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Published jointly by
St Thomas à Becket Church
and Framfield Parish Council

Parish Newsletter



Framfield, Blackboys
and
Palehouse Common

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2017

**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR
LOCAL CHURCH**

Vicar : **Revd Chris Lawrence**
01825 891090
(after hours 01825 890365)

Churchwardens : **None at present**

Secretary to PCC : **Mr Peter Tomsett**

Treasurer : **Mrs Patricia Marchant**

**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:

26th August: John Christopher Gregory and Laura Anne Watson

9th September: Marcus Holman and Andrea Pereira

At rest:

3rd September: Glen Swire

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East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: 0303 999 1000

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HOWEVER, ENDORSE ANY PRODUCTS OR SERVICES
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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

Distribution: Barbara Trickey, Delia Gillies,
and their teams of volunteers

Printers: "Print Matters"

A bi-monthly Newsletter distributed free to all
homes within the Parish.

What's the point?

Summer appears to be drawing to a close with the shorter days and chillier evenings. However, let's not rule out the possibility of an Indian Summer as we head towards October.

So how was your summer? Good, bad or indifferent, the pace of life and work does appear to slow down a little. The roads are definitely quieter and holidays are supremely beneficial to recharge the batteries and give the mind a rest as we put the diary aside and turn off the mobile.

However, time to reflect is often a mixed blessing. When you are really busy then there's not much time to ponder the big questions and when you do have time, your mind can go off in a variety of directions. This summer I found myself in the book of Ecclesiastes. I wasn't really taking time out to do a Bible study that would be a bit weird even for me! Rather it was to reread what the 'meaning of life' is all about. Does life actually have a point? If it doesn't then what is all our striving for, if at the end of the day we die and leave it all behind? I was just thinking about one my old friends who had a T shirt with the slogan, 'He who dies with the most toys wins' emblazoned on the front. Sadly, I really think he believed it.

Some of you may remember the song by the Byrds - Turn! Turn! Turn! From the mid 1960's. The lyrics are taken almost verbatim from the book of Ecclesiastes; chapter 3 (part of the Bible's wisdom literature). Chapter one opens abruptly with the words **"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."**

The title *Ecclesiastes* means "Gatherer", but is traditionally translated as "Teacher" or "Preacher" the pseudonym used by the author of the book.

The book dates from c. 450–180 BCE and is a musing by King Solomon as he relates his experiences and draws lessons from them, often self-critical. The author, introducing himself as "son of David, king in Jerusalem" discusses the meaning of life and the best way to live. He proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently *hevel*, meaning "vain" or "futile", ("a chasing after the wind"), as both wise and foolish end in death.

There are many reasons why I like this particular book. Firstly, it's only ten pages long! Secondly, although written over 2,200 years ago its bang up to date and finally Solomon's reflections on life are absolutely true.

As a person, apart from Jesus he was the wisest man on the planet. Additionally, he writes his reflections on life when he is an old man. It's a cracking autobiography. Basically, he's done it all in an attempt to find meaning i.e. devoting oneself to study to explore wisdom and folly, chasing pleasures, undertaking great projects, working hard, gathering wealth and possessions, career advancement. He considers the fate of men and animals. He reflects on those who are oppressed, those who are lonely, those who are youthful and those who are old etc. All these things and situations in life he realises are utterly meaningless. There is a time for everything but at the end of the day we leave it all behind whether it be a lifetime of skill and knowledge or a vast array of possessions and money in the bank.

Many have tried to find the meaning of life but humanly speaking it is an impossible task as only God knows. As Solomon says - **I have seen the burden God has laid on men. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end (Ecc 3:10-11).**

Solomon clearly endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life. In light of this senselessness, one should do good and enjoy the simple pleasures of daily life, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from the hand of God. The book concludes with the injunction: **Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecc 12:13-14)**

If you have a spare half hour this Autumn how about reading Ecclesiastes for yourself? Please feel free to email any feedback or thoughts.

