

The Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



February/March 2026

Keston Parish Church

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Friends of Keston Common

High Elms Country Park friendsofkestoncommon.chessck.co.uk / 01689 862815

Keston Residents' Road Safety Group

krrsg@hotmail.com

*The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship Psalm 19:1*

Thought for the month



'Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.' Luke 2.19. What could be more endearing than watching the nativity story unfold with a real life baby, lying in a manger, gently and lovingly watched over by her mother and father (and in this case at Keston Church this Christmas Eve, also her big sister, her very own guardian angel)? The place quickly filled with angels singing, excited shepherds flocking to gaze upon the sleeping infant and wise men from the East seeking to honour the baby who would be king.

A brief insight into that very first Christmas day when Jesus was born. Mary had just given birth to her first-born in a strange place. She knew that this baby was special. She had been told this by an angel. Then, there were all these visitors from near and far. What was she to make of it all? There was no time to think, so she remembered all these things, mulled over them and slowly built her hopes and dreams for her little son.

Nearly every new mother thinks her child is special. She has hopes and dreams for her little ones, forged from

glimpses of their little characters and interests as they grow – what captivates them? She wants her child to be the best they can be.

Mary, the model of motherhood, shows the wisdom of reflecting, yet keeping her thoughts to herself. She knows her son is destined for greatness. She knows that there will be pain, as Simeon, the old priest in the temple, warns her “and a sword will pierce your own soul too”. Yet she does not rush to interpret or control the narrative, choosing to sit with the mystery. In the end, she finds herself stood at the foot of the cross on which her son is hung up to die. Quietly, she bears what no mother should have to bear. So strong is her love for her child.

Motherhood, indeed parenthood, can be the most joyous experience. It can also be extremely challenging. Letting go yet being the discreet safety net that unobtrusively stands ready to catch and to comfort; to set upright again. And pride, what pride when they find for themselves fulfilment and wholeness in who God made them to be!

Happy Mothering Sunday on 15th March.

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor

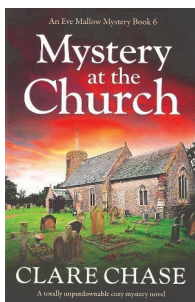


I want to hibernate!
Eat and sleep...
At least the snow
has melted today
and the temperature
is slightly warmer,
although who
knows what is

coming later in the week? As Richard Geiger is away on holiday, and unable to do his usual article, I thought I would share some of the beautiful snowy photos that people have taken recently on that page instead.

I was kindly given several books as Christmas presents, and am happy to have some good reading lined up. One of them is a murder mystery that takes place whilst a film is being made at a church not dissimilar to ours – in fact the cover looks so like the front of this issue it made me laugh! Mystery at the church... God IS a mystery, completely unfathomable – our finite minds cannot hope to understand the mind of God. So I am grateful for the honesty of Geoff Carr whilst writing his Faith Journey in admitting his faith has wavered over the years. Let us not give up worshipping and encouraging one another in our faith and hope at church this year.

Sally Churchus



Cover Story



The amazing sunset photo on the cover was kindly sent in by Keston resident, Barbara Fowlds. She noticed the beautiful sunset and cloud formation as she was leaving her weekly art class in the church hall. She's a weather watcher and over the last 10 years has had her photos appear on BBC and ITV weather forecasts as well as in local magazines and newspapers. This one featured on the Camera Club page of the News Shopper. Since moving here two years ago she has been pleased to put Keston on the weather map. She says she is just an amateur and uses her iPad, but carefully considers the composition.

Her photos can be seen on Twitter/X @skylark22BHC1. Thank you for sharing it with us – it's a shame I had to crop it to portrait orientation.

Sally Churchus

Apologies

Apologies to Edward Williams for forgetting to attribute the old photos used in the last issue of the magazine from his extensive collection – one of Miss Jarvis and two of the Mill House. They really help to bring articles alive!

A New Look for the Old Post Office

The Real Estate Lounge



You may have noticed some changes at the old, rather dilapidated post office in Keston village. Well, it's had a serious makeover and is now "The Real Estate Lounge" of Keston Estates – officially opening for business just in time for you to read this!

