The Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



December/January 2027

Keston Parish Church

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Keston Residents' Road Safety Group

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This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

Front Cover: Christingle Service 2025 by Sally Churchus

Thought for the month



Photo by Sincerely Media on Unsplash

The gift of Christmas

What is the best gift you have ever received? I must admit that I have struggled with this. No sooner I think of something then I think of something else, something much more meaningful to me. I wonder how you begin to answer this question.

The starting point, I suppose, is to think about who is asking the question and in what context, in the hope of spotting a clue as to the answer that might be expected. As a Christian priest posing the question, you might reasonably expect that the desired answer might be something to do with God.

The question above, however, is deliberately vague. There is no right or wrong answer but it would be nigh on impossible to think of something that does not come from God. For do not all good things come from God? In 1 Kings chapter 3, God gives Solomon, still only a child when he is called upon to lead the Israelites, the gift of a 'wise and discerning mind.' Ecclesiastes 5 acknowledges wealth as a gift from God because the material blessings of our labour used properly bring us joy and fulfilment. Psalm 127 views children as a precious gift, a heritage from God. Numbers and Leviticus speak of the gift of peace. In Exodus manna from heaven fed the hungry Israelite refugees escaping slavery in Egypt.

For all the generosity of God and in spite of his grace freely given and available to all, our world is far from the paradise God had in mind for us. Sin continues to ravage this world. Peace seems unattainable. Creation is groaning in the face of accelerated climate change and despite an abundance, God's people still go hungry. Into this troubled world, John tells us, *'… God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.'*

Jesus, God's only son, **is** the ultimate gift of Christmas. Each year in this season, we are reminded that God's promise of eternal life is not just a future aspiration. It begins now with the birth of a baby, a saviour who comes to put right all the wrongs in our world. It is Jesus who helps us face the darkness of our lives and brings hope into pain and loss and peace into hostility. It is Jesus who welcomes us and gives us a new start again and again and again, no matter our starting point. Jesus knows us, loves us and is already there waiting and watching over us. The best gift on earth.

Happy Christmas. May the Christ Child fill your heart with unending love, peace and joy today and always.

Belinda

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor



Firstly, thank you to those people who read about my need for articles and responded – we have some great pieces for you to read in this issue. Please keep them coming!

Not having a dog, and not knowing much about them, I was interested to read about the dangers in some flea and tick treatments, clearly explained on page 16, as well as the role Bouvier dogs had in wartime thanks to the article submitted by Betty's owner, on page 12. I'm sure readers will also enjoy another of Chalkpit's history articles, this time recounting wartime tales of the publican from the Kings Arms.

The run up to Christmas has begun and it won't be long before I dig out my nativity set and little wooden ornament from my childhood, below. That cross at the back of it is a reminder that Easter will come – indeed, the next issue I'll be working on is the Easter one, as it falls in March next year! In the meantime, let's enjoy our blessings of affluence, family and friends over Christmas, and not forget the many in the world that are not so fortunate.

Sally Churchus



Cover story

The photo on the front cover at the Christingle service last year captures the wonderful atmosphere during this family friendly non communion service. It will again be combined with the Toy Service at 10am on Sunday 6th December when we will also be collecting unwrapped toys for the Salvation Army to give to needy local children. Last year there was a shortage of toys for under 2's and also for 16-17 year olds (always tricky!).

Do come and enjoy this service where each child will be given a Christingle and you can find out the meaning of the different elements of the Christingle!

Home Communion

If you are housebound and would like Christmas Communion please email Rev'd Belinda or leave a message on 01689 853186 with your name, number and saying Christmas Communion, by Sunday 20th December at the latest. Thank you.

Christmas Prayer

Lord Jesus, Wise men travelled for miles to bring you the first Christmas presents. So may we, too, remember with thankful hearts the love that comes with each present we open. We also thank you for the amazing love that you have for each of us, and we thank you for the many gifts that you give us. Amen.

Triple Two Macmillan coffee morning



Grace Afshar, left, with Amanda Burey

On Tuesday 22nd September 2026, we had the pleasure of hosting our very first Macmillan Coffee Morning at Triple Two Keston – and what a wonderful morning it was!

