

Parish News

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF FRANT, ERIDGE & BELLS YEW GREEN



“Eridge Church” by Duncan Hardy

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From the Rectory



What a miserable summer it's been. As I write in August, the rain is pouring down and the wind is blowing. Basically, as soon as the school children broke up for summer holidays, the weather decided it was Autumn already. It's just awful for the farmers trying to harvest, which in many cases is impossible when it is wet. Yet two of our local schools which I am governor at had to send children home for lack of water from the water company last term. Too much water, and yet too little water.

A couple of weeks ago our churches Frant and Eridge interviewed for a new church architect to oversee our two church buildings. Chatting with these architects who were so passionate about their profession and engaging about the history of our churches was fascinating.

One of the things that came out very strongly was their appreciation of the layout, and the exceptional woodwork and panelling at Eridge Church.

At Frant I learnt from one of them about some of our stained glass which I hadn't realised was so old. I knew the church was rebuilt in 1821 and I also knew that there had been a nearby world war 2 bomb that blew the windows out, so I had assumed

that the glass work was not old. It turns out they must have been safely reinstated from the old church. One of the architects (who we eventually appointed) showed us some clearly medieval glass in the church windows, which can be seen from the style and shape.

Our churches have seen a lot of history, adaption and change over the years. Yet what holds our churches together is not the bricks and the mortar (which in Frant Church case failed and was rebuilt), nor the history, but the message.

The message of God that is passed from one generation to another connects us with our forefathers, and also with God himself.

The Bible tells us how God made us and loves us, but we as people turned away from his goodness, and yet God comes to us through Jesus Christ to bring again his love and forgiveness. It is a message that reverberates through history, and it is a message that we share with those who went before and which keeps us going and growing as Christians here in our Parish today.

Be part of God's story here in our parish, we would love you to join us Sundays, Eridge 9:15, Frant 10:30.

— The Reverend Brendan Martin

News From The Pews

As a result of our 'no mow May' in the churchyard, you may have spotted the variety of wild flowers which we didn't know we had, particularly the delicate pale mauve pyramid orchids. You may also have seen the colourful miniature 'wild flower meadow' planted at the entrance to the Stables.

In June and July 3 couples were married in St Albans. On 17th June the church was full when Emma Torr, a member of our church since she was 4 years old, married Ariel Garcia. Emma has been living in Madrid for the past few years and it was there that she met Ariel. It was lovely that she chose to come back to Frant to celebrate her wedding with her church family. Heavy rain on 8th July didn't subdue the air of celebration when Rebecca Puckett, another local girl from Eridge, married Alexander Woodhead. When Thomas Jenner and Camilla Persson married on 22nd July, once again the rain didn't dampen the happy spirit of celebration, or the enthusiastic support given to the couple during the service. On what is probably the most important occasion in our lives and we plan every detail meticulously, one thing we can't plan for or control, is the fickle weather. It has rained on 3 of the 4 weddings celebrated at St Albans so far this summer, but guess what, we're English so we do it anyway!

It was good to see the church full on July 3rd for the concert given by pianist Lara Melda, young musician of the year 2010, and the Carducci String Quartet. Having performed in London, Copenhagen, New York, Washington, Toronto and Amsterdam, we were very privileged to hear this outstanding quartet in our little church. As well as being a very enjoyable occasion, the concert raised £1,500 towards the upkeep of the church building. Our thanks again to Roo Froud and Stuart Jackman for giving their time to organise such an event.

The damage caused to the woodblock floor of the south aisle when water came through the roof after the theft of the lead in 2021, has now been repaired. The damage to the ceiling caused at the same time has still to be dealt with. Maintenance and repairs to the church building are on going and there is never a time when we can say that nothing needs doing. During the summer the walls of the south porch were repaired and

redecorated by volunteers to whom we are very grateful.

The summer barbecue at the end of July was enjoyed by people of all ages, from 10 week old Raphael Martin to one lady of 98. Due to covid restrictions, the barbecue hasn't been held for 4 years, so it was lovely to see everyone together again. Just as the food was ready to be served..... you've guessed, it started to rain! The tables were duly carried inside, 85 people crammed into the Stables and the party continued. Spirits weren't dampened and what seemed like hundreds of children played outside apparently not noticing the rain. Remember, this is England so we do it anyway!

