

Elmsted with Hastingleigh Community News

*St James the Great
Elmsted*



*St Mary the Virgin
Hastingleigh*

July 2020

40p



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July

in Elmsted with Hastingleigh

We are so lucky to live in such beautiful countryside, where such a variety of creatures live, many of which deign to visit us in our gardens, as can be seen by the beautiful photos sent in by our readers (p20-21). There are more intriguing thoughts on St Mary's Church Stone on page 24, an interesting article about the history of Wellingtonia trees (p18), and more insights into the life of a new vet (p17).

Sadly, another well-known member of the community has passed away, and we send our condolences to Sally Vanes family. We are really enjoying all the new content in the magazine, and it seems you, the readers are too, so please do keep sending us any articles, puzzles, photos or recipes you would like to share.

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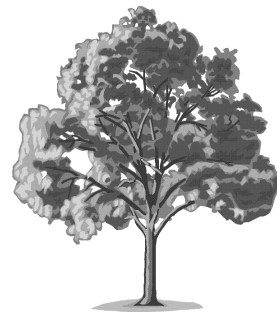
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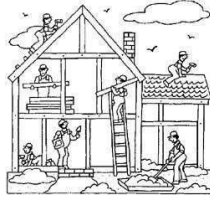
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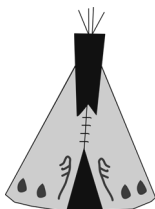
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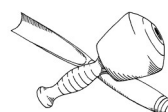
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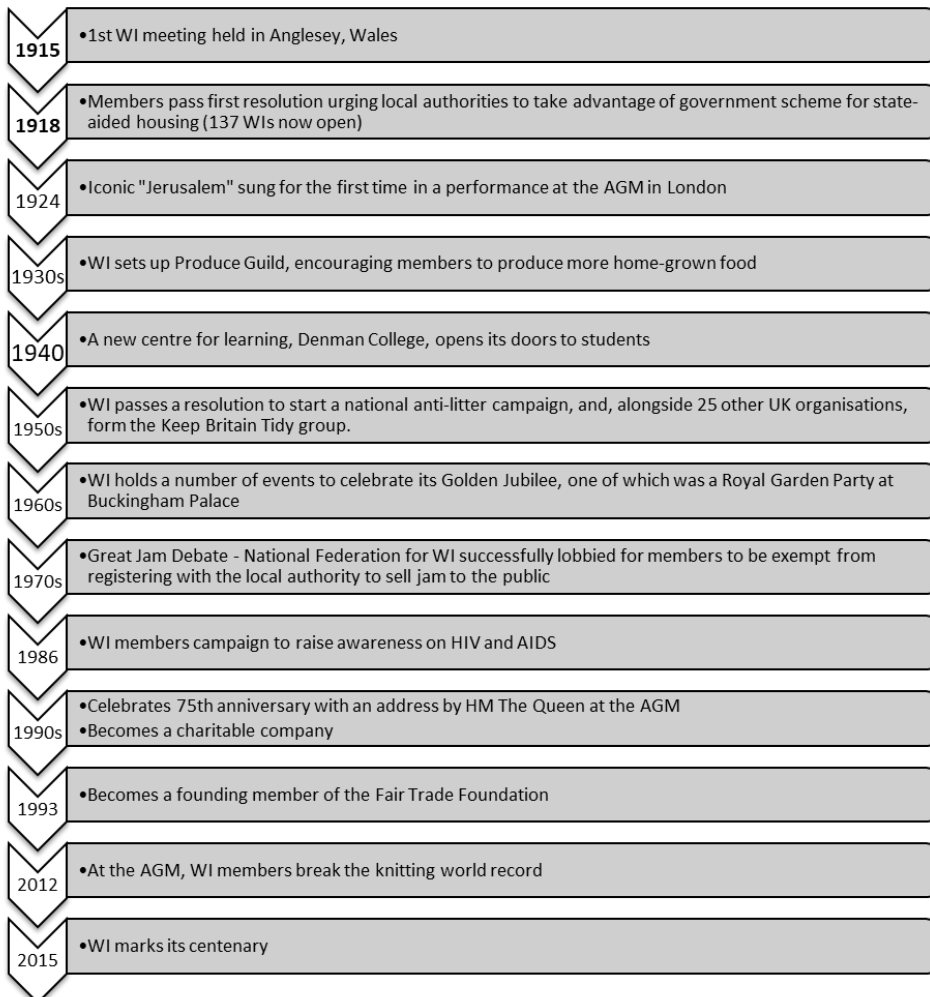
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History of the WI