Cancer is something that has touched the lives of so many people, whether directly or indirectly. Within our own team and wider community, we have heard many personal stories and experiences from those affected by cancer and decided to sign ourselves up to host a Macmillan Coffee Morning.

Our fantastic Triple Two Keston team really got behind the event, baking and donating a huge variety of delicious homemade treats for everyone to enjoy. From freshly baked cinnamon buns, cookies and lemon drizzle cakes to Bakewell tarts and Swiss rolls, there was something for everyone! Of course, no Coffee Morning would be complete without a lovely cup of tea or coffee to enjoy alongside the sweet treats.

The morning was made even more special by the incredible support we received from our wonderful customers and members of our local community. Whether you donated, purchased a bake, enjoyed a coffee, shared our event or simply took the time to stop by and support us, every contribution made a difference. It was fantastic to see everyone coming together for such an important cause and creating such a positive atmosphere.

Almost 100% of the work carried out by Macmillan Cancer Support is funded through fundraising and donations. This funding helps Macmillan provide essential services, including their Support Line, Information Centres and Buddies service, helping people affected by cancer access the advice, information and emotional support they need.

We originally set ourselves a fundraising target of £250, but were absolutely thrilled to smash our target and raise an incredible **£660.10** for Macmillan Cancer Support! Thank you everyone for your generosity.

To those who couldn't join us this year, please keep a look out as we hope to be back with another Coffee Morning in 2027. We can't wait to do it all again.

Grace Afshar, Manager at Triple Two



A bumper harvest for charity

Over the Harvest Festival weekend of 3rd and 4th October, Keston Parish Church raised an amazing amount for charity. Thank you for your generosity.

- Welcare in Bromley

£485 was raised during a collection at the service for this local charity that helps families in need.

- Bromley Borough Foodbank

Over 70kg of tins and non-perishable foodstuff was collected and delivered to the warehouse in Downham.

- Friends of the Holy Land

A raffle at the Harvest Bring and Share lunch raised £175 for Friends of the Holy Land, an ecumenical charity that gives practical help to struggling Christians in the Holy Land.

In July the Church of England's General Synod voted to stand in solidarity with Palestinian Christians and to hear their voices. Across Israel and the Palestinian territory the Christian population, once amounting to approximately a third of the population has now declined to less than 1%.



Entrance to Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, West Bank, Palestine. You have to bend down to get through the 'Door of Humility'.

Fishermen to the rescue!



At the beginning of October, local anglers noticed fish in distress and some dead fish on the margins of the main pond. The Environment Agency (EA) undertook water quality testing, recording dissolved oxygen levels of between 15% and 20% saturation which was low. They thought it to be a naturally occurring dissolved oxygen crash most likely caused by decaying vegetation and/or algal dieback during recent warm weather – such events can occur during warm Autumn periods.

After the Council and idverde were notified of the incident they too undertook a site visit.

Local anglers had quickly deployed two pieces of aeration equipment with generators to increase the oxygen levels which were then followed by two more, loaned from the EA. The Council have offered to reimburse the petrol costs incurred by the anglers.

Idverde and the London Borough of Bromley are grateful for the fast action of the fishermen, and the considerable time and effort they gave in helping to save fish.

Sally Churchus

My faith journey



Kim at her Confirmation on 6th September with the Rt Rev'd Simon Burton-Jones

Still dancing, still believing

Church was a big part of my childhood. I even dreamt of becoming a nun! Perhaps not what those who know me today would have predicted. Baptised at St Anne's, Limehouse, in 1957, I attended Blackheath Bluecoat C of E School, went to Sunday school, sang at St George's, Westcombe Park, and belonged to the Girls' Friendly Society.

Although regular churchgoing eventually took a back seat, my faith never left me. I have always felt the Holy Spirit guiding me, shaping my values and desire to care for others. Wherever I travelled, I could rarely pass a church without stepping inside.

I left school at 15 with no qualifications. My father only agreed because I had secured a job at Barclays Head Office. That began a banking career spanning over 50 years, ending up as an Executive Director of a private Swiss bank.

However, my greatest achievements are undoubtedly my children, Jade, Scarlett and Louis. I'm immensely proud of them, and my wonderful grandsons, Theo, Hudson and Mason, who bring me endless joy. I'm fortunate to share my life with my husband Chris of the last 15 years.