In July St Albans Church was packed with over 200 people for the funeral of Nick Jones, which one has to say was an enjoyable, a word not usually used to describe a funeral service, and uplifting occasion, at which the words 'gentleman', 'humility', 'witty' 'character' 'amazing story teller' and 'kind' were used many times. The service was enriched by singing from the Tunbridge Wells Orpheus Male Voice Choir, of which Nick was an active member. Born in 1942, Nick was the second of 4 children. At 10 years old he went as a boarder to Akeley Wood prep school near Milton Keynes and then on to Bryanston School when he was 13. The summer he left school, he worked for a time as a farmhand in Denmark, before going on to work at Peter Jones in Sloane Square, at Fortnum and Mason and for P&O. He finally found his niche with British Transport Hotels and worked at the Liverpool Adelphi where he enjoyed the life of the swinging 60s. His job took him to Paris, and while there 2 memorable events took place - he was appointed to look after the Archbishop of Canterbury and tried on the Bishop's hat in the cloakroom for size! He also watched the 1966 world cup with the head waiter, a German, who at the final whistle, shook Nick's hand. The next year he moved back to London to the Charing Cross Hotel where, in the canteen a 19 year old blond called Margaret took his eye. On their first date Margaret took him shopping to carry the bags, and although he didn't realise it at the time, this set the precedent for the next 54 years!

Working for a time in both France and Germany, Nick became fluent in French and German. His first job as a married man was as deputy manager

of the Royal Victoria Hotel in Sheffield, from where he moved to Leeds and then to the Midland Hotel in Manchester. During these years he had stories to tell of interesting encounters with, among others, Miss World, Tom Jones, George Best, a famous MP (nameless) who he carried to bed drunk, and Princess Grace of Monaco, who ordered crumpets to be brought to her room at 4am. In 1976 the family, now with 2 children, Sarah and Rebecca, moved to Frant where their 3rd child, David was born in 1980.

Nick and Margaret managed the National Union of Railwaymen Conference Centre in Frant Place until it closed in 1995. The story goes that Nick was chosen for the job because the NUR wanted a public school boy on the staff to appease the snobbish sensibility of the locals! They became active members of the local community. Nick was devoted to Frant Church where he served in many roles. His children remember how exciting it was to climb to the top of the church tower with him when he went up to raise or lower the flag. He served on the PCC until May 2023 when he became ill. He was for a time a governor of the Primary School and a member of the Dramatic Society where people still remember him as the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk, an ugly sister or a ballerina.

Skipping on a few years, in his retirement, Nick was kept busy with 8 grandchildren. He was normally a very modest man, but not where his grandchildren were concerned, he was a very proud granddad and very close to all of them. Nick's Christian faith was of paramount importance to him, but he was also very interested in food, and was known in the family as 'the human dustbin'! Another of his interests was the monarchy. In 1953, with his mother, he attended the coronation of the late Queen, for which they had won tickets to watch from the grandstand. He would always try to be in London for Royal events and was in the Mall in 2022 for the Queen's funeral.

In later years Nick and Margaret enjoyed cruises to North America, the West Indies, the Mediterranean and the Baltic. For our church and community, losing a faithful servant and friend is incredibly sad, but we give thanks for Nick's life, that we were privileged to know him, and for the memories which we all have.

St Alban's, Frant & Holy Trinity, Eridge

Rector

The Reverend Brendan Martin — 01892 752003; rectoryfrant@gmail.com



www.frantchurch.org
Churchwarden

Juliet Nightingale— 01580 200403



www.eridgechurch.org
Churchwardens

Jonathan Lynn—07788 597051
Stephen Barnes—861302

Services for

September / October 2023

10.30am	Frant as One (All Age)	3rd September	Communion Service	9.15am
10:30am	Communion Service	10th September	Morning Service	9:15am
5.00pm	Festival Church			
10:30am	Morning Service	17th September	Communion Service	9:15am
5.00pm	Festival Church			
10:30am	Morning Service	24th September	Communion Service	9:15am
5.00pm	Festival Church			
10:30am	Frant as One (All Age)	1st October	Morning Service	9:15am
		Harvest Festival		
10.30am	Frant as One (All Age)	8th October	Communion Service	9.15am
		Harvest Festival		
10.30am	Communion Service	15th October	Morning Service	9.15am
10.30am	Morning Service	22nd October	Communion Service	9.15am
10.30am	Morning Service	29th October	Communion Service	9.15am

WORSHIP AT BELLSYEW GREEN

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Frant School News

As I write this news I am about to go outside and pour green gunge (slime) over our year 6 children. This is a tradition that seems to have started even before I did! We wish all our year 6 children the very best as they move to their secondary schools.

Frant School has been very busy this term, please enjoy some of our highlights.