The Women's Institute in Britain was established in 1915, and was originally founded to revitalise rural communities, encouraging women to become more involved in food production during the First World War. Since its beginnings the WI has become the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK. A timeline of prominent events in the WI's history is shown below.



Due to the current climate, we are unable to meet at the moment but

are holding virtual competitions for flower of the month. The Flower of the Month joint winners for June were Sally Morley-Smith and Sue Lawson, both with photos of beautiful peonies.

Marie Wenham



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In The Garden

The roses in June were magnificent; this despite the ups and downs of the weather this year – the wet, wet winter followed by almost total drought conditions. Or was it because of the weather and it just suited the roses? Whatever the answer they have been outstandingly good. Although the aubrietia has faded away for the year, in fact the flower garden is a source of favourable comment from passers-by; and now the occasional visitor is allowed under the easing of the lockdown, from them too.

In June we did have a smattering of rain but not enough to replenish the surface water tanks which are bumping along virtually empty, and every evening is spent watering to keep newly-planted flowers and vegetables alive, allowing them to get their feet down into the soil below our surface mulch. Once the roots are down, on the whole they are growing well and, so far, we have not had winds strong enough to damage the lovely cosmos plants that have yet to flower as I write this in June.

The dawn and dusk episodes of the day can bring calm for a period as the light comes and then goes again; a vital and essential rhythm of the earth below and the cosmos above. Without these rhythms, human life would be lost; and as gardeners we need to take account in our planning and planting through the year. The summer solstice has now passed and early-growing vegetables, such as spring lettuce, will now struggle and shoot up to seed that much quicker. This is all perfectly natural and now, facing the declining amount of daylight each day, even though soil and air temperatures may be at their highest, we need to take account of what suits differing types of crops and the effect of these changes on the types of insect and other life that share our habitat.

Now June is past, the blackbirds will have more-or-less finished their wonderful serenades for us, even if their alarm calls are a continual alert to remind other birds of danger and to protest at our sudden presence.

So, how should we plan the cropping for the second half of the

year? Growing plants in their right season will give you far more success than if you sow anything you fancy at any time of the year. As I said above, lettuce is naturally productive in spring, as is spinach, purslane and basil, which need summer heat; while endives and mizuna thrive in the autumn, and rocket and lambs lettuce will give you fresh leaves through the winter.

Likewise with insect pests. For example, flea beetle is more prevalent in the spring, and if those crops are not protected with a fine-meshed net the leaves of summer-grown rocket will be peppered with their small holes. Having said that, I have never grown broad beans without an influx of black fly. A few early on can be controlled by nipping off the tender tips of infected stalks and assigning them to the compost heap; but if things become too bad then I have no compunction in resorting to a pyrethrum spray. Our way of dealing with carrot root fly is to grow carrots in a frame totally covered with a fine mesh net, which is virtually 100%, effective. Some advice suggests that you can surround your carrot bed with a polythene fence about 65 cm tall. Well, might work for some but I'm afraid the carrot fly in these hills must be super jumpers, and the only sure way for me is to cover the whole bed. I can't stand carrots with holes in and I do like my carrots!

This year I am growing an F1 hybrid tomato called Crimson Crush (despite usually avoiding these hybrids on the grounds of biodiversity) as it is claimed to resist blight. Two plants outside and two in the greenhouse for comparison. Interesting

Fred

Flower Photographs

Please email photographs of your garden and wild flowers to fill our centre pages with colour. Thank you for all the lovely pictures of your garden visitors.

