

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS?

How do you feel about villages? Village life seems to be something that has an enduring attraction, at least in theory, to many people. Those comforting Sunday evening television programmes - *Lark Rise*, *Cranford*, *Heartbeat* and so on - often seem to feature villages. They are depicted as places where people know each other, where problems are solved by communities pulling together. They are rose-tinted versions of reality, of course. The excellent history of Seal which was produced last year (copies available from Highland printers!) told the real story of this village, a story which included poverty, disease, poor housing and sanitation, and limited opportunities for many who lived here. But for all the hardships it also painted a picture of a community that, in many ways, was far more self-sustaining than it is now, and where people were far more connected to each other and to their local environment. There were more local shops and services - it was far harder for people to travel so there had to be. People looked close to home for entertainment, support and friendship too. Foreign holidays were an undreamed of thing for most. Transport usually meant the bus, bike or walking; few had cars. All of these factors meant that it was far more likely that you would know those around you. You would bump into them as you went about your daily business, whether you wanted to or not.

Today things are very different. Most people can jump in the tin bubble of their cars and be transported from A to B without ever putting their feet on the ground of the village streets or having a real human contact with their neighbours. Long commutes to work or even school are common. Entertainment happens electronically in the privacy of the home, or at distant cinemas and theme parks. Children are driven to organised activities outside the village; few will be allowed to roam freely around the area as they once could. The result? Far less real sense of connection to the places and the people around us and a vague sense that, for all that we value our privacy, this is not the way we want things to be. The Sunday night TV programmes tap into that hunger, but they will never be able to satisfy it.

We are not forced to rely on each other as closely as our forebears did, so if we want the advantages of community life, we have to choose to make it happen. For example, Seal Beavers, established last year, is full to bursting, and many of the children are ready to move up to the Cubs - but at the moment there is not enough adult help to start this group for older children. (Contact Nicky Harvey - 01732 457118 - if you'd like to know more. No experience necessary, but CRB clearance will be required.) Seal parish council too is still looking for people prepared to serve as councillors, and there are many other local organisations that could tell the same story. Seal is lucky - there is still a lot going on here. But the future is in our hands. Sustaining the kind of community life that will in turn sustain us takes individual action and commitment, whether that is taking responsibility for leading or helping a group, or turning up to support what is going on.

That is why we are putting on three evening sessions in April in the church hall entitled "**Do you know your neighbours?**" (Thursday April 3rd, 10th and 17th from 7.30-9pm). Anyone is welcome to drop in - wine and nibbles provided! - and there will be representatives or displays from some of our local organisations there too. These sessions are simply times to chat and get to know one another. Whether you have lived here all your life, or are a newcomer to the village, why not come along? You might find a new interest, or, even better, a new friend!

Anne Le Bas

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Diary For April 2008		
2	Wednesday	
	11am	Holy Communion
	Thursday	
	7.30-9pm	"Do you know your neighbours?" Church hall
6	Sunday	Easter 3
	10 am	Holy Communion and Sunday School
	6.30 pm	Evensong with Sermon
7	Wednesday	
	11am	Holy Communion
8	Thursday	
	7.30pm	
13	Sunday	Easter 4
	10 am	Holy Communion and Sunday School
	6.30 pm	Evensong without Sermon
16	Wednesday	
	11am	Holy Communion
17	Thursday	
	7.30pm	"Do you know your neighbours?" Church hall
20	Sunday	Easter 5
	10am	All Age Worship
	11.15 am	Matins
	6.30pm	Breathing Space Communion
23	Wednesday	
	11am	Holy Communion
	7 pm (children) 7.30 pm (adults)	Open choir practice – all welcome
27	Sunday	Easter 6
	10am	All Age Communion followed by APCM
	6.30 pm	Evensong
30	Wednesday	
	11 am	Holy Communion
	7 pm	Open Choir practice – see 23rd
	MAY	
1	ASCENSION DAY	
	8pm	Said Communion

Parish News

A Feast of Spirituality Rochester Cathedral

19th April 2008
12.30 - 19.00

Workshops on ...

Celtic, Franciscan, Benedictine
Ignatian Spirituality, Silent prayer,
Poetry and prayer, Healing ministry
Spirituality and Dreams.

Space for Reflection

A chance to meet others

Taize worship to end the day

Organised by the Rochester Spirituality Network
within the Ministry and Training Department.

Everybody is welcome (though I am advised that the
day has not been designed with children in mind.)

Suggested donation of £5 per person on the day.

Booking is advisable – fill in a slip on the red table at
the back of church or download from

www.rochester.anglican.org

Anne Le Bas

Can anyone offer temporary storage for a
harpichord, currently taking up space in the church
hall? If you can help, please phone Dan Eaton on
07977 157753



EVER FANCIED SINGING WITH THE CHOIR?

