

# The Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



April/May 2026

# Keston Parish Church

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



## Rector

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling      Working days      01689 853186  
Saturday – Tuesday      [rector@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:rector@kestonparishchurch.org.uk)

## Licensed Lay Minister & Parish Administrator

Tricia Coward      [hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 07748 655240

## Churchwardens

Geoff Carr      [warden@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:warden@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 07584 058872

Chris Rowland      [warden@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:warden@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 07988 712873

## Safeguarding Officer

Natasha Beckhelling      [safeguarding@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@kestonparishchurch.org.uk)

## Treasurer – Anna Bailey

[treasurer@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@kestonparishchurch.org.uk)/01689 852583

## Organist & Choirmaster

David Cook      [music@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:music@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 020 8289 5768

## Church Hall

Tricia Coward      [hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 01689 854373

## Magazine Editor & Book Reading Fellowship

Sally Churchus      [editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) / 020 8462 8750

## Women's Institute – Helen Best

07715 880889

## Beavers/Cubs/Scouts

[gsl27thbromley@gmail.com](mailto:gsl27thbromley@gmail.com)

## Residents' Association

[kestonvillagera@gmail.com](mailto:kestonvillagera@gmail.com)

## 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 – Dawn Ardern

01689 858399

## Friends of Keston Common

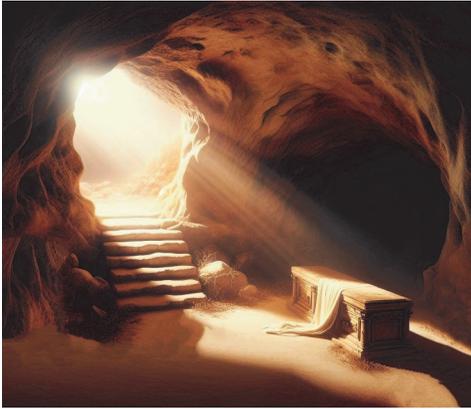
High Elms Country Park      [friendsofkestoncommon.chessck.co.uk](http://friendsofkestoncommon.chessck.co.uk) /01689 862815

## Keston Residents' Road Safety Group

[krrsg@hotmail.com](mailto:krrsg@hotmail.com)

*Jesus said, "I am he who lives, and was dead and behold:  
I am alive forevermore!" Revelation 1:18*

# Thought for the month



## Hope in Jesus Christ

Have we ever needed Jesus more than we need him today?

The world is in a very sorry state. The war in Ukraine is now in its fifth year. A whole people in Gaza is in danger of annihilation from hunger, disease and persistent military incursion. A third world war suddenly seems a real possibility. An escalating climate crisis threatens the natural world. In our nation, a record number of people are using foodbanks and 4.5 million children live in poverty. And there is no shortage of reports in the news of power-hungry humans inflicting abuse and control in all its depraved forms on fellow beings. I wonder if Jesus's assessment of his own contemporaries, when he said 'this generation is an evil generation' (Luke 11.29), applies even more so to this generation.

It seems that if ever the world was in need of salvation, it does so **now**. In the face of such devastation, turbulence and uncertainty, Easter offers a promise of renewal that is mirrored in the natural world around us. As the days grow

warmer and longer, nature reawakens. Everywhere we look we are faced with signs of hope – dainty white snowdrops, shy colourful crocuses and bright yellow daffodils. Beneath the trees, laden with pretty white and pink blossom, we stroll on the soft dewy confetti covered grass. We cannot help but be filled with hope for what is to come.

Our hope comes from Jesus Christ. More than two thousand years ago Jesus came into the world, sent by a God who loved the world so much, that he sent his only son to take on human form and open himself up to suffering and death. *'God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'* (John 3:17)

The good news is that Jesus was born, a helpless babe into an ordinary family. At Christmas we celebrated his birth. But he lived an extraordinary life and set an example for us, that we also might bless the earth. Once for all, by his death on the cross, he bore the sins of the whole world. He obtained forgiveness of sins and by his resurrection he promised redemption for all.

That promise still holds even amidst the turmoil and self-destructive path the leaders in our world are set on. Jesus simply asks each one of us in faith to do the little things that we can to bless our earth and to bless one another starting with the weak and vulnerable and to trust that God will do the rest. In Christ hope truly springs eternal.

Belinda

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

# From the Editor



In this issue there's a great variety of content from a write up on a school event to some interesting facts about squirrels and an amusing piece about a 1914 break in to a house on Westerham Road. There's also a recipe I found for Hot Cross Bun Cupcakes which I decided to try out but took me ages as I forgot to put the melted butter in. I then had to whip the cakes back out of the oven quickly and scrape all the contents back out to mix the missing ingredient back in!