Life has brought challenges. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008, I underwent treatment but the cancer returned in 2010, bringing further surgery and chemotherapy. Throughout, I knew God was beside me. My faith gave me inner strength and absolute confidence that I would survive.

Retiring in December 2025 gave me time to explore new interests. In April, I approached choirmaster David Cook expecting an audition. Instead, he invited me to Friday's practice! I've become extremely fond of my fellow choir members, each wonderful in their own way. Rev'd Belinda deserves special thanks for guiding me through Confirmation in September. For me, it was a heartfelt commitment to the God who had always been with me.

I'm enjoying choir, Messy Church and parish life, including fabulous prayer walks led by our lovely Tricia (Coward).

Those who know me will tell you I'm something of a party animal and rather partial to dancing on tables! I still have one ambition: to sing *Dancing Queen* in church one day. Watch this space!

It's never too late to return to church or visit for the first time. You don't have to attend every Sunday. There are wonderful people to meet and a warm welcome waiting.

Finally, thank you to Sally for producing this wonderful magazine. I've enjoyed it since moving to Keston 18 years ago. Its topical articles keep our community connected. Who would have thought I'd feature in it myself!

Kim Vale

Can you help Alexandru?



Alexandru with a Theranova technician

Are you able to help with the cost of prosthetics for a little Romanian boy, Alexandru? He is seven years old and recently suffered from sepsis and had to have his legs amputated with a 10% survival chance. He is the youngest of three children and sadly his father died from bacterial meningitis shortly after his amputations. The total cost would be £3,700 but any little bit helps.

Theranova, based in Oradea, was founded in 2002 by Jaco du Plessis. It is a charity raising funds to pay for patients who cannot afford to pay for the artificial limbs which, for young children, need to be replaced as they grow up. Theranova's goal is to offer patients in Romania prosthetic and orthotic care similar to that found in large clinics abroad. Because the state budget fails to cover expenses quickly or completely, many families rely on Theranova, especially low income families. Since publicity in the Keston Magazine in 2017 two Keston residents have generously helped to fund prostheses for two other children, changing their lives.

For any enquiries and communications please contact Lidia Toher via email lidia@johntoher.com or by mobile 07764 286914. You can be assured that your money will be used wisely and that all funds received are used to aid those in need and although the technicians are paid no members of the charity receive any expenses or remuneration of any kind. Thank you for your continued support.

Lidia Toher,
member of Keston church congregation



School playground transformation





Christmas has come early for the children of Keston CE Primary School, as months of fundraising, volunteering and community spirit have culminated in a transformed playground environment.

Much like the mustard seed in Jesus' parable, a tiny seed of inspiration has flourished into a project that has captured the imagination and support of the school community. Guided by our school motto, *"In God's hands we love, learn and grow,"* families, staff, local businesses and most importantly, the children themselves have worked together to create an outdoor space that reflects the needs and aspirations of our pupils.

At the heart of Project Playground have been the children. Through the School Council, pupils shared their ideas and priorities, helping to shape plans so that the result has been a playground designed with children, not just for them.

Fundraising efforts have included Christmas and Summer Fairs, school discos, cake and sweet sales, Gift Aid donations and Amazon Wish lists. Local businesses have been incredibly generous too, and have helped turn a vision into reality.

On a sunny Saturday, we had our very first Keston Community Day when an amazing team of parents, carers and staff helped install new storage sheds, organised and allocated new toys and sports equipment, repaired and restored resources and replanted areas to create a welcoming outdoor environment.

The children have embraced the improvements wholeheartedly, even creating their own Playground Pledge, promising to respect, share and care for their new resources. Already, we have seen a reduction in playground disputes and accidents as children play more collaboratively, invent new games and enjoy traditional favourites together. The icing on the cake arrived over half term with the installation of vibrant new playground markings. As one excited child said, "*Now there is always something fun to do at playtime, and everyone can join in!*"

Project Playground is a wonderful example of what can happen when a community comes together. By living out our motto, we have transformed a small seed of an idea into something really special for Keston's children and we are truly thankful to everyone involved.

Dawn Ardern, Head Teacher/Copilot

A trip down memory lane





Above, two photos, 62 years apart, of the same couple separated by a lifetime of experiences.