Like most projects involving a much-loved but rather tired old building, converting the former post office into The Real Estate Lounge came with its fair share of challenges and took a little longer than first anticipated. Its age and a few 'unusual' features – including the famously sloping floor – certainly kept everyone on their toes.

What many people may not realise is that the building was originally part of a coaching inn. The premises once formed the stable block for The Fox Inn, back during the reign of George IV in the 1820s when horses and carriages would stop overnight on long journeys. Over the years, the stables were adapted for commercial and retail use within the village, and today the building has been given a new lease of life as The Real Estate Lounge, continuing its long tradition of serving the local community.

The man behind it all is John Wiltshire, who has lived in Keston for almost 25

years and in the Borough of Bromley for over 46 years. John brings a wealth of property experience, running his own agency for the past seven years in partnership with Keller Williams.

John still calls Keston village home, living with his long-suffering property and golf widow, Sara, and their teenage son, Henry, who shares his dad's love of history and sport – including following Bromley FC and Harlequins RFC.

As a proud member of the Keston Village Residents Association (KVRA), John is involved in all sorts of local activities, including the teams that organise KestFest on the Common in June, the Remembrance poppies around the village and the village Christmas fair – although, strangely, John and Santa have never been spotted in the same room!

What We Do at Keston Estates

Put simply, we help clients buy, sell and let; and landlords manage homes across Keston, Downe, Coney Hall, Hayes, Bromley, and beyond – we're not restricted by postcodes.

At Keston Estates, you'll find a friendly, approachable team offering honest advice, expert local knowledge, and a personal service every step of the way. So, if you're thinking about moving, letting, or just want a chat about property, pop into The Real Estate Lounge – we'd love to see you!

John Wiltshire



Church Donations to Charity



Licensed Lay Minister, Tricia Coward, left, and Churchwarden Chris Rowland, with the toys

Thank you to Keston church congregation for donating 113 wonderful toys and books to an approx. value of £350 at the Christingle and Toy service on 7th December. Tricia Coward took them to the Bromley branch of The Salvation Army to be distributed to local children who would otherwise have gone without a Christmas present.

Over the rest of the Christmas period, thanks to the generosity of those attending services, collections amounting to £1,000 were split between the following charities:

- The Children's Society
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- St Christopher's Hospice
- LATCH Project for homeless in Bromley
- Demelza Hospice Care for Children
- Centrepont homeless charity for young people.

Thanks

Thank you once again to Sam Price, who owns a fruit and veg stall near Bromley South, for kindly donating over 80 oranges for our Christingle service.

The Great Storm of 1987

A talk entitled 'The Great Storm of 1987 – and how it changed my life' is being given by local historian and writer, Bob Ogley, in aid of the charity Welcare in Bromley. He will be speaking at St. Peter and St. Paul church in Bromley, BR2 0EG (behind Primark) at 3pm on Saturday 7th February. Entrance is £10 on the door but please register attendance by email to sheilabee498@gmail.com or telephone 01689 851605 (for catering purposes). There will be light refreshments and a raffle. Welcare provide practical and emotional support for families with children up to the age of 13 in South London and East Surrey.

Prayer

*Go forth into the world in peace;
Be of good courage;
Hold fast that which is good;
Render to no one evil for evil;
Strengthen the faint-hearted;
Support the weak;
Help the afflicted;
Honour all men.*

Anon

My Faith Journey



In 1939 my parents had their first child Georgina. In 1940 their second child, Gillian, was born with a heart defect which resulted in some major operations over a number of years. The next child, Elizabeth, died at a young age but was Christened. Then came Barry who again was Christened but died young. In November 1948 I was born and, whilst very young, caught pneumonia.

The start of my faith journey was therefore my early Christening into the Church of England in case I did not survive. My family was not one where we regularly went to church but there was an underlying belief. My first connection was made when I wanted to join the Cubs. My friends had joined a group which was held in Addiscombe Methodist Church where I attended monthly Church Parades. I did not continue into the Scouts but I did go on to regularly attend the Salvation Army Youth Club at the Croydon Citadel as a teenager.

