

The

Keston Magazine

News of your Parish and Village



December/January 2025

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And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus,
for He will save His people from their sins. *Matthew 1:21*

Thought for the month



Giving and Receiving

With Christmas fast approaching, no doubt what is exercising us most is the last-minute present buying. What do we get someone who has everything? Will they like my choice? Children write letters to Santa, adults drop subtle hints, in the hope of persuading someone to give them something they really want or they really think they need. Some just want surprises, and increasingly in our world many others have no means to enable them to give or receive presents, a fact of which many charities are acutely aware.

In the UK in 2022, research showed that the average person spent around £300 on Christmas gifts alone. 32 million people receive at least one gift which they don't really want. 6.13% throw these gifts away and the amount of waste created at Christmas is 30% more than at any other time of the year. Giving and receiving gifts has become big business and most of us are caught up in it.

Does it have to be this way? Scriptures teach us that there is a different way. John 3.16 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'. This is what Christmas is all about – the precious gift that meant everything to him, God presented to the world, his only son. It cost him nothing and yet it cost him everything. God did not intervene to prevent his own son's death.

Giving while still holding on is not giving at all; it is keeping control. It is keeping the strings attached. When God gave Jesus to the world, he had to let go, so that those receiving this special gift might benefit. Receiving is equally challenging. It involves taking possession. It means owning the decision on how to use or not use the gift going forward.

Whether you enjoy giving or receiving, these are complicated things, and have the power to make or break relationships. During Covid, we experienced a culture of giving and receiving that went beyond self-interest, that stemmed from a desire to be a blessing to others. People gave of their time, their love, their care and concern, their freedom and even their money. The difference it made was immeasurable and not much ended on the scrap heap.

What if this Christmas in a world full of self-interest, unrest, war and economic instability, the gifts we share with each other are love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)?

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very blessed Christmas, full of love, joy, peace and good will. Hope to see you sometime.

Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

From the Editor

I do hope that you manage to find a few moments to read the magazine at this busy time of year. Diane's incredible 260 mile walk might be of interest or maybe the history article about the Old School on Heathfield Road with its cess pit being emptied into a cart using buckets! Or perhaps reading about the insectivorous plants that fascinated Darwin or a bit about an unsung hero who does litter picking would be more appealing.

We also have a beautiful tribute to Frank Netscher, a well known congregation member whose funeral will take place on 25th November. It was recalled that he volunteered to be on the church Social Committee as he felt sorry for Chris, the only man on the committee. At the first meeting he discovered that Chris was actually Christine – and he was the only man on the committee! As a church we pray each week for those who have been bereaved, which can be especially difficult at this time of year.

Of course this issue wouldn't be complete without some Christmassy bits and a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. Wishing you a joy filled Christmas!

Sally Churchus

Cover Story

This beautiful photo was taken by local resident Graham Roberts, a keen wildlife photographer. It is actually a still from a video and was used by him and his wife Angela on some Christmas cards they had made last year. Thank you so much for allowing us to use it!

Poppy Appeal

Following the Keston Village Residents' Association appeal in The Keston Magazine, we received a number of kind donations towards our annual Commemorative Poppy Display. Thanks to the generosity of those who gave we now have sufficient poppies for the foreseeable future. We hope you will have enjoyed this year's display and thanks once more to all those who helped support us in this way.

Peter Zieminski

Churchgoers help Local Charities



Sally Churchus delivering the goods to the warehouse in Downham

From our collections at the Harvest Service on Sunday 6th October we were pleased to be able to donate £557 to Welcare in Bromley, a family support charity. In addition, over 81 kilos of tins and non perishable goods were collected and taken to Bromley Borough Foodbank (a Ford Fiesta boot full and back seat and footwell full of bags).

Harvest at Keston Parish Church



The singing by members of Keston CE Primary school choir was enjoyed by the congregation at the Harvest service. We are hoping that they will be able to join us again, possibly on Mothering Sunday.



35 people of all ages tucked into the Harvest lunch which included salmon, prawns and vegetarian options, and finished with home made apple crumble!

Robin facts or fiction?