On 5th September 1964 I was living in Keston and married Penny Rankin from Orpington in Keston parish church. Nothing remarkable in that you may think.

A bit special, however, was that precisely 62 years later on the afternoon of 5th September 2026 we were welcomed back to the church by Rev'd Belinda who, at no prior notice, opened up the church for us and our family to the great excitement of all. Whilst in the church she kindly gave us an impromptu blessing. In no time flat the younger members of the family started sprinkling second-hand confetti from the pathway over the heads of the happy couple!

But back to the wedding at the height of the swinging 60s and the trad jazz boom. Appropriately, we had met for the first time a couple of years earlier at Bromley Court jazz club. Penny was a medical student at King's and attracted a lot of media coverage of the wedding as she had been the 1962 Orpington Carnival Queen. I was the press officer of a tyre company at the time.

Penny recalls that the church was rather gloomy but feels much brighter now. She remembers that no photography was allowed during the ceremony or of the signing of the register.

We have been blessed with three fine sons and seven lovely grandchildren. Our eldest son, now 60, is a wildlife cameraman and film producer based in Vermont in the US. Our middle son works in broadcast journalism with the BBC World Service. Our youngest is a software developer currently on a sabbatical writing a book on science and philosophy.

We now live in the Cuckmere valley backing the Seven Sisters in Westdean, East Sussex but thoroughly enjoyed our trip down memory lane.

John Aeberhard



Carol service 2025

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

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)

But no services on Mondays 7th and 28th December or 4th January

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)

Christingle and Toy Service

10.00am Sunday 6th December

Informal non Communion service with a Christingle for each child. Collection of unwrapped toys for the Salvation Army to distribute to local children

Carol Service

6.30pm Sunday 20th December

A traditional service of Seven lessons and carols. Followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the hall

Crib Service

4.00pm Thursday 24th December

Non Communion service, children invited to come dressed up as a nativity character

Christmas Midnight Service

11.30pm Thursday 24th December

Holy Communion

Christmas Morning Service

10.00am Friday 25th December

Holy Communion and family friendly

Soldiers of Fur



French Red Cross dogs line up for inspection on the Western Front 1914.
Bouvier des Flandres third from right.
Used with permission from the Imperial War Museum

Of the many residents who attended the Remembrance Day memorial service in Keston on November 8th, few will have given a thought to the many dogs that gave their lives in service to the war effort – the so-called 'Soldiers of Fur', as they were known. Even fewer will be aware that one particular dog, the Bouvier des Flandres, was almost wiped out because of its wartime contribution to the Allies, and that a representative of this wonderful, rare breed has been hiding in plain sight on the streets of Keston for the last 12 years.

Sometimes mistaken for a bear, Betty the Bouvier is fairly typical of the breed: large (40kg), stocky, with black/brindle non-shedding fur (blondes are strictly not allowed under Kennel Club rules), fierce eyebrows and a jaw like a heavyweight boxer. Her presence belies her calm, non-aggressive demeanour, which means she always avoids punch-ups and altercations with other canines (preferring instead to turn the other, hairy, cheek). Sadly, Betty does not share the sharp intelligence so valued in her heroic wartime predecessors, although her unfeasibly large nose does allow her to detect any passers-by with a) hidden treats or b) an unguarded 'Tena' moment, with the unfailing accuracy of a heat-seeking missile.

Originally, the Bouvier des Flandres was a farm dog, bred to herd and drive cattle in Belgium. Also known as the Koehund (cow dog) or Toucheur de Boeuf (cattle driver), the Bouvier's traits of bravery, strength and loyalty made it an ideal fit as one of the first 'Soldiers of Fur' on the outbreak of the First World War. They were drafted in to pull supply carts, drag ambulance stretchers to rescue fallen soldiers in the trenches, and carry messages across enemy lines. So many were killed, that the breed was nearly driven to extinction, and the dedication of a few enthusiasts managed to save it through breeding programmes in time for a second 'tour of duty' in the Second World War.