Roads, Tracks, the Footpaths – Let's Keep Them Open

The article in the June issue about Evington Place prompted interest, including this charming picture of the gates to Evington Park.



Looking carefully at old maps made me realise that the road from Newlands Wood (on the Waltham Rd) past West Down, and on Lyddendane (Levendane in 1754) was a much more important route than today; as it continued past the Malt House (today's road down Evington Leas) and joined at the Gate Lodge, and then would have continued to Evington Place. It is quite noticeable how the road then is lower than today outside the Gate Lodge.

On the 1839 map there was "the Modern Road". This was a

private road down from the village to the Estate. Do you know when this was tarmacked?

I have enjoyed looking at a lot of the old routes used by cattle drovers, people and carts too complicated for this article, but will be delighted to explain to anyone interested. Just let's keep our old by-ways, bridleways and footpaths open, as our history is "in them".

Roz Bacon

In Memory of Sally Vane

Sally passed away unexpectedly on 21st May 2020.

Born in Kingsnorth in 1939, she moved around the Ashford and East Kent area with her farming family. During her younger years she had a passion for ballroom dancing, learning modern sequence and foxtrot at the Ridley School of Dance in Ashford, achieving bronze, silver and gold medals.

She lived in Bonnington, Nonington, Elmsted and Crundale before marrying Les and moving to Kennington. In 1973 they moved to Hastingleigh where they enjoyed the countryside and shared a passion for gardening. During her 40 years in Hastingleigh, Sally contributed to village life, helping out at the playschool and Bodsham primary school before moving to Wye in 2015. There she was able to continue her passion for gardening and also took part in the local primary school's outdoor gardening activities.

She will be very sadly missed by her sons and daughters-in-law, her much adored 3 grandsons and her 3 sisters.

The funeral will be at Charing Crematorium with limited attendance allowed.

Donations please to the Fragile X Society.

Andrew and Wendy Vane

Paul and Sue Vane



Tails from Wales



(From Hastingleigh, again)

Most people in my year had jobs lined up before our final exams but I wasn't one of them, so the evening after my last exam I looked forward to having nothing to do for a while as I applied for jobs.

I was looking for a position ideally in the south west or the England-Wales border. Going to university in London and Hertfordshire had been expensive and I wanted to be somewhere cheaper to live than the south east, but not too far from Hastingleigh. From the applications I sent I was offered four interviews: first in east Cornwall, then in Suffolk, followed by South Wales and, finally, one in Kent. I had an offer from the job in Wales quite soon after the interview but had the one in Kent still to go. It turned out Wales was the one. I was lucky that near my practice is the town one of my university housemates came from, so I had someone to stay with for my interview and to show me around. My colleagues have been very supportive since I started, talking about how they do surgical procedures and things they've learnt from experience; and making sure I'm confident and happy with what I'm doing, or being around if I have any concerns.

Starting work was daunting, it had been almost four months since sitting my finals and I had done very little that was vet-related in that time. The first day, I was shown around the practice and how the computer system works. I looked through the cupboards to start trying to learn where everything lives, and shadowed the two vets who were working that day. At university, when we did consultations ourselves, we had to leave the room to discuss the findings and treatment plan with a vet who then went in to check over the animal and finish the consult. Even for vaccination appointments, a vet checked over the animal first to make sure it was healthy and we hadn't missed anything. I was looking forward to being able to do

things by myself. On the first afternoon it took some time to get used to just getting on with it when I took my first few solo vaccination appointments, but at last I was on my way!

At my practice we consult in the morning until about 10.30 when we start surgery. Afternoon consults start again at 2.30, unless the surgery is done sooner, in which case we start consulting earlier. This has given me plenty of chance to gain experience in surgery and consulting, and to meet some lovely animals and their owners.

I had been working for almost six months, from the beginning of October to the last week of March, when I had to be off for shielding and so was put on furlough. It seems I might be here for a while yet, but hopefully we'll all be back to some sort of normality soon!

RJB

The Wellingtonia Trees

We are fortunate to have two Wellingtonia trees left in the valley between Evington and Hastingleigh. As you drive up the road, there is one by the cellars of the Evington house ruins and one on the other side of the road, in what would have been the old cricket pitch.