There will be open choir practices on April 23rd and
30th at 7pm for children, 7.30 pm for adults. You don't
need to be an expert – all are welcome. No
commitment is involved – just come along and try out
singing with us to see if you like it.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

I will be starting confirmation preparation for both
young people (who must be in at least school year 6),
and for adults in early May. I have half a dozen young
people and a couple of adults who have already
expressed an interest. Would you like to join them?

Young people will be prepared in a series of group
meetings on Sunday afternoons through the summer.
I usually meet with adults on a one to one basis, but if
there are several people it may be possible to
organise an adult group.

There is no upper age limit for confirmation, and it is
very common for older people to be confirmed, and
baptised too if necessary. You don't need to know all
about faith to begin, or to feel you have life all sorted
out – this is for everyone! Please don't hesitate to
contact me if you think you would like to investigate
this further.

Anne Le Bas

Thank you to the Ladies who came to help decorate
the Church on Saturday. Also to the Beavers for
doing the centre windows on the north side. Its lovely
to see what they do.

Many thanks and best wishes,
Jane Saunders

"FAITH AND FUN" IS ON THE MOVE !

The "faith and fun" sessions for small children and
their carers have been held on the fourth Friday at
1.30 for the last year, but this is a difficult time for
many families if parents are out at work or children in
day care.

We are moving "faith and fun" therefore to the **fourth
Sunday in the month from May onwards**, following
on from the 10am service. Families are welcome
either to come at 10am and stay on, or to arrive at
about 11 and have coffee etc. with the 10 am
congregation. We will then gather in the Lady Chapel
at about 11.15 for the usual mix of songs, stories and
craft. Sessions will finish by 12 noon at the latest.

There won't be any "faith and fun" in April – the new arrangement starts on May 25th.

All are welcome to this VERY informal "service" –
older brothers and sisters are welcome - though the
service will be pitched at the level of the fives and
unders. If you would like to be added to the email
"reminder" list for this activity, please contact me.

Anne Le Bas

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

This year's APCM will take place at 11.15 on April 27th in the church hall. We will be electing new members of the PCC and Deanery Synod. All are welcome at this meeting, but only those on the Church Electoral Roll can vote.

Bingo Night

Saturday 26th April

At 7.30pm

In The Church Hall

Tickets £5

Many thanks to all who cooked for the Easter cake stall, and also to congregation and visitors who bought.

The final few pounds are not yet in, but the result will be in the region of £115.00. This will be a valuable help towards the replacement of the church path lights which are now dangerously worn. Thanks too to Linda and Georgina who helped to sell all that was given.

Margaret Mountfield

Memorial Book

If you would like an inscription in the memorial book (also called the book of remembrance) in the Lady Chapel in memory of someone close to you who has died, please contact me or pick up a form (in the Lady Chapel, beside the book) and return it to me.

I am planning to send the book away to the calligraphers for any new inscriptions to be added during May, so please return forms **by the end of April at the latest**.

Prices for an inscription start from £7.50 for one line (45 letters and spaces), with additional charges for pictures (floral emblems, badges, crests etc) Details can be found in the leaflet in the Lady Chapel.

Anne Le Bas

Those We Support

The Children's Society

Extract from head office case histories –

Thank you. Your generous support could make all the difference to a child like Jennifer, who was arrested for shoplifting shortly after her mum died:

"When I was waiting to hear whether I was going to prison, it felt like a choice between life or death. Mum was dead, and I'd never felt so alone. But The Children's Society was there for me. They've given me a second chance and I'm not going to waste it. You can be sure of that!"

Fund Raising Efforts – Financial Year 2007-2008 (Provisional)

1. At 31 Mar monies origination in **Seal Parish** –

	07/08	
06/07		
House Boxes	£	569.58
£615		
Sale of remade greeting cards(net)	£	157.00
£162		
Miscellaneous Donations	£	19.30
23		£
Christmas		
Christingle & Services	£	209.69
Candle collection boxes	£	84.47
	£	<u>294.16</u>
£272		
TOTAL	£	1,040.04
£1,073		

2. Also other amounts **PAID-IN** by Seal representatives during this Financial Year –

Rockdale – Sale of remade cards	£	1,085.00
& White Elephant items (Mrs N Wimsett)		
Leisure Centre – Money Spinner Box	£	<u>197.45</u>
		£ 1,282.45
Banked during the year under		
Seal Account Number		
Grand Total		£ 2,441.52

Our sincere thanks must go to all who in any way assisted in raising the above funds in support of the Children's Society's work.

Bob & Dawn (763787)

Faith and Thought

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH –

A prayer taught by a Notre Dame nun more than 100 years ago

Dear little Jesus, come to me.
Dear little Jesus, stay with me.
My heart is so small,
Thou fillest it all.
There is room for no one,
But only thee.
Dear little Jesus, come to me.

