

Alkham Monthly Newsletter

Brian Wimsett
The Old Post Office
Slip Lane, Alkham CT15 7DE
Telephone 01304 824969

No. 312 January 2020

Funded by adverts and independent of the Parish Council

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CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS SWITCH ON - A fantastic turnout of over eighty villagers sang carols on the village green on the 7th December accompanied by Graham Bissett on accordion followed by the switch on by Nancy and Rupert Beaney and George Chittenden. After Father Christmas distributed chocolates, we were all invited to The Marquis of Granby for mulled wine and mince pies. A cheerful start to the party season in the village! A big thank you to all involved



including Tracey Prince who raised over £150 for the lights fund, to Leigh Taylor for upgrading the electrics and to Nadine, Will, Huw and the Marquis of Granby staff and finally to Kevin Rolfe who made sure Father Christmas knew how to get to Alkham. **Den Barnard**

THE MARQUIS OF GRANBY would like to thank the community for its support in its first year; we are pleased that the changes we have made to the pub have been embraced by the community and look forward to many more years of hosting you all. A few important updates; The Marquis of Granby will be closed for minor refurbishments on the following dates: January 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th. To that end, we will be hosting our first quiz of 2020 on Monday 13th January from 7.30pm. Although all of our dining spaces are now full for New Year's Eve, we would love to host you from 9pm for drinks to celebrate the New Year with us.

MANY THANKS to the staff at the Marquis of Granby for being so kind to Sue Lees. Sue and her family moved to Alkham in the 1970's and until 2005 she was a very effective Parish Clerk and also the parish historian with copious records which will be archived. Sue recently developed dementia, but she visits the Marquis every day where they treat her with kindness and understanding and makes sure she gets home safely. **From Helen and friends**

ROOF REPAIRS - The church in Alkham is a Grade 1 listed building and should be preserved for future generations to be used for social or religious purposes. It is estimated that in excess of 6000 tiles are needed to be replaced on the roof at a cost of £15,000 and following the last appeal £285 has been received. The Friends of St. Anthony will donate some of the money and if you would like to donate to this worthwhile cause please contact Susannah Tapsell 01304 822295, Den Barnard 01304 824845 or Brian Wimsett 01304 824969.

CONGRATULATIONS to Tracey Prince and Sam on the birth of their son who weighed in at a healthy 9lbs 10ozs on the 11th December.



CONGRATULATIONS to David Beaney who won the Young Councillor of the Year at the Achievement Awards held in the Royal Horseguards Hotel Westminster on the 5th November. This award reflects the amount of work he has carried out since he became a councillor for Dover Downs and River in May 2019. David is also a Parish Councillor for Alkham and has been very active in resolving local problems. **Laurence Jones**

ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE - For those of you who have already visited the church you will see how exceptionally beautiful it is this year. It's the grandest and tallest tree we have ever had and needed to be placed on the floor instead of the usual tabletop. Our thanks and enormous appreciation to **Alkham Garden Centre** for providing and delivering. The owners and team of our garden centre never waver in supporting St Anthony's and other events throughout the year and I personally can recommend the tea rooms, especially the cakes. **Irene Barnard**

FILM NIGHT

December	No film this month
January 28 th	Downton Abbey
Village Hall 7.30pm Please bring your own refreshments	

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ON THE DOORSTEP – OZ's article on page 3 about the Lydden and Temple Ewell Nature Reserve, where the wart-biter bush cricket can be found, was first published here as Country Notes in October 1999. This location could make a festive breath of fresh air. The reserve lies on a south facing

slope between Temple Ewell and Lydden and is very steep in places and not suitable for wheelchair access. In addition, the adjacent roads, such as the old A2 past Lydden, have Roadside Nature Reserves which are managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. On the main road at Temple Ewell there used to be pub on the northern side just to the Dover side of the village shop and behind the pub there is a free car park and access to the reserve. **Editor**

ALKHAM VALLEY after WW1 was described as delightful by a man who walked its length; a two pipe walk of sheer pleasure at any time of the year from Kearsney to the peaceful village of Alkham. He walked by road but, further to the article above, a two pipe walk from Ewell Minnis to Scotland Common at Kearsney is also delightful.