May God's blessing be on everyone in the parish - *Revd Chris Lawrence*



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Waldron Country Market at Holy Cross Priory, (Possingworth) (on the B2102 between Cross in Hand and Blackboys, near the Tunbridge Wells turn)

Thursday 12th October, and Thursday 9th November.

For more information contact Roy Wilkinson 01435 812931

We do always appreciate support from the local community and if you feel you can spare any time to come and hear readers or help with any activity please do contact the school offices (Framfield 01825 890258; Blackboys 01825 890423).

As we continue to work towards the Federation vision: *Be the Best You Can Be: Life in all its Fullness (John 10.10)* we look forward to an exciting school year ahead.

Best wishes from Graham Sullivan and Jacqueline Davies, Acting Headteachers

At Framfield we do have a vacancy for a midday meals supervisor, for just one or two hours each week. If you are interested in knowing more again please do contact the school office.

Framfield and Blackboys Wives Group

Jumble Sale 14th October 2pm. Tombola, Cakes, Bric-a-brac.

Please leave jumble at the Framfield Memorial Hall in the morning. Our charity this year is Hospice in the Weald.

If you have any queries phone Val Peaty on 890677.

In September, we are having a crochet lesson. This is a skill which passed some of us by and is growing in popularity.

In October, we have a talk by a carer which may prove useful in the future and in November a member of Lewes Castle Rotary Club will be telling us of their work helping people in Rwanda set up their own business.

Please support our Jumble Sale and have a de-clutter. Thank you.

Diary of Church Services

OCTOBER 2017

- 01 Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity**
8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
11.00 am Harvest Festival Family Praise Service
Followed by Harvest Lunch in the Church Hall
- 08 Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**
10.00 am Family Service
6.30 pm Evening Holy Communion (CW)
(with prayer for healing)
- 15 Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity**
8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)
4.00 pm Messy Church
- 22 Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity**
10.00 am Morning Praise
6.30 pm Evening Communion (CW)
- 29 Last Sunday after Trinity**
10.00 am Morning Praise
No Evening Service

NOVEMBER 2017

- 05 Fourth Sunday before Advent**
8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 am Family Service
- 12 Third Sunday before Advent – Remembrance Sunday**
10.00 am Service of Remembrance
6.30 pm Evening Holy Communion (CW)
(with prayer for healing)

- 19 Second Sunday before Advent**
 8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)
 10.00 am Parish Holy Communion (CW)
 4.00 pm 'Messy Church' for all the family
- 26 Sunday next before Advent**
 10.00 am Morning Praise
 6.30 pm Evening Holy Communion (CW)

BCP: Book of Common Prayer. CW: Common Worship

**COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE PLEASE
 BY 10th NOVEMBER 2017**

**TO
 ANN NEWTON – 01825 890182
framfieldpc@gmail.com**

**CHURCH NEWS ITEMS MAY ALSO BE SENT TO
 CHRIS LAWRENCE AT THE CHURCH OFFICE –
 01825 891090**

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR PARISH COUNCIL –

**FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
 Mrs Ann Newton (Parish Clerk)
 Telephone/fax: (01825) 890182.
 Email: framfieldpc@gmail.com**

**Postal Address: 'Highlands', Framfield Road, Blackboys,
 East Sussex TN22 5LR.**

Parish Council website: www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk

**Thomas a Becket Church of England Federation.
 Blackboys and Framfield Schools**

First of all may we express our thanks to the many of you who have supported both our schools at the summer events including our fayres and also at the horticultural show.

The end of term was very busy, notably with special occasions to mark the end of an era for Mrs Jonquil King as our Executive Headteacher. All the children and governors, both current and from the past, were involved in a memorable service at St Thomas a Becket church. Rev Chris Lawrence led the service and explained about our journey in life. We were fortunate to be featured on the Uckfield News website (uckfieldnews.com/two-schools-join-forces-to-say-farewell-to-executive-headteacher/ink). Both schools held celebration tea parties in which all the children and parents enjoyed special cakes designed to mark the occasion. Also moving on from our schools were Miss Jessica Stevens and Miss Lauren Maidman, both classteachers, and Teaching Assistant Mr Gavin Toms.