Parish Organisations

Royal British Legion – Seal Women's Section

We held our meeting on Wednesday 27th Feb in the Village Hall.

We opened with hymn and exaltation. After we had finished the business. Our speaker was introduced Mr Stuart Robinson who gave us a talk on some of the interesting places to see in the city of London. With a short history from Roman times to the eighteen hundreds with some slides. Mr Robinson is a City Guide.

Our Chairman thanked him. After tea was served and the raffle was drawn.

Our meeting in April will be flower arranging in the Village Hall at 2.30pm on 23rd St Georges Day.

Pat Walkling

Seal Mothers' Club

We had a very enjoyable and amusing afternoon's entertainment with Mollie Gaskin. Her repertoire stretched from Stanley Halloway to Pam Ayres and many others, all conveyed with attitude and expression. I hope no-one missed her visit to us due to a "senior moment" of mine in the last News Letter. The local Chronicle reporter did include the correct information.

Next time it will be Joy Collins from The Volunteer Bureau, on 9 April. Before our next meeting Club Members will be having their annual lunch on Wednesday 2nd April to the Plough, Ivy Hatch.

Many thanks

Eileen Burgin



Coming Events

- 30 May -1 June Engaging Spirituality @theGathering
- 29 June Strawberry Tea
- 12 July Sponsored Walk at Bewl Water
- 4 Oct Harvest Supper
- 13 Nov CTSD Annual Open Meeting

From The Parish Registers

We entrust into God's keeping:

Christopher Morris
Ann Letchford
Tony Lineham

We celebrate the marriage of:

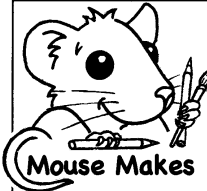
Paul Day and Julia Myers



Dates for the Next Issue

The May Magazine will be published on Friday 25th April 2008. All copy for that issue should be left in the basket at the back of the church or email me at a_c_chapman@hotmail.com by 20th April 2008.

Two for the children



Mouse Makes

God gave Moses **ten** laws to help and guide his people and it is still important for God's people to keep these commandments today.

The first four commandments are to do with our friendship with God. The last six are to do with our friendships with one another.

Read Deuteronomy 5: 1-22

GOD'S LAWS FOR LIFE <small>The Ten Commandments</small>	1. WORSHIP NO GOD BUT ME <small>Put God first</small>	2. DO NOT MAKE OR WORSHIP IDOLS	3. DO NOT MISUSE GOD'S NAME <small>Watch what you say!</small>
4. OBSERVE THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY <small>Keep a special day to rest and worship</small>	5. RESPECT YOUR PARENTS	6. DO NOT MURDER <small>Don't take away someone's life</small>	7. DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY <small>Don't take away someone's husband or wife</small>
8. DO NOT STEAL <small>Don't take something that is not yours</small>	9. DO NOT ACCUSE ANYONE FALSELY <small>Don't tell lies about others</small>	10. DO NOT COVET <small>Don't be jealous of what belongs to others</small>	Jesus' summary of the law: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF <small>Matthew 22:39</small>

Make a mini book of God's Commandments:
 Cut out the strips then glue them together to make one long strip. Zig-zag fold along the dotted lines



APRIL FOOL!

April 1st is All Fools Day, the day when people play tricks on each other. We are not sure just how it started but one idea is that it started when in 1564 the French decreed that the New Year began on January 1st as instead of on April 1st. So that the traditional New Year gifts and cards were now sent in January. For a joke some people continued to send mock gifts and cards, silly things, on April 1st. In Scotland the April Fool is an April Noddy, a cuckoo or a gowk: the same day is Boob's Day in Spain, Fish Day in France and Doll's Day in Japan.

WHAT IS IT?

There are some very strange, not to say peculiar, words in the Bible - and I'm not kidding you.

1. Is a BATH
 - a) something with bubbles, or
 - b) a liquid measure
2. Is BAANA
 - a) a mis-spelt fruit, or
 - b) an official from Megiddo?
3. Is NISSAN
 - a) the first month of the year, or
 - b) a form of transport?
4. Are OREB and ZEEB
 - a) cartoon characters used to tell modern versions of Bible stories on channel TV, or
 - b) two princes killed in battle?
5. Is KAB
 - a) a measure, or
 - b) part of a chariot?

Guess first and then look them up - answers at the bottom of this page.

Did you hear about the little girl who does bird impressions? She eats worms.

How do you part the Red Sea? With a sea-saw.

All round the world people are busy kidding their friends that their shoelaces are undone or someone is sent to buy a pot of striped paint - but every joke has to stop at midday. After that the joker becomes the fool.

Answers - look them up in 1) Ezekiel 45:11, 2) 1 Kings 4:12, 3) Esther 3:7, 4) Psalm 83:11, 5) 2 Kings 6:25.

