

The

Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



August/September 2024

Keston Parish Church

Church Road, Keston, BR2 6HT kestonparishchurch.org.uk



Rector

Working days Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling 01689 853186
Saturday – Tuesday rector@kestonparishchurch.org.uk

Licensed Lay Minister & Parish Administrator Churchwarden

Tricia Coward 01689 854373
hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk
Geoff Carr 07584 058872
warden@kestonparishchurch.org.uk
Tonia Crouch
verger@kestonparishchurch.org.uk

Verger

Safeguarding Officer

Steff Nash
safeguarding@kestonparishchurch.org.uk

Treasurer

Anna Bailey 01689 852583

Organist & Choirmaster

David Cook 020 8289 5768

Church Hall

Tricia Coward 01689 854373
hallbookings@kestonparishchurch.org.uk

Magazine Editor &

Sally Churchus 020 8462 8750

Book Reading Fellowship

editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk

Women's Institute

Helen Best 07715 880889

Beavers/Cubs/Scouts

gsl27thbromley@gmail.com

Residents' Association

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

Julia Evison 01689 858399

Friends of Keston Common

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

Keston Residents' Road Safety Group

krmsg@hotmail.com

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same
the Lord's name is to be praised. *Psalm 113:3*

Thought for the month



Sabbath

'God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.'
Genesis 2:3

Summer is traditionally a time when most of us down tools and prepare to have a break. Whether we 'staycate' or 'vacate' to sunnier climes, the intention is to take a complete break from work, in whatever form we know it. That is not to say that there is something inherently difficult about work or that it is life-draining.

The desire to work is an integral part of who we are. We want to use the gifts and talents God has given us. We want to make a difference for the transformation of the world we live in for the good of all. We want to have a legacy that blesses those around us, in the here and now and for always. We want to work in order that we might live well.

We all set out with good intentions, confident that we can, and know how we will manage the tensions of work, leisure, study and rest, so that our life is

an organic whole, perfectly balanced and seamlessly bound together. It does not take long before we find ourselves living to work. Worse still, with the pervasiveness of modern technology, the demands can intrude on our lives 24/7.

Holidays, originating from an old English word 'holy day', serve as a Sabbath time – a time when we rest, a time when we stand back and check to see that all that we do is good and life-giving. It is a time to listen to our bodies, a time to recapture an enthusiasm for the rhythm of daily living and a time to make space where relationships with our loved ones, with creation can be prioritised and re-energised. Nicola Slee says, '*Sabbath is the breathing space in our labours, the pause in and before and after the music, the clearing in the woods through which the light comes, the empty hours of night in which our bodies and minds regenerate themselves and God gives gifts, ... to God's beloved.*' (p18 *Sabbath: The hidden heartbeat of our lives*.) Sabbath is a gift which invites us to connect with God, our maker, whose sole purpose is to help us be who he created us to be.

This holiday time we are freed from the drudge and monotony of daily toil. This in itself is deeply restorative. But it can be so much more, if we return, renewed and refreshed, full of a sense of who we are and fully aware of the unique space God calls us to fill as a blessing to the world.

Belinda

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor



Summer has finally arrived in a wet kind of way! The front cover brings to mind a holiday I had as a child in Minorca when I

managed to step on a sea urchin and my dad had to try and get the spines out of my foot! It was pretty painful, but hasn't stopped me from loving swimming in the sea, snorkelling or SCUBA diving to see all the beautiful creatures living there.

I hope you enjoy the variety of articles kindly written by Joanne Bourne, Jonny Meah and others passionate about their interests in this issue, as well as those remembering the lives of two Keston residents.

Sally Churchus

Cover Story

Readers with good memories will recall the article about the fossil in the church wall from 2003. If not, the fossil in the flint can be found on the north wall, beneath the window, about 6ft from the porch wall and 5ft from ground level. The small white circular markings are

the position of the original spines of a sea urchin, an echinoid. It was probably preserved as a fossil when the Chalk Seas were being laid down between 100 and 64 million years ago – mind boggling! Presumably there are other fossils within all the flints that have been used to build the church – we just haven't spotted them yet!

Magazine Donations

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



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The Flintstones



I've been in awe of flint as long as I can remember. It was ever present on the Downs as I was growing up; used to build garden walls and rockeries, to edge drives and weight dustbin lids, but also to build houses in my village of Green Street Green, and locally pubs, churches, gatehouses and even castles.

I made a small collection of interesting pieces. Coloured pebbles, a fossil sea urchin and my prize possession: the forked claw of a dinosaur. And though that proved to be the product of my imagination, flint – in its original form – takes on a seemingly endless range of shapes.

In 1997 I returned to my home village after years living abroad and started walking the paths and fields of the Downs again, picking up small nodules, the occasional fossil and humanly worked flakes and tools to add to my childhood collection.

There are places on the Downs where the topsoil has no depth and ploughing periodically scrapes the fields down to the chalk. Here the machines can toss up whole flints – their shapes the perfect positive of the negative they formed in. Patterns repeat but, like snowflakes, no two pieces are ever the same. These are the gallery flints. The

Barbara Hepworths and Henry Moores. The Mirós and Picassos. Or art project of the great divine.

I sometimes made notes about my walks. The places I went; the things I saw and found and the people I met. In 2014 I started turning the walks into stories – stories I then turned into a manuscript in 2020. That manuscript became *Flint: A Lithic Love Letter*. Chapters follow my walks through woods and across local fields, from Green Street Green to Farnborough, as far east as the beach at Ramsgate and north to the edges of the downland at Keston.

Keston Church lies on this sand and chalk boundary, its beautiful flint walls the product of deep time. The nodules were dug from the chalk that formed between 93 and 72 million years ago during the Cretaceous period, each knapped by hand by the church's builders at various times over the last 1,000 years. Many parish churches can claim antiquity, but what is impressive about Keston Church is its situation in human terms, built on what are probably late Saxon graves, close to an Iron Age settlement, Roman Villa, tower tomb and ritual pit. It suggests a continuity of worship of at least 2,000 years that I find powerfully moving, and is tangibly present – certainly in the glimpse I had of the church on my Keston flint walk.

Joanne Bourne

Flint: A Lithic Love Letter is published in hardback on 19th September 2024 by Eye Books at £14.99. Readers can buy the book at 25% discount from <https://www.eye-books.com/books/flint> by using the code KESTON at the checkout.

New Keston Library



If you have walked along Commonsidge recently, you may have noticed a small addition situated outside No. 27a: a house-like box that is filled with books. This is a “Little Free Library”, part of a worldwide charitable initiative to expand book access, promote literacy and bring local communities closer together. Users

are free to take and leave books or leave a message in either its physical or virtual guestbook on the “Little Free Library” app.

Its steward, Teresa Amos, was inspired to start her own after using a nearby book exchange. She designed the library and it was built by her partner. While the library welcomes a wide range of books, Teresa will be ensuring that there will always be a good selection of children’s titles: “After learning that one in 12 children does not own a single book*, I wanted to do something, in my own small way, to try and rectify that”.

The library is opposite Commonsidge carpark and can be accessed 24/7. Follow on Instagram @kestonlittlelibrary

*National Literacy Trust, 2023

Teresa Amos

A Summer Prayer

Creator God, under the warmth of the summer sun
the world awakes and blossoms into every imaginable colour.
You created a garden for us to enjoy,
and within it planted the most magical of flowers and trees.
You needed no horticultural training to plan your colour scheme,
no gardening expert to recommend variety or design.
Your garden is perfect, its colours harmonious, its scale immense,
spoilt only by the clumsiness of those who tend it.
Open our eyes, Lord, as we walk through this world,
to feel the wind and sunshine,
see the majesty of creation unfolding before our eyes.
Help us in all this to see you. Amen.

@John Birch www.faithandworship.com

Celebrating 60 Years of Ministry



A Thanksgiving and Celebration service for Rev'd Eric Heselwood's 60 years of Ministry took place on the afternoon of Sunday 7th July. The church was packed with over 170 people coming to mark the occasion. Several people spoke about the impact that Eric and his late wife Hilda had on their lives and faith. It was followed by Pimms and tea or coffee plus a selection of home made cakes in the church hall.

Why Go to Church?

A casual church-goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. He wrote "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I've heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, and the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the 'Letters to the Editor' column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I have been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked 32,000 meals... but for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals! However, I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!".

My Favourite Bible Verse

"Underneath are the Everlasting Arms". Deuteronomy 33:27

Only five words, but this quotation has always meant a lot to me. I wonder if others find it helpful too?

I have a mental picture of very strong 'everlasting' arms, holding me tightly. Those arms are not "up in the sky", not far away somewhere, but **underneath**. They are constantly there. When I am feeling very low, they are there, underneath and supporting me. When I have made the same mistakes again and again, they are there holding me up. When I can't get out of bed in the morning, they are there lifting me up! They are not judging me, they are just always there. What a comfort! I can cling on, and know that I am loved and supported by my loving heavenly Father.

Angela Godfrey



Obituary

Doreen Smith 7/9/1940-1/6/2024



Doreen Smith, born in Beckenham during the turbulent times of the Blitz, passed away peacefully on June 1, 2024, at the age of 83. Despite the challenging beginnings, Doreen's life was filled with love, creativity, and meaningful connections.

Doreen attended Baston School, where she formed lifelong friendships, often meeting her "Baston Old Girls" for annual reunions. Her passion for art was evident from a young age, evolving from drawing on her bedroom wallpaper to pursuing a formal education at art college. Doreen's talent and dedication earned her the title of Miss Art Queen in 1962. She contributed her skills as a technical illustrator for an architect's office in Pall Mall and the Home Office, and was an active member of the West Wickham Art Association.

It was through her involvement in the local church fellowship youth club that she met Anthony, her future husband. They married in September 1963 at St John's Church in West Wickham and had two children, David and Robin.

Anthony's career required several relocations including to Chile and then in 1992, Doreen and Anthony moved to Hong Kong, where she quickly immersed herself in the expat community joining various social groups and doing charitable work. This period was marked by extensive travel, visiting different countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Bali, Malaysia, Singapore, and later, Australia, New Zealand, and a return trip to Chile.

Doreen's creative pursuits continued throughout her life. As a member of the Pottery Club, she produced various creations that adorned her home. Her artistic talents were not confined to pottery; Doreen was also skilled in drawing, painting, sculpture, glass engraving, writing, gardening, and flower arranging. Visitors to her home always admired her creations while enjoying tea and biscuits in her garden.

Doreen actively participated in Messy Church, church flower arranging, church choir, keep fit classes, was a member of Keston Women's Institute and the Wednesday Widows group.

In September 2023, Doreen was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. She faced this battle with courage and grace, reflecting on her life with gratitude, saying she had no regrets and cherished her family and friends.

Doreen is survived by her loving family and countless friends who will miss her dearly. Her legacy of creativity, warmth, and resilience lives on in the hearts of those who knew her. The family is grateful for all the condolences and hopes that Doreen will be remembered with a smile.

David and Robin Smith

Obituary

Cathy Cribbens 9/4/1937-3/5/2024



Cathy Cribbens passed away in May 2024 having lived in Keston for 56 years.

Born in 1937 in County Longford, Ireland, Cathy's formative years were spent in the small country town of Granard. After her education finished she spent four years working for two doctors in Dublin – an experience that shaped her ambition to be a nurse, and that brought her to England.

In 1957 Cathy left Ireland to train in nursing at the then Farnborough Hospital. It was the beginning of a career devoted to delivering care to others. It was through her nursing – at a time when patients would spend many weeks in hospital, and patients and their families would even become friends – that she was first introduced to Frank. In her words, “corny as it may sound it was love at first sight”.

They married in 1962, and lived in Penge close to Frank's mother and aunts. Sons Nicholas, Timothy and Jonathan were born before they moved

from Penge to Keston in 1968, and their last son Simon was born the following year.

On moving to Keston, Cathy began attending Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Hayes. She was a devout Catholic whose faith was very important to her, and remained a constant member of the congregation until her illness at the end of February this year.

She was also a regular guest at Keston Parish Church, often attending alongside Frank, who among many roles for the parish sang in the choir for 30 years. The Rectors of the parish were frequent guests at the family home. Geoffrey Hyder and Alan Cox remained lifelong friends of Cathy and Frank.

Cathy had always wanted four sons, and got her wish. She also got three grandsons, and in the mid-70s a male Labrador! Despite the male dominance and her diminutive size, she was centre and direction of our home.

Through the village's Mother and Baby Club, nursery and primary school, and among her neighbours, Cathy made many friends in Keston – and continued to as new families moved into Lakes Road.

She loved Keston for its community, and the beauty of its woodland that she enjoyed walking in into her eighties.

She was caring and supportive to many, and was comforted by her friends and family when she lost Frank in 2004, her sister Margaret in 2007 and her son Tim in 2021. A devoted mum, and grandmother to Tom, Ted and Christie, Cathy's love, care, wisdom and interest will be missed.

Simon Cribbens

'Final' rest for Killicks



From left, Michael and Peter Killick

J & R Killick Ltd have a long history dating back to when the firm was established in West Wickham by James Killick. James was born in 1836 in Baston Road and started life at Mayes Farm, near the existing police dog training ground on Layhams Road.

In 1879 at the age of 43 he set himself up in West Wickham as James Killick, the local builder. He was a self-taught carpenter and built, with his own hands, his home at 112 High Street, West Wickham. He called his home Mayes Cottage, after the house which he was brought up in and if you look hard enough you can still see this name on the building today.

James married Maria Durling also from a local established family in West Wickham and they had six daughters and three sons. Two of their sons, Joseph and Roland, carried on helping their father and the Company became known as J Killick and Sons. James died in 1915 aged 79 (a good age in those days). Roland took over the Company along with Joseph's eldest son,

James Junior, known as Jim. They were also joined by Roland's sister, Julia, who became Company Secretary, responsible for the book keeping. They built up the Company and had 120 men working for them when West Wickham was still a village.

Then in 1939, with the prospect of war looming, the family reduced their liability by becoming J & R Killick Ltd.

Up until May 2001, the company were builders and joiners and the tradition in a village was for builders to also carry out any funerals; as a carpenter could make the coffin, a labourer could prepare the grave and a bricklayer construct a vault.

In 2001, Michael and Peter Killick decided to close down the building and joinery division of the company to concentrate solely on funeral directing. The old joinery workshops were re-furbished and the facilities at the office in West Wickham were totally modernised.

The Killick family have always been very proud and privileged to serve West Wickham, Shirley and the surrounding areas and the Company has always been family owned and orientated and this has always been very important to everyone involved.

It was therefore after careful consideration that Michael and Peter made the difficult decision to fully retire, and after 145 years of the Killick family serving the local community decided to close the office in West Wickham and cease trading with effect from Friday 28th June 2024.

Michael and Peter Killick

Church Services

1st Sunday of each month

8am Holy Communion using Book of Common Prayer (1662)
10am Celebrational Worship

All other Sundays

10am Holy Communion

Harvest Festival Sunday 6th October

10am Holy Communion followed by Harvest lunch

Messy Church



Tuesday 30th July 10 am-12 noon at Keston Parish Church Hall.

Come and enjoy crafts and activities for all ages followed by Celebration with music in church, finishing with lunch (provided).

No booking required, all welcome!

From the Registers

Funeral

28th May Carole Linda Gibbons (aged 59 years)

25th June Doreen Smith (aged 83 years)

Burial of Ashes

9th May John Patrick Jones (aged 93 years)

9th May Shirley Mary Jones (aged 88 years)

Keston's Connections with India Part 1



Holwood House 1798 as Pitt knew it (*Image from Bromley Archives Collection Ref: L10/1*)

Many readers will have experienced the problem faced when trying to buy a present for an older male friend or relative, I have to admit I can never think of anything to suggest. My family has resolved the problem by turning to history, encouraging me to read books I would not otherwise open. By this means I acquired an eight hundred page tome, *'The Anarchy'*, a history of the East India Company by William Dalrymple, (at £35 only as a gift), a fascinating story beautifully written and easy to read. The Company was granted a Royal Charter in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth I that only ended in 1858 with the Government of India Act. We hear so much about the wealth and power of global companies today but 200 years ago, in the days of sailing ships, the Honourable East India Company

(HEIC) was on its way to being the greatest of them all, managing half of the World's trade and governing the second most populous country in the world, India. While reading, I was reminded that many families of Bromley are associated with this episode in our Imperial history.

Two Keston families connected with HEIC and India

The tiny parish of Keston can provide convincing evidence of the Company's influence on life at home. The three largest estates and grandest houses of the parish were occupied at some time during their existence by families whose wealth had originated in India. Sadly none of the houses mentioned remain standing, however there is much evidence of their owners' presence still to be found in the landscape.

William Pitt the Younger and Holwood

Holwood was owned by William Pitt the Younger from 1789 to 1803 when he was Prime Minister. Having been born at Hayes Place he often visited Holwood as a young boy and wished to own it one day. The Pitt family's wealth was gained by his great grandfather Thomas Pitt, (1653-1726), often known as '*Diamond Pitt*' who as an employee of the Company rose to be Governor of

the easiest and safest way to transport his money – by purchasing a huge diamond

Madras. Having achieved considerable wealth he faced the problem of all Company men, how to transmit his money safely home to Britain. Like many others, Pitt sought the easiest and safest way to transport his money – by purchasing a huge diamond for the immense sum of £20,000. On returning to England he sold the stone to the Duke of Orleans for £135,000 (approx. £14 million today). With his new fortune he bought landed estates, one of which held the right to select a candidate for Parliament; this set the family on course for a life in politics. The Holwood estate is slightly larger than that known to Pitt the Younger but displays features he helped create through drainage schemes, tree planting but most clearly in rerouting the road from Bromley Common to Westerham, A233. Pitt ensured his privacy by first enclosing 30 acres of Keston Common then closing the existing road that passed his house replacing it with a new

section of road, 1470 yards long snaking around Holwood Hill over 200 yards from his house. Should you drive along this road passing Keston ponds and negotiating the hazardous bends in the road you can recall this is the work of William Pitt the Younger.

The Toone Family and Keston Lodge estate

When Sweeney Toone, a Captain in the army of HEIC returned to England around 1803 he bought Keston Lodge on the Croydon Road. His three sons followed him to India, the two youngest dying there but the elder son Francis Hastings Toone, (his godfather was Warren Hastings, Governor General in India), spent many years in Canton. He survived the threats to life in the Far East to become a member of the Select Committee of HEIC before settling finally in his father's home in Keston. His estate of 80 acres is now the prestigious Keston Park Estate built in the inter war years. Older readers might just remember his home as the Keston Park Hotel, demolished in the late 1960's and now Keston Park Close. He is buried in Keston Church graveyard, along with his two sisters, his brother in law, Lord Huntingtower and Elizabeth Parker, a respected servant.

Tudor Davies



Keston Lodge, Croydon Road, in 1963 when it was a hotel just before demolition

Keston Trees and their link to our history



The Wellingtonia in January

Given the many changes over the centuries here, it is challenging to determine for certain what is the hand of man, and what are the natural forces that have shaped our woodland areas and hedgerows.

There have been large areas, such as Holwood House Estate and the woodland around Ravensbourne House, which have been subject to extensive tree planting for aesthetic purposes during the Victorian era, and may therefore contain non-native species or a mixture of native trees planted to enhance the views.

Just downriver from Ravensbourne House is perhaps the finest example of such tree planting – a magnificent Wellingtonia *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. (Also known as a giant sequoia or giant redwood). This tree was first discovered in California in 1852 and was first planted in England on the Duke of Wellington's estate at Stratfield Saye, Hampshire, hence the English name. It can live to up to 3,400 years and reach over 50m in height. (Our tallest native tree, the Beech, can grow to 36 m.) It probably won't reach the dimensions of the biggest tree in the world, the General Sherman, in the Sequoia National Park, but it is still a very impressive sight.

For our native woodlands, management through coppicing and pollarding are very ancient practices, which continue to this day. Coppicing involves cutting the tree at the base to allow shoots to regrow from the stool, which are then harvested after a few years for many purposes such as fencing. Oak, Sweet Chestnut and Hazel are the main species used for this practice. Coppicing was last carried out in Padmall Wood at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, but this was primarily to create a better mosaic of habitats and rides for bird and butterfly species. The wood produced basically paid



Wellingtonia in June



Coppiced wood from Padmall Wood



Ancient pollarded oak on Holwood estate

for the work to be done. Most of the wood went to Kent renewable biomass plant, whilst some of the significant pieces have been kept for fencing such as post and rail, hopefully to be re-used on Keston Common or maybe other parks in Bromley. Coppicing in Padmall Wood continues on a regular cycle of seven years or so, meaning that it is due to be done again in the autumn of 2025, but this has not been confirmed as yet.

The disadvantage of coppicing is that the regrowth can be grazed by domestic and wild animals, so to avoid this, the practice of pollarding was followed in areas used for wood pasture. Trees were cut at between 6 and 15 feet high, and the shoots could then safely develop without risk of damage from animals. Very ancient pollarded oaks can be seen on the right of the footpath that runs past the Holwood Estate from Westerham Road to Holwood Farm. Some of these are probably over 400 years old and are home to a variety of rare insects and lichens. The lumps and bumps on the oaks are where branches have been cut in the past, and the tree has reacted by trying to seal the damage by extra bark production. If regularly

managed, both coppiced and pollarded trees can live a very long time.

Oak trees have often been used in hedgerows and woodbanks to mark the boundary between fields and property. These can grow to become veterans and this may be the origin of the line of large oaks between the first and second meadows from the Lakes Road entrance.

Around the common are many Scots Pine trees, our only native conifer. Most of these have been planted in the 1950's and now management is needed to remove them from the Keston Bog to prevent it from drying out and losing its unique flora. Also, Birch and Willow seedlings are constantly invading the bog and without constant attention, natural succession would lead to a dense woodland in a few years.

One species now becoming less common is the Alder, found in abundance around the Ravensbourne House pond and along the river. In spring, the catkins are a beautiful shade of purple and the cones are the favoured snack of flocks of visiting Siskin. When cut, the wood has a blood-orange tinge.

Bob Harrop

Stag Beetle Week?



'My' Stag Beetle

On the evening of 17th June I was surprised to see a Stag Beetle on my garden fence. I then heard that on the same day Angela Godfrey had also seen one in her garden when she moved a pot, and the following day, Bob Harrop saw a female one in his garden!

Are Stag Beetles endangered?

They are in most of the country, but not in London and the South East – but what a treat to see one – the UK's largest insect. Males are up to 7.5cm including their antlers/mandibles (jaws) and females are smaller. Stag Beetles are declining across most of Europe, and are a protected species in the UK.

What is the lifecycle?

For 3-7 years, the grubs live underground eating dead wood, tree stumps weakened by fungi or decaying fence posts, woodchips and even railway sleepers. The grubs are white with an orange head and legs and can reach up to 11cm! Stag beetles undergo complete metamorphosis to transform from their larval to adult form. Pupation takes about six weeks and begins in the final autumn of the beetle's life cycle. The transformed adult leaves the pupa but remains underground until the following May or June when they

emerge from the soil beneath logs and tree stumps. In this form, which we see, they only live until August, which is sad.

When do they mate?

On a warm summer's evening, particularly at twilight, you may hear the whirring as the males fly looking for a mate. The males have large antlers that are used for attracting a mate and for fighting off other suitors. Despite their look, Stag Beetles are not normally aggressive to humans; surprisingly the females have the sharper bite. Females are more likely to be found on the ground, looking for somewhere to lay their eggs. Once adult, the beetles are unable to eat, although they can manage tree sap or the juice from rotting fruit.

What can we do to help?

- Create a dead wood pile, if possible partly buried.
- If you see a Stag Beetle on a road or pavement where it's likely to be run over or stepped on, move it to a safer spot in nearby vegetation.
- Cover water butts and keep an eye out for Beetles in ponds – try and save them from drowning if possible.
- Record Stag Beetle sightings on the stagbeetles.ptes.org website.

Sally Churchus



Bob's female Stag Beetle

Adult Art Tuition

At Keston Parish Church Hall
starting on 10th September

I am delighted to bring my long established weekly art classes to Keston this autumn. I have been teaching since 2001 at Ripley Arts Centre. Although I am now semi-retired, I have had a continuous career as a commercial artist and have been President of the Society of Graphic Fine Art.

The practical art tuition classes consist of six weekly sessions on Tuesday afternoons from 12 noon to 3pm, and are designed to encourage both beginners with little or no experience, together with those who have a modest painting knowledge but now wish to take their work forward to more advanced levels.

All the art mediums will be covered, including oils, watercolours, acrylics, pastels, colour pencils and more. Students will be expected to provide their own materials and a suggested list will be recommended at the time of

booking. Some basic items such as paper may be available at modest cost with approved suppliers.



The courses are intended to be creatively stimulating in the company of other like-minded people enjoying the enormous pleasure art can bring to our lives by opening up new ways of artistic expression and creative skills.

For further information or to book a session of six weeks, priced £130, Roger can be contacted on his landline 020 8655 0221, mobile 07746 247119 or by email rogerlewisgfa@tiscali.co.uk. See website www.rogerlewisart.com. The second six week course begins on 29th October.

Roger Lewis Hon. PPSGFA.UKPCS



Left, Keston National School and Right, Autumn's Turn at Stourhead by Roger Lewis

Prime Ministers

Britain had its first Prime Minister (PM) in 1721 when Sir Robert Walpole took the job; he was a Whig. In total thus far we have had 82 Prime Ministers; this excludes First Ministers and doesn't count separately an existing PM who wins the election and continues in office. If s/he loses but subsequently wins another term, each term is counted separately.

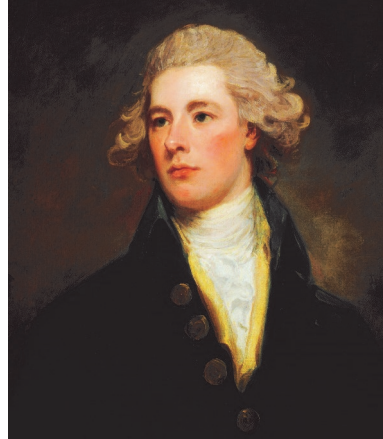
We have had 57 different people as Prime Ministers, including Keir Starmer.

The longest serving one was Sir Robert Walpole, who was PM for 21 years. In length he was followed by the Tory William Pitt the Younger in 1783, (nearly 19 years), then by Robert Jenkinson, the Earl of Liverpool in 1812, also a Tory. These are the first three of a list of PMs who have served over seven years.

There were 16 PMs in the 18th century, 33 in the 19th, 25 in the 20th

and so far eight in the 21st century. Labour and the early Tories had slightly more time in office than the number of Prime Ministers *pro rata*. Rishi Sunak was the first British Asian Prime Minister.

From Parish Pump



William Pitt the Younger in 1783 by George Romney

Dogcollar



I WANT LOTS OF GOOD FOOD. A COMFORTABLE BED A T.V. SET..... I KNOW -



What I Do



Hello! My name is Jonny Meah. I'm a lifelong Keston Villager, and attended both Keston Primary and Ravens Wood. My family have lived here for my entire life and, after a few years away, I recently moved back to my family home with my wife, Lucy. It's so great to be home, although it was rather surreal converting my old bedroom into a nursery for my own baby, Louis. But there's something so special about raising him in a place full of love and happy memories, thanks to my dad, Bill, and wonderful late mum, Betty.

I'm back in the house that helped shape me and my career. Louis' room is the room that I used to record my pretend radio shows in, as a 12 year old, dreaming of one day making it happen for real. I remember being asked, in 2008, to write in this very magazine about my hopes and aspirations, after appearing on Capital. Well, 16 years on, they've asked me back to see how things are progressing! Somehow, I've been stealing a living on radio and TV for the past eight years.

I've been lucky enough to be with Heart radio since leaving University.

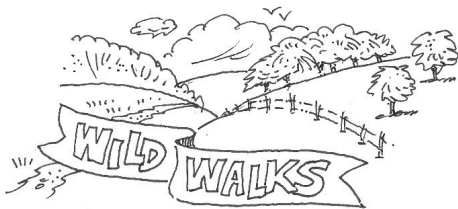
Firstly, with their Kent region as their Drivetime Presenter, and then quickly proceeding on to the main National station. Along the way, I've had some brilliant times, from presenting Breakfast with Kelly Brook, to helping give away thousands of pounds to wonderful people and charities. I've also regularly hosted their National Breakfast shows on their Decade Stations, too.

Somehow, I've progressed from behind a mic, to being in front of the camera. I Directed and Presented my own documentary, on zero budget, called *Inside the Tanks*. It focuses on the cetacean captivity industry, and now has over 7.5million views. I've also been trusted to Present on some of BBC1's flagship shows including *The One Show*, *Morning Live*, and *Sunday Morning Live*. I'll never forget my first gig on TV – I was presenting a story about a Pet Blessing. Between tortoises with bobble hats, to donkeys walking down the church aisle, it was a strange introduction to the 'glamour' of TV.

Finally, one of my favourite aspects of my job is live hosting. I regularly host at some of the most iconic venues in the country, from Manchester Arena to Wembley, along with some of the big festivals. Performing in front of a sold-out audience, of tens of thousands of people, is a thrill like no other.

So, that's me – just a normal guy from Keston, who's been fortunate enough to live his childhood dream. There's not a day that goes by that I'm not thankful for the life I've been given. Who knows what update I can give you 16 years from now. I'll probably be a lot greyer, but if it's half as fun as the past eight, I'll be very happy.

Jonny Meah



Not so much 'Wild Walks' as wild bike ride. Today, 27th June, I decided to get up early as the previous few days had been 'scorchers' so I was out by 6am!

The bike I used is an old Dutch machine – built to be ridden across Dutch fields of tulips etc. It was to be thrown away when my son and I cleared a friend's garage many moons ago. The wheels are huge – 28" diameter, the handle-bars are 17" wide and with no visible signs of brakes! However, it does have a back pedal brake. There's no possible way you can touch the ground whilst sitting on the saddle, therefore the second you come to a halt you have to slip off the saddle and stand astride the beast! In the early days of ownership I would often nearly come to grief by forgetting to hop off the saddle. Hence I've written in felt pen, on the body of the headlamp HOP OFF to remind me!

It has a dynamo driven off the front wheel, (not the rear), and a carrier plus a rear stand as per motorcycles at the time. Although they were all made as a ladies model without a crossbar, this one belonged to a lady and had 'clip on' panels on the rear wheel to protect skirts being caught in the spokes. I've since been corrected by Dave Rugg whose father owned a similar bike with a crossbar. To mount and dismount you stood on one pedal!

My journey took me out of my back garden across to the airfield through the



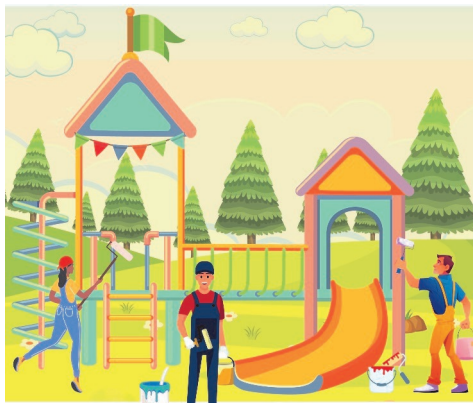
dense and tall Broad Beans. Interestingly, I was sufficiently high up to cycle easily. Soon I arrived at the Downe Road and coasted downhill past the stables; but for the rise back up I dismounted and walked. After that it was a gradual uphill ride to Downe and thence to Berry's Green. On the way I was greeted with a 'Morning' as a serious cyclist whizzed by, which woke me up.

At Berry's Green I sat on a bench and rested while watching cars and vans appear up the very narrow lane from Cudham and thence into Jail Lane. I was aware that on previous rides the traffic from this direction had been less and assumed they were somehow trying to avoid the chaos at the Keston church junction. Touching on this subject slightly, I'm amazed that as roads become more congested the car makers make everything bigger!

So, my rest over, I remounted and 'loped' along Jail Lane. Half way along were road works with traffic lights. No bother – I just used the empty pavement at that early hour. On to the main road and all downhill to Leaves Green. Luvly! The only bit of pedalling was past the main runway and from there on free wheeling back home to enjoy my breakfast.

Richard Geiger

What's On



• Community Action Day

Fri 26th July 10am-3pm

Playground at the end of Lakes Road

Come and help paint and tidy the playground, no booking necessary. Equipment, PPE and light refreshments provided. For more information please contact fokc.support@hotmail.co.uk

• Prayer Walks

1st Tues & 3rd Wed 9.30am

The Green opposite Greyhound pub

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

• Men's pub social

3rd Wed 7pm The Greyhound

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

• Keston Book Club

1st Wed 7pm The Fox

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

• Friends of Keston Common Walk

1st Wed 2pm from Keston Village Sign opposite The Greyhound

Walks last up to 2 hours. Well behaved dogs welcome. Good footwear advised and a drink if the weather is hot.

• New Keston WI

2nd Wed 1.30pm-3.30pm

Keston Church Hall

Contact Helen Best on 07715 880889.

• Book Reading Fellowship

Mon 16th Sept 2pm Gravel Road

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

• Mental Wellbeing Coffee Morning

Sat 5th October 10am-12 noon

Keston Church Hall

Come for chat over tea/coffee and cake with a mental health professional at hand. We will hear tips about how we can keep ourselves well.

• Harvest Lunch

Sun 6th October Keston Church Hall

Tickets £18 available in due course.

A red poster with yellow stars and text. The text reads: 'THE KVRA PRESENTS KEST Factor! 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024 KESTON VILLAGE HALL If you, or someone you knows is a talented singer and would love a platform for showcasing their talent, we'd love to hear from you. To audition for your opportunity to perform at Kest Factor 2024 please email us kestoffactor@gmail.com THE WINNER WILL PERFORM LIVE AT KESTFEST 2025!' There are two microphone icons at the bottom.

THE KVRA PRESENTS

KEST Factor!

27TH SEPTEMBER 2024
KESTON VILLAGE HALL

If you, or someone you knows is a talented singer and would love a platform for showcasing their talent, we'd love to hear from you.

To audition for your opportunity to perform at Kest Factor 2024 please email us kestoffactor@gmail.com

THE WINNER WILL PERFORM LIVE AT KESTFEST 2025!

Magazine Deadline

Please send photos and articles for the October/November issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Sunday 1st September by email: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ The passenger tapped the cab driver on the shoulder to ask him something. The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up the pavement, and stopped inches from a department store window. For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said, "Look mate, don't ever

do that again. You scared me half to death!"

The passenger apologised and said he didn't realise that a little tap could scare him so much.

The driver replied, "You're right. I'm sorry. Really, it's not your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver. I've been driving a hearse for 25 years".

☺ My mate just asked me, "If you were stuck on a desert island and you could only have three records, what would they be?" I said, "The long distance swimming one would be good!"

☺ A group of road workers disappeared last weekend. The police sent out a search party, no joy... But I'm happy to tell you they resurfaced this morning!

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