KS2 performed Matilda over two nights. The acting, the singing, the scenery was just amazing. Well done to all the children and to Mrs Davey for all the hard work that goes into such a show.

Our Sports Awards Assembly was an opportunity to celebrate all the events we have taken part in. The Awards themselves are not just to recognise attainment and skill but to recognise attitude, improvement and commitment. Here at Frant, we want all our children, irrespective of ability, to take part, do their best and to enjoy sport at all levels. Well done to all children who have taken part in an event or tournament this year.

We rounded off the year with our Sports Day with yet again blazing sunshine. The children were amazing and every child, without exception, gave their best and hopefully enjoyed the day. Although one House wins, the Red Team this year, well done to Green, Yellow and Blue Houses.

The PTFA have supported us, as always, with a visit from an ice cream van, Sports Day, an end of term Frant Fest and supporting with resources.

Thank you.

We are saying goodbye to a few members of staff:

- Miss Waller who stepped in for Mrs McIntyre when she went on maternity leave
- Mrs Trakul, breakfast club and lunchtime supervisor.
- Mrs Hayes, an HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant)
- Mrs Donovan, our Bursar
- On our return we welcome new staff to our team:
- Mrs G Palmer will be joining as an HLTA
- Mrs K Holland will join as the bursar both here and at Mark Cross
- Mrs C Woolger will be joining as an INA each morning
- Miss P Human will be joining our year 5/6 teaching team

I hope you have enjoyed reading our news. Please do contact the school at any time if you have any questions or would just like to say hello. I am in school every day and will always find time for a chat.

With very best wishes.

—Mrs Joanna Challis, Acting Executive Headteacher

Frant Parish Council

The Parish Council is responsible for various areas and structures in Frant, Bells Yew Green and Eridge, including the Grade 2 listed Albert Well opposite Church Lane. Overlooking Eridge Park, it has faced the south westerly gales for

over 125 years and is now unsafe and has been temporarily 'braced' pending refurbishment. Frant had a number of wells in the days before piped water - talking of which, if you consider yourself vulnerable, you can register for home delivery of bottled water in the likely event of a repeat of the recent water cut off: southeastwater.co.uk or 0800 952 4000.

Councillors met East Sussex Highways staff recently, and highlighted various areas of traffic danger to residents, including Frant Green Road (traffic calming), Bayham Rd (traffic calming, flooding, village signs), Eridge Road (traffic calming), Bunny Lane (road surface), and Dundale Road (HGV deterrence). Residents should be aware that changes take time, but we are going to pursue these issues and press for feasibility studies where appropriate.

Work is in progress at Bayham Old Abbey in the east of the parish, renovating the 18th century Dower House (below), and capping various walls of the 13th century abbey ruins. As a 'free site' it remains one of the best preserved monastic sites in south east England under the care of English Heritage.

Repairs to the play equipment in Bells Yew Green will start shortly.

FlexiBus has been introduced into East Sussex. It is a flexible low cost on-demand transport service for local amenity access. See eastsussex.gov.uk/ESCCFlexiBus or phone 01273 078203 to register.

We have welcomed back Deborah Park as councillor and are still looking for new members to strengthen the depth of our team, so if you are interested do contact our highly efficient clerk, Rosie clerk@frant-pc.gov.uk

—Cllr Andy Macdonald-Brown



News from RSPB Broadwater Warren

The breeding season is drawing to a close and the results of our various wildlife surveys will be analysed in the coming months. It was a fairly tough first six months or so for wildlife, beginning with a very dry February followed by weeks of wet weather and a cool start to the summer.

Butterflies

Many butterfly species were late in appearing and only emerged in numbers on the reserve in July. Overall, it's likely that 2023 will show a continued decline in a number of the UK's butterflies, despite the efforts of conservation organisations such as the RSPB to improve habitat on their reserves.

However, one of the highlights this year that got us all excited was the report from Gill Snowdon, one of our regular visitors, of seeing and photographing a male Purple Emperor butterfly (below) in the south of the reserve. In the 16 years since the RSPB opened Broadwater there had been just 5 previous sightings of this butterfly. It's the Holy Grail for most butterfly enthusiasts and the male, in particular, is a spectacular insect as you'll see from Gill's photo. The Purple Emperor is the UK's second largest butterfly after the Swallowtail with males the size of a small bird. The caterpillar's food plant is willow, but



the males are usually seen flying high around tall trees where they feed on aphid honeydew and tree sap. They will adopt a tree as their territory and fiercely defend it against rivals and have even been known to chase off birds! Occasionally they will come to the ground to feed on salts and minerals in such things as animal dung and carrion and that gives a rare opportunity to see one up close, as Gill did.