Bouviers subjected to shoot-on-sight orders during World War II

Once again, Bouviers were called in for service, finding wounded servicemen, sniffing out landmines and acting as military aides, only this time they were targeted by Axis troops because of their recognised value to the Allies. In Holland, the Dutch Resistance used Bouviers during undercover missions, and whole streets saved food scraps to





Betty the Bouvier at Keston War Memorial

support their survival. Some aficionados like to claim that there was an order for the eradication of all Bouviers from Hitler himself after he was bitten by one on the hand (although there is no evidence to prove it). Urban myth or not, once again it took the dedication of a few Bouvier devotees to prevent extinction by introducing breeding programmes across and outside Europe.

Since the 1960s, when Bouvier numbers recovered, the breed has been used in various occupations such as protection (Princess Diana was guarded in the 1970s by a large male called Jango), in police forces in Poland, and on military duties in Belgium and North America. One less successful famous pairing was President Ronald Reagan's companion Bouvier, Lucky, whose mischievous antics in the White House led to early retirement to the family ranch (First Lady, Nancy described it as trying to control a small horse).

Back here in Keston, one of Betty's distant relatives showed an innate ability to herd and manage cattle that was purely instinctive, despite being bred for the show ring. Betty does like to herd 'her people' from the rear on walks round Padmall Wood but it's safe to say that her natural aptitude would lean more towards chief dog-sausage taster at Heathfields Café.

Despite a surge in popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, Bouvier numbers are on the decline again in Europe. Even in Brussels, where the Bouvier has national treasure status, the fate of this loyal canine is in the hands of a small number of breeders and breed associations. Superseded by Belgian Malinois in athletic military roles, there is also the element of upkeep in this double-coated breed – not for nothing are they nicknamed 'dirty beard' (Vuilbaard) in Holland. They have also become casualties of the fashion for cross-breeding doodle hybrids, for those who have a penchant for large hairy dogs and don't mind the commitment to grooming requirements.

Unlike doodles, a Bouvier groomed to breed standard should boast a generous fall (or fringe), emanating from a flat head with small ears, which sweeps over heavy eyebrows down to that infamous nose. Legs should be proportionate columns of hairiness to balance the deep chest and body, and, at the other end, the tail should resemble a long furry toilet brush. Not showy or flag-waving like more flamboyant canine cousins, but the solid dependability of a breed that's quiet in its confidence, protective without being aggressive, affectionate yet stubborn with a wickedly dry sense of humour.

Amanda Rickaby

By Royal Appointment



Fred Horwood and wife Alice circa 1900
By B. Buck (Horwood)

The publican of The Kings Arms, Fred Horwood and my grandfather were the best of friends and often enjoyed a drink and tub of oysters together. It was no surprise therefore that, on 15th June 1940, when I was christened in Keston Church that Fred was one of my Godparents and became known to me as 'Uncle Fred'. With the end of the war in 1945, and no further damage being inflicted on the building, along with Fred's grand-daughter Janet, I was to spend many happy times exploring the Inn and garden, even spending what are now known as 'sleep-overs'!

Around 1950 Uncle Fred retired and, along with his daughter, Lal as she was known, moved to a bungalow at the other end of Leaves Green. Sadly Fred's retirement was curtailed, I recall, when due to diabetes both his legs were amputated. My mother and I would visit and whilst she was in the kitchen chatting to his daughter, Uncle Fred would tell me of his lifetime spent at the pub.

Fred met his wife, Alice when she came up country to earn extra money picking flints from the fields of Old House Farm and they had three daughters, all born in the pub, as was Fred himself. He remembered the excitement when the first fragile aircraft landed on the field behind the premises and R.A.F. Biggin Hill was born; The Great Blizzard of winter 1927 when Leaves Green was isolated by giant snowdrifts and everyone coped as best they could; visits by the West Kent Hunt and the Surrey and Burstow Foxhounds who took it in turns to meet outside the pub and enjoy a 'hot toddy'



Fred Horwood with two of his daughters Tommy and Lal circa 1920
Rabbit shooting in the fields at Harvest time behind Old House Farm *By R. Ripley*



August 1940 after Luftwaffe machine gunning of the Kings Arms – many civilians were injured, including Fred Horwood the publican and Bill Blundell who lost a leg. *By W. Blundell*

and bring colour and the chance of a tip for the locals before setting off to cover the woods and fields locally. He also told how his love of horses saw him serve in The Great War in the Veterinary Corps but nothing of the horrors he must have experienced; the War years when R.A.F. personnel from all over the world would relax and enjoy the friendly atmosphere over a drink or two! Who was the first person to pin their country's banknote to the old beams which started the trend and eventually covered them all over and became part of the pub's history?