We now start a new school year, welcoming new members of staff; Miss Emma Cross at Blackboys, who will be teaching in the year 5/6 class, and Miss Fiona Barnes at Framfield in Puffins year 3/ 4 class. We wish them every success at the beginning of their teaching careers. We are also excited to welcome new children and families to our schools. We are a very inclusive learning community and we know that they will settle in quickly and get a lot from their time with us.

This term we will all be starting with a focus on our Christian value of Courage. We will be working on our traditional 'Marvellous Magical Me' topic before preparing for Harvest and our exciting new class topics. The eldest children from both schools have their special residential weeks at the start of term. Blackboys will be going to PGL Windmill Hill and Framfield will be having their residential at Bowles Educational Centre.



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7:30pm



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John Wilmot 01825 830333 john.wilmot11@btinternet.com

Sally Jackson 01825 732091 sally.jackson@bhdchurches.org.uk

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Charity number 282334

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Thank you.

John Wilmot

Chairman of THE FRIENDS OF ST.MARGARET CHURCH

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Sunday 15th October
Sunday 19th November

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STARTS @ 4 PM

- 8 -



Terry Everitt, Chair, Framfield and Blackboys Summer Show Committee

FRAMFIELD AND BLACKBOYS MONDAY CLUB

- November 6th Winter Outing to Nottcutts to see the Christmas display and have tea and cake at Ditchling. Leave Uckfield 1.30 pm
- November 20th Entertainment from the UCKFIELD SINGERS. Framfield Memorial Hall 2.30 pm

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Throughout the afternoon stalls provided a variety of things to occupy old and young alike along with the fairground rides and inflatables from Wayne Winter's collection. The usual stunning array of produce from the residents of the parish (and a few from further afield) was displayed in the large marquee and Memorial Hall. With entries from young, new and experienced participants, the competition was of course reserved in the way expected of a traditional village show. However, the standard was high and trophies awarded as listed below. So a big thank you to all those who enter this centrepiece of the traditional aspect of the Summer Show. A lucky few took home armfuls of the auctioned exhibits that top up the money raised by the Show.

Our visitors remarked about the way the show was "such a delightful and friendly afternoon with so much to do and see". Terry Everitt, Show Chairman "was delighted with the way the show has brought out the parish community for a fun day in ideal weather".

Once the produce auction had created its annual set of bargains of flowers and produce the marquee was cleared and set for the community evening event, which was this year set as a Family Barn Dance. A small yet enthusiastic crowd spent the evening promenading and reeling the evening away.



Thanks have to go to the wide range of people involved in putting the show together and making it happen on a day with perfect weather. See you on the 11th August in 2018.

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Our committee has now finished this year's season of tea and cake making at many NGS open garden venues. It has been very enjoyable and successful, with only a couple of days when the weather was too hot or too wet! Our grand total of money raised this year was a fabulous £7,000. Last week about 40 people attended our Ashdown Forest Walk. Keeping dry was a little bit of a challenge at times, but we all enjoyed the day and stayed dry for the important bit - our delicious lunch! The walk raised just over £600.

Macmillan Cancer Support's flagship fundraising event is World's Biggest Coffee Morning, to be held on or around Friday 29th September. The Uckfield committee is holding theirs at Pizza Express, Uckfield on Friday 29th and hope as many people as possible will attend. Many other local coffee mornings will be held in our local area to support this event. Donations will also be made linked to M&S Cafe all over the country.

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

Nature Notes

Continuing with the seasonal theme of change, as I write this we are heading for the autumn equinox when day-length equals night-length the world over. In the northern hemisphere we progress to shorter days, but south of the equator, it is the nights that get shorter – lucky them!