For those of you who were unable to come to the display of plans put on by Bromley Council for the Keston Ponds Project that took place at the end of February in the church hall, we will be featuring an article about the proposed three year project in the next issue. As part of the preparation a fish survey has been undertaken which you can read about on page 7 – some of you may have wondered what was going on if you saw the fishermen in action.

There's good news about a resident receiving a Mayor's Award and more good news about the Keston Church Organ, which will no doubt be accompanying the joyful singing of the congregation on Easter Sunday!

Sally Churchus

# Cover Story

The children on the front cover enjoyed the Easter egg hunt after the church service on Easter Day last year. They ended up with a bagful of eggs each! Thankfully the weather was dry, but who knows with the current rainfall whether we will be so lucky this year... We will be hiding the eggs in the church if need be! There will be a Sunday School during the church service, do come to celebrate and enjoy this special morning.

# Village Stores Change to Opening Times

The Keston Local shop and Post Office on Heathfield Road has changed their opening times to the following:  
8am - 6pm every day.

## *Topical Prayer*

*God of mercy and hope,  
guide our world toward peace.  
Strengthen those who work  
for justice,  
and help us become instruments  
of your love and compassion.  
May truth rise, dignity be honoured,  
and every person live without fear.  
Let your light lead us into a more  
just and peaceful world.*

*Amen.*

# Keston Organ Granted Listed Status



David Cook holding the certificate

Last summer I discovered that the small and perfectly formed 122 year old Lewis organ that graces our church has an almost identical twin! I saw it in the Historic Organ listing scheme run by the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS). This lists some 1,209 organs in the UK that are regarded as being of crucial to the heritage of British organ building and are outstanding examples of the work of British organ builders.

The organ in the parish church of Langbank, Strathclyde, had the same organ builder – Lewis and Co., similar date – 1903 and a virtually identical stop list. It had been awarded a Grade II listing meaning that it was an organ of “special interest”. If that organ could get a listing, why not Keston?

I filed an application to BIOS for the Committee to consider, but several queries were raised about the origins of the organ. The stop list was not typical

of a Lewis organ. Dr William McVicar, Chairman of BIOS, was dispatched to view our organ. Fortunately, Dr McVicar lives locally and a visit was arranged. He appeared, along with his dog Pluto who was not too keen on the frequencies of the high notes! Removing one of the front pipes to gain access to the organ Dr McVicar brandished a selfie stick, attached his phone and proceeded to put it into the organ case to take photos. The phone rang, it was his wife saying there was no food in the house – would he do something about it!

His subsequent report to the HOLS committee stated that the organ “looked to be entirely the work of Lewis and Co., that it was unusual in its specification, had a wide variety of stops, the pipe work was original, and had had only minor alterations and had been well restored”.

The report did the trick and at the January 2026 meeting of the BIOS Council our application was approved and Keston Parish Church Organ was awarded Grade II \* listing, (the same as the church), and certified as being “an instrument of special interest installed in 1904 by Lewis and Co. It is in almost original condition, is robustly engineered and with an unusual musical scheme... and is an instrument of importance to the national heritage and one deserving careful preservation for the benefit of future generations”.

However, it should be noted that it is the organ, not the Organist (48 years and counting at Keston) which has been granted Historic Listing!

David Cook, Organist and Choirmaster

# My Faith Journey



As a child, I used to go with my mother to a C of E church in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, although I don't recall my brothers coming at all. I attended the Sunday School there, eventually becoming one of the Sunday School teachers myself. I was Confirmed and enjoyed the activities of the Youth Group there before I left to take up my place at the Royal Academy of Music. Piano was my passion from the age of seven – I was taught by my mother's piano teacher until I reached grade 7 – but that was her limit!

I had always wanted to teach music rather than perform so a teaching career ensued. When living in Ickenham (West London), I tried attending a local church but unfortunately wasn't made welcome so I didn't really get involved. After marrying Murison and having my daughter Hilary, we moved to Keston in the early 1960s and later had a son, James. I joined the congregation of Keston church, where I received a warm welcome and soon joined the church

choir. I think I've seen seven or eight Rectors come and go now!

I have always believed in God, known that He was there somehow and have not really wavered in my faith. When my husband died, the church family were there to support me. His funeral took place at Keston church. I do not think that God punishes us, I have not blamed Him when bad things have happened.

With my love of music, I find hymns lift us towards God. I have many favourite hymns, but the one that springs to mind is 'I, the Lord of sea and sky' written by Dan Schutte in 1981. The words I find most meaningful are 'Here I am, Lord' that are in the chorus. The hymn is based on a verse in Isaiah Chapter 6:8 *'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'*

I have always been a great reader, and enjoy coming to the Book Reading Fellowship meetings hosted by Sally Churchus. We all read different books with some Christian content, so get to hear about a variety of books and I enjoy the discussions that we have on a wide range of topics. I guess I should read my Bible more, but perhaps everyone thinks that.