Everyone loves a robin, but why are they on the front of so many Christmas cards? It probably arises from the fact that postmen in Victorian Britain wore red jackets and were nicknamed 'Robins', so the robin featured on the Christmas card is an emblem of the postman delivering the card. In 1861 the postmen's uniform was changed to blue, but red has remained as the traditional colour of the Royal Mail, reflected in its vans and postboxes.

However, there are several legends that actually link the robin to the Christmas story. One of these is that Mother Mary was worried baby Jesus would get cold as the embers were dying in the fire. The other animals didn't help but a plain, brown coloured robin assisted by flapping his wings so the embers glowed again. He then picked up some dry sticks and tossed them into the fire, however, as he did so a flame suddenly burst forth and burned the little bird's breast a bright red. Mary praised the robin for all he had done, saying 'From now on, let your red breast be a blessed reminder of your noble deed. You will be known throughout the universe as the messenger of the Christ child, the true herald of Christmas...and you will be part of the message of Christmas until the end of time and will always be known as the Christmas Robin'. (Shortened version of that written by Henry Livingston Jr. 1748-1828, proposed uncredited author of 'The Night Before Christmas').



Interesting robin facts:

- Males and females are similar in coloration. Juveniles are speckled brown.
- Nearly 75% of robins will die before they are a year old, but after that their life expectancy increases.
- Male robins exhibit highly aggressive territorial behaviour, many ending in fatalities. They even attack their own reflections sometimes!
- In the 15th century the bird became known as Robin redbreast, (rather than just redbreast), when it was popular to give human names to familiar species.
- Some sports organisations are nicknamed 'The Robins', typically teams whose home colours are predominantly red.
- Due to artificial lighting robins will often sing at night.
- The robin has twice been declared Britain's national bird, the first time in 1960 and the second in 2015, but it's not yet been made official.
- National Robin Day in the UK is on Saturday 21st December.

Sally Churchus

Birds are nature's musicians... and their concerts are free

Three Baptisms and a Confirmation Service



Jonathan's Baptism at Keston Church

After spending much of our life overseas it was not until 2015 that we moved back to Keston village, and since then we have loved integrating back into the local community. Jack and Summer finished their school education locally, we became season ticket holders at Bromley FC, and we are active members of local running and tennis clubs.

It was not until more recently, however, that we started to attend Keston Parish Church, and that has felt like the 'final piece in the jigsaw puzzle'. Our attendance at the church coincided with the arrival of Rev'd Belinda and we have been blessed by the warm welcome she has extended to us. In conversation with her earlier this year, we admitted to three of us not having been christened as children, and it was a regret of ours. How pleased we were, therefore, to be offered the chance of being baptised and Confirmed, and being guided through the process by Rev'd Belinda. We have always considered ourselves as Christians, and we have attended church wherever and whenever we could,

although we often admit to our busy lives sometimes getting in the way! As a family we see the Christian faith as a nice and reassuring guide to living a good life. Being kind to others, helping out whenever possible, and generally taking a positive attitude to life. Standing at the font of Keston Church, and being baptised was a moment the three of us will always treasure.

The four of us then proceeded the following week to receive our Confirmation by the Rt Rev'd Simon Burton-Jones, the Bishop of Tonbridge, at St. Mary's Church in Green Street Green, which was extra special. From our personal experience, we would strongly recommend anyone who has not been christened as a child to consider being baptised in later life. For us personally, it felt like the right thing to do, and we have been overwhelmed by the strong support we have received from friends and family as a result of our decision. With Christmas approaching, there is no better time to pop into church, give it a go, we did, and we are so happy to have done so! You will be made to feel very welcome.