I then met a girlfriend whose family worshipped at Bromley Central Methodist Church. I attended as regularly as life permitted. I was married in the church and my first two children

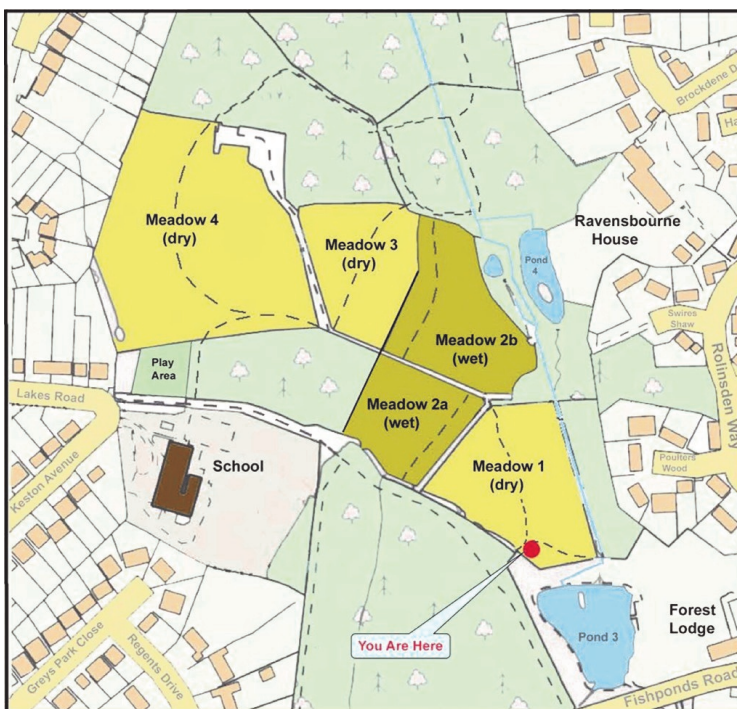
were baptised there. The church was demolished so that the Glades could be built and the Council gave us a plot of land near to the County Court where we built a new Bromley Central Methodist Church and my third child was the first Baptism on the Cradle Roll in the new church. I carried on attending this church until after a house move when we made various new friends who attended Hayes United Reform Church in Pickhurst Lane. My family then became regulars at this church and my children joined the Scout movement there. I still attend many of their Men's Group monthly meetings but I stopped worshipping there after my wife and I separated in 2006.

I was working at Trinity School from 2001 and met a rather hostile Sandi there. When her husband died in 2004 I used to help out fixing things around her house as they would normally have been done by her husband John. After I separated from my wife I was living in rented accommodation. Eventually Sandi suggested I used two rooms in her house and help out with the bills and repairs. This became my new living arrangement and as Sandi was a regular at Keston Parish Church I also started to attend. I really enjoyed the C of E services and the many friendly people there and felt very happy. I know not what God has in store for me but I am sure He will let me know.

I have had several periods of doubt during my life as I am sure have others. I was 19 when my father died suddenly at 55. When my cousin died suddenly at 52 I was left feeling that I would not make retirement, but at 77 I am still here.

Geoff Carr

New Trees and Information Boards



Section of the new Interpretation Board for the Meadows

The Friends of Keston Common will be busy in the new year with a number of new developments and initiatives.

Firstly, we have ordered a batch of ten disease resistant Elm trees. These will be planted along the edges of our meadows towards the end of January and early February. We plan to add to these in future years and gradually replace the Elm and Ash trees we have lost to both Dutch Elm and Ash Dieback diseases.

Secondly, we have ordered a batch of 420 tree whips from the Woodland Trust. These comprise native species and are provided free of charge. The plan is to plant some of these along the side of the bridleway that runs from Fishponds Road to Lakes Road, and the

remainder close to Caesar's Well to fill the space left by the loss of Ash trees. The former location will help create a low-level hedge to encourage nesting birds and remove the need for maintenance of the decaying post and rail. We expect to plant this during February.