I usually finish my day with prayer for other people, the world and hand over to God the things I cannot understand.

Pam Robertson as told to Sally Churchus

*Life is fragile, handle with prayer* Harold B.Lee

# Fish Survey



As part of the larger ‘Keston Ponds Project’, British Aqua Care were employed to carry out a fish survey on all three of the ponds on Keston Common. This was done to ascertain what species of fish currently inhabit the ponds and see what condition they are in.

The Environment Agency also attended the survey days with a seizure licence to remove any non-native invasive species that had previously been sighted in the ponds – this included Catfish, Sturgeon, Albino Grass Carp and ornamental Koi Carp.

British Aqua Care used nets to separate the ponds into smaller sections, then electro fished these sections off a boat with great success. Many of the larger Carp were instantly recognised by onlooking anglers, some of which had not been seen for several years.

All of the fish caught were found to be in great health and condition, many double figure Tench were caught alongside a number of other species including Pike, Perch, Rudd, Roach and Chub of varying sizes and ages; this

diversity shows evidence of a healthy ecosystem in the ponds.

Lastly, all of the Carp, Pike and silver fish were relocated out of the Conservation pond into pond 2 (main pond). This action was taken to help invertebrate numbers increase alongside amphibian numbers, removing their main predators from this pond. It is also with the aim to stop unauthorised fishing from taking place on this pond.

Ben Jarvis, Biodiversity Manager



# Running for Molly



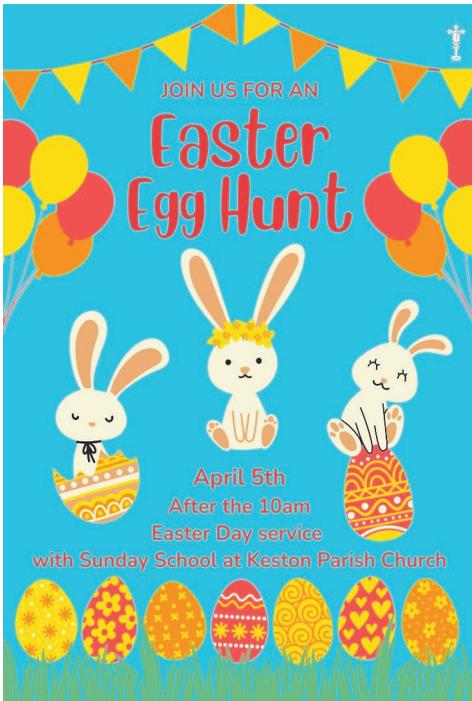
Sadly, I lost my firstborn, Molly, aged five to cancer and although that was in 2006, I am running the London Marathon in her memory. She attended Keston School as we lived in Lakes Road, then moved to Heathfield Road. I'm known as Mrs B at Keston School where I am a Teaching Assistant, and as Emma Biederman to village residents. I love living in Keston and am so grateful

for the friends I have made. I am also blessed with Megan, 19, Mackenzie, 17, and Miles, 13, who are my saviours.

In 2019 I badly broke my ankle and was admitted to hospital for a long period of time and ended up with a infection in the metalwork. I am eternally grateful to God to actually have a foot as they said I was close to becoming an amputee.

It is perhaps surprising then, that I have set myself the challenge of running to raise funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital in memory of Molly and all the staff and parents who do such an amazing job. If anyone would be kind enough to donate to this amazing charity I will be incredibly grateful. You can donate via [JustGiving](#) and searching MollyMooMoo. Thank you.

Emma Biederman



# Keston's Got Talent Shows 2026



## A Joyful Celebration

On Friday 6th February, the hall at Keston Primary School was transformed into a stage bursting with excitement, anticipation, and plenty of glitter as pupils, parents, and staff gathered for this year's *Keston's Got Talent* shows. It was an evening filled with laughter, applause, and special moments and an uplifting reminder of the creativity and confidence blooming in our young people.

From the moment the curtains opened, it was clear that the pupils had worked incredibly hard in preparation for this much-loved event. Over the past weeks, the school corridors had echoed with rehearsed songs, dance steps, jokes, and musical practice. That dedication shone through in every performance. Whether it was a heartfelt solo, a lively dance routine, a jaw

dropping gymnast routine, football skills, an awesome ventriloquist, a carefully crafted magic act, or a group performance full of laughter, each child stepped onto the stage with courage and enthusiasm, each met with great cheers from the audience.

What stood out strongly was not only the talent on display, but the resilience behind it. Many children pushed past nerves, tried something completely new, or persevered through tricky rehearsal moments to make their act the best it could be. Their willingness to keep going – to practise again and again, to encourage one another, and to give their absolute best on the night was truly inspiring. We are so proud of their hard work, commitment, and determination to make this the best show ever.