The Red Admiral is probably one of UK's best-known butterflies, but have you heard of the White Admiral? It's a different species, about the same size as the Red Admiral, but with only white markings and no red. It's much less common than the Red Admiral, its caterpillars feed on Honeysuckle and it likes shady areas. White Admirals fly from July to August and one of the best places to look out for them is the track running alongside the Sphagnum Paddock. Although the White Admiral is widespread in southern England, its population has declined dramatically in the last 20 years for reasons that are unclear.

Birds

As for the birds of Broadwater, the most iconic is probably the Nightjar. It's a bird of heathland and forest clearings that arrives on the reserve in May from overwintering in sub-Saharan Africa and leaves in September. Nightjars



are only active at night and you have to wait until dusk until you hear their extraordinary song or "chur". There isn't anything quite like it. The song is described as mechanical and I think it sounds like something you'd hear in the tropics. The Nightjar is about the size and shape of a Kestrel and almost floats through the air. On a warm, still and dry summer's night at you can't fail to hear one at Broadwater, but spotting one in flight is a lot more difficult and often a matter of luck. Nightjars are listed as birds of conservation concern, but the restoration of heathland has resulted in them doing well on the reserve and this year there were estimated to be 14 churring males, compared to 11 in 2022.

Flora

Visitors may have noticed that we have a rotation programme for cutting the ride edges to improve the habitat for wildflowers and this year we have started to reap the rewards with a greater variety appearing. At least 4 types of orchid are found at Broadwater and one of these, the Bee Orchid (above), appeared out of the blue in the west of the reserve a few years ago. They are quite small but very attractive and thrive on chalky soils. How did they get to Broadwater and why are they growing in an area of acid



heath soil? It's thought that the Exmoor ponies that we used to have grazing on the reserve may have brought seeds with them in their dung because they overwintered on the South Downs where Bee Orchids are widespread. The patch of land where the orchids are found is also close to an old forestry track which contains crushed rubble that probably contains limestone and so the runoff from the track may have reduced the acidity of the land either side. No one's sure, but we are taking special care of the area, in which Common Spotted and Pyramidal Orchids (above) also grow.

New Trails for Families and Children

We've been very pleased to host several Scout events this year, thanks to the work of our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Helen, and her team of events volunteers. The Scouts have enjoyed pond-dipping, mini-beast hunts and the two new trails devised by Helen and volunteer Mark Thorpe. For older children there is an orienteering trail designed to help with developing map-reading skills. This trail features a series of posts with a single letter on each one. Find all the letters and unscramble them to make the name of a species found on the reserve. There is also a family trail for young ones and their families that's marked by a number

of signs with beautiful artwork created by our volunteer, Andy Moore. You'll find maps and instructions for both trails on the information board in the car park. After the Scout Beaver events parents were signing up on the spot to be Beaver helpers with one dad heard to say to the Beaver Leader; "I'd love to help you as a leader if you are doing events like this!" A great success and very rewarding for the RSPB volunteers involved.

Staff

Finally, we are looking forward to the arrival of our new assistant warden, Matt Orwin, who joins us from Kent Wildlife Trust on 7 August. Our warden Phil is particularly pleased because he's been without an assistant for about 6 months. Many don't realise that, as well as Broadwater Warren, the Weald Reserves Team is also responsible for the management of 3 other reserves scattered across Kent, East and West Sussex. With just 2 members of staff, supported by volunteers, that means there is no team staff member solely dedicated to working at Broadwater. That prompts me to say how grateful we are to all my fellow volunteers who always go above and beyond to give up their free time, expertise, and physical labour with such enthusiasm and kindness.

—Alan Loweth, Weald Reserves Office Manager



Parish past

Eridge church was first built as a hall for Sunday School, it was only in 1856 when the then over-large parish of Rotherfield was split up that a chancel and side aisles were added and it was consecrated as a church for the new parish. The pews are largely of oak grown on the estate and the boat-shaped ceiling was added as a feature the following year.