The best of all Uncle Fred's recollections was about the time he went to Croydon to pay for the premises in gold! Amongst the Inn's papers was a large parchment document headed "By Royal Appointment" and signed by King Henry VIII. This led Uncle to the theory that when the King was getting nowhere with his courtship of Anne Boleyn by letter, he would make the journey to visit her personally at Hever Castle! On his way from London to Anne's home he would travel along Kentish lanes which took him and his companions past a small thatched Inn where they enjoyed refreshments before descending the North Downs to Hever. Over time this became a regular stop and in reward for the Innkeeper's hospitality the King gave him the honour to display the Royal Warrant to The Kings Arms outside the pub! Uncle Fred was quite convinced of this and it became more colourful with each telling! Although I am not so sure of this story now, I was totally convinced at the time! I have never forgotten Uncle Fred's tales which I am sure gave me my lifelong interest in the parish's past.

I wonder what became of all those banknotes?

Country Correspondent (Chalkpit)
And with thanks for the use of his photos

Potted history of the Kings Arms

The 'Kings Arms' was originally a farm dwelling built in 1585. An ale licence was issued in 1763 at which date it was an untitled beer house, at 'Leves Green in the parish of Cudham'. After a number of owners and work being done to the property, in 1785 a full licence was granted for the premises and it was registered under the title of 'Kings Arms'. Several owners were horse dealers or groomers (curriers).

In 1881 the Inn was taken over by John Horwood. He remained there until his death in 1912 and was succeeded by his son Henry who was killed during WW1. It then passed to his wife Elizabeth who stayed until her death in 1937, and in that year was succeeded by her son Frederick, who stayed until 1963.

Help Keston wildlife – be Spot-On aware



Wendy Foulds (left) and Diane Stalker Muir

We are the Keston Riverfly Monitoring Initiative team. We monitor water quality near the source of the river Ravensbourne as part of a wider South East London rivers project. Many of you have stopped to ask us questions and look at the wonderful wildlife we find in our stream, such as freshwater shrimps, mayflies and caddisflies. It is through our observation of these invertebrates that we can judge the quality of the water.

Even so close to the Ravensbourne spring at Caesar's Well there are many sources of pollution including run off from local roads, the impact of which should be much reduced through the planned Keston Ponds project. You may have noticed several national news articles relating to another source of pollution that has an extremely detrimental effect killing invertebrates in our ponds and streams and impacting the whole food chain including our beautiful kingfishers. This further source of pollution is caused by the chemicals found in flea and tick Spot-On treatments.

The most toxic are Imidacloprid and Fipronil – two insecticides that are found in the majority of over-the-counter 'Spot-On' pet treatments. These insecticides were initially introduced for agricultural use, but after research showed their toxic impact on pollinator insects such as bees and butterflies, as well as aquatic invertebrates such as mayflies and caddisflies, they were fully banned for UK outdoor use in 2018. Even very small amounts of these insecticides are harmful, for example Prof. Guy Woodward of Imperial College London estimates than an amount of Imidacloprid as small as two sugar cubes would be toxic to aquatic wildlife in a waterbody the size of 400 Olympic swimming pools.

Both insecticides are also being found in unacceptably high amounts in domestic wastewater and cannot be removed in the wastewater treatment process. Spot-On flea treatments being



Kingfisher image from Wikimedia



Caesar's Well

washed off when dogs enter waterbodies and domestic handwashing after applying flea treatment, or washing pets and their bedding all have the potential to introduce insecticides into the environment.

In July 2025 the House of Lords Environment Committee launched a Call for Evidence, taking submissions from a wide range of stakeholders. Their recently published report recommends that the government restricts the use of these insecticides to vets, pharmacists and other qualified professionals – a move that is supported by the British Veterinary Association (BVA). However, these treatments are still available for sale to the general public.

We recognise that all pet owners want to do their very best for their pets.