We owe the presence of these trees to the intrepid and adventurous plant-hunter William Lobb who, during the great gold rush of the 1850s, was exploring the foothills of the Sierra Nevada range in California and chanced upon these mammoth conifers. Lobb knew the Victorian desire for these specimens would trigger an enormous craze amongst the British horticultural society. He collected seeds, shoots and seedlings which gave rise to thousands of saplings. These were snatched up by wealthy Victorians to adorn great British estates.

The larger-than-life conifers, symbolic of the American wilderness, suddenly became a Victorian status symbol.

Shortly after the discovery came the question of what to name the big trees. The Canadians were planning to name their tree the

Washingtonian in honour of the American first president; but before they had chance to register it, Lobb raced back to England with them, and the horticultural society decided on the un-American name Wellingtonia to commemorate the lately-deceased Duke of Wellington.

This was greeted with indignation 'across the pond', sparking a debate that would rage for years. Eventually a scientific name settled the argument: Sequoia Dendron Giganteum, chosen to reflect the trees' botanical link to the Californian redwood.

That we persist in affectionately or stubbornly calling this tree 'the Wellingtonia' is a testament to its value as a living monument. You can see magnificent examples of these gigantic trees across Britain's finest parks and stately homes. They are the largest and oldest living organism in the world, and can live up to 3,000 years. The two we have in the valley, planted in 1852, have a stem girth of 6 meters. They have a long way to go to reach their Canadian cousins, but these giants of the tree world are disappearing at a fast rate in our ever-increasing need for land. There is a growing imbalance between mature or ancient trees and the next generation of newly-planted trees. So bear them a thought as you pass on up the hill: these trees are cultural icons that need to be preserved.

Rose Robus

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Visitors To Our Gardens







Hello

We are Mary and Mac Costen and we receive the magazine by post. We have just had this month's edition: great pictures; hope you can have the exhibition sometime in the future.

The articles on the Nailbourne brought back lots of memories. I lived in Petham from 1953-1963 and can remember it rising from the barn opposite the village hall, flooding Duckpit Road [sic]; and the other way, under Town Road through Hopfields at Lower Kenfield and as far as Garlinge Green Road.

Regards

Mac and Mary Costen

Thank You

Iwould like to thank all the people who have collected the money over the past months for their help in keeping the Magazine going; especially as they are also, generally, the ones who deliver your magazine to you.

If you have not yet paid your subscription, would you please make sure you do so this month, as afterwards you will no longer receive the magazine. Do, please, drop your subscription in to your distributor, as they have been very kind in continuing to deliver to everyone.

Treasurer

Erratum

The information in last month's article, about Evington Place, that the Band of Brothers still exists and is part of the old stagers, is incorrect. The BB are not connected in any way other than as friends.

Roz Bacon

Letter from Sir Charles Jessel

In the May 2020 Edition of the Community News, Roz Bacon referred to an article of mine in which I mentioned the fact that many Christian churches were built on top of heathen worship sites instead of destroying them. She refers to the possibility of a standing stone from the previous temple lying at the blocked up south doorway of St. Mary's Church.

I too have wondered for many years if this could have been a standing stone left on the site. It will be hard to prove from which part of the church it was removed.

When I have the opportunity again, I will see if I can trace possible sites in which this object could have stood before being moved to its present position.

'So they do Say.!

The main site for pilgrimages in the 14th century was Canterbury Cathedral, the tomb of St Thomas Becket, attracting 200,000 visitors each year. Each person paid one penny to see the site where he was struck down, the point of the sword that killed him and his tomb. The shrine was covered in plates of pure gold, studded with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, with carved agate, jasper and cornelian reliefs. There was one particular jewel, a ruby no bigger than a man's thumbnail embedded in a wall to the right of the nearby Altar. Even though the Cathedral was dark, this ruby radiated intense red light which caused everyone to marvel at it. The treasures on display resulted in the spread of fame throughout Europe encouraging many visitors to come.