One of the most inspiring parts of the evening was seeing children of all ages supporting one another by clapping along, calling encouragement from the wings, and celebrating every performance with equal delight. It captured the true spirit of community that Keston Primary is known for: a place where every child is valued and every talent, whether big or small, is celebrated.

The judging panels had the tricky tasks of selecting winners from such an outstanding range of performances. Yet perhaps the greatest success of the evening wasn't the trophies and medals awarded, but the confidence gained, friendships strengthened, and joy shared across the whole school family.

As a Church of England school, we rejoice in moments like these – moments that remind us to nurture the

God-given talents within each child. *Keston's Got Talent* was not simply a show; it was a celebration of creativity, courage, and the wonderful diversity of gifts present in our young people.

May we continue to support and encourage these budding performers as they grow in confidence and character. After all, as 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us: *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others"*. And on this special February evening, the children of Keston Primary did just that – blessing us all with their joy, enthusiasm, and shining talents.

A special thank you to the PTA, teachers and families who supported with the arrangements and contributed to the show's success. Congratulations to all the children who took part, especially the winners.

Mrs Ardern, Headteacher

## Mayor's Award



Larry Herbert receiving his award

The Friends of Keston Common are delighted to announce their Chairman, Larry Herbert, has been the recipient of a Mayor's Award for Outstanding Voluntary Service. The award was conferred by the Worshipful Mayor of Bromley, Cllr Jonathan Andrews, on the evening of 5th March 2026 at a ceremony at Bromley Civic Centre. Larry was nominated by three members of the Park Friends community for his continuing work and efforts over the past twenty years in supporting and maintaining the green spaces in the borough of Bromley. The evening included five other recipients for the same award for varying disciplines of volunteering.

*Congratulations, very well deserved Larry! SC*

**MESSY CHURCH**

**Tuesday 31st March  
& Tuesday 26th May**  
10 am - 12 noon  
Keston Parish Church Hall  
Church Road BR2 6HT

10am Welcome drinks/snacks  
10.15am Crafts and Activities  
11.30am Celebration with music  
11.45am Lunch (provided)

Everyone welcome

# Church Services

## **Sunday 29th March Palm Sunday**

10.00am Holy Communion with distribution of Palm Crosses

## **Monday 30th March Holy Monday**

7.00pm Taizé meditative non Communion Service

## **Thursday 2nd April Maundy Thursday**

6.00pm Bring your own meal to eat together in church hall

7.00pm Holy Communion service with washing of feet

8.00pm One hour Vigil (stay as long as you want)

## **Friday 3rd April Good Friday**

10.00am Walk of Witness from Village Sign to church

*All ages (and dogs) welcome!*

11.00am Short non Communion service

*Followed by hot cross buns and tea/coffee*

## **Sunday 5th April Easter Day**

10.00am Easter Day Holy Communion **with Sunday School**

*Followed by children's Easter egg hunt*

## **Sundays 12th , 19th (with Sunday School), and 26th April**

10.00am Holy Communion

## **Sunday 3rd May**

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

10.00am Celebrational Worship (non Communion)

## **Sundays 10th , 17th (with Sunday School), 24th and 31st May**

10.00am Holy Communion

## **Thursday 14th May Ascension Day**

3.00pm Holy Communion

## **Every Monday**

7.40am Morning Prayer - except 6th and 13th April

8.00am Holy Communion (said) - except 6th and 13th April

## **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).

# Hot Cross Bun Cupcakes

These cakes have all the fruit and spice of the traditional bun so have a great flavour although the texture is heavier than a light sponge cake.

## Ingredients

1 tbsp. lemon juice  
100ml semi skimmed milk  
175g salted butter  
175g self-raising flour  
½ tsp baking powder  
160g light soft brown sugar  
2 tsp mixed spice  
100g ground almonds  
3 large eggs  
Zest of 1 orange, ¼ set aside  
100g sultanas  
1 peeled and grated eating apple

## Method

1. Combine lemon juice and milk in a large jug, and set aside for 5 mins. Set oven to 180C/160C fan/Gas 4 and put 12 cake cases into muffin tin.
2. Melt butter in microwave or saucepan.
3. Put the flour, baking powder, sugar, spice and almonds into a large bowl, then squash any lumps of sugar.
4. Beat the eggs, the ¾ portion of zest and melted butter into the thickened milk. Pour this into the dry ingredients, then beat with a balloon whisk until even. Stir in the sultanas and apple, and fill up the cake cases, virtually to the top.
5. Bake for 18-20 mins until golden and well risen. Allow to cool.
6. Warm the jam/marmalade with a splash of water and glaze the cupcakes.
7. For the buttercream, beat everything together until creamy and pale. Use a large nozzle on a piping bag to pipe crosses on the top of the cupcakes so that all the buttercream is used up.