THE GREENING OF ALKHAM - Once again Brian sets the pace. Not far from Alkham's red letterbox in Slip Lane are the newly painted green doors of The Old Post Office. How smart are we? This repaint was carried out in spite of speeding vehicles so thank you, Brian, for saying goodbye to buttercup yellow. Looks grand! **Jo Walker**

POPPY APPEAL - Another bumper year for the Poppy Appeal in Alkham and Ewell Minnis - £801.74. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously. I must thank my helpers who collected in some pretty dodgy weather. And thanks too to all the local businesses that had Poppies. **Rachel Fountain**

THANKS - On 29th November at around 5.00 pm near the top of Warren Lane we punctured a front nearside tyre. I stopped (as it happened the right) passing car and the young man driving could not have been more kind or helpful - he looked at the situation, went home for better tools and a good torch (ours was very poor) and returned to change the wheel for us - he even directed me to the best option for a new tyre! this took him time and he got very dirty to boot. When I offered him well earned money for his trouble, he refused to take it. My husband and I are so very grateful to you - you are our 'knight of the road'. You know who you are and I will not embarrass you by mentioning your name but would like to say a great big thank you for all that you did not only in assisting with the tyre but by giving us both peace of mind. May I take this opportunity of wish you and yours the very best of seasonal compliments and a very happy and healthy 2020. **Jane Tapsell**

PCSO – On the 21st of November our Police Community Support Officer held a surgery at the village hall to which 6 people turned up. Her name is Megan Keehner and she confirmed that if you needed to report something you should dial 101 when you will also be given a reference number so you can check on progress if necessary. She is also contactable by email Megankeehner@kent.police.co.uk but stresses that if she is on holiday then the email might not be read and that is why it's best to phone 101. She is also the PCSO for River, Hougham, Temple Ewell and Capel-le-Ferne.

Alkham Valley Garden Centre

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Dates for your diary: - Now in stock- a wide range of Christmas food and treats. Christmas gift and decoration shop open from the 1st October. Christmas Trees – arriving 22nd November. Christmas Fair – Sat/Sun 23rd/24th November 10.00am – 4.00pm. Late Night Opening 28th November till 8pm. A new range of books and puzzles will be on sale very soon.

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ALKHAM CRICKET CLUB – To mark their centenary an article was printed in the Dover Express in June 1939 and the following is a digest.

According to a very old copy of the original rules in the Marquis of Granby, the club was first formed on 1st July 1839. Early fixtures were played on any day of the week, and usually commenced in the morning. The players had dinner at the Marquis, and a long afternoon's cricket was followed by tea and a singsong in the pub. There was no pavilion, but a tent built of poles and hurdles, covered with tarpaulin was erected for the players to change. Around 1900 a pavilion was erected in Newlyn's Meadow which in 1932 was transported on rollers to Vicarage Meadow. Level ground was very limited, and this was reduced when the main road was widened and in 1938 further reduced when a dyke was constructed to divert the nailbourne from the main road. The Club moved to Vicarage Meadow in 1932 and when the nailbourne flowed it flooded such that in 1937 the ground was transformed into a beautiful lake. The Club relies entirely on local players and has a useful nursery in the village school, but young men are leaving the village nowadays, many joining H.M. Forces. There are 13 rules and 3 rules are particularly interesting: Rule 10 "That any member who shall be guilty of swearing shall be fined one penny, and every time he repeats the offence the fine shall be double"; Rule 11 "That any member who shall misconduct himself quarrelling or drunkenness shall be fined sixpence; Rule 12 "That all fines shall be paid to the Treasurer within ten days, or double the amount inflicted."