Among the followers of William the Conqueror was Gilbert Neville, but it was not until a descendant's marriage to Elizabeth Beauchamp in the 15th Century that Eridge came into their ownership. Through this marriage the estate has thus been owned by the conjoined family since just after the Conquest, a remarkable continuity considering the dangers then of living close to the centre of power: many ancestors and descendants have been killed in battle or imprisoned over the centuries! There was an angry rebuke from Queen (Bloody) Mary, saying the earl was insufficiently zealous in persecuting Protestants which, happily, he seems to have ignored and his successor was certainly in favour with her successor, Elizabeth I, who stayed in Eridge for 6 nights in 1573, a high honour indeed. While there she enjoyed feasting and a special celebratory hunt - royal visits, however welcome, cost a fortune. He was later appointed one of the lords who sat in judgement over Mary Queen of Scots, condemning her to death.

In later years Queen Victoria and Edward VII also visited.

For much of the 18th Century the Nevills were not ordinarily resident at Eridge and their manor became a rather ramshackle farmhouse; it was only at the end of the century that a large Gothic castle was built for the family's return. This was demolished and a more convenient replacement built in the 1930's. —Pat Wright

Frant Parish Friendship Group

We are about to start our autumn programme. Details of which are listed on the Parish Diary. We are a very friendly community funded group and always looking for new members, so if you are over 55 and wanting to meet new friends in the village please come There is an annual membership fee of £3. This subscription is due when joining and then subsequently every January. There is also a £3.00 charge to cover meeting costs and this is collected at each monthly meeting.

Knit and Natter group usually meets the first Monday of the month at various locations and knits for charity. This very friendly group are currently looking for new knitters.

Exercise Classes. This is a course of 6 classes at £3.00 a session the total of which, £18, is payable at the start of the term. New members can have a taster session at £3.00 and then if continuing payment of £15.00 for the remainder of the course.

It is with great sadness that the Friendship Group heard of the death of Nick Jones. Without his support in our early years (since 2010) we would have had a much more difficult time. He kept our books, banked our money, sold raffle tickets and as his piece de resistance cooked the turkeys for our Christmas dinners. Carving and serving them beautifully. We shall miss his continual kindness, support and willingness to help everyone. Enquiries : Valerie Palmer 01892 750559 valeriepalmer@uwclub.net

Frant Garden Club

Summer is a time for visiting gardens for the Frant Garden Club which is why you would have found us on a warm, sunny June day at Herstmonceux Castle and Gardens. Not only did we enjoy the grounds, the formal and themed gardens, but also an unexpected and interesting talk about the history of the castle from the first laying of the bricks in 1441 to its transformation into the Queen's International Study Centre in 1993 after it was purchased, and then gifted, to this Canadian university by Alfred Bader, in appreciation of the opportunities that had been given to him as a Jewish refugee in WW2.

Then in July we made our way to Godinton House and Gardens, near Ashford, for our full day annual outing.

We may have avoided being caught in traffic on the M25 on this particular trip, but our journey in a large coach on narrow country lanes criss-crossing the Kentish countryside was not without excitement. Our journey, however, ended without incident at this truly beautiful house which has rooms that feel loved and lived in, filled with treasures such as fine porcelain and intricate wood carvings, but also has 12 acres of gardens and parkland which were full of colour, with a multitude of plants of all varieties - some of which even the most knowledgeable amongst us were not able to name.

The final trip of the year will be on Tuesday afternoon, 5th September, when we will visit Batemans.

Our return to autumn meetings will be on Tuesday, 24th October at 2.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall when Edward Flint, Head Gardener at Tidebrook Manor, will give a talk on container planting. We end the year on Tuesday, 28th November with our AGM and Christmas celebration. —*Dianna Tennant*

The Arts Society Ashdown Forest

Thursday 12th October at 2pm at Crowborough Community Centre, TN6 1FE Lecture: "The Many Faces of William Morris" Lecturer: Jo Banham

William Morris was a man of prodigious energy, talent and versatility. He was a designer, craftsman, writer, lecturer, conservationist and revolutionary socialist. This lecture reviews his life, ideas and achievements, explores the highlights of his career and relationships with his wife and other artists and the reasons why he is still important and influential today.

Jo Banham is a freelance curator, lecturer and writer. She has had leading educational roles at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and Tate Britain, and roles as Curator at Leighton House and Assistant Keeper at Whitworth Art Gallery. She has published on many aspects of Victorian and early 20th Century decoration and interiors and is a regular lecturer for The Arts Society.

Everyone welcome - members of the Society free, visitors £7 per lecture. Refreshments available at the end of the lecture. If you would like to join, please contact our Membership Secretary, or for further information about the

lecture please contact our Programme Secretary, both on 01892 851015 www.tasaf.org.uk

News from Nus Ghani MP

It is hard to believe that the 'back to school' period is upon us yet again, and we are heading into a new term and into the autumn. I hope that you had a lovely summer and enjoyed a break in the sunshine. Before Parliament resumes for another busy session, please allow me to reflect on just some of the Wealden successes and highlights of the past few months.