*Based on the Goodfood Hot Cross Bun cupcake recipe by Jane Hornby, available online*



## Glaze

1 tbsp. apricot jam or jelly marmalade

## Orange buttercream

Zest of ¼ orange, from above  
50g full fat cream cheese  
45g icing sugar, sifted  
25g salted butter, softened

# Remembering Dr Judith John 1953-2025



On Friday 30th January, some members of the Friends of Keston Common were privileged to be invited to attend a memorial event held at Bromley Environmental Educational Centre (BEECHE) at High Elms, to celebrate the life of Judy John, who died recently. The event included several moving tributes from representatives of Friends groups throughout the Borough of Bromley, followed by a speech by Judy's husband David.

Judy worked with dedication and passion for all of Bromley's green spaces, and one of the closest to her heart was Keston's Site of Special Scientific Interest. She had a particular passion for Keston's bog where Charles Darwin studied, and the Ravensbourne meadows, and it was in no small measure thanks to her hard work and enthusiasm that we have the wonderful diversity of flowers in our meadows every June.

Judy filled various roles within Bromley including 'Wildspace Officer' and later became one of Bromley's

Countryside Officers, working at Jubilee Country Park, Darrick and Newstead Woods as well as Keston and Hayes Commons. Her passion was 'to connect people with nature' and in this role she set up and led a wide range of educational walks, talks and events across our local nature reserves, including bat walks, natural history talks and glow worm walks. She also set up and produced various nature trails, including our very own Ravensbourne Trail (covering Hayes and Keston Commons).

Above all Judy will be remembered by us all for her generosity of time, enthusiasm and expertise, and her modesty and kindness in helping each one of us to learn more about our precious environment here in Keston. She was very much loved. As one of our members said recently "I have special memories of Judy patiently explaining about the nodes and leaves on a particular grass one Friday morning. It transformed how I viewed grasses!"

One of Judy's final wishes was to see the BEECHE Gardens' Interpretation boards updated and maintained for future generations to enjoy and learn from. So, after the memorial event, guests were taken on a walk around that garden to see the unveiling of one of 12 beautiful boards, funded by Judy's family.

If you are having a walk at High Elms, and perhaps enjoying a coffee at the excellent Green Roof Café, do take a stroll around the garden and admire the beautiful art work and boards. In this way, Judy's legacy and love for our environment will live on.

Angela Godfrey

# Ambush at Warbank and Theft at The Crown Inn



The Crown Inn circa 1905 after alterations at the turn of the century. Note the state of the road before it was tarred when the majority of the traffic was horse drawn and leisurely. A walnut tree can be seen to the right. The “Meet” of Old Surrey Foxhounds was a common site outside pubs in the area. It was a colourful scene and provided both entertainment and income to the locals who would turn out to follow the hunt.

A report in the *Bromley and Kentish Times* on the 13th November 1914 relates to a break in at Warbank, Westerham Road, Keston. The occupier, Mr Thomas Heywood was suspicious from an earlier occurrence that a break in was possible. Along with his son Fred, they organised a watch at the house. Thomas, armed with a golf club, hid in the coal cellar and Fred in the shrubbery at the rear of the house. Thomas’s hunch had been correct, and a figure soon passed his hiding place and was heard breaking into the property. Fetching his son, they located the intruder by a light showing in the sitting room. On calling for the

intruder to come out the man threw himself out of the window. Defending himself, Thomas struck his assailant with the club with such force it was broken. With his son, the pair tried to restrain the villain, but he fought so violently that Thomas was forced to take a life preserver, (cosh), from his pocket and hit him several times on the head which did subdue him! When they tried to bind him, he struggled again, so Fred withdrew his bayonet and threatened him, whereupon he saw sense and surrendered. In due course the police arrived and Cornelius Cowhig of Burnt House Cottage, Layhams Road

was taken to Farnborough Police Station and remanded for a week. In the week that followed, Cornelius pleaded guilty to many more robberies and confessed that he was under the influence of drink and hardly aware of what he was doing! The Judge advised him to abstain from drink in the future and because of the punishment he had received from Thomas and his son he would be lenient with him and only sentence him to 12 months hard labour!

Whether he took the Judge's advice is not recorded, however, he did serve overseas, to begin with in the East Surrey Regiment and with other Regiments later, leaving the Service with the rank of Lance Corporal, so perhaps military discipline had a bearing on his character – let us hope so!