Meanwhile, the planet is experiencing equinox weather with high winds, heavy rain, floods, landslides and all sorts of turmoil. Oceanographers have measured the temperature of the oceans getting warmer. This leads to more evaporation of the seas and loading of water vapour in the atmosphere. This has the effect of energising the movement of air and results in the wind and rain extremes we have experienced. This has consequences for wildlife as well as humans. Migrating birds can get blown off course and end up in strange places. For example, I went for a walk along the Cuckmere Valley recently and saw an American Baird's sandpiper on the wrong side of the Atlantic, busily hunting small invertebrates along the waterline of a meander. There were also many winchats aggregating before venturing forth across the English Channel to France and on to Africa. I was also blessed to see two peregrine falcons and three ravens annoying each other in the sky. The ravens eventually flew off into Friston Forest.

The migration away from the northern breeding grounds is usually quite slow, taking up to three months in many cases. There is no real imperative, as the birds are simply following the tide of insect abundance as it also recedes south. Most northern insects will die during the autumn, either due to weather or to being eaten by the seasonal abundance of spiders. Also, most birds will be moulting and producing a new coat of feathers to see them through winter and help them with migration flights. Incidentally, the spring migration to the breeding grounds is much more rapid, taking as little as three weeks from Africa to England. If you now look carefully at the gulls, crows and pigeons flying over you in the autumn sky, you should see the gaps in the wing feathers caused by the sequential loss of flight feathers. Moulting is a well ordered process which varies according to species. Meanwhile, on the ground, many ducks lose the ability to fly properly as they can be too heavy when they lose some of their feathers. They also often go brown for camouflage, this is called going into eclipse.

Martyn Stenning

Out To Play On A Sunny Day

Saturday the 12th August arrives and the annual Framfield and Blackboys Summer Show entertains the visitors to the Framfield Memorial Recreation Ground and Village Hall in its usual wide-ranging fashion and in perfect weather to bring out the crowds. With the gates opening at 12.30pm, the fun began almost straight away and continued well into the evening. Overall the day raised in excess of £1000 which will be spent within the community in the future.



The Companion Dog Show was a hive of activity from the 12.30pm opening with classes for pedigree and non-pedigree alike. With 16 classes, there was something for every type of dog and owner. The best in show was King owned by Pat Milham in the pedigree section and Kaede owned by Laura Middleton in the Novelty classes. The Companion Dog Show raised £322 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The central arena saw a sequence of entertainments with music from the Uckfield Performance Ensemble, exercise participation from Emma Naylor Zumba, dancing from the Shalesbrook Morris Side and the long-awaited return of the Framfield Stagers who performed a stunt race involving (fake) pensioners to much amusement. The arena concluded with races for children and adults.

This was complemented by the Sussex Stompers and the refreshments that were nearby, both alcoholic and beverages more suited to the accompanying cake as well as ice cream and hot food. So, something to sustain the visitors palates all through the



afternoon so they could try to win the variety of competitions such as Trap the Rat, bowling, golf shots, door opening, hoopla and at the end of the afternoon the Summer Show Raffle was drawn.



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*And what does the Lord require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy and to walk
 humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

We continue to meet every Sunday morning in the Village Hall on Gun Road in Blackboys. We have changed our service times slightly though and now start at 10:45 am and end at 12.15 pm with tea, coffee and cake served beforehand. We also have three thriving children's groups catering for Pre-school children through to school year 11, they all go out to their separate groups after the first 20 minutes or so of the service. In addition, the secondary school aged children also have a fun programme of Sunday evening activities.

We have an All Age Service on the last Sunday of every month often followed by a lunch. Our next one will be a Harvest Service/lunch on September 24th. If you are thinking of joining us one Sunday these services are a great way of coming to meet the church family in a more relaxed informal way.

Over the weekend of the 29th September -1st October we will be joining with churches all over the world for The National Weekend of Prayer (www.national-prayer-weekend.com). Our building called The Space (next to The Grove Café on Brownings Farm) will be set aside for 48 hours of prayer with individuals and groups seeking to cover the time in non-stop prayer.