In the middle of the 14th Century, because of the three Royal Mints, several private mints at places like Canterbury and York, plus the changes of king, and the changes of design each time a new Bishop or Archbishop was appointed, there were about 160 different designs of the penny, all legal tender.

TW

St Mary's Church Stone

As someone who trained as an archaeologist before embarking on a career in museums, and as I live right by the church, I was intrigued by Roz Bacon's recent piece on the large recumbent stone outside the blocked south door, and History Enthusiast's response in the June magazine. I hope readers might be interested in my thoughts.

I've taken a look at the stone, which seems to be 'dressed' (ie shaped by human action). It may be a sarsen stone, which is a form of sandstone deposited by Ice Age glaciers that once covered the landscape. These natural stones were occasionally used by prehistoric people in monuments, including standing stones. They tend to be of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in date, around 4000-1800BC.

Standing stones seem to be fairly rare in Kent. The best known prehistoric monuments are the Medway 'megaliths', which are mainly tombs built of sarsens. The Coffin Stone near Aylesford seems to have been a standing stone. The barrow at Shrub's Wood outside Hastingleigh appears to be earthen, and not made of stones. Julian Cope's extensive compendium of ancient sites in the UK includes several entries for Kent (<https://www.themodernantiquarian.com/home/>) but none are standing stones. There is an intriguing reference, though, to standing stones reused at St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury.

So, it is not impossible that the stone at St Mary's is a prehistoric standing stone. There is certainly plentiful evidence of Neolithic activity in nearby fields in the form of flint tools and flint flakes from manufacturing them. I doubt however that a stone would be dragged some distance from the coppice wood at Evington Leeze as suggested by History Enthusiast, and the description does not match the one at the church. So there may be another sarsen stone there.

Sir Charles Jessel was right in pointing out that Pope Gregory in AD 601 encouraged St Augustine to locate new churches on sites of 'pagan' (ie Celtic Iron Age) worship and there are certainly instances

throughout the UK of churches being located on the sites of standing stones. The association of yew trees with ancient sites of worship is also well known. However, the notion of 'ley lines' of ancient energy flowing through the countryside and linking significant sites, derived from Alfred Watkins' book 'The Old Straight Track' of 1925, and has no basis in science.

So it does seem possible that St Mary's Church was originally located on the site of a previous place of worship. But at the time of the church's foundation early in the Norman period, any standing stone would already have been there for at least 2000 years and its meaning may have been very different to the local Anglo-Saxon inhabitants. It may also have been associated with a grove of yew trees.

Two further questions remain in my mind. The first is the stone itself. It is lying flat outside the old south entrance. It is unlikely to have been originally located there, as it is so close to the church. It fits almost exactly the shape of the blocked up entrance. Might it have been brought from nearby to block up the entrance, only to be toppled later?

The second is the location of the medieval village, or whether there was one at all. This is where, as a prehistorian, my expertise runs out. There seems to be a tradition that the village was located near the church, but I'm not clear what evidence there is for this. Was the church sited there because of an existing village, or because there was an existing site of pre-Christian worship? If so, did a village grow up around it, or was it always a series of disconnected farmsteads, whose inhabitants walked across the fields to the church? Is the idea that the village was abandoned at the Black Death and relocated higher up in its present position a myth or are there historical records attesting to this?

Nick Merriman

Farming Notebook

I find myself humming the tune to the 1980s hit by Toto, the chorus of which is “God bless the rains down in Africa”. After such a torrid and wet winter it was always likely that we were going to have a long dry spell. Nature has a way of evening things out. It has been really dry and the crops were beginning to show real signs of stress. Then came the rains.... Only 8.8mm over a weekend. Followed by another 5.5mm over the next weekend. Not much, and not enough, but it is will just about tide the crops over until the thunderstorms forecast for the end of the week.

The wheats are well in ear and into flowering. Sunshine and a little more rain will see them through to harvest. The rape has set its pods and will start to fill the seeds within. Another five weeks and the combine will be rolling... the spring beans are now in full flower and the bees are very active. The scent and deafening buzz of the insects is a wonder to behold. As always, it is the potatoes which cause the most concern during a dry spell. They grow so fast and are now setting and trying to fill the tubers underground. Their water requirement is phenomenal. Without irrigation the potatoes have to go in search of water. On our test digs, to see how the crop is developing, it is amazing to see the amount of fibrous root that the plants produce. Searching ever-deeper for moisture.