I'm thrilled that following the fantastic result of £1.3 million investment in 2021, Beacon Academy in Crowborough have been successful again in the latest round of the Condition Improvement Fund and awarded a further £1.5 million this year to support further upgrades to its fire alarm system. Previously, Hailsham Community College and St Mary's School in Maynard's Green were also successful in securing support from this fund, and I will continue campaigning for more funding for Wealden schools in need of this vital support.

Moreover, Wealden has led the way in providing support to Ukrainian families arriving to East Sussex and is currently home to over 720 guests. I continue working with volunteer groups in Mayfield and Hellingly and I'm immensely grateful for the kindness and hospitality of Wealden residents involved in local support. But I also appreciate that some Ukrainian families may now wish to move on into their own accommodation and I'm pleased that Wealden is being supported by over £418,000 from the Government's £150 million fund to help Ukrainian guests find employment and long-term suitable independent accommodation.

I also continue working with Sussex NHS leaders on improving the delivery of primary care and emergency services in Wealden, and opportunities for expansion of current provision. In addition to the meetings at the Minor Injuries Unit and Birthing Centre in Crowborough, I was pleased to meet with the League of Friends of Uckfield Community Hospital to ensure that the existing facilities, which are an excellent asset for local communities, are being used to their full potential.

Lastly, I recently convened a meeting with local farmers and representatives

Eridge Arts Club

On 19 June the Eridge Arts Club welcomed Lady Angela Nevill, who spoke about her experiences as a dealer specialising in 19th and 20th century fine art. She illustrated her talk with images of significant paintings and sculptures which had passed through her hands including Van Gogh's Irises (which sold for what was, at the time, a world record figure) as well as paintings by Picasso, Matisse, Monet, sculpture by Claudel: more recently Mark Quinn. The range of styles and periods was

from the National Farmers' Union to discuss all things farming and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our fantastic farmers whom we all depend on and who work all year round not only providing fresh produce of the highest quality, but also contributing a great deal to the community through job opportunities and education about our food chain.

Frant Allotments

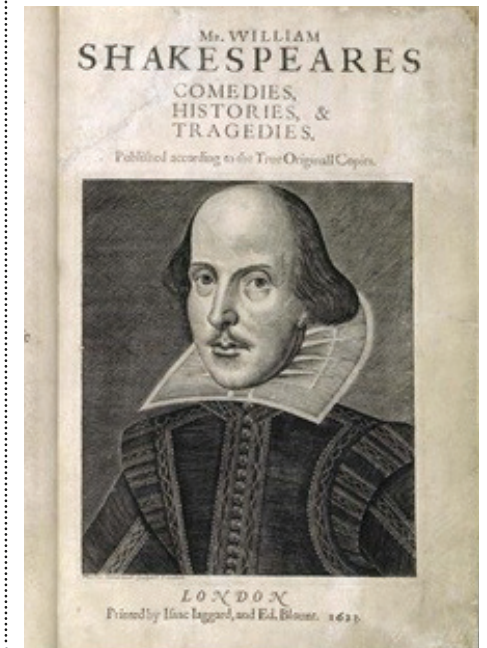
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impressive. On each artwork Lady Angela had an entertaining story to tell - sometimes about bringing it to market or placing it with a collector or museum. Those present were greatly appreciative of her talk.

The Eridge Arts Club had a stimulating, indeed uplifting, day out on Thursday 27th July. A convivial pub lunch separated our visits to two significant local churches, where we had tours from excellent guides. Our morning visit was to All Saints in Tudeley where our guide, Daphne Males, outlined the church's history, explained the circumstances of the commissioning of Chagall for the stained glass windows (left) and helped the party of nearly 20 people to appreciate the artist's outstanding achievements. In the afternoon the group visited St Thomas a' Becket Church in Capel. Its north wall retains remarkably well preserved wall paintings from medieval times. Our guide, Charles Mackonochie, set out for us what is known of the building's history, and why the paintings have survived.

The next Eridge Arts Club event, on Wednesday 13 September, will be a talk by Marcus Coles about the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, published 400 years ago. Marcus has the privilege of owning a copy of that folio and has been closely involved in events celebrating this quatercentenary - including giving interviews to the Times newspaper and others earlier in the year. Tickets for our next event are £5. To book please email mary.helson@gmail.com.