Thirdly, during March, we plan to install two new interpretation boards. The first of these will be placed in the first wild flower meadow and will describe the flora and fauna that can be found there. The second will be placed on the Heathland and replaces the previous board which had failed and required a complete re-write.

Larry Herbert, Chair FoKC

The Fox's Achilles Heel



Many readers will recognise Harry Sargent as the cheerful Barista and Barman at The Fox and Heathfields. He lives close by – upstairs at The Fox pub! What fewer people probably know is about his musical ability as half of Achilles Heel band, as a singer and keyboard player.

His love of music started at Secondary School, and although the traditional type of music taught didn't appeal, he was inspired by an out of school Jazz and Piano teacher. He then went on to study music at Falmouth University, Cornwall, and met some like-minded music lovers to play with and a group of four was formed. On leaving Uni he discovered that one of the four, Caitlin (Pinkess) lived not too far away in Wimbledon, and the two of them teamed up to continue their music making.

Caitlin usually writes the songs with basic chords or has a rough idea of what she wants to sing, and then it is set to music by Harry. The genre of music can

be described as Neo Soul, or New Soul/ Jazz Pop. They have performed throughout London, including prestigious venues – The Ned, The Bedford and delivered a sold-out headline show at the EFG London Jazz Festival in 2025.

The band do their recordings at a studio in Acton and released their first single in 2024. Recently their first album *Thirst* was launched with a special evening at The Fox on 4th December 2025. If you missed that, and want to hear their music it is available on Instagram @achillesheel_band, Spotify or TikTok.

When speaking to Harry about the future, he and Caitlin have applied to play as many festivals as possible in 2026. "I love performing, and the art behind creating something that others will enjoy" he said. We wish our local talented musicians every success, and hope they don't forget us when they are famous!

Sally Churchus



In Half Term

10am - 12noon Tuesday 17th February

Keston Parish Church Hall, Church Road BR2 6HT

10am Welcome drinks and snacks

10.15am Crafts and Activities

11.30am Celebration with music

11.45am Lunch (provided)

Theme: Shrove Tuesday Next Date: 31st March



Saturday 7th February 10.00am

Keston Church Hall, Church Rd

Cost £10 Everyone welcome

Includes croissants, porridge, toast, fruit
and freshly brewed coffee/tea etc.

Bookings on 07748 655240



There was no more dozing off after the
vicar started serving the extra-strength
coffee *before* the service

Church Services



Church Choir and Keston School Choir during 10am service at Harvest

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

Third Sunday in the month

10.00am Holy Communion with Sunday School for children

Every Monday

7.40am Morning Prayer

8.00am Holy Communion (said)

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)

Ash Wednesday

3.00pm Wednesday 18th February
Holy Communion with ashing

Mothering Sunday

10.00am Sunday 15th March
Communion service with Keston School Choir

Annunciation of the Lord

3.00pm Wednesday 25th March
Holy Communion

From the Registers

Burial of Ashes

13th September

Kathleen Elizabeth Cribbens
(aged 87 years)

24th November

Reginald Kenneth Still (aged 103 years)

Funeral (at Bluebell Cemetery)

22nd October

Eileen May Rose Martin (aged 94 years)

How We Met

I first saw Kiri in a little convenience store in London during my school trip from Germany in September 2004. Something about him made the ordinary moment feel magical. We exchanged numbers, and even after I returned home, we talked every day, three times a day. By March 2005, I felt confident enough to come back to the UK and see Kiri again. Feeling over the moon and full of trust, I knew I was ready to move to the UK and start my life with him. We got married in 2006, so are celebrating our 20th wedding anniversary this year and looking forward to many more. What started as a chance meeting truly became the beginning of our life together.

Shavee Udhayakumar and Kiri Thurairajalingam
(who run Keston Post Office and Village Store)



In 1960, a new department to act as academic support for the technical courses at Bromley Technical College was opened off London Lane. The junior clerical officer (myself) was transferred as Secretary to the HoD and a teaching staff of 10 appointed, including six young men, mostly direct from University.