### *Forced to take a life preserver (cosh) and hit him several times on the head*

Another theft was also reported in the same edition, this time the location being The Crown Inn at Leaves Green. The Publican John Neves reported the theft of money and a ring from behind the bar. The culprit, William Brown of no fixed abode, was soon caught and sent before the Magistrate where he pleaded guilty and received one month's hard labour.

Country Correspondent

Photo of The Crown and information for the caption courtesy of Edward Williams

## Roofing Crime Warning 2026

Recently, a number of residents in Bromley, Beckenham and Biggin Hill have been scammed by a doorstep criminal into accepting roofing work. Bromley Trading Standards are warning residents to avoid unsolicited traders and seek several verified quotes.

### **How the crime typically unfolds**

Roofing scams often begin with criminals offering seemingly low cost repairs to gain an initial agreement, before rapidly escalating the scope and price of the work, including when they claim to have “found” additional problems. Often scaffolding is erected at the earliest opportunity, creating urgency and making it much harder for residents to withdraw.

Once work begins only a fraction of the quoted repairs may be completed, leaving residents with inflated charges and shoddy workmanship which may need to be rectified or completed by a reputable roofer.

### **Actions to avoid**

Don't contact traders solely via leaflets, online platforms or social media without thorough checks.

Don't pay large sums of money upfront. Don't be rushed into deciding, always seek advice from a trusted contact before agreeing to works.

### **Who to use**

Search for Trading Standards Checked workmen for a safe, reliable trader <https://tschecked.bromley.gov.uk/>



# Our Grey Squirrel, Acrobat of the Commons



*Photo by Andy Willis on Unsplash*

If you've ever spent a quiet morning wandering around Keston Ponds, you may hear the frantic scratching of claws on bark or the indignant chitter-chitter of a local resident who thinks you're standing much too close to their favourite oak tree.

## Masters of the Canopy

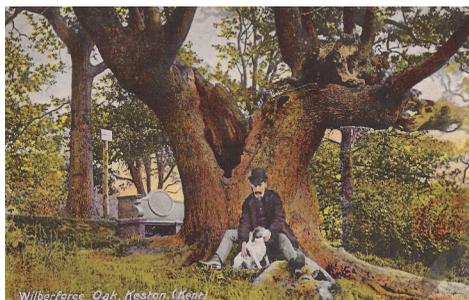
These squirrels are more than just foragers; using their bushy tails as both a rudder for balance and a fuzzy parachute, they navigate the “highways” of the treetops with a confidence that would make a parkour gymnast envious.

Unlike some animals that hibernate, our squirrels are active year-round. This leads to the fascinating behaviour known as scatter-hoarding.

We could all learn a lesson in stewardship from our squirrels. They spend their weekdays in a frantic state of “saving for a rainy day”, burying acorns. Did you know that a single squirrel can bury thousands of nuts in a single season? They don't rely on smell alone to find them; they actually create a mental “map” of their territory. Of course, their memory isn't perfect. Every forgotten acorn buried has the potential to become a mighty oak

maybe 500 years later. In a very literal sense, the squirrels are the unofficial foresters of Keston, planting the next generation of our woodland.

Perhaps our native Red Squirrels were even responsible for the Wilberforce Oak, where William Pitt the Younger and William Wilberforce sat beneath its branches in 1788 discussing the abolition of the slave trade.



*Postcard of Emancipation Oak, Holwood Park circa 1880 from Edward Williams' collection*

Look for the “drays” – the messy looking nests of twigs high in the forks of the trees. If you're lucky, you might spot a juvenile practicing its first jumps, or a pair engaged in a high-speed game of tag around a trunk.



*Grey squirrel drey*

*Photo by Jeremy Bolwell on Wikimedia Commons*



Nibbled pine cones on path by the Keston Bog information board. Squirrels like them as they contain little seeds located just behind the scales – they tear back the scales to get to them and leave the leftovers!

There is no denying that squirrels are one of the most entertaining visitors to our gardens. Although some dislike the non-native Grey, they are, for many people, their only connection with nature, and love them or loathe them, they are here to stay.

Have you ever watched them navigate a bird feeder? It's a feat of high wire

## *They can hang upside down by a single toe*

dexterity better than any circus trapeze artist. They can hang upside down by a single toe, raiding the “squirrel-proof” seeds with ease.