Talking of prayer as of September we will be meeting every Sunday evening (6.15 to 7.15 pm) in The Space to pray as well.

If you would like to come along one Sunday, or join in one of our events or would like to more about our church family then please feel free to ring or email me it would be great to hear from you.

Revd Guy Partridge
guy_newlifechurch@btinternet.com
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MEETING SCHEDULE 2017

On each date detailed below, generally three meetings will be held as follows (although the Planning Committee may be cancelled if not essential):

- Planning Committee - commencing at 6.30 pm
- Trust - commencing at 7 pm
- Parish Council - commencing at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday, 28 November (FF Trust)

Framfield Memorial Hall

Public welcome. For further details, please telephone the Parish Clerk,

Ann Newton, on

01825- 890182/framfieldpc@gmail.com

'Highlands', Blackboys TN22 5LR.

Agendas will be published on all noticeboards and the website - framfieldcouncil.org.uk



**Framfield and Blackboys
Summer Show 2017**



Thank You

Thank you so much to everyone who helped and supported at this year's show. We had another great event which would not have been possible without everyone's involvement.

Save the date: Saturday, 11 August, 2018

If anyone from the parish (or beyond!) can help next year we would really appreciate it.

Many thanks, *The Show Committee*

FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL – REPORT

Over the School summer holidays various refurbishment works were carried out in the Memorial Hall. A new heating system has been installed and the entire Hall redecorated including the changing rooms. Also the Hall has had a thorough deep clean. We only have the cupboards in the rear corridors to finish which will be completed shortly. The next task is to sort the external areas out, in particular the rear steps and tarmac.

Framfield Village Market (the last Saturday in the month) – please do come along and have a look at local craft wares and produce and have a cup of coffee. All proceeds go towards the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall.

The new sports pavilion on Blackboys recreation ground is now complete. This is a Parish asset in a similar way to the Village Hall and Memorial Hall, although it will only be available for sports activities and will not have a premises licence for music etc. If anyone has a sporting event that when they believe they could use the Pavilion please contact me in the first instance.

Recreation grounds, play areas etc. If anyone believes they have discovered a fault or problem with in particular one of the play areas, could they please contact me immediately. Although the areas are inspected on a weekly basis by one of our contractors, any additional notification is important to the Council.

The Parish Council are gradually taking over by the way of licenses several of the guideposts in the Parish. This means we can repair/replace them and include them on our insurance. They were previously owned by ESCC. During this financial year we hope to increase the 'stock' to up to ten which is a good start. If anyone notices any damage to any posts please let me know.

All agendas are put on the village noticeboards and website. The full minutes of all meetings are also on the website.

Ann Newton (Parish Clerk): 01825 890182.
Email: framfieldpc@gmail.com.
Postal Address: 'Highlands', Blackboys TN22 5LR.

Website: www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk.

NEWS FROM YOUR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

A few items which might be of interest:

Wealden District Council's (WDC's) current Dog Control Order, The Fouling of Land by Dogs Order 2013, is coming to an end shortly. The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 has provided the Council with powers to replace the 2013 order with a Public Spaces Protection Order. The Council are therefore proposing to make a Public Spaces Protection Order covering the whole of Wealden.

In March 2017 a report on options for On-Street Car Parking Enforcement was produced for the WDC Cabinet following publicly acknowledged changes to the priorities of Sussex Police, and advice from an external Consultant. The resulting recommendation was to work with ESCC to enable the introduction and management of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in a way acceptable to WDC.

As previously reported, WDC is building the first crematorium in the District. It will cater for the final wishes of 1,200 local people each year who choose to be cremated. The modern, multi-faith facility will be located on a 12.7 ha site, south of Horam, along on the A267. It will include a Chapel to seat over 120 mourners, a Flower Court and a landscaped Garden of Remembrance. Provisions will include a car parking for 150 vehicles and a separate waiting area. Our aim is to allow one hour for each service. Full details and updates are on the WDC website – www.wealden.gov.uk.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me and WDC (through the formal channels) if you have any missed bins or other bin problems.