The Bonds



From left, Jack, Summer, Bishop Simon, Clare and Jonathan

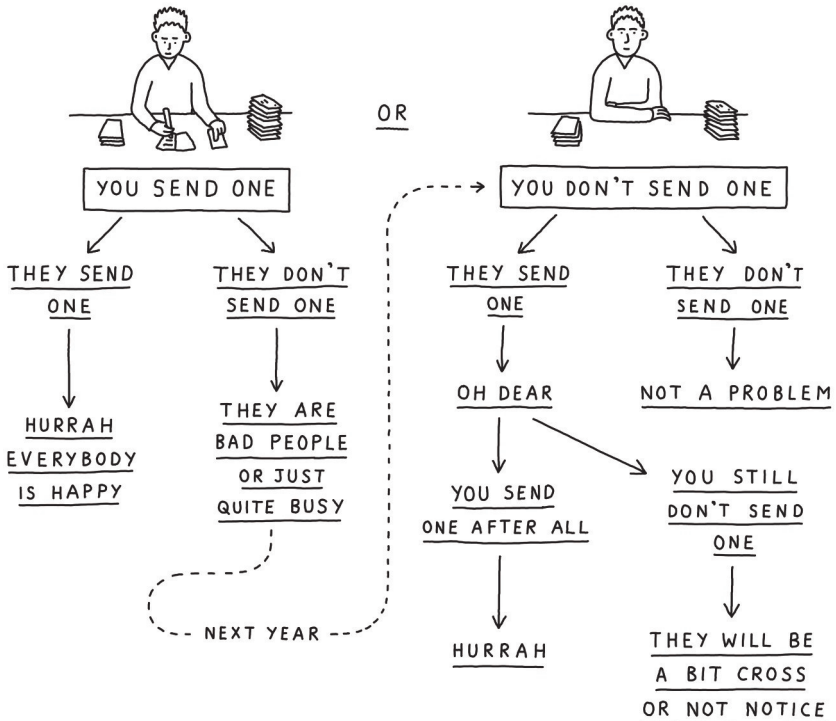
Stuck for Christmas Presents?

Before you buy a bunch of “stuff” for family and friends this holiday season, try asking them what they really NEED.

- Maybe they need help with a utility bill, or a car payment, or the rent.
- Maybe they need a child-free night and could use a free babysitter.
- Maybe they need a night off of cooking and could use a homemade meal.
- Maybe they need help with petrol for their car.
- Maybe they need a night out with friends.
- Maybe they need a cup of coffee, and someone to just listen.
- Maybe they need help making the holidays bright for their children.
- Maybe they need help in some other way, but they either don't know how to ask for help or are embarrassed to ask.

Maybe YOU could be the one to give them what they really need this season, rather than just more “stuff”.

CHRISTMAS CARDS



Obituary

Frank Edward Netscher

7/9/1930 - 21/10/2024



In 1930, Frank was born in Great Bookham but then grew up in Bombay, India. There, he attended an Anglo-Scottish faith school, until the age of 17 when his family returned to London. During this time, he attended a local church where he became fascinated by the sermons of a very old, retired priest. These sermons always ended with the same theme “God is Love”. In response, Frank was confirmed at St Paul’s Cathedral.

Aged 18, Frank started the long training to become a chartered accountant. He joined Sainsbury’s in 1954 where he continued to work for the next 36 years. He loved his work and became their chief accountant in 1975.

In 1959, Frank met the love of his life, Sheila. The following year they were married and had two children, Philip and Sandra.

Throughout their lives they maintained a very close core of friends through Bromley Cricket Club. There, Frank was involved in raising funds for the new 1966 clubhouse, was Chairman twice, eventually becoming President in 1995.

In 1988, Frank and Sheila moved to Keston where they continued to have a great social life through golf, bridge and the church. At Keston Parish Church, they both found their place in Keston’s warm, welcoming family of God. They both joined the choir and then Frank joined the PCC (Parochial Church Council). In 2018, Frank began the tortuous journey of seeking planning permission to extend the church car park which was finally dedicated last year.

Frank and Sheila shared many interests including their love of gardening and travelling the world. They were both very sociable and loved to spend time with family and friends. They were immensely proud of their children and four grandchildren who they loved so dearly.

In 2017, Sheila was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and for four years Frank was devotedly by her side, until she died in 2021 after 61 years of marriage. During this time, he felt the power of prayer and the depth of love of his family like never before. Frank started to rebuild a life without Sheila but in 2022 was diagnosed with skin cancer. Despite this, Frank continued to spread joy and laughter to those he met and continued to worship at Keston. Frank, like Sheila, died at home surrounded by his children and the beautiful garden which had brought them both so much joy.

Frank was a very kind, loving and generous gentleman who loved to make others laugh and smile. He is now at peace with his beloved Sheila; their great love re-united.

Philip Netscher & Sandra McConnochie

Church Services

1st Sunday of each month

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

All other Sundays

- 10am Holy Communion

Mondays (except 30th December and 6th January)

- 7.40am Morning Prayer
- 8.00am Holy Communion (said)



Celyah Walling after her Baptism on 21st July with parents Joshua and Nicola with Rev'd Belinda Beckhelling

My Favourite Bible Verse



"But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first". Matthew 19:30
I find this verse a simple but powerful reminder to avoid the temptation to chase prestige and rank. I still fail at this, continually. But reminding myself of this verse is my first remedy to ground myself in stressful situations, especially at work. It's so easy to get caught up in the world's way of ranking things.

Sam Toomer

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 Saturday 21st December.

From the Registers

Baptisms

- 6th October Jonathan David Ames Bond
- 6th October Jack Herbert Ames Bond
- 6th October Summer Lily Bond
- 20th October Gigi Barbara Labeur (born 21st October 2023)
- 20th October Finley George Foskett (born 22/10/2023)

Service of Thankgiving

- 20th September Ann Cecilia Margaret de Croos (aged 76 years)

Christmas Church Services

Family Toy and Gift Service

Sunday 1st December 10am Celebrational Worship (non Communion)

Bring an unwrapped toy to be distributed by the Salvation Army to local children

Carol Service

Sunday 22nd December 6.30pm

Traditional service of 7 lessons and carols followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Christingle Service

Tuesday 24th December 4pm

*Come to our Messy Christingle and make your own Christingle at **3.30pm***

Christmas Midnight Service (Communion)

Tuesday 24th December 11.30pm

Christmas Morning Service (Communion)

Wednesday 25th December 10am



Keston National School Part 6



The Master's house after conversion to apartments in 2018, now Heathview Place.

The extension of 1906 is on the right of the building.

Conditions in the first half of the 20th Century

Between 1855 when the School Trust was established and a site agreed, and 1858 when the first children registered at the new school, the parish had raised the necessary funds to finance the building and successfully erected a two classroom school with a Master's house attached. Forty years later, the building, furniture and fittings were in a somewhat dilapidated state and the accommodation utterly inadequate for the growing numbers of pupils. Until 1966 all the rooms were heated by means of open coal fires but in 1903 the heating in the third classroom which was added in 1900, 'the large room', was supplemented by hot water pipes supplied from a coal fired boiler installed in the basement.

Just before the school was finally closed in 1974, a new boiler was fitted and only then was the use of open fires totally discontinued and the fireguards

were no longer available for drying children and their clothes in wet weather. The classrooms were built with high ceilings and large windows for plenty of light and ventilation. In the days when tuberculosis, in particular, regularly ended in death and was feared by everyone, circulation of fresh air in all rooms was considered essential. A copper ventilation cowl was built on the roof of classroom 2, to supply a constant stream of fresh air; the green cowl is still visible. The inconvenience of this arrangement was that the ventilator could not be closed, so the room received air at outside temperatures all the year round as is recorded by the Master in February 1900, when the temperature in the infants' room was just above freezing point.

Initially, lighting came from oil lamps and candles but in 1908 gas mantles were installed and although an electricity connection was made in 1922, gas lighting remained in use until 1940s. Until 1897 when the school was connected to Kent Water Works, all water for use in the school came from a well that was supplemented by a rainwater tank topped up with rain from the roof gutters.

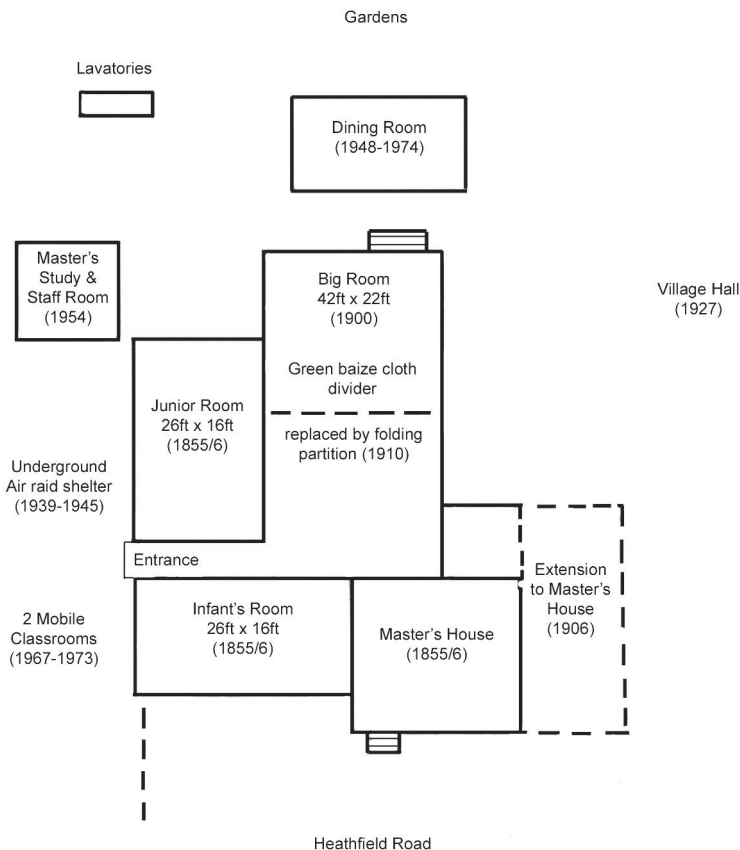
By 1990 the school desks were described by the Master as unhygienic, the outbuildings as in a dilapidated state, there were regular reports of the roof suffering from leaks and the floors were badly worn in a number of places.

However, the one facility that consumed most time for the Master and the Managers was the sewer system. The

external lavatories were served by one cold water tap, and emptied into a cess pit dug in the school grounds. For the first 40 years, this pit was emptied every month but as the numbers on the roll increased it became necessary to empty it every fortnight. The method for emptying the pit was by the use of buckets that were emptied into a cart for transport to another site; there is no record where this might be. In 1911, the Borough Sanitary Officer expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of the latrines and the method for emptying

the cesspit. He recommended the use of dry earth rather than lime for use in the pit and emptying it once a week. The Managers approached the Parish Vestry enquiring whether it was possible to empty the contents of the cess pit on the Common – there is no record of the response. Given the lack of money and the poor state of the building, it is amazing that following the appointment of Fred Taylor, most Inspectors' reports spoke positively about the standards of work achieved by the pupils.

Tudor Davies



Floor plan of Keston National School 1855-1974

My Journey from Iona to Lindisfarne



Ascending the slope near Dalmally

My hike of 260 miles took me from the western Isle of Iona to the eastern Isle of Lindisfarne, both in the company of friends and family and as a sole traveller. After months of planning and eight forms of transport to get to the start, I embarked on an amazing adventure.

A few highlights:

Iona is extraordinary and this was my second visit there. I find whatever your religious beliefs or none, there are ‘thin places’ where we can feel something *extraordinary* – we can be more in touch with our inner being, in a way maybe we can’t elsewhere; places that are ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’ and that bring a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world. I started and finished my journey in two places like that – Iona and Lindisfarne, and passed through others.

Iona’s sky was full of stars and meteors and Mull had a wild and

challenging terrain of moor, bogs and cliffs seen through mist and rain; its coastline miles of wet rocks to scramble over. We saw five white tailed sea eagles; the largest powering over the loch with it’s huge 2.4 metre wingspan; I was delighted as I had so wanted to see them.

Accidentally ascending the challenging, rather than the gentle, route to the hydroelectric power station near Dalmally meant a crash course from my friend in maintaining three points of contact whilst climbing/scrambling up a very steep, muddy, rocky 1,100 feet slope with an exhilarating finish! Glen Orchy has stunningly beautiful scenery and from my camping pod I saw a sky full of clusters of stars.

On the West Highland Way three golden eagles flew by as I heard their distinctive call.

I was excited to reach Loch Lomond; the path grew more challenging as the hours went by, with rocks to ascend and scramble over, tree roots to climb up, streams to ford and more, all the time with stunning sun filled views of the loch to my right. My route took me down the east side of Loch Lomond through rare oak temperate rain forest



View over inverted clouds at Melrose hills



Sunset over Loch Etive

with waterfalls, huge ferns and blankets of abundant mosses. I was just thinking it would be lovely to see a red squirrel when one appeared running up a tree in front of me!

My journey taught me to look after myself more than is my usual custom, taking two rest days with family and friends en route and giving my feet much needed care every day! I so enjoyed the company of loved ones as well as getting to know new people along the way.

The River Tweed was stunning, very beautiful and tranquil, the river dazzled in the sunshine, herons flew and landed in trees, cormorants were sunning themselves; I kept an eye out for otters but sadly didn't see any.

We hiked over the Melrose Hills with misted 'fairy cobwebs' en route up and with a glorious view over the inverted cloud. In the Cheviot Hills we had a continual climb up into the hills with resulting incredible 360 degree views. Wideopen Hill was aptly named as you

could feel the vast open spaces all around. On the autumn equinox we crossed from Scotland to England and into the Northumbrian National Park; I loved the feeling of tramping through the mist on the hills and moors.

Crossing the causeway to Lindisfarne was just as atmospheric as my previous crossing four years ago: quite grey and wet underfoot but somehow this enhanced, rather than reduced, the atmosphere. It was fabulous to follow the poles stretching eerily into the distance and see the seals lying on the sandbank in the causeway; the mournful and beautiful 'Selkies'.

"May the wind be always at your back and the sun on your face"... a friend's wish for my hike, which was so abundantly fulfilled with only one day of rain throughout (on Mull). I walked into sunshine as dark clouds gathered north on the West Highland Way and watched the rain come in over the mountains on the trail as I walked away south. As we left Lindisfarne... eventually a downpour!

Diane Stalker Muir



I finished!

Keston, Charles Darwin and the Sundew



Drosera rotundifolia which was the type originally on the Keston bog Photo by Alan Rockefeller

Charles Darwin often rode to Keston from his home at Down House, and the commons, ponds and bog were all his living laboratory, providing insights into the many studies he carried out in pursuit of his theories of evolution. A note from his diary of 1880 paints a picture of the commons as they were then:

“On Keston Common north of the path across from Holwood wicket is a high bit of land covered with heath, the ground amongst the heath being quite covered with lichen; I walked carefully over this place and pulled up the heath and looked among the roots, saw no trace of earthworms. The Holwood path divides the lower part of the Common into two regions, the south being chiefly gorse and fern with grass

and having worm castings, the north being pure heath and lichen region.”

Darwin is well known for his studies on earthworms, but his real passion seems to be reserved for the humble Sundew plant. Even Darwin’s wife Emma noticed his fascination with the genus *Drosera*, which means “dewy” in Latin. She wrote to a friend: “Charles is too much given to anxiety, as you know, and his various experiments this summer have been a great blessing to him, as he can always interest himself about them. At present he is treating *Drosera* just like a living creature, and I suppose he hopes to end in proving it to be an animal’.

Darwin himself wrote later: “I care more about *Drosera* than the origin of all the species in the world”.

His work began in 1860, when he first observed the common sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) on heathland in Surrey, and was curious about the large number of insects caught on the sticky leaves. Darwin lost himself for years compiling drawing after drawing, experiment after experiment into his book that was later published under the title “Insectivorous Plants”, around 1876.

Carnivorous plants actually hunt for the nitrogen found in the insects they trap. This nitrogen is absorbed by the plant where it goes on to aid the plant in photosynthesis. Darwin performed a multitude of experiments on plants like the Venus Fly Trap, Pitcher Plant, and the Sundew. Through his experiments, he sought to answer questions like how food was absorbed and how the signal for movement was triggered and carried out within the plant.

Darwin discovered the valley bog at Keston had a good population of

Sundews, and he collected some to study in his laboratory in Down House. His affection for the Sundew led to keeping his own collection of plants – he was a true Sundew fanatic.

Alas, the Sundews no longer grow on Keston Bog – the last plant was reported in the 1980’s. Since then, despite the valiant efforts of the conservation volunteers in clearing ground and creating scrapes, the inexorable march of climate change and scrub invasion have led to drier, less acidic conditions unsuitable for the Sundew to survive.

However, you can still see these extraordinary plants at in the greenhouse at Down House near Downe village. His legacy is still carefully managed by English Heritage under the skilled guardianship of the head gardener, Antony O’Rourke. Well worth a visit!

Bob Harrop



Keston Bog

Social Cinema



On the 1st of August 2024, the Bromley Picturehouse in the High Street closed its doors due to dwindling customer numbers and the rise of streaming services. It was no longer financially viable to keep the cinema open.

However, a few of us realized that the community who frequented the cinema needed an alternative to mainstream multiscreen cinemas. As a result, Social Cinema Bromley was created with the aim of showing films in community settings across Bromley, bringing people together and tackling social isolation and loneliness – one movie at a time.

The response has been remarkable, and we are proud to be sponsored by the Bromley Borough Rotary and Chislehurst Rotary. Their support has promoted our work and united the community.

We have a busy Christmas schedule of films including *Arthur Christmas* and *The Holly and the Ivy*. The nearest venues to Keston are Bromley Old Town Hall and Wickham Theatre Centre on Corkscrew Hill, West Wickham. Though we are still new and finding our way, we are thrilled with our progress in such a short space of time.

We encourage you to visit our website www.socialcinemabromley.co.uk and sign up for our newsletter or even volunteer with us if you feel so inclined.

Rob Carrick,
Head of Social Cinema Bromley

Bricks in a Wall

I read with interest the wonderful article “The mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee” in the last issue of the magazine. It brought to mind a little anecdote told to us in 1958. We were about to be married and, as was customary in those days, we had a private chat with the vicar before the banns were read or the ceremony arranged. He wanted us to assure him that we knew all about procreation, (the word “sex” was taboo in those days!), and he told us that should be top priority in our marriage. He then went on to tell us that an argument is like a brick and each brick is placed one on the other until a wall is built. If that wall grows too high then there is no seeing over it.

This profound philosophy has stood us in good stead for the past 66 years. We have to admit there have been a good few tiffs along the way but we never go to sleep without making up!

Valerie Pestell

P.S. The procreation bit worked too – our family now numbers 21!

Christmas Carol

Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'

Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Charles Wesley and others

What I Do



Apparently I have been nicknamed ‘the bag man’ locally, as I wander around Keston carrying a yellow bag and grab stick. You may well have seen me, I go out every morning, Monday to Friday, rain or shine. I have a saying: ‘Exercise with added purpose’, and it’s rather like a ritual, as I’m walking each day it clears my mind and seeing the rubbish I might as well pick it up on my way.

I have been litter picking around Keston for at least five or six years now, but I am by no means the only person who does so. Other individuals and families do, as well as the Friends of Keston Common and the Council. Like others, I take a pride in my village and like to keep the area looking nice. Perhaps seeing us clearing up helps prevent some people from littering – I hope so! I usually collect half a bag full a day, but when I do my longer walk on Fridays, (about an hour and a half), it’s usually two bags full. The summer months probably generate the most litter, as more people are out and about.

The commonest things I come across are firstly McDonald’s packaging, then coffee cups and energy drink bottles

and fizzy drink bottles and cans. I recently found a large family’s worth of KFC packaging up by Keston church. I also pick up empty nitrous oxide (laughing gas) canisters as well as unmentionable items. Occasionally I find items of value which I take to a charity shop, and have included portable speakers for a phone and a lovely lamp with a candle which was hanging in a tree. Sometimes there are unopened six packs, presumably left behind by mistake, or the odd coins or notes. I went to the police once, after finding three sets of number plates thrown over the fence on the other side of the road to the second pond. I find a lot of rubbish there, along Fishponds Road by the main pond, where people park up.

I enjoy feeding the ducks and geese as I do my circuit and have also helped rescue a dog that slipped into the third pond and was trapped under the wooden bridge. Fortunately I just managed to get hold of his collar to help him out, much to the owner’s relief.

Asked why I think people throw litter, I suppose it’s just people being inconsiderate. I don’t have an easy solution although I have asked Bromley Council if they would let me pay for and put up amusing notices asking people not to litter, but they declined. Some wire fencing along Fishponds Road, on the opposite side of the road to the pond would really help. I recall, as a child I threw a can towards a litter bin and missed, as I went over to pick it up and put it in the bin properly a lady said to me ‘Well done’, and that has stayed with me, that positive reinforcement, so perhaps that’s part of the solution.

Martin Dudman, as told to Sally Churchus

Richard's Ramblings



The river Stour at Canterbury

I have recently been looking through artwork done whilst an art student at Canterbury, I was aged 21 at the time. I lent them to my new neighbour at Leaves Green who grew up in the area and she recognised some of the places. They may also be of interest to our new Rector, Rev'd Belinda, who is acquainted with the area too.

The painting of the river Stour was done on a winter's day in 1960 when I hitch-hiked with a school friend, Martin Turner, (also at art college), on a Sunday afternoon. A small Morris van took us from Gillingham to Canterbury and on entering the van we were

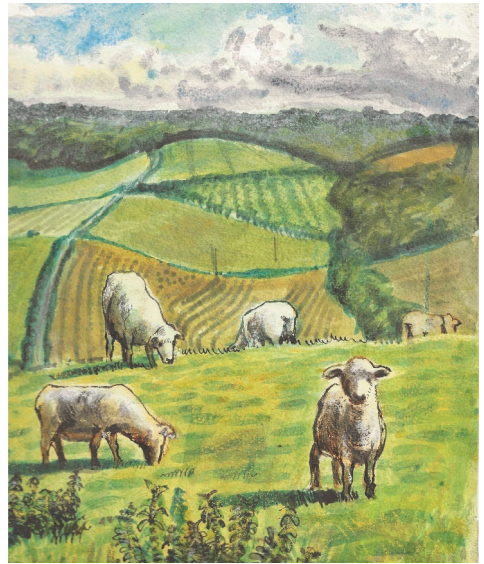


Darland Banks, Gillingham, looking towards Chatham with Bachelor's Farm in the distance

surprised to find that an oil heater was standing by the passenger seat. Martin went in the back and I sat in the front seat with the heater between my legs! It was lit and the van was super warm! Lucky it didn't crash...

The view of Darland Banks, Gillingham was a great place for sledging in winter, especially in 1963. Apparently it is now a local nature reserve with the largest population of man orchids in Britain, although we do have some in Keston. It was at this spot that I flew my first model plane. I was 14 at the time and went with my father. It was a rubber powered plane with a 14" wingspan and was called 'Pixy' by Kiel Kraft. Aah, I recall there were cows grazing at the time and they gathered around it and one licked it. I thought they were going to eat it!

Richard Geiger



Looking towards Detling – probably from Queen's Down Warren. It was painted wearing sunglasses!

What's On

- **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.

- **New Keston WI**

2nd Wed 1.30pm-3.30pm

Keston Church Hall

Contact Helen Best on 07715 880889.

- **Christmas Flower Arranging Workshop**

Thurs 19th Dec 1.30pm for 2pm start Keston Church Hall

Each person can choose the type of arrangement they would like to do and assistance will be at hand. There will be some oasis available for purchase if required. Please bring secateurs, flowers, foliage, a container and maybe some baubles. There will be the usual raffle together with tea and biscuits. Everyone welcome. Further information from Maureen Marshall on 01689 857260.

- **Ravensbourne Morris Men**
Thurs 26th December 12.30pm
The Greyhound, Commonside

The traditional dancing on Boxing Day, 61 years and counting!

- **Book Reading Fellowship**

Mon 6th January 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.

- **Quiz Night with Fish and Chip Supper**

Sat 1st March 6.30pm for 7pm

Keston Church Hall

Tickets in advance £16 from Chris Tel: 07988 712873. Please bring your own drinks and glasses. Proceeds to Keston Parish Church.



**Saturday
18th
January**

Coffee & Cake

- Keston Church Hall
BR2 6HT
- 10am - 12 noon
- Entrance £4
- Bring & Buy stall
- Raffle



**Everyone
welcome!**

Magazine Deadline

Please send photos and articles for the February/March issue of The Keston Magazine to the Editor, Sally Churchus, before Wednesday 8th January by email: editor@kestonparishchurch.org.uk or contact her to discuss ideas on Tel: 020 8462 8750. Thank you.

Laughlines

☺ Don't mention it!

A little girl went to visit Father Christmas in the local garden centre grotto. He welcomed her with a smile and the question of what she would like for Christmas. The little girl gasped and stared up at him in horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

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☺ Christmas Cracker Jokes

- **Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem?**
Because they couldn't book a home delivery.
- **What was the three wise men's favourite Christmas carol?**
Oh Camel, Ye Faithful.
- **Why did the choir have to cancel the Carol concert?**
They caught tinsel-itis.
- **How did Mary and Joseph know Jesus' weight when he was born?**
They had a weigh in a manger.
- **Why is parliament like ancient Bethlehem?**
It takes a miracle to find three wise men there.

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