One day, the Economics teacher came to the office to tell me, without any excitement at all, that he had bought his first car. Sadly, he was also without a licence, any insurance, or even knowing how to start it; please could I help him by going to the garage, just to collect it...

My pupil passed his test the first time! You can guess the rest. We were married in 1968 with another of the 'new' staff being Tudor's Best Man.

Judy and Tudor Davies (Treasurer of The Friends of Keston Common)



In December 2014 I was invited by Martin Durman to go to Langley Park Rotary Club Christmas party. Unfortunately he was unwell and asked Alan Blanchette if he could take me. This he did and also sat next to me for the meal. When he dropped me home I thanked him and said it was too late to invite him in for coffee to which he replied that it wasn't and he would love a coffee, was out of the car and at my front door before I had time to reply. Well, we enjoyed coffee and a chat and a month or so later I was inducted as a member of Langley Park Rotary Club. Alan would often pop round for coffee and then he asked me if I would like to go to the Edinburgh Tattoo with him. We had a very enjoyable couple of days and both decided that we were, in fact, a couple. We spent a lot of time together and on 5th September 2020 married in Keston Church. Due to Covid we were the only wedding there in 2020 and were only allowed 30 guests. We did, however, have a fabulous celebration in a marquee in my garden with the 30 guests and two dogs. Ren and Alan Blanchette

In 1986 I got a new job with Bromley Council which meant I could buy a flat but not without a second job, so I took an evening bar job in The Bird In Hand, Bickley. Richard was working as a Project Manager for Bovis and was renting a house near the pub. He came into the pub for a drink with his work colleagues before going home and we got chatting – mainly about food and drink, which led to him taking me for a meal at the Chariot Wheel Restaurant in Bromley. Neither the pub or restaurant exist any longer but we are still together 39 years later! Hilary (KVRA Treasurer) and Richard Ryder



We were both working at the main library in Bromley. A colleague (matchmaking?) gave us tickets to a classical music concert she was performing in. When we realised we would each be going alone we arranged to meet up. Enjoying each others' company we continued going to concerts together and David wooed me by cooking some delicious meals – especially his signature Tiramisu dish! David proposed in 2001 and we married in 2002. We are still enjoying music and food together! Caroline and David Cook (Organist and Choirmaster, Keston Parish Church)



In 1968, soon after I left school, my sister and I had the opportunity to go on a Norfolk Broads boating holiday with a group of other young people. There were two yachts, one for the boys and one for the girls at night. During the day we had a Captain from the boy's boat and we would crew, never having sailed before although we were both good at swimming. It was great fun, with memorable music of the day coming from a transistor radio. We got lots of bruises from dodging the boom but soon got to know how to tack and pull on the right ropes.

However, you also have a quant pole to get you out of a tight spot when there is no wind or to push you off a bank that's a bit too close. On this particular day Michael was our Captain on punt duty and we were going along gently when the quant got stuck in some soft mud. One thing is that you mustn't lose the pole so you hold on tight and try and pull it out but of course the boat is still moving forward... and so he slid gracefully down the pole shouting "Don't lose the quant pole!" And so I grabbed it but of course just slid into the water too! So it was up to the others to get to us and the dratted pole, but luckily we were near a bank and were rescued quickly but drenched in freezing water and stinking mud. We cleaned up on our respective boats and were given hot tea and snacks and Michael let me put my freezing feet on his tummy to warm up and that did it for me! The start of over 50 years together – and he still keeps me warm when I'm cold! June and Michael Gibson

Thank you to all those who kindly contributed towards this article.

The Archaeology of Keston

This article is the first in a series written by Mrs E.V. Piercy Fox FSA (also known as Nancy Piercy Fox) which appeared in the October 1965 Keston Parish Magazine. She was a Keston resident and archaeologist who died in 1966.

Introduction: Continuity at Keston

Keston is a remarkable place because there is evidence to show that men have wandered or lived here from the Mesolithic period which preceded the first settled Neolithic farmers who appeared about 3000 B.C., through the Bronze Age which followed, to the period which gives Keston its greatest glory, namely, the Iron Age from 500 B.C. to 43 A.D. Roman influences came in before the end of the Iron Age but Roman buildings did not appear here until about 75 A.D. We are still able to see the foundations of the Roman buildings which have existed at Warbank for nearly 2,000 years.

The written history of Keston begins with the Anglo-Saxon Charter of Bromley dated 862 A.D.; many of our field names are Saxon and the Saxon burial ground later became the site of Keston Church. The Saxon Manor of Chestan is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 A.D. and from then through the centuries until the year 1801 there were no very great changes in the parish of Keston which then numbered 183 persons. The Tithe Award Map of 1840 gives a detailed picture of the parish with all the farmed land, woodland, dwellings and persons who had increased from 183 in 1801 to 568 in 1841.



Ancient oak on footpath on Holwood estate

But why did men throughout long centuries choose to live in Keston? The parish of Keston is two miles long from Keston Mark to Leaves Green where the boundary coming up from Holwood, Howie's Farm (*now Holwood Farm Shop*) and the golf course runs along the garden of the Old House, across Westerham Road, and round Leaves Green making for the last house in the row of cottages on Leaves Green and on to Furze Bottom. The parish is irregular in width being wider at Leaves Green than at the Mark where it runs from Grace's Corner at Commonside to Hollydale Drive. This is because the east and west boundaries are natural ones formed by dry valleys and the north and south boundaries are arbitrary lines cutting across the higher land between the valleys. The boundaries were first defined in the Saxon period about 800 A.D.

The area Keston Mark, Keston Park and Holwood still has many large oak trees and in its natural state would have been well wooded. Yet if one looks in the gardens the soil is mostly pebbles! The Pebble Beds are well exposed in the old quarry face above the car park at Keston Ponds. How can there be ponds on Pebble Beds? The answer is that a strata of clay underlies the pebbles and in many places there are disturbed areas where the pebbles are mixed with clay. The strata of clay holds up the water and the pebble beds function as a great water-holding reservoir which can support oak trees and other vegetation.

Walking up Westerham Road from the Mark to the junction with Heathfield Road by Knightons we are all the time walking on Pebble Beds and when we arrive at the junction we see with surprise a beautiful view and realise that we are standing on an escarpment with Keston School and the windmill on our right and the Keston S-bends following the nose of Holwood Hill to Keston Court Poultry Farm on our left. We notice that a belt of woodland on the steeply sloping face of the escarpment stretches from Leafy Grove, through Knightons and Warbank to Keston Court Farm. This woodland is growing on the strata of clay which underlies the Pebble Beds and used to be called Greenhill Oaks. The beautiful view is over farmlands and orchards and it begins at the foot of the steep belt of woodland where the Chalk emerges from under the Clay and Pebbles and continues unbroken to the crest of the North Downs at Westerham Hill. Greenhill Oaks divides the parish into two areas completely different in

character, Farming Keston on the Chalk with no surface water and Woodland Keston on the pebbles with plentiful water supply and food for animals in the woods and clearings. Men and animals cannot exist without water and so Woodland Keston was the ideal place for primitive men to make their home. The thin soil over the chalk was easy to cultivate without extensive clearing of forest so the first fields were sited here. Timber for fires and shelter was plentiful, both the pebbles and the chalk are well-drained and provide dry sites for homes, so primitive people found everything they required here including the nodules of flint from the chalk which they used to make their tools and weapons.

Mrs Nancy Piercy Fox, edited by SC
Photo below courtesy of Edward Williams



Photo of Knightons taken in 1912 prior to the firm of G.W.Smith undertaking a large extension which resulted in a fine house overlooking the Vale of Keston. It was the home of the Boosey family, the well known music Publishers. A look at the War Memorial will reveal that Lt. F.C. Boosey (aged 24) and 2nd Lt. R.G. Boosey (aged 20) gave their lives in the Great War.

The Deer of Keston and the Cudham Valley



Roe deer with neat upright antlers

Photo by Bob Brewer on Unsplash

Step quietly through our local woodlands or parkland at dawn or dusk, and you may glimpse two very different deer. The Roe deer, Britain's native, slips like a shadow along the scrubby edges of Hayes Common as well as in woodland at Holwood and High Elms Country Park.