George Macbean, Eridge Castle land agent

In Parish News for July/August I mentioned Siegfried Sassoon's description of the Marquess of Abergavenny's 'hard-riding agent'. This was George Macbean, who was the steward or land agent of the 1st Marquess of Abergavenny for fourteen years until his untimely death in 1902. There is a brass memorial plaque to him in Eridge church.

He was born in Perth in 1860, the son of Forbes Macbean and his wife Frances. Forbes was a captain in the 92nd Highlanders when he married Frances Pennyman in 1855 at Ormesby in Yorkshire. She was the daughter of Capt. Pennyman of Ormesby Hall (near Middlesborough) and had been born in Corfu, in 1833, presumably because her father was stationed there. Forbes was from a well-known Scottish military family and was a retired lieutenant colonel when he died in 1900.

In 1861 Frances Macbean was living in Perth with three children: Forbes aged 4, Frances aged 2 and little George aged 13 months. Her husband was presumably abroad, as his regiment was in India from 1858 to 1863, and he is not listed in the 1861 census. Forbes junior was born in Gibraltar in 1857 but Frances Katherine (known as Katherine) was born at her mother's family home. In

1871 the census shows that Mrs Macbean was living in Rugby with two more children, Ethel 7 and William 8, and again no husband. He may have been in India with his regiment where they were sent in 1868. The Macbeans had five servants including a governess who may have been teaching George when he was younger. His older brother Forbes went to Uppingham School but I have not been able to find out where George went to school.

Forbes junior joined his father's regiment in 1876, which had merged with the Gordon Highlanders, and the younger brother William went to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and then into the Royal Artillery. Katherine married an army officer, but George chose a different way of life.

The plaque to Macbean in Eridge church says that he was steward to the family for fourteen years, which means from about 1888. He was then 28, and must have been doing something else beforehand. He may have been learning the work elsewhere. Being a land agent was an acceptable career for someone with his background. His mother was from the landed gentry and although I have not found where his father was from, a high-ranking army officer would be familiar with the aristocracy, if not one of them.

In the 1891 and 1901 censuses George

was living at The Cottage, Brighton Road. In 1901 he was described as a 'worker at home' so presumably was working from home, rather than at Eridge Castle, though he must have been at the Castle frequently as the estate records would be kept there. It is not easy to identify all of the houses in the census, but The Cottage is likely to have been the house now called The Old Inn, in Old Eridge Road. In 1881 it was probably Dairy Farm House where William Dickinson, described as private secretary, was living with a housekeeper, a 13 year old page and a groom, aged 24. In 1891 Macbean had a housekeeper Catherine Mackie, a single woman of 44 from Scotland. Also living there were another groom Colin Walls, from Edinburgh and George Howard, a valet from Yorkshire. It is likely that a laundry was attached to the house, run by William Unsted and his wife in 1891 with two young laundry maids, and by Christina Wheatley in 1901 with her daughter. It was presumably the laundry for the estate. The house was part of the estate.

George served as a captain with the Sussex Imperial Yeomanry during the second Boer War in South Africa. He was back in Eridge when he died suddenly on 11th December 1902. He was buried in the churchyard with a Celtic cross gravestone, very like that on his father's

grave at Dover. The grave is on the edge of the Abergavenny plot, which gives an impression of the family's appreciation of him, but in fact – as Jonathan Lynn tells me – George was buried before the family plot was laid out.

—Mary Alexander

Bells Yew Green Cricket Club

When I moved into Bells Yew Green in 1993 I was having one of the busiest and most visible times of my life. I was working with Terry Wogan on BBC 1, on "Countdown" and presenting a football programme on BBC Radio 5.

This may have been why Martin Christoff, then publican at the Brecknock Arms, asked me if I would speak at Bells Yew Green Cricket Club Dinner.

Soon after they asked me if I would become President. Despite expecting to be just a figurehead I made the mistake of attending a Committee Meeting. At this I discovered that some houses were to be built on the entrance to the ground.

When I saw the plans I pointed out that there were too many to enable the site to continue as a cricket ground. I also discovered that there was only a five-year rolling lease with the Trustees who owned the land. This meant that no development could be made for the cricketers. There were just two sides then who were changing in a dilapidated Portakabin with no electricity or running water.

We managed to change the plans to enable the development to become what is now the very attractive Cricketers Close.

Working over the next 14 years, thanks to the efforts of many of the members and others in the community, not least the late John Hodson and Martin Athey, the club now has a 125-year lease and a fine brick pavilion, built by Paul Patterson, one of the members, and helped by many others.