If anyone wants to contact me, please don't hesitate to get in touch. My details are below.

Contact details – Ann Newton, 'Highlands', Blackboys, TN22 5LR.
Telephone - 01825 890103.
Email – anewton1965@gmail.com



RACE NIGHT

HARE & HOUNDS - FRAMFIELD

Run in conjunction with Framfield & Blackboys WI
 Friday, October 6th 2017 - First Race 7.30
 £10 Including Seat & Supper
Proceeds in aid of Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance
 Get your tickets at the Hare & Hounds or telephone
 01825



Framfield & Blackboys WI

JULY OUTING

We had a private tour of Penshurst Place as our 2017 July outing. It was a lovely sunny day and we all enjoyed exploring the beautiful gardens before our exclusive guided tour of the house.

AUGUST MEETING

We went for a meal at the Hare & Hounds for our August meeting. The Food was delicious, the service excellent and the company as ever, was superb! Perhaps we should have all our meetings there.

FRAMFIELD SHOW 2017

The weather was kind and we all had a good day at the 2017 Framfield Show. Our WI Wine Challenge was a great success. There were a number of wine bottles, some of which were still full of wine while most of them were filled with coloured water. For the payment of £1, if you could pick out a real bottle of wine, it was yours to keep. We also had a 'Guess the Weight of the Cake' competition which was very popular.

KENSINGTON PALACE - DIANA: HER FASHION STORY

On Friday, September 8th we sent to Kensington Palace to see the major new exhibition of Diana, Princess of Wales wonderful collection of clothes, tracing the evolution of her style from her early years in public life to the elegance and glamour of her later style. The exhibition included the iconic blue velvet gown which Diana wore to a ball at the White House when she danced with John Travolta.

COMING UP NEXT

CANTERBURY SHOPPING & CHRISTMAS MARKET 29 NOVEMBER
£38 P/H Incl full carvery plus dessert at The Black Horse at Pembury

Like to find out more about our WI? Come along to one of our meetings (no obligation to join) or contact our President, Philomena on 01825 890216.

Follow us on Facebook or visit www.framfield & blackboys wi

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FRAMFIELD VILLAGE MARKET 2017

Memorial Hall, Framfield

The market opens from 10 am to 12 noon.

28 October
25 November
16 December

Please contact Ann Newton with any queries – 01825 890182 or email framfieldpc@gmail.com



Our Family Friendly Service is a lively short happy service, where the children are actively involved.

**Sunday 8th October at 10.00 am
Sunday 5th November at 10.00 am**



Blackboys Pre-School
The Village Hall, Gun Road
Blackboys, East Sussex TN22 5JL
Tel: 01825 891113
email: enquiries@blackboyspreschool.org
Twitter: @BlackboysPreSch
www.blackboyspreschool.org.uk

We are a non-profit making pre-school registered with Ofsted.

Open Monday to Friday from 7.45am to 6pm, we welcome children between 2 to 5 years old in the preschool and those between 2 to 11 years old in our Breakfast, After School and Holiday Clubs.

Our staff are trained in Montessori and Forest School principles and we have an allotment located just next door to the pre-school, where our chickens are kept. We also use this space for our forest school activities.

Welcome to all our new children, parents, grandparents and carers! We're looking forward to an exciting term!

The Pre-school is hosting a Macmillan Coffee Morning on 6th October (10am-12pm) in the Village Hall – everyone's invited to join us to help raise money for this great charity. It's also a chance to meet the Pre-School committee and find out more about the team that help run the Pre-School.