What can you do to help? Please:

- Talk to your vet about a non-toxic flea and tick treatment
- Use treatments only when necessary; the BVA states that most pets do not need year-round treatment.
- Keep your pets out of Bromley Council's Dog Exclusion Area of Keston ponds, Caesar's Well and the Ravensbourne stream.
- If you really need to use a Spot-On treatment, follow the Government's 'Be Spot-On Aware' Campaign that includes these recommendations:

* Keep pets out of other waterbodies if they have had a Spot-On treatment in the last four days (over the counter or supplied by a vet)
* Stop washing your pet in the weeks after a Spot-On application
* Bin used pipettes and return unused medication
* Don't leave treated pet fur out for nesting birds

Wendy Foulds and Diane Stalker Muir



Traffic concerns with proposed housing



Section of Croydon Road where proposed development to be sited

The Keston Residents' Road Safety Group, (KRRSG), have recently become aware of a likely planning application by Knights Developments Ltd for a significant number of dwellings on the open land fronting onto Croydon Road between The Drift and the Al-Emaan Centre. The company are seeking comments from interested parties, although they have only circulated this request to a limited number of residents.

The proposal suggests 60 homes with 50% affordable housing, new cycle and pedestrian route to the school, new school parking and a new public open space, although no detail has been provided on any of this at this stage.

As with all development proposals in our area, KRRSG's concerns focus on the impact that any building will have on the safety of our roads and in particular on this already very busy junction, which a report for the Council identified many years ago was already operating at capacity at that time.

Details of the proposals can be viewed on www.thedrift-consultation.co.uk. In representing local residents, we would like to receive any views and comments that you might have on this proposal and we can be contacted on our email address krrsg@hotmail.com.

The group continue to work to improve road safety in our area and many residents will be aware of the defibrillator that the group purchased and maintain, that is available on the wall of the Shell petrol station at the Keston Mark junction. For those interested, we will providing a training session in the use of this equipment in the New Year, so please look out for an announcement.

Our current projects include trying to persuade Bromley Council to mark a 'Keep Clear' box at the junction of Phoenix Drive and Croydon Road to improve the safety of vehicles and people leaving Phoenix Drive. We are also seeking improved road markings on Croydon Road between Longdon Wood and Keston Mark junction, where at busy times, morning and evening, traffic often travels at speed on the wrong side of the road, as they attempt to 'beat' the traffic lights.

Andy Barrett, Chair of KRRSG

What I do



My husband Rocky and I have lived in Keston Park for over 40 years, bringing up our two sons, Scott and Lloyd, in the area. Back in 1995, we started Glebe FC with just one youth team playing in West Wickham. We certainly had no grand ambitions to create one of the area's largest grassroots football clubs – we just wanted to provide a welcoming, enjoyable environment where local youngsters could play football, make friends and develop their skills.

Today, our club, now known as Chislehurst Glebe FC, is based in Foxbury Avenue Chislehurst and boasts an impressive 38 teams and almost 500 playing members for the 2026/27 season, catering for boys and girls from Under 7s right through to men's and women's adult football.

Over the years, thousands of young people have pulled on a Glebe shirt, with many players coming from Keston and nearby, a connection that continues to this day, as many local children play for the club. Some have gone on to play at higher levels, while others have simply enjoyed the friendships, teamwork and sense of belonging that grassroots football brings.

When I look back over those 31 years, I sometimes wonder how we've managed to fit it all in! Like so many people involved in grassroots football, Rocky and I have turned our hands to just about every job imaginable. We've coached teams, prepared pitches, painted and decorated, organised events, and generally done whatever needed doing. I have run the club kitchen, done fundraising, marketing and managing grant applications – the largest one was for £1m to help us build a new state-of-the-art 3G football pitch which opened in July 2025. It has transformed our facilities and helped secure the club's future for generations to come.

And 2026 brought another special milestone when Chislehurst Glebe FC was named **London FA Grassroots Club of the Year 2026**, a tremendous honour and recognition of the dedication of our volunteers, coaches, players and the wider football community.

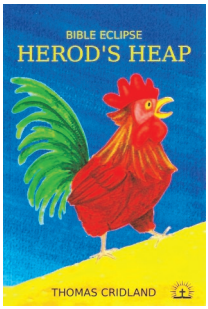
Despite all the growth and success, Glebe remains very much a family club. Rocky is still an active Chairman, and I'm now the Club Secretary, so we're both still very much involved in its day-to-day running.