There are now four Saturday men's teams, two women's sides and several hundred juniors being coached and playing.

Among the many fund-raising activities were seven sportsman's dinners starting with Sir Bobby Charlton and cricketer Geoff Miller. They were followed by Denis Law, Sir Geoff Hurst, Sir Bobby Robson, Terry Venables, David "Bumble" Lloyd and Allan Lamb.

During this time many famous faces came to visit or play in the President's XI

including the late Mike Denness, Derek Underwood and the current Head of English cricket, Rob Key.

Sir Tim Rice assisted with grants through the now-disbanded Foundation for Sports and the Arts and Lord Seb Coe came to open the new pavilion along with BBC TV cameras.

In total some £250,000 was raised and the last event saw Sir Ian Botham arrive in my field by helicopter to join rugby player Martin Bayfield at the final dinner.

I even came out of retirement to skipper the Sunday XI until time caught up with me and I stepped back from all activities nine years ago.

It was agreed there would be no bar at the ground as one of my main aims was to keep the Brecknock Arms open despite all the difficulties which accompany running such an enterprise. I am delighted that it is still there and thriving along with the George and Abergavenny in Frant.

Last year I had the great honour of having my name put on the pavilion which will be one of the many reasons which will make it very hard to move on when the time comes.

Although not blessed with any natural ability I have always loved sport, football even more than cricket, and have always seen it as a force for good and it has certainly enriched my life, not least in this community. This is especially true of junior sections where I am reminded of a quote from someone in New York who said "sport is a way of getting kids out of gangs and into teams."

Although I am no longer directly involved it is rewarding for me to see so many of the members, including those stalwarts who have done so much these past 30 years, devoting a great deal of their time to maintaining and growing what so many worked so hard to establish.

—Bob "the cat" Bevan, MBE



Parish Pets #8:

Marnie, Tilly and Poppy

Our three dogs are all Cockadors ¼ Labrador and ¾ working cocker, this means they are very energetic and love their walks in the local wood. Marnie, our eldest, loves affection and nice warm cuddles on the sofa. Tilly on the other hand does not stop moving no matter the weather, if she is in the garden she has a tennis ball in her mouth and out on a walk she gets the biggest sticks to try to impress us. Last but not least our youngest Poppy, she is very much a Mummy's girl always hanging around and begging for a belly rub.

—Bailey Roberts, aged 12

» Like your pet featured in *Parish News*..? If so, send a description and photo to: carmel.kinley@gmail.com

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**Parish Diary:
September/October 2023**

» **Frant Parish Friendship Group
Autumn timetable**

21st September: 2.30 –3.45pm, The Stables. Exercise Classes with Alison
28th September: 2.30-4.00 pm, The Stables. A Panorama of Victorian Leisure with Bertie Pearce
5th October: 2.30-3.45pm, The Stables. Exercise classes with Alison
19th October: 2.30-3.345pm, The Stables. Exercise classes with Alison
26th October: 2.30-4.00 pm, The Stables. The Real Brexit (our Geological separation) by Clive Nuttman

» **Wednesday 13 September**
 Eridge Arts Club Talk
 7.30 pm - Eridge Village Hall (see page 11)

» **Thursday 12 October**
 The Arts Society Ashdown Forest Lecture (William Morris)
 Crowborough Community Centre, 2pm (see page 10)

» **Tuesday, 24th October**
 Frant Garden Club: Edward Flint talk "Container Gardening", Memorial Hall 2.30 p.m.

Regular Meetings

Little Fishes: Baby & Toddler Group
 Every Tuesday 9.30 –11.30am in The Stables, Frant. A warm welcome to all.
Encounter (School Years 6–13)
 Contact Ed Pascoe for more information: frant youth@gmail.com
Coffee Morning at The Stables, Frant
 Every Wednesday, 10:30am –12noon. Come for a hot drink, a cake and a chat.
Festival Church Kids During 5pm outside service.

Parish News can be downloaded from: www.frantchurch.org or www.eridgechurch.org
 Advertising enquiries: 750285 or susan.piccioni@btinternet.com
 Contributions for our next issue should be sent to the Editor: carmel.kinley@gmail.com or 01892 750217
 Next deadline: 1st October 2023

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 Bob Standley: 783579
Parish Council meetings
 Full PC meetings are usually held at 7.30pm every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Planning meetings are held on the first Monday of the month.
 Please check the Council's website at www.frant-pc.gov.uk
MP for Wealden
 Nus Ghani MP: nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk

Police Contact Details:
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