Our next Holiday Club is running in the October half term – 23rd-27th October. Sessions from 7.45am-6pm, £5.25 per hour, minimum 2 hours per booked session. In addition to our usual forest school/arts and crafts/story time activities we'll also be: making Halloween paper plate crafts, pumpkin decorating, making pumpkin stress balls, cooking S'mores on the fire and lots more.

Our After School Club runs from 3.30pm to 6pm during term time, with a pick-up service available from local primary schools.

For more details, or to organise a visit, please contact us:
Call Jenny on: 01825 891113 / 01825 749820
Or email us: enquiries@blackboyspreschool.org.uk

LIVING WITH FUR AND FEATHER

BONFIRES

I am writing this on a very gloomy wet August day and feel autumn is already here. All through the summer I have been enjoying the wild life, especially studying their behaviour. There are many programmes on television showing birds being caught so they can be identified. These programmes usually show the presenter cooing over a cute fluffy fledging who I am sure would rather be left alone. This summer I have found the woodpeckers very interesting. There were two families that I watched feeding their young. The eldest offspring quickly learnt where the nut feeder was and would hang on to the post supporting the porch before reaching over to the feeder and taking a nut. Frustratingly for him it often swayed out of reach. Up until now all of the woodpeckers have used a convenient hole in the far side of the post to hold the nut while they eat it. This youngster decided to make a new hole in the side in the post that was nearer the kitchen window. It has been very confident and bold and is quite happy for us to watch his antics from the kitchen. He still has not mastered the knack of holding on to the porch with one foot while holding the nut feeder still with the other one, like all the others. The younger woodpecker has had a totally different temperament, being very shy and easily frightened away. Strangely this one cleverly swings underneath the feeder then eats the nut in the original hole on the far side of the post. We are nervously wondering how much longer the porch will last with its old posts full of holes! It is so nice being able to recognise different birds.

We keep binoculars on the window sill in the kitchen ready to watch any wild life further away. The other day I spotted a beautiful fox just sitting and watching the ground carefully. Suddenly it pounced, I presume on an unsuspecting mouse. I was working in the wood recently, with Chloe helping as usual. Being a Newfoundland she is not particularly interested in wild life but she sniffed the air and then stared out across the adjoining field. I could not see anything of interest. However a bit further on I found a young dead rabbit, still warm. I imagine I had startled a fox who had then dropped his meal and run off. I threw it further away and a day or so later it had gone, so hopefully the fox found its rabbit.

Soon it will be bonfire season when people start to make huge piles of burnable material ready for lighting on the big day. There are always warnings about hedgehogs in these piles but not usually about other wildlife. We always have loads of stuff for bonfires, whatever the season. We used to make piles in our field ready for the next burning session. These piles were placed in a wide circle round the bonfire area. This way the material was taken from the heaps and burnt on the clear area in the middle. I have always found this very stressful as small creatures are often hidden in these heaps. One day it was a family of mice, another time a frog would need rescuing. Even spiders and other creepy crawlies were carefully removed before the stuff was thrown onto the fire. If the weather was not suitable for bonfires the debris would be there for some time. The field could not be cut in that area and all the stuff would gradually tangle up in the long grass.

Some time ago I thought of a better place to keep the bonfire material. This was under a group of holly trees on the edge of our wood. Nothing grew under there so any garden weeds or rampant plants would not seed there. I found one big disadvantage was I had to push the wheel barrow uphill instead of downhill to the field that made me puff. I optimistically thought everything would keep dry under the dense canopy of holly. During the summer it was always too hot, too windy or too wet so it was only a while ago that conditions were right for a fire. Load after load was brought down to the field in the trailer. Disappointingly the stuff was damp and reluctant to burn. We were part way through this task and the fire was going well, then my husband spotted a movement in the trailer. There was a toad trying to hide under the load. I managed to extract it and carefully placed it out of the danger zone. I then spent ages looking through all the piles still waiting to be burnt. It took ages. I then went up to the holly trees and looked at the remaining heaps. Another toad had made a home there. I have decided to abandon the holly tree area and am leaving it to the wild life to enjoy.

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