidal orobid,
cuckoo flower, meadow brown butterfly,
bumble bee, ox-eye daisy, common
blue butterfly, knapweed, damselfly,
yellow rattle, ragged robin.

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