COUNTRY NOTES - It was gratifying to learn last month [September 1999] that Kent Wildlife Trust had succeeded in its appeal for resources to buy another area of land at Lydden Temple Ewell Down. The land is necessary in order to save several endangered species, including the wart-biter bush cricket. A reference from 1829 states that "In Sweden warts are destroyed by the *Gryllus verrucivorus* or wart-eating grasshopper." A.H. Swinton, in *Insect Variety* (1880) refers to "The Great Green Leaf-cricket, or Wart-biter." Fifty years ago the wart-biter was common on the chalk downlands of Kent. As with many other species it then went into a rapid decline under severe environmental pressures and was finally declared extinct in Kent in 1976. In 1993, 20 adult wart-biters were re-introduced onto Lydden Temple Ewell Down. Currently, the population, although still expanding, remains vulnerable, which is why the extra land is needed. Gilbert White, the author of *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, was, when not investigating owl sounds, fascinated by crickets. Writing in the late eighteenth century, he devoted three long and consecutive letters to this topic. In the second one, he refers to house crickets (*Gryllus domesticus*) as "...noisome pests... like Pharaoh's plague of frogs..." and goes on to say that they "may be destroyed, like wasps, by phials half filled with beer ...for, being always eager to drink, they will crowd in till the bottles are full." We've been destroying slugs that way for some years now, the best bait being a dark, sweet, mild beer, purchased in 2-litre brown plastic bottles from a local supermarket. It's amazingly successful, killing thousands during the season. Most people accept that it works, but occasionally I get that wary, disbelieving look that sometimes greets the news of the wart-biters. **(Steve Osborn – first published here October 1999)**

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Tuesday	Art Workshop in village hall from 10am – 1pm		
Wednesday	Keep Fit 9.30/11.00am – Tai Chi 6pm to 7pm		
Friday	Pilates 9.30 to 10.30am		
Last Friday	Sightloss group View Hotel Folkestone 1030 to noon		
Other Events in the village hall			
Tuesday	9	W.I. meeting at 7.30pm	
Saturday	11	SEKAS 7pm	
Tuesday	23	Village Hall committee meeting 2pm	
Tuesday	30	Film Night 7.30pm – please see page 1	
CHURCH SERVICES			
DATE	ALKHAM	CAPEL	HOUGHAM
Saturday 4 th	Messy Church St Radigund's 3.00 – 5.00 pm		
Sunday 5 th	Evensong 4.30 pm	Eucharist 9.30 am	Worship 11am
Sunday 12 th	Eucharist 9.30 am	Worship 11am	
Sunday 19 th	Worship 11am	Evensong 6.00 pm	Eucharist 9:30 am
Sunday 26 th	United Parish Eucharist, Capel 10.00 am		
BUS TIMES To Dover 8.00, 9.11,10.11, 11.11, 12.11, 13.11, 14.11, 15.11, 17.04, 18.34 Sat: 9.11, 10.11,11.11, 12.11, 13.11, 14.11, 15.11, 17.11, 18.41 To Folkestone 7.32 9.32 10.32 11.32 12.32 13.32 14.32 16.27 17.32 18.32 Sat. 7.32 9.32 10.32 11.32 12.32 14.32 17.32,18.32			

FROM THE VICARAGE - As I write, Christmas is still ahead of us and, like everyone else I know I am feverishly working my way through a list of things to be done before 25th December. By Boxing Day some people seem to regard Christmas as already over. But there are Twelve Days of Christmas, as the song reminds us, and five are in January. Not until 6th January, when the New Year festivities are over and everyone is back at work, does the Church celebrate Epiphany, the wise men arriving at the crib with their gifts for Jesus almost unnoticed, at least as far as the UK is concerned. But in other parts of the world the arrival of these mysterious travellers in Bethlehem after following a star from the mysterious East is widely celebrated, and their story has inspired other legends. One concerns Baboushka, an old woman who, in the depth of a Russian winter, offers shelter from the bitter weather to three travellers who explain that they are following a star to find a new-born king. When the weather clears they invite her to join them, but she tells them she must finish her chores and find a gift for the baby first. By the time she is ready to leave fresh snow has covered their tracks. When she eventually reaches Bethlehem, not only have the Wise Men already left, but the baby too. They say that Baboushka is still looking for that baby. Every year, at the time that the Wise Men

came, she is said to go around giving presents to the children – just in case one of them happens to be *the* child. A story of kindness and generosity that makes Christmas last a bit longer, perhaps? **Brian Williams**

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