For me, there's something special about knowing that what started as one little football team all those years ago has become such an important part of local life. It's been an enormous amount of hard work, but also a wonderful journey, and one that has brought us friendships, memories and experiences we could never have imagined in 1995.

And after 31 years, I'm still as passionate about the club and what it means to our community as I was when we first started.

Grace McMillan

Herod's Heap



The magic of a children's book is its ability to unlock a child's imagination. The words may be printed in black and white; however, when read, they become colourful stories across the theatre of their minds. This sparked my desire to write one.

Historically, literature transformed Christmas. Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* changed the Victorian Christmas from a quiet affair into a one of celebration.

Annually, the Nativity is performed around the world, becoming a core part of the festive spirit. Yet, because it is so well known, the beauty and depth of the original story can often feel lost. I wanted *Herod's Heap* to bring back the heart of the Nativity story in a fresh, engaging way. It is the tale of three starving rats searching for a mouse said to be the new king who will solve all their problems. Standing in their way is Herod, a fighting rooster who rules Caesar's farm and is determined to stop the prophecy to protect his grain.

No children's book would be complete without pictures. When looking for an illustrator, I thought: how wonderful it would be to one day read my children a story penned by their father and illustrated by their grandmother.



I prefer to weave Christian details and themes subtly throughout, much like C.S. Lewis did in his beloved *Narnia* series. It has been great to hear from people of all faiths who have enjoyed the book. *Herod's Heap* is aimed at ages 7+ and is available on Amazon.

Thomas Cridland,
illustrated by Alison Southcott

Good news if you are reading this!

Recent research has shown that reading for enjoyment is linked to improved health and problem solving. Benefits include lowering stress, greater empathy, enhanced wellbeing and decreased loneliness. Reading with others as part of a book club or as a parent reading with children can bring even greater rewards. Children who begin reading for pleasure early in life do better at school and have fewer mental health problems. In addition, one study showed that older adults who regularly read had a 33% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's.

The report published in *Psychological Medicine* which reviewed data from many trials and studies found that MRI scans showed reading could improve brain structure and connectivity.

Reading was beneficial regardless of what type of material was read – fiction, non-fiction, comics, newspapers or magazines. All the more reason to enjoy The Keston Magazine!

Sally Churchus

What's on

Prayer Walks

First Tuesday & Third Wednesday 9.30am
The Green opposite The Greyhound pub
We usually return about 11am. Well behaved dogs welcome too!

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 on leads welcome.

New Keston WI

Second Wednesday 1.30pm-3.30pm
Keston Church Hall
Contact Helen Best on 07715 880889.

Book Reading Fellowship

Monday 23rd November 2pm
Come and discuss books with some Christian content that you have read over tea/coffee and cake. Contact Sally Churchus, her details are on p2.

Keston Art Show

Saturday 28th November 10-5pm
Keston Village Hall
Refreshments available. Free entry.

Keston School Christmas Fair

Saturday 28th November 12-3pm
Keston CE Primary School, Lakes Road
Entrance fee £2 for adults, children free.

Parish Lunch (postponed from Sept)

Sunday 29th November 12 noon
Keston Church Hall
Tickets £18 from Chris 07988 712873.

Christmas Flower Arranging Workshop

Monday 21st December
1.30pm for 2pm start
Keston Church Hall
Do come and enjoy creating your own Christmas arrangement with us. There will be assistance to hand if required. You will need to bring secateurs, flowers, foliage, a container and maybe some baubles. Oasis Bio Foam will be available to purchase. There will be the usual raffle together with tea or coffee and biscuits. Everyone welcome. Further information available from Maureen Marshall on 01689 857260.

Morris Men Boxing Day Dancing

Friday 26th December 12.30pm
The Greyhound pub
Come and join the throng and enjoy the 63rd year of this tradition.



Magazine deadline

Please send material for the February/March issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, well before the deadline on Wednesday 6th January by email to: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ **Candles**

For our Christingle service the Rector will light his candle from the altar candles. The ushers will light their candle from the Rector's candle. The ushers will turn and light the worshipper at the end of each pew.



"…and don't forget we're coming into Nativity Play season – make sure we have extra tea-towels in stock!"

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