We have completed our silage-making, picking the few dry days between the showery weekends. There is not that much bulk due to the dry weather, but if we left it any later the quality would decline rapidly as the grass would try to set seed rather than maintain leaf. With the crop that we harvested earlier off the herbage seed we now have enough for the winter. Fertiliser has been applied to the aftermath to hopefully provide some late autumn grazing for the cows and calves.

It is a nervous time for us as June is the time that all the seed crops get their field inspections. For the cereals and beans, the inspections primarily focus of varietal purity. Too many off-types, and the case of the wheats, wild oats or other rogues could fail the crop. In some

years, hand-roguing is necessary, but this year the crops are pretty even.

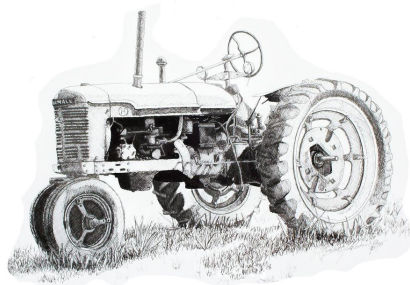
The potatoes usually have two field inspections, but due to the pandemic, DEFRA have decided that there will only be one this year. It does mean that the certified grade of the seed crop will be lower than that we had applied for. But the higher grades need two inspections... It really does put us at a disadvantage to other parts of the UK and Europe, which still allow two inspections. One would imagine that, of all places, it would be possible to socially-isolate in the middle of a potato field!?? Potato inspectors look for far more than varietal purity. There are very stringent rules on all manner of diseases. The most serious is virus. This is spread by aphids. We have zero tolerance for aphids. All the fields have highly sophisticated aphid traps which consist of a bright yellow bowl filled with soapy water. Any aphids found in the traps trigger an insecticide application. The problem we have is that some products are cleared for use in ware or eating potatoes and not in seed, and vice versa. As a portion of our crop will end up as ware, we cannot use either chemical. Our options are very limited and, as such, virus is becoming an ever-increasing problem.

It has been an eventful time with the cattle. Earlier in the spring we had to have a cow put down. It had a calf and it was doing its best to rear it, but its health was fading rapidly. So we ended up with a six-week-old orphan calf. As it happened we had a cow that had lost its calf. It was stillborn. Elizabeth decided that she would try to foster the orphan on to the calf-less cow. The cow was having none of it: the calf could only feed whilst the cow was eating. So for three weeks Elizabeth fed the cow morning and evening and stood over it to let the calf feed. Eventually, as the calf was quite plucky and probably going to pinch milk from any cow that would stand still long enough, it was decided to put the cow and calf back with the herd. To our great surprise the two are inseparable and we have seen the calf feeding on numerous occasions. A great result.

Now there is the story of “wedgie”... One evening we checked the cattle and there was one cow roaring and standing away from the herd. Her calf was nowhere to be seen... We tried to follow the

direction that the cow was looking and went on a calf hunt. Eventually we found the calf. Wedged in the cleft of a tree!! It had obviously been playing with its mates when it jumped up and tried to jump through a gap between two stout branches. Its head and shoulders made it, but its hips did not! The poor thing was left hanging with its head on the floor and its tail up in the tree. It was impossible to saw the tree and so a long strap and the Land Rover were used to pull one side of the tree away from the other. This allowed just enough room to lift the calf's hips through the gap and set it free. It staggered away as though it had been at the pop. Very relieved to be back with its mum, but very sore. Both mum and calf were brought back to the farm, the latter in the grain bucket of the forklift. A course of anti-inflammatory and a couple of days rest and the calf was back on its feet. Both are now back with the herd. The calf was last seen trying to emulate Nijinsky in training for the Derby. Another good outcome. Never a dull moment.....

W Wilson-Haffenden



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