The Fallow deer, introduced centuries ago, often gather in herds across open grassland. South of the Downe area, from Cudham to Berry's Green, there is a large herd of up to 100 animals. Individual animals may roam as far as Shire Lane and Farnborough Meadows.

Roe Deer

(Capreolus capreolus)

Small and elegant, Roe deer wear a reddish coat in summer that fades to grey in winter. Their white rump patch flashes as they bound away, and bucks carry neat, upright antlers. Solitary by nature, Roe deer favour woodland edges and thickets, browsing on herbs and young shoots, but are also especially fond of bedding plants, including wallflowers as one Holwood resident



Roe deer showing white rump patch

Photo by Doncoombe on Unsplash

found out! They are often seen under an oak tree eating the acorns in the autumn, and even come onto the patio.

Their presence can sometimes be revealed by their short sharp dog-like

*But are especially fond
of bedding plants*

barking. The barking warns off competitors and signals presence to females. Roe deer are more solitary, so their calls are less continuous than Fallow.

Their secretive presence is a reminder that even in suburban Bromley, fragments of ancient countryside endure.

Fallow Deer

(Dama dama)

By contrast, Fallow deer are larger and more striking. Their coats vary from chestnut with white spots to darker shades, and mature bucks grow broad, palmate antlers. There can be



Fallow deer showing antlers and rump
Photo by Bob Brewer on Unsplash



Fallow deer herd
Photo by Zoltan Tasi on Unsplash

completely white animals within the herd.

Unlike the solitary Roe, Fallow deer are often seen in herds, grazing across parkland and estate grounds. Introduced by the Normans, they have become part of Bromley's historic landscapes, shaping vegetation through both grazing and browsing.

Male fallow deer are famous for their low, rasping groans or grunts, sometimes described as a “belching” sound. These calls are repetitive and can continue for hours during the rut. They are among the highest calling rates recorded for any terrestrial mammal. The groaning serves to attract females and to intimidate rival males. It carries well across parkland and open woodland, where Fallow deer often gather in large rutting assemblies. This October, the footpath to Horns Green reverberated to the sounds of the Cudham Valley herd in full rut.

A Living Contrast

As the only thing we may see of these beautiful animals is a flash of their rump

as they disappear into the trees, it is useful to note that the best way to separate the two species is that the Roe deer has a white rump patch that looks oval or round, and no obvious tail.

In contrast, the fallow deer has a white rump patch with a black outline, often described as heart-shaped and a longer tail (black on top, white underneath) that hangs over the rump patch.

Together, these two species highlight the diversity of our green spaces. The Roe deer, quiet and elusive, represents the native woodland heritage. The Fallow deer, sociable and conspicuous, reflects centuries of human influence on the landscape. Both play roles in the ecology of the area — Roe through selective browsing, Fallow through herd grazing — and both remind us that wildness still thrives at London's edge.

Bob Harrop

Please remember to be careful and go slowly whist driving at night, as Bob has seen two Roe deer killed on Baston Road.

Pancake Day

Tuesday 17th February



Ever wonder why we eat pancakes just before Lent? The tradition dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when Christians spent Lent in repentance and fasting.

On the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, the church bell would summon them to confession, where they would be ‘shriven’, or absolved from their sins, which gives us *Shrove* Tuesday. At home, they would then eat up their last eggs and fat, and making a pancake was the easiest way to do this – the food in the larder wouldn’t keep for six weeks so it had to be eaten. The ‘Lent Fast’ was widely and strictly observed.

Pancakes feature in cookery books as far back as 1439, and today’s pancake races are supposedly in remembrance of a panicked woman back in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She was making pancakes when she heard the shriving bell calling her to confession. Afraid she’d be late, she ran to the church in a panic, still in her apron, and still holding the pan.

Since the Reformation the ‘Lent Fast’ has not been so rigorously observed in Britain, but people still often resolve to give up something for the 40 days of Lent, with Sundays considered exempt.

Motherhood Quotes

Every mother is a working mother.
Anon

If you **bungle** raising your children,
I don’t think whatever else you do
well matters very much.
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of His mother, as if to teach us that his holy love should be our **last worldly thought** – the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight for heaven.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A suburban mother’s role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and **by car** for ever after.
Peter de Vries

God could not be everywhere and therefore He **made mothers**.
Jewish Proverb

Motherhood: All love begins and ends there.
Robert Browning

Motherhood is about raising and celebrating the child you have, not the child you thought you would have.
Joan Ryan

All I am I owe to my mother.
George Washington

What I Do



As a lifelong dog lover, I have always been aware of how our pets enrich our lives. For people, like me, who are now retired and live on their own, they can be a lifeline, providing companionship and a sense of purpose. Every day I count my blessings that I have my two dogs and two cats. However, I realise that many animal lovers, for one reason or another, are unable to keep pets.

My two Shih Tzus, Poppy and Tashi, have opened many doors for me and recently opened another one in the form of a local charity called CareDogs. I had never heard of it until I was handed a leaflet by someone at the dog training class I attend with Tashi. I made enquiries and have since become a volunteer.

The aim of CareDogs, which is a South London charity, is to ease loneliness by pairing older people with local dog

owning volunteers, for friendly, regular walks. A simple stroll with a warm conversation and a wagging tail can make a real difference to someone who spends a lot of time on their own.

Alongside one to one walks, CareDogs also runs group community walks, day centre visits and other local activities that help people meet others, enjoy gentle exercise and feel part of community life again.

All volunteers are supported in their roles. The service is free to anyone aged 55 and above, who might benefit. CareDogs believes that connection, kindness and companionship can change lives.

At present I am not in a position to commit to regular paired walks, but have taken Poppy and Tashi on some community walks and also on visits to Dementia Cafes and community centres. It's lovely for all concerned, clients, volunteers and dogs. As well as being a chance to meet people, the clients enjoy seeing the dogs and the dogs love being admired and stroked. Poppy is very small, so is often passed from lap to lap and is in her element having her head and tummy tickled for over an hour!

Even though I have only been involved with CareDogs for a few months, I have found it extremely rewarding. I know that if, heaven forbid, I find myself in a position in which I am unable to look after my own pets, I would definitely want to become a CareDogs client. To learn more or get involved, visit caredogs.org.uk.

Shirley Glew

Sometimes the best medicine has four legs and a wet nose

Snowy Keston January 2026



Photos thanks to Diane Stalker Muir, Tiziana Herbert, Sam Toomer, Laurence Pierce and Alan Dow

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

Come for chat, drinks and a meal.

Contact 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 2nd February 2pm Gravel Rd

Come and discuss books with some Christian content that you have read over tea/coffee and cake. If you want to come, please let Sally Churchus know on Tel: 020 8462 8750 or email editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk.

Friends of Keston Common AGM

Wednesday 18th March 7.30pm

Jubilee Room, Keston Village Hall

Everyone welcome. Presentation by a member of Bromley Council about future plans and funding for a possible Ponds Restoration Project.



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Quiz Night
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Saturday 28th February
6.30pm for 7pm Keston Church Hall
Tickets £18 from Chris Tel: 07988 712873

Magazine Deadline

Please send material for the April/May issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Wednesday 4th March by email to: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ The Three Bears

It was a sunny morning in the big forest and the bear family was just waking up. Baby bear went downstairs and sat in the small chair at the table. He looked into his small bowl. It was empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he wailed. Daddy bear arrived at the table and sat in his big chair. He looked into

his big bowl. It was also empty! "Who's been eating my porridge?" he roared. Mummy bear put her head through the serving hatch from the kitchen and yelled, "For goodness sake, how many times do we have to go through this? It was mummy bear who got up first. It was mummy bear who unloaded the dishwasher from last night and put everything away and then put the washing on. It was mummy bear who went out into the cold morning air to fetch the newspaper. It was mummy bear who put the cat out, cleaned the litter box and filled the cat's water and food dish. And now that you've decided to come downstairs and grace me with your presence... listen up, because I'm only going to say this one more time... I haven't made the porridge yet!"

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