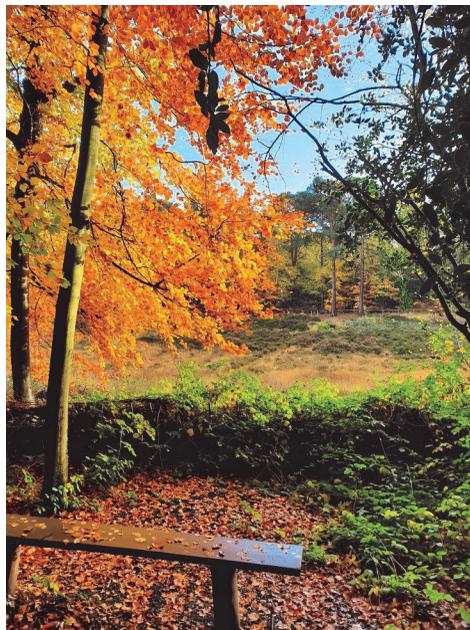
Alas, the Red Squirrel cannot compete for resources with their larger Grey cousins who arrived in the late 1870's from America. Also, the Grey carry the squirrelpox virus with no threat to themselves, but if transmitted into a Red Squirrel population, it can decimate the

numbers within weeks. For these reasons, co-existing is simply not possible and as they are different species, they will not cross breed. So the closest place you will see the Reds are on Brownsea Island or the Isle of Wight, where the Greys have been excluded.

## **A Moment of Quiet**

As the sun sets over the beech trees in Keston Bog, casting long, golden shadows through the heavy boughs, the squirrels finally slow down. For a brief moment, the frantic tail-twitching stops, and they sit silhouetted against the sky – the tiny, furry guardians of the woods. In that moment of stillness, they remind us that the world is full of small wonders, historical echoes, and the occasional bit of slapstick comedy.

Bob Harrop



Beech tree in autumn on the opposite side to the Keston Bog information board

# Through Our Eyes

I was lucky enough to have been born in Bromley, lived in my parents' house in Tweedy Road, even when at University, then in Chislehurst for many years with my partner, and now in Keston.



I am English through and through, but gradually, however, I realised that my parents themselves had not been granted that blessing. They both came to this country in 1939 as refugees from Nazi Germany, my father after a short stay in Dachau concentration camp, and my mother on the Children's Transport. In fact, he worked with the nascent Oxford Refugee Committee to help rescue children from Germany – my mother, her sister, and a cousin among them.

Thinking that our family tales might have a worth not only to our friends and acquaintances but to historians everywhere, I set about gathering information – photos, letters, sayings. Recently I have published a book containing my parents' memoirs, contemporary letters pre-, during, and post-war, short biographies of friends and relations, and later reminiscences by others to show how their lives developed after such tremendous upheaval, as well as an introduction and other remarks by me representing the next generation.

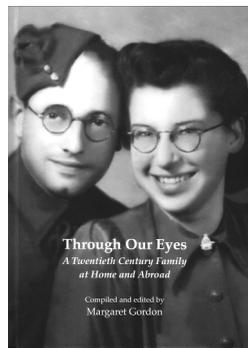
They were both believers – my mother certainly, my father perhaps in a rather more reserved manner. What I

find amazing though, is that my mother's parents were both able to maintain their faith, despite what they had experienced. My grandmother, a Lutheran and later in life a Quaker, never knew if she would ever see her husband again, whilst her own country was bombing the place where her children lived. My grandfather, a Jew, was 'taken late' because he was in a 'mixed' marriage. He arrived in Theresienstadt in February 1945 and by the time the Russians liberated the camp he was down to six stone. Yet even so, both fervently believed that the fact that they had survived was due to the Lord's bounty and they were sure He would lead them to their children again. He had to work against bureaucracy but they visited England, at last, in December 1947.

Although the topic may be a serious one, there are moments of amusement too, and I think it is a relatively easy read. Plus, it is in a large font, as befits my likely readership, and of course with plenty of illustrations.

"Through Our Eyes: A Twentieth Century Family at Home and Abroad" is available from the publisher Words by Design online or through any bookshop.

Margaret Gordon



# What I Do



## Keston and Me

My name is Joe Ravens. I'm a gardener, garden designer, consultant and landscaper, and I run Ravens Gardens, a small local business that employs myself and two others, based here in the village. I live on Lakes Road with my partner and our two young children.

Keston has always been a special place to me. I grew up just off Bromley Common, went to secondary school and sixth form at Ravenswood, and with both sets of grandparents living within walking distance of the fishponds, it was an area I spent a great deal of time in as a child. Many happy hours were passed playing, picnicking, building camps and exploring the ponds, woods and Commons. I have particularly fond memories of spending long summer afternoons building dens beneath the giant sequoia near where the river Ravensbourne runs down towards Padmall Wood.

When our son was born at the end of 2018, it soon became clear that we needed more space and somewhere we could really put down roots as a family. Through our NCT classes we became friends with a couple who lived on Lakes Road. They waxed lyrical about the village life, strength of the

community, and how special it felt to live on top of such a beautiful part of the world... By the start of September 2019 we had the keys to our new home on Lakes Road!

