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Anrish Aewsletter



Framfield, Blackboys and Palehouse Common

DECEMBER 2017 / JANUARY 2018

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:

At rest:

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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.

Christmas – Can you see yourself in the story?

Have you ever been to the cinema but arrived late? The film started 30minutes earlier and now it's really difficult to pick up the threads of the plot because you missed the beginning.

The whole meaning of Christmas can be just like the late cinema experience.

The first Christmas is a point in history that has relevance to every human being but if you are not aware of the beginning of the story then Christmas makes little sense.

Naturally the Christmas story centres on Jesus but do we just see a special baby born to excited parents? The appearance of angels, kings, the giving of gifts and the down-to-earth stable where Jesus was born certainly serve to add drama to the story but is that where it ends? Do we simply emulate the story and give gifts to one another because that was the pattern handed down from the first Christmas?

If we are to adequately answer these questions then we need to dig a little deeper. Firstly, there is the problem of using the word 'story'. I've had my suspicions for a long time but just to check them out I asked my daughters what came into their minds when some mentions a 'story'. They all said 'something made up', fiction, like a Harry Potter novel. The Christmas story is a great story, the greatest story ever told, but it is not a work of fiction it is in essence a historical account of God in the guise of a baby entering human history. I mention this simply because if you think the Christmas story is a work of fiction then you will never see it for what it truly is or take it seriously.

Secondly, do we fully appreciate how special Jesus is? The simple view is a child born in a stable to a couple called Mary and Joseph. True enough but saying that Jesus was a special baby if a formidable understatement! This is how Jesus is described in the beginning of John's gospel.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. So much for Jesus just being a baby!

Finally, can you see yourself in the story? Since the time sin entered the world through Adam and Eve every human being has been tainted by their sinfulness. As human beings descend from one another we naturally inherit the corruption of our ancestors. As we are made in the image of God, God has to demonstrate to us what it is to be truly human without the affliction of sin that has eroded our true humanity. Jesus arrives on earth as a baby and grows up into an adult to show us by his life and actions what it is to be fully human. It is only when we look to Him do we realise how far we have missed the mark. The problem with our inherited sin is that it has separated us from God and Jesus' intervention in human history is fundamentally to bring us back into a right relationship thus ensuring our eternal future and heavenly destiny. It is often misquoted when people say we are all God's children. We may be made in the image of God but we become God's children through adoption. The big question is do we truly want to become God's children?

In the verses above there a couple of problems that are just as relevant today – recognition and belief. Through the baby Jesus can you see and recognise your Saviour and Redeemer? Many of the people in Jesus' time didn't see Him for who he truly was and as such rejected Him. Yet to those who had the spiritual eyes to see His true identity and believe in Him He gave them the right to become children of God. Jesus is God's gift to us but as with all gifts we can accept or reject the gift – the choice is ours.

May God's blessing be on everyone in the parish this Christmas and in the New Year. *Revd Chris Lawrence*



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We will soon be approaching Advent and all the Christmas celebrations. We hope you may be able to join us at our fayres: Blackboys School have theirs on Saturday 25th November from 12-2 and Framfields' is on Saturday December 2nd from 12-2.

Both schools are participating in the Uckfield late night shopping event singing on the stage. Blackboys are performing at 5:10pm and Framfield at 5.50.

Nativity plays will be performed by our KS1 children and KS2 will have the opportunity to sing a range of carols in our lovely parish church, thanks to Rev Chris's permission.

Please can we take this opportunity to wish everyone in our community the very best wishes for the festive season.

Best wishes from Graham Sullivan and Jacqueline Davies, Acting Headteachers

Framfield and Blackboys Wives Group

Thank you to all of you who supported our Jumble Sale. We made over £250.00 which we will give to the Hospice when a representative comes to speak to us at our meeting in February.

At the moment we are planning our programme for next year and hope to have a wide variety of speakers and activities. All will be revealed at our AGM in January.

If you would like to join us phone me, Val Peaty, on 890677

We would like to wish you all a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Diary of Church Services

DECEMBER 2017

03 Advent Sunday

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Parish Communion (CW) with Prayer for Healing

10 Second Sunday in Advent

10.00 am Family Service

6.30 pm Evening Holy Communion (CW)

17 Third Sunday in Advent

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Parish Communion (CW)

No Messy Church this month

6.30 pm Lessons and Carols by Candlelight

24 Christmas Eve Fourth Sunday in Advent

10.00am Morning Praise

4.30 pm Crib / Christingle Service

11.30 pm Midnight Holy Communion (CW)

25 Christmas Day

10.00 am Family Festival Service

31 First Sunday of Christmas

10.00 am Morning Praise
No Evening Service

JANUARY 2018

07 First Sunday of Epiphany

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Parish Holy Communion (CW)

14 Second Sunday of Epiphany

10.00 am Family Service

6.30 pm Evening Holy Communion (CW)

(with prayer for healing)

21 Third Sunday of Epiphany

8.30 am Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00 am Parish Holy Communion (CW)4.00 pm 'Messy Church' for all the family

28 Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

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 JANUARY 2018 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

We hope you are all enjoying the beautiful Autumn weather. This has been as an opportunity for many of the children to experience learning outside the classroom. It is delightful to see on a regular basis phonics and maths teaching taking place outside as well as children enjoying their Forest School sessions with Mrs Lydia Godfrey, our Forest School leader.

The children in Class 1 and Peacocks are enjoying finding out about 'People who help us' as well as Superheroes. They are excited about their joint trip to Raystede this week. Our youngest pupils are making great progress and it has been a delight to see their reading and writing developing so quickly.

Class 2 and Kingfishers have been learning about the Victorians and specifically Victorians who made a big contribution to their society. Research on Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole has really inspired the children they all enjoyed a joint trip to Michelham Priory to learn more about living in that era.

In class 3 and Puffins there has been great enthusiasm for their cross curricular topic 'The Romans' and they are going to Fishbourne Roman Palace next week. Both classes have produced stunning mosaics and are excited about comparing and contrasting their versions with the real thing!

The year 5 and 6 children in both schools have had a different learning experience with a focus on the ancient Maya civilisation. They were very fortunate to have an excellent talk by the only UK Maya geologist expert Dr Diana Davies. All the children had the chance to hear about her work, handle real artefacts as well as ask many questions to support their own research.



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Framfield & Blackboys WI



Our Race Night in aid of Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance on Friday, 6th October, raised £821 in total. Everyone who attended contributed most generously, particularly the owner of the winning horse in the last race who donated his £120 prize money. Other people also donated their winnings. There was a raffle with lots of great prizes donated by Annie & Phil of the Hare & Hounds, WI members and local businesses. The food was delicious, and Annie and Phil and all the staff ensured that we had an enjoyable evening.

On 1st November members and friends of the WI returned to the Hare & Hounds to present a cheque for £821 to Dave Winsor of the Air Ambulance. Attending the presentation were Phil Saunders, Mine Host Hare & Hounds, Dave Winsor, Air Ambulance, Philomena Whittle, Gill Roberts, Sheila Wilkins, Joyce West, Mary Short, Pat Cottingham, Karen Hillman, Arthur Roberts and Brian Short.



Photo: Ron Hill Photographic.

If you would like to join us, please contact Philomena on 01825 890216. Follow us on Facebook or Google Framfield & Blackboys WI

FRAMFIELD AND BLACKBOYS MONDAY CLUB

December 4th CHRISTMAS PARTY –

Framfield Memorial Hall 2.30 pm

Entertainment from Framfield CE Primary School

Also Music from the Alpaco Band.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL, from all at Monday Club

January 22nd 2018 AGM - New Programme Subscriptions (£15) - 2.30 pm Framfield Memorial Hall.

Happy 2018 to you all from Framfield and Blackboys Monday Club

Any further information contact Sandy Rogers, 01825 840648 - sandyrogers77@qmail.com

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

Thursday 14th December, and Thursday 11th January. For more information contact Roy Wilkinson 01435 812931

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Blackboys Cricket Club

With our kits now packed away and the summer drifting off to become a memory, members of the Blackboys Cricket Club will have happy recollections of the season gone. Not only did have use of a new parish sports pavilion we dominated Division 6 of the East Sussex Cricket League to win our first trophy for 10 years. It wasn't quite a poetical collection full of matches of ten to make and the match to win as the records of this year will attest we won most of our games with plenty to spare. But I am sure the romantics will recall a bumping pitch and a blinding light as we knocked off the runs to win some of our games. We only lost one league match to a strong Mayfield team, winning the rest bar a first game draw away to Robertsbridge. We duly collected our trophy and medals at the league presentation dinner at the Cumberland Hotel, Eastbourne, in November. So are we are getting promoted and playing in a higher division? Yes and no. Cricket on the green fields of Sussex is changing. All the leagues are being amalgamated into one league, the Sussex Cricket League. So whilst we would have been promoted to Division 5 of the East Sussex Cricket League, due the vast number of teams now under the same banner we will be actually be in Division 9 of the Sussex Cricket League which does not guite sound so grand. However, cricket is cricket and play up and we will play the game whatever league division we fall under.

As we start to think towards 2018 with indoor practice starting in the spring, perhaps you would like to become involved with friendly club and maybe help us on to more success. Probably a pint after the match might help sell the ticket more. We are always on the lookout for new players and please do not hesitate to contact us. Please contact Colin Eade, secretary, at colin.eade@gmail.com or 07599 655861.



In order to support Macmillan Cancer Support's fundraising initiative, The World's Biggest Coffee Morning, our committee arranged several events over the last month. Pizza Express allowed us to host our main coffee morning in their restaurant, as they have done for many years, and for which we are so grateful. Another event was held in East Hoathly outside the Post Office stores and a third at Buxted Medical Centre, where people receiving flu jabs were encouraged to enjoy our cakes! All these were very well supported and we raised about £12.500.

At the end of November, the Horizon Centre in Brighton is to hold its official opening. This is the new cancer unit which is part of Brighton Hospital and has now been in operation for one year and many people have appreciated the facilities available. Our committee has been supporting this venture for the past three to four years and are proud to have been part of it, having raised £37,500 in one year alone. If anyone who is receiving treatment in Brighton and has not visited the centre, then please go along to see what is on offer and spread the word!

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

I am due to give a talk about blue tits in Norway later this month (October), so I thought I would rehearse some of it here.

DNA studies have revealed that the ancestors of blue tits originated in China about 7 million years ago. They dispersed across central Asia to Europe and eventually North Africa. Since then, a series of ice ages and climate changes caused these ancestral blue tits to go extinct, leaving the North African population isolated. Here their plumage probably attained its colourful blue, yellow, green, black and white tones. That is, all the colours that can be seen from space when looking at our planet. African birds tend to be colourful, because the brightness of plumage is an honest signal of health and freedom from parasites. Parasite abundance increases with proximity to the equator. About 3 million years ago, these African blue tits colonised the Canary Islands, forming new isolated populations on 7 of the islands, there are now 4 recognised species of blue tit on the archipelago, the Tenerife blue tit, the Fuerteventura blue tit, the Palma blue tit and the Hierro blue tit.

Meanwhile, about 5.33 million years ago, the Mediterranean Sea formed when a sun-parched salty crater separating Europe from Africa filled with water from the Atlantic Ocean via the Strait of Gibraltar. This historic event is called the Messinian salinity crisis and the Zanclean flood. After this, it became possible for the isolated blue tits of North Africa to recolonise Europe. They spread north, dispersing through Spain, France, central and eastern Europe, eventually reaching Britain where they again became semi-isolated forming our own subspecies of blue tit (Cyanistes caeruleus obscurus). Blue tits are still colonising Finland right now, and are being found further north each year. A few are now even breeding north of the Arctic Circle.

As blue tits moved north and particularly east, they became paler, eventually losing much of the blue and yellow of their western cousins. Another species was formed; this is called the azure tit (Cyanistes cyanus). Then as azure tits spread back into the warmer regions of Central Asia, they began to re-acquire their yellow hues on their chest, and yet another species was formed north of India and parts of China. This species is known as the yellow-breasted tit (Cyanistes flavipectus).



Building through Blessing in Blackboys and Beyond

Please find below details of our Christmas Services this year. If you are not familiar with New Life we are a young church established 5 years ago, attracting a growing number of people of all ages including families with younger children. We are part of the Baptist Union of Great Britain a fellowship of 2000 churches spread throughout the UK with roots going back to the 17th Century.

We meet each Sunday in the Blackboys Village Hall (TN22 5JY) and our gatherings our relaxed, informal and welcoming. During the week our base is a building called The Space (TN22 5HG), a converted cowshed, which can be found next to The Grove Café on Browning's Farm, Blackboys.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 10th December 11.00 am All Age Christingle Service at the Village Hall Blackboys . A fun, interactive service and all the ingