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Published jointly by
St Thomas à Becket Church
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Parish Newsletter



Framfield, Blackboys
and
Palehouse Common

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR
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Vicar : **Revd Chris Lawrence**
01825 891090
(after hours 01825 890365)

Churchwardens : **Mrs Joan Burne**
Mr John Mordaunt

Secretary to PCC : **Mrs Diana Kentish-Barnes**

Treasurer : **Mr Norman Jones**

**All communications for church matters should be directed to
the Church Office – 10.30 am – 5.00 pm (closed Wednesday)**

Email - rev.chris@btinternet.com

Post - Vicarage Barn, Brookhouse Lane, Framfield TN22 5NH

Telephone/ leave a message - 01825 891090

From the Registers :



Marriages – those whom God has joined, let no one divide:

22nd October: Jonathan James Guest / Jennifer Louise Powell

At rest :
28th November: Michael John Gough

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WHO'S WHO AT THE St THOMAS À BECKET NEWSLETTER

Joint Chair -

For the Church: Rev. Chris Lawrence

For the Council: Mr. Rob Newton

Co-ordinator and Advertising: Ann Newton

Technical Editor: Barry Richardson

Treasurer: Jan Riddle

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Stop Press - God comes to Earth as a baby!!!!

When you think about it, God's plan to save the world is quite bizarre. Why would Father God send His son Jesus to earth in such a covert way? A baby born into virtual poverty in the small town of Bethlehem to parents yet to be married!

Surely if God wanted everyone to know that He was God then perhaps we could have expected a more dramatic entrance. After all God did some amazing displays of his power in numerous accounts found in the Old Testament.

If this were not enough how about getting your head around the fact that Jesus was divine and human at the same time?

Answering these two questions alone gives us a crucial insight into the wisdom of God and the crux of the Christmas story.

One of the stumbling blocks many people have with God or even being intrigued enough to find out more about God is that the natural human mind cannot initially understand the mind or the ways of God. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah God said *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.*⁹ *"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

The question of Jesus' divinity and humanity has been problematic down the ages. However, to Jesus' mother Mary it was a case of simple acceptance and belief in what the angel Gabriel told her. Mary was Jesus' natural human mother but Jesus' father was God the Holy Spirit. Joseph adopted Jesus as his earthly son.

The announcement of this perplexing fact is recorded in Luke's Gospel chapter 1³⁰ *But the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God.*³¹ *You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus* (which means Saviour – my note). Naturally Mary asks³⁴ *How will this be, since I am a virgin?*

³⁵ *The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.....*³⁷ *For nothing is impossible with God.*³⁸ *I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May it be to me as you have said.*

I believe the reason that Jesus was born as a baby and to all intents and purposes grew up as a normal child, teenager and adult was so that he could connect with all areas of

our lives. The pains and joys of earthly life were fully experienced by Jesus so that He is able to empathise with the whole range of human emotions that we experience.

When we pray (*Speak and listen to God*) we are not communing with a god who doesn't understand us, quite the contrary, God is concerned about our lives and wants the very best for us as you would expect of a true and loving Father. It would be untrue to think that God is distant and not interested. In reality He is the One who 'stooped down' in humility and entered our broken world to save it.

Another interesting point is in the giving of His name. Have you noticed that Mary and Joseph never get to choose his name? The angel Gabriel announces to Mary what his name will be and God appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him - *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* (Matthew 1:21).

Every name especially from a Hebrew perspective has meaning. A person was and is defined by their name. Jesus' name is very specific because it tells us that He is the Saviour. People get very hung up on the name Jesus and his mandate to save. The reason the world is in such a mess is due to the problem of sin. Personal sin that we inherit or literally 'born into' needs to be recognised and reconciled back to God. Man cannot save himself and re-establish the original relationship with God that would enable each one of us to love unconditionally in the way that God loves us. Sin separates and no amount of good works can make up the difference. Trying to earn our way back into God's favour is the epitome of pride.

However, it is often when we run out of ourselves, when we come up against a problem that we cannot solve or we feel so broken inside that we give up that we start to look beyond ourselves. This is the place where God resides and it is at this point that the cry of the heart reaches the ears of God and He says "I am here for you". This is the point of transformation and it comes through the simple acceptance of Jesus the Saviour; He alone turns our darkness to light, our stress into peace and our selfishness into true love, not just for now but for all eternity. As John writes in perhaps the most powerful, and succinct words in the Bible - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16).

God with outstretched arms offers His Son as a gift to each one of us, but as with every gift it has to be willingly received - the question is - have you accepted Jesus for yourself? He is simply the most amazing gift you could ever receive! I hope everyone in the parish has a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year - *Rev Chris Lawrence*

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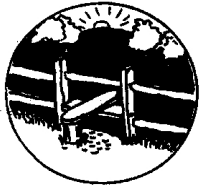


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Framfield & Blackboys WI
Wish you a Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year

Programme for 2012

January 10th New Year Dinner

February 14th at Framfield Memorial Hall: 'Choice Joyce' (A taste of Joyce Grenfell) *Mrs Pat Bryer*

March 13th at Framfield Memorial Hall: 'Travel in the land beneath the wind' (Borneo) *Speaker Mr Raymond Hale*

April 10th at Blackboys Village Hall 'The Green Man' music, song and Folktales *with Dr Lynn*

May 8th at Blackboys Village Hall – Resolution meeting with Ploughmans Supper

June 12th at Blackboys Village Hall: 'My life as Henry VIII' *Mr Tony Harris*

July 10th Summer Outing

August 14th Afternoon Tea in the Garden

September 11th at Blackboys Village Hall 'A Sussex Farm in the 1950's' (Cine film) *speaker Mr Ian Everest*

October 9th at Framfield Memorial Hall: 'Witches & Warlocks' *Speaker Dr Janet Pennington*

November 13th at Framfield Memorial Hall: A.G.M.

December 11th at Framfield Memorial Hall: Christmas Party
Framfield & Blackboys

Diary of Church Services

DECEMBER 2011

04 Second Sunday in Advent

10.00 am Parish Communion (CW) with Prayer for Healing
6.30 pm Evening Praise

11 Third Sunday in Advent

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 am Family Service

18 Fourth Sunday in Advent

10.00 am Parish Holy Communion (CW)
6.30 pm Lessons and Carols by candlelight

21 11.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)

24 Christmas Eve

4.30 pm Crib and Christingle Service
11.30 pm Midnight Holy Communion

25 Christmas Day

10.00 am Family Festival Holy Communion

JANUARY 2012

01 First Sunday after Christmas

10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)
6.30 pm Evening Praise

08 First Sunday of Epiphany

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 am Family Service

- 15 Second Sunday of Epiphany**
 10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)
 6.30 pm Evening Communion with Prayer for Healing
- 18** 11.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 22 Third Sunday of Epiphany**
 8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 10.00 am Morning Praise
- 29 Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**
 10.00 am Traditional Matins with Holy Communion

BCP: Book of Common Prayer. CW: Common Worship 2001

**COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE PLEASE
 BY 10th JANUARY 2012
 TO
 CHRIS LAWRENCE AT THE CHURCH OFFICE –
 01825 891090
 OR
 ANN NEWTON – 01825 890182**

**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR
 PARISH COUNCIL**

Mrs Ann Newton (Parish Clerk): 01825 890182 (fax/answer machine). Email: framfield.pc@virgin.net. Messages will be picked up during office hours. All communications for Parish Council matters should be directed to Ann.



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CHURCH AND VILLAGE EVENTS

From Eve, our roving reporter

In September we were pleased to welcome visitors from Canada, on a journey into their past. Their mother, Flora Skinner, emigrated to Canada as a war bride in 1946. Having made her home there, she went on to produce seven children. Three of her daughters and a niece came here specifically to find their 'roots'. They found the gravestones of their grandparents, Flora and George Skinner, who died in 1958 and 1970, respectively.

George worked for Press and Banks and lived in Gatehouse Lane. There were some in church who remembered them so were able to give local information. They visited the Skinner's bungalow. I think they had a very satisfactory visit and insight into their past.

On an uncharacteristically warm October Sunday, Framfield Church held the Harvest Festival service which was well attended, after which we all enjoyed an excellent harvest lunch. Our catering team of Frances Brinkhurst, Delia Gillies and Joan Jeffreys, supported by members of the congregation, can always be relied upon to produce a wonderful meal. We thank them once again for all their hard work.

I hope you are all enjoying this wonderfully mild Autumn. We can still enjoy a cup of tea or coffee sitting outside in the sunshine. We must make the most of it, because no doubt when it starts to rain it won't know when to stop.

Hopefully we have got our Pub back - The Hare and Hounds - a succession of Landlords and Managers have not produced a productive venue, but now we are fortunate enough to have Mathew Marches at the helm! He is going to do Honest Pub Food soon. At the moment it's - Sundays Only - and I have to admit to being one of the first customers and enjoyed an excellent lunch. Mathew is quite happy for anyone to park in the car park when going to

Church services. Hopefully local people will have the confidence to support him in his new venture. - Watch this space.....

At the beginning of October my friend and I flew off to Italy. We arrived at Naples airport in a thunderstorm, then were driven to our very nice hotel in Sorrento. It also rained very hard the day of our return!!! but in between the weather was perfect. Our excursions included the Amalfi Coast, the beautiful Isle of Capri and Naples. The scenery is breathtaking and the Italian people were very friendly and welcoming. A wonderful experience for anybody. So until next time I'll say...
Chow Chow (Bye Bye).

FRAMFIELD VILLAGE HALL MARKET

Saturday - 17th December -10.00am - 12.00noon

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Thank you all for your Support in 2011,

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If you have NOT been to your local market, then please do in 2012, its every 4th Saturday of the Month except August.

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**Happy Christmas and New Year
to you all.**

For more info ring Sandy~01825 840648.

Framfield CE Primary School

Since writing for the Newsletter in September the school has come very successfully through an Ofsted inspection which found that our children have outstanding behaviour, and that by the time they leave, they are 'thoughtful and well-organised young people'. These comments are among the many very positive statements in the report which recognises the many good and outstanding aspects of the school, including an outstanding Foundation Stage. The full report is now available on the Ofsted website – do have a look! I would like to thank my excellent team of very dedicated people who work tirelessly to provide an excellent learning environment for the children, and their parents who offer us consistent and creative support. It is a team effort and we are very proud of what we have achieved together.

This term has been full of enjoyment, with a school focus on animals of different kinds. A walk around the school reveals a deep interest in dragons – mythical and real, a fascination with minibests, farm animals and there is potential danger in the Peacocks class which looks more like the jungle than a classroom! We even had a visit from a miniature farm, complete with a very small cow, sheep, hens, rabbits, mice and guinea pigs. It was great fun and we enjoyed sharing it with the Pre-school.

Many of you will already know that I will be leaving the school at the end of this term. This is so that I can pursue related interests to work with children as a counsellor. I am looking forward to my new careers, but will really miss this school very much. It has been a very creative part of my life and I have thoroughly enjoyed working to make this school a fantastic place for children to learn and grow. There have been many people in the wider community who have also been important in many different ways, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your invaluable support for the school. I shall look forward to hearing of its continued success over the coming years and wish you all well.

Janet Wilde
Headteacher

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MY LIFE WITH FUR AND FEATHER

DOGS SNOW AND SLEDGES.

As I write this I can hear the Long Tailed Tits twittering together as they enjoy breakfast on the feeding station by the kitchen window. These delightful little birds herald the start of winter and brighten up the cold dark days. Their arrival reminded me of winter weather over many years.

I have always enjoyed the snow and so have the dogs. A succession of Newfoundland's have been trained to pull our old home made sledge. My first Newfoundland Cassie was the first one to do this. I had a harness made for her and I was thrilled when it snowed so I could teach her to pull the sledge. This was done very carefully to build up her confidence, helped by succulent pieces of chicken to encourage her to haul the strange object behind her. She soon became an expert sledge dog obeying commands, negotiating gateways and would happily take the sledge round our fields and little wood. One winter there was a very heavy fall of snow and all the lanes leading out of our valley were completely blocked with massive snow drifts. The children and I thought that was fantastic as we could not get out and no cars could get in. This meant that it was safe to try sledging in the lanes. David was small enough to ride on the sledge which was great fun. At that time I also had a miniature long haired Dachshund whose legs were only a few inches long. It was amazing to watch her cleverly running along the tops of hedges and five barred gates. Eliza did not sink through the snow as she was so light and had – like all Dachshunds - very big paws, designed for digging which helped

When sadly I lost a much loved dog I would start all over again with another puppy and wait impatiently for the snow to arrive so sledge training could commence once more. The three boys were always delighted to see the snow especially if they could not get to school. The Newfoundland would pull the sledge up the hill over the neighbouring fields then the children would wiz down the steepest slopes with much glee. We all had plenty of fresh air and exercise in snowy weather; my husband busy sawing logs, the children stacking them and the dog pulling them along on the sledge or dragging long branches back home from the wood.

Our little wood looks magical in the snow. Tracks of animals and birds crisscross the sparkling ground. Normally we cannot see what enticing scents dogs are following but the snow makes this possible.

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It is wonderful watching a puppy's reaction on seeing snow for the first time. They are usually fascinated and quickly investigate this strange fluffy stuff experimentally biting and eating it. They quickly become excited, racing round and round nose down and legs flying. Chloe my latest Newfoundland was only a youngster when she first saw snow. I opened the door and let her out, expecting the usual puppy curiosity and excitement. Chloe walked slowly outside, strolled briefly round the lawn, came back in looking decidedly bored as much as to say, "is that all it is, what's all the fuss about?" What a disappointment!

Last winter Chloe had her first lesson in sledging. As I had done with the other Newfoundland's, I taught her very carefully, one step at a time. She was incredibly good, relaxed and steady in her usual laid back way. Before long she had learnt the commands to "walk on, stand and stay." I was so pleased with her progress we went up in the woods round the pond and through the trees. She stood rock still while I took photos. She looked lovely with her jet black fur against the white snow. I was so pleased at her standing there; without her lead attached, looking so relaxed. The photo session finished I thought we would have one more session and go up and down some little slopes between the trees. Up we went then turned round to come back down. It was then that disaster struck. I had quite forgotten the old wooden runners had been replaced by new metal ones to make it slide more easily. The sledge ran forward and hit Chloe's back legs. Being frightened she leapt forward, the sledge hit her again. I was desperately trying to hang on to the lead and calm her down but by now she was panicking. I could not hold on and she shot off dragging the sledge behind her. I was horrified as she tried to escape from the terrifying object that pursued her relentlessly. She vanished out of sight weaving perilously between the trees; then I caught a glimpse of her careering dangerously past the house and out of sight again. Breathlessly I followed and at last found her lying down, shaking with fright her legs all tangled up in the straps attached to the sledge. I felt so terribly guilty letting this happen.

Since this incident I have tried to gradually introduce Chloe to the sledge again but she is still terrified. Chloe has always been so sweet and placid but I doubt now whether she will ever pull a sledge or cart again. It was all my fault for being over confident.

Hazel Carter
www.hazel-carter.co.uk
info@hazel-carter.co.uk



It's November and I'm sure that like me you are all enjoying the amazing weather we are having. Long may it last. However it is a little disconcerting for our gardens and for us to know just how seriously we should take notice of the forecasts that threaten us with another severe winter. After two bad years I am going to play it safe and heavily mulch or wrap up all those plants that suffered so badly last time. There has to be a limit as to how many times some of our more delicate specimens can recover from such extreme cold.

Our Society has had an amazingly successful year with our numbers increasing and a bigger attendance at all the events that have been organised. The drinks party held at The Grange was blessed with a lovely warm evening and it was great to have most of our members in the same place at the same time so that we could enjoy each others company. We are all very grateful to Jack and Kathy Gore for allowing us to share their garden for the evening.

The Summer Show was a huge success and again was a big social gathering as well as being a Horticultural event that seems to grow larger every year. We are always looking for more volunteers so please come forward, you will receive a big welcome.

We have had some excellent talks as well as some very interesting outings and of course we don't stop there! There are still more events planned before the end of the year. Keep your eyes open for notices telling you , "what's on."

The A.G.M. is on November 8th at 7.30pm in the Blackboys Village Hall, followed by a talk given by the head gardener of Nymans. Do come along.

Jennifer Graham.

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FRAMFIELD STARRY CHRISTMAS TREE



In aid of MacMillan Nurses

The Framfield Christmas Tree is here again. Stars are on sale for £3.00 for people to buy and write messages (permanent ink) to family & friends who are no longer with us or who cannot be with us this Christmas time due to distance.

All stars will be available to buy from Monday 14 November from the following:

- Framfield CE School
- Framfield Pre-School
- Hair by us
- Selina Allen – Tel no: 891110

All money raised will go to Uckfield MacMillan Nurses.
The Tree will be lit from **Friday 25 November at 5pm.**

Thank you - Selina Allen

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

The committee have had several successful fundraising events recently, starting with the MCS coffee mornings, held in various locations, at the end of September, these made £1,464. Nationally the current total is just under £8 million. Our collection for two days outside Tesco's was particularly good and raised £1,185. At the start on November we held a Christmas fair at the Luxford Centre. There was a good selection of stalls and together with the sale of coffee, mince pies, and homemade soup lunches, £503 was raised.

The need for Macmillan services has never been greater, but that need is only set to grow. That's why they have developed ambitious plans to reach and improve the lives of everyone living with cancer over the next 20 years. Work, family and social life, even the way you look, is changed with cancer. The Macmillan Support team wish to make sure no-one has to face this alone.

If you or anyone you know has worries about cancer, if they've just been diagnosed or even if their treatment has ended, the Cancerline, Benefits Helpline, Cancer information Nurse Helpline and Youthline have all been brought together under one phone number: 0808 808 0000 or the website can always be visited on www.macmillan.org.uk. Information can be had over the telephone, or you can request any number of relevant booklets.

Ann Press, Local Chairman 01825 890400

NO PARKING PLEASE !

We have recently been reminded that people are using the Southern Water drive to gain access to the Churchyard. May we remind you that there is no access via that route. The route must at all times be kept open for Southern Water and residents to obtain access. We would appreciate the courtesy to these parties by using the main entrance to the churchyard off Church Approach.

Thank you for your cooperation



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Blackboys Village Hall,
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Tel: 01825 891113

www.blackboyspreschool.org.uk

email: enquiries@blackboyspreschool.org.uk

As Christmas approaches, we're looking forward to an action packed few weeks as we prepare for our Christmas Show, welcome a dance teacher to the school and continue our regular trips to our allotment.

Montessori and Forest School:

All Blackboys Pre-School staff recently attended specialist training into Montessori principles and Practice, which the Pre-School now applies to some of our activities. Montessori principals are a wonderful fit with the Forest School training that staff have also undertaken, which uses the natural environment for activities, such as den building and craft work. Both methods encourage children to be able to be independent and confident in their world, to learn life skills for the future, to be polite, to respect themselves, each other and their environment.

Growing up green - our allotment:

The children are continuing their regular visits to our allotment. It has now been divided into separate plots, including a herb garden and dedicated vegetable and fruit mini plots. We have had a very generous donation of tools from a member of the community who wished to remain anonymous. We cannot thank her enough. If you are allotment holder in Blackboys and would like to talk to the children about the things you grow, drop us a line - we're really love to hear from you! Give Jenny a ring on 01825 891113.

Blackboys Pre-School - community events:

More than just a village pre school, Blackboys Pre-School is an important part of village life. We host a number of events coming up open to all members of the community.

The term will end with our annual Christmas party with lots of games and food and hopefully a visit from the man in red himself. We would like to welcome our new children and their families this term, Thomas, Dylan & Trinity; we hope you enjoy your time at Framfield Pre-School.

We are open 7.45 - 6pm daily, including a breakfast club 7.45-8.45 and after school club 3-6pm for 2-11yrs.

We still have some availability for morning and afternoon sessions, if you would like to arrange a visit or for more information please telephone Sarah Ridley on 01825 890943.

OFSTED Registration No. 415265

Charity Commission No. 1139563

PLA Member No. 29899

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2012

Tuesday, 31 January (BB Trust)	Blackboys Village Hall
Tuesday, 28 February (FF Trust)	Framfield Memorial Hall
Tuesday, 27 March (BB Trust)	Blackboys Village Hall
Tuesday, 24 April (FF Trust)	Framfield Memorial Hall
Tuesday, 29 May (AGM) (BB Trust)	Blackboys Village Hall
Tuesday, 26 June (FF Trust)	Framfield Memorial Hall
Tuesday, 31 July (BB Trust)	Blackboys Village Hall
August	No meeting
Tuesday, 25 September (FF Trust)	Framfield Memorial Hall
Tuesday, 30 October (BB Trust)	Blackboys Village Hall
Tuesday, 27 November (FF Trust)	Framfield Memorial Hall
December	No meeting

Parish Council Website – why not check it out – www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk.

ANN NEWTON/Oct 2011



FRAMFIELD PRE-SCHOOL
THE STREET
FRAMFIELD
TN22 5NR
TEL: 01825 890943
www.framfieldpreschool@gmail.com

This term we have had a very successful visit from Blackberry Farms travelling farm, the children enjoyed meeting all the animals. We have had tortoises visit for the day and a visit from a bearded dragon lizard. We are continuing to develop our theme focussing on animals that live in the snow and ice.

We have many fundraising events organised for the run up to Christmas. We are holding a secret chocolate tombola at the School Christmas fair on Friday 25th November and also selling our 100 club tickets (this is open to anyone, please ring Sarah for details) We will be selling bird feeders and reindeer food at the village market on Saturday 26th November as well as our traditional chocolate tombola.

For Children in need day all the children were invited to make a donation and come to pre-school wearing something spotty, there were spots everywhere.

To promote healthy eating we held a "make your own lunch day", encouraging children to be independent and make healthy choices as well as developing their fine motor skills.

On Thursday 1 December we will be holding a Christmas themed coffee morning and Open Day from 9.30am - 11.30am at Blackboys Village Hall. Pop along and enjoy a drink and a slice of homemade cake, catch up with old friends or make some new ones. Children, as always, are welcome! We will also be selling Christmas puddings from the Ultimate Plum Pudding company, winners of a Gold Great Taste Award no less - and they're a steal at £5.50 each (we're even undercutting Lakeland!) Go on, treat yourselves and support your local pre-school in the process.

It's also a chance for people to look around while they're there and see all the great things Blackboys Pre-School has to offer, so spread the word.

Support your Pre-School:

Blackboys Pre-School is a not-for-profit charity set up with the sole purpose of providing a nurturing and caring environment for our children. Like many charities, the generous support of benefactors can make a huge difference. And we now have a JustGiving page set up which means we are able to benefit from Gift Aid and claim back tax on any donations made through the site at <http://www.justgiving.com/blackboyspreschool/Donate>. That gives us an extra 20p for every £1 donated.

The site also allows people to set up regular monthly donations. A monthly donation of £10 - the equivalent of just a few cups of coffee -- would make a massive difference to the Pre-School.

Check out our website at www.blackboyspreschool.org.uk for details of other events and to sign up to our email newsletter.

Blackboys Pre-School is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am until 3.30pm. We have places available for September. For information or to book your child in for a no-obligation free trial, call Jenny on 01825 891113 or email enquiries@blackboyspreschool.org.uk.

The Blackboys Pre-School team

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FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL – REPORT

Residents may or may not have noticed that Parish Council meetings are now always preceded by a meeting of one of the Trusts. We have many Trusts, over which the Councillors are Trustees, and these Trusts have to be run separately from the Council. Therefore, there is now prior to every PC meeting a meeting of either Blackboys or Framfield Trust. Blackboys covers the recreation ground, allotments, Hall and Palehouse Common recreation ground. Framfield just the recreation ground and Hall. We also administer Framfield Allotments. If there are any queries regarding any of the grounds, or halls or allotments, contact should be made through me in the usual way.

Jeff Goggin was co-opted and welcomed onto the Council in September leaving only one vacancy.

Blackboys – reduction in speed limit. The re-engineering works to the junction of the B2102 and B2192 in Blackboys will go-ahead in January but ESCC are having a re-think on the traffic-calming measures to the High Street in Blackboys and the work has been delayed until the next financial year 2012/13. The Parish Council and residents involved hope that any proposals which come forward are significantly less ‘engineered’ than what has already been on offer. Councillor Chris Dowling (ESCC) is working with the Council to progress the works.

Blackboys Village Hall is to be painted internally in the Christmas Holidays and a new gate has been installed between the old and the new car park to stop the top car park becoming a stop-off for weekend evening revellers which causes a nuisance to everyone around. The gate should be kept shut once anyone has gone through.

The Parish Council, once again, will cover the cost of a Christmas tree for the Tree of Light situated outside the Memorial Hall – further details of how to get involved are elsewhere in the magazine.

A list of meeting dates for next year is detailed separate to this report. All that is left from me to say is that the Parish Council wishes everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

If anyone requires a full hard copy of the minutes for any of the Council meetings please let me know. All our meeting details are available on our website – www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk.

ANN NEWTON/November 2011

Maria Naylor– Chairman (890946); Selina Allen (891110); Richard Brocklebank (0788 9336446); Myran Eade (890507); Peter Friend (01435 867126); Felicity Groves (840341); John Mordaunt (890443); Rob Newton – Vice Chairman (890103); Ian Paisley (890904); Ann Newton (Parish Clerk): 01825 890182 (fax/answer machine). Email: framfield.pc@virgin.net. Messages will be picked up during office hours

BLACKBOYS & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Time tends to fly by so quickly, it seems impossible that the society is now in its 15th year and continues to thrive. We again have a varied and interesting calendar of events organised for members and visitors for the coming year. We will be holding our Christmas Event on Friday 9th December in the Blackboys Village Hall at 7pm. This year's "entertainment" will be entitled The Turning Year, with Dr Geoff Doel and Dr Mick Lynn. Tickets are £5 available in advance only. There is no meeting in January.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we hoped to be having "an evening of memories" an informal meeting, with refreshments, when local people would be invited to come along and share their memories by giving a short talk and/or by joining in an open discussion about our "local history". This is scheduled to take place on May 1st and because the Queen's Diamond Jubilee will be celebrated in June, the theme for the evening will be the 1950's & 60's. There will also be a small display of appropriate documents, photos, artefacts. If you would like to take part or know someone I can contact who might be willing to participate please feel free to contact me by phone or email. If people would prefer to write their memories down or have them recorded, or relate them to someone on a "one to one basis", that can be arranged. We would appreciate contact from people all around the Parish, particularly from those who have any stories from the 1950's.

Meetings are held in Blackboys Village Hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30 for 8pm start, unless otherwise stated. Visitors and prospective new members are always welcome and although most current members are senior citizens, we welcome all ages.

If you would like to know more about any of the above, or the society's activities in general, please contact the secretary on 01825890359 or email bturner.18maple@btinternet.com.

Ann Turner

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STOATS ARE 'STOATALY' DIFFERENT.....

By Mike Russell of Sussex Wildlife Trust

There can't be many people who at some time in their life who haven't enjoyed reading 'Wind in the Willows' and will undoubtedly recall that the 'baddies' in Kenneth Grahame's much loved classic are undoubtedly the stoats and weasels who occupied Toad Hall.

In fact, overtime they have both generally generated an unpopular reputation and even outright hostility, the epitome of what we think of as vermin. Amongst landowners the only time they liked to see them was when their bodies were strung out in a line on a gibbet! 'Weasely' has entered our vocabulary to describe someone who is a shifty and untrustworthy. So, I think it's about time that these two unpopular creatures had a public image makeover.

Neither of them is uncommon, they are widespread throughout the UK although the weasel is not found in Ireland. You are likely to encounter them along field edges and ditches in the longer grasses and stoats in particular don't like to be out in the open whereas weasels have a wider range of habitat and are more likely to be seen in urban areas.

So, if you see one, how will you tell the difference? Stoats are bigger though by not much. What you have to look at is the tail and if there is a black tip to it then you are looking at a stoat. The other name you might know a stoat by is ermine as they sometimes turn white in winter, especially the further north you go, but this is an unlikely occurrence in Sussex. Weasels are really pencil thin, long, sleek and very quick, but essentially the pattern of the fur on both mammals is very similar. In the end to identify them you might have to come down to a very unhelpful saying 'weasels are 'weasely' told and stoats are 'stoataly' different!

That they are voracious and clinical hunters is without doubt and their unpopularity and subsequent persecution resulted from their occasional forays into game pens where, as with any predator, faced with an abundance of potential prey will go on a frenzied killing spree. Despite their similarities there doesn't appear too much competition for food between them. Stoats will go for larger prey items, mainly rabbits and water voles whereas weasels prefer smaller mammals such as mice and voles, though they will both take eggs,



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chicks, insects and worms. Their success depends on the amount of food available and fluctuates from year to year; starvation is the main cause of death for both species.

I have had a few encounters with stoats and weasels over the years and, although not always pretty, have been very entertaining. I was watching a nestbox at Woods Mill many years ago in which resided a family of great tits when a weasel rapidly climbed the tree and managed to squeeze through the entrance hall of the box and undoubtedly made short work of the chicks. Well you can't consume what probably amounted to at least half your own body weight without having an impact on the waistline and, sure enough, the weasel was now too fat to get out the hole. For the next 30 minutes I watched him gnaw at the hole to make it big enough to slip out, a monumental effort that required so much energy that probably made it ravenously hungry again.

The whole ecological system by which we all survive requires predator-prey relationships and stoats and weasels are a very effective part of that system, and shouldn't be vilified for that role. If you do come across them stay quiet and still as they will often be unaware of your presence and you might well be rewarded by observing some natural, very energetic and entertaining behaviour by one of our most charismatic mammal species.

Mike Russell - Sussex Wildlife Trust - www.sussexwt.org.uk

FRAMFIELD AND BLACKBOYS MONDAY CLUB

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Blackboys Church of England Primary School

One of our first events this year was our wonderful Harvest Festival in Framfield Church in October. This year's celebration, which was well attended by parents, focused on A Harvest from the Sea and the money raised was donated to the Fishermen's Mission. The children's singing was of a very high standard, the recorder group performed beautifully, and Revd Chris gave an amusing and thought-provoking talk.

Visits, assemblies and activities

Earlier this term Years 5 & 6 pupils went on their residential trip and gave us a fabulous report on their return. They had a wonderful time and gained so much from the experience - in fact, their film, photographs and presentations about it made us all feel rather jealous!

Also this term Class 3 enjoyed a visit from archaeologist Mrs Oldham as part of their Roman topic work. She is currently working on a Roman villa site at Barcombe and talked to the class about her work, explaining that anything they find buried can tell them something about how people used to live in the past. The class was very lucky to be given pieces of Roman tile over 2000 years old! A huge thank you to Mrs Oldham for bringing this subject alive for the children.

Our Class 1 assembly this term was a real treat! The circus came to Blackboys as we were entertained by strong men, clowns and acrobats - and some rather fierce lions and tigers! Class 1 surpassed themselves with excellent speaking and listening, acting and dancing skills and it was wonderful to see how all the children had developed since the start of term. Class 2's assembly this term focused on Keeping Healthy and they presented some of their wonderful work on this topic. They wrote their own words, organised themselves very well and presented their knowledge in a very professional way.

Three Blackboys pupils recently had the chance to work with New Sussex Opera: Felix Giles, Jacob Doherty and Ethan Peck all took part in several performances of a professional production, including one in London, for which they had to attend intense rehearsals. They all behaved very professionally and kept up with their schoolwork too - it was a wonderful, if tiring, experience for them all. Many thanks to the New Sussex Opera for offering children this valuable experience and also to the parents involved who ferried the children to rehearsals and performances.

Our school community

After about 18 months' planning we completed a small building project over the summer. Once the structure was finished we asked if parents could help with the painting and decorating and we had a wonderful response - so many of our school community gave their time and energy and all we have to do now is carpet the building and start using it.

We would like to thank our pupils, our hardworking members of staff, and our parents for their contribution to the success of the events and activities outlined here. Over the next few weeks we look forward to our Carol Service in Framfield Church and a party for the senior members of our community. We do hope that you will be able to join us at this special time of year - you will be very welcome!

J K King, Headteacher

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