And it did feel like home, instantly. Before we'd even finished unloading the removal van, new neighbours were introducing themselves with offers of tea and help. Combined with all the childhood memories tied up in this place, we knew straight away that we'd made the right decision. We were warmly welcomed and quickly formed friendships. Conversations with longer-term residents revealed even deeper family connections: Maureen Thrower, at the top of the road, had been part of the Keston Youth Fellowship with my grandmother Hazel Shepherd (née Tester) and my grandfather Don in the early fifties, while Cathy Cribbens, who lived directly opposite and is now sadly deceased, had also been a close friend of Hazel's up until her passing in 2010.

That sense of community, along with having so much open space right on the doorstep, made settling here feel easy and natural. Only a few months after we moved in, Covid struck, and the true value of having the Commons, woods and ponds quite literally on our doorstep became abundantly clear. Soon Covid seemed all but a strange distant memory, and our daughter was born in the summer of 2021.

I've worked as a gardener and landscaper in and around Bromley for around 18 years. My dad ran his own small business from the early 1980s and would often employ me as cheap labour during the school holidays. After finishing my A-levels, my part-time job

at Halfords soon turned into a full-time role, with a lack of motivation and no long-term plan. My dad eventually persuaded me to take a chance on working with him full time, with the idea that I might one day take over the business when he retired. In typical teenage fashion, I shrugged my shoulders and went along with it, mostly to get him off my back...

Over time, that indifference turned into genuine passion. I found the most enjoyment in landscaping projects where we could completely transform a garden, particularly through thoughtful planting. After my dad retired and moved to Sussex, I began forging my own path and enrolled in a diploma in Garden Design. Returning to education after several years away was a real challenge but proved to be a hugely positive experience.

Learning the intricacies of garden design has deepened both my love and understanding of gardens, plants, and the human relationship with them. I continue expanding my knowledge wherever I can. The bookshelves at home are now heaving with garden books of all shapes and sizes. To quote Vita Sackville-West: *“The more one gardens, the more one learns; and the more one learns, the more one realises how little one knows”*.

I've taken on many jobs in the local area – from garden consultations, design commissions, full on landscaping works to simple maintenance jobs; the last count was at least 25 gardens within a 300m radius of my house – I've never been a fan of a long commute. Keep an eye out for my van and feel free to say hello!

RavensGardens.co.uk Tel: 07484 397387



Rev'd Belinda and others enjoying the Parish Brunch on Saturday 7th February

# 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.

## Keston Village Residents' Association AGM

**Tuesday 28th April 7.15pm**

**Keston Church Hall**

Everyone welcome. Our Speaker will be David Winstanley, CEO Biggin Hill Airport.

## Mental Wellbeing Coffee Morning

**Saturday 18th April 10am-12 noon**

**Keston Church Hall**

Come for a chat over tea/coffee and cake. We will hear tips about how we can keep ourselves well.

## Ravensbourne Morris Men

**Friday 1st May 5.32am Caesar's Well**

Welcoming in the May Day sunrise, dancing and lingering a while! More details on [www.ravensbourne.org](http://www.ravensbourne.org).

## St Christopher's Fun Walk

**Sunday 10th May from Keston Village**

**Sign opposite The Greyhound**

The Pink route, 5.5 mile walk runs past Keston church which will be open. Do pop in en route for refreshments, toilets or to light a candle and say a prayer.

## Keston Church APCM

**Sunday 17th May 11.30am**

**Keston Church Hall**

Anyone interested in the work of the church is welcome to attend.

## KestFest 2026

**Saturday 6th June 1-5pm**

**On the Green opposite The Greyhound**



**Sunday  
3rd  
May**

# Parish Walk

- Meet 2.15 Keston Church Car Park BR2 6HT
- Takes about 2 hrs
- Finishing at Keston Church Hall for tea and cakes
- Well behaved dogs welcome

**Everyone welcome!**

## Magazine Deadline

Please send material for the June/July issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Wednesday 6th May by email to: [editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk) or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

## Laughlines

### ☺ **Easter chocolate dilemma**

364 days of the year we tell our kids: "Do NOT eat anything you find on the ground, or anything from strangers!" On Easter morning we tell them: "Why don't you go outside and search in the churchyard for chocolate Easter eggs that someone we don't know has hidden for you?"

### ☺ **Valuable Find**

A Some archaeologists digging in a pyramid in Egypt have found a mummy covered in chocolate and hazelnuts, and believe it to be a Pharaoh Rocher.

### ☺ **No News**

A traveller was marooned in a small town because of a landslide caused by heavy rain. It fell in torrents for three days. Looking out of the window of the restaurant, he finally remarked to the waitress: "This is like the flood."  
"The what?"  
"The flood. Surely you have heard about the great flood and Noah and the Ark?"  
"Sorry, sir," she replied. "The internet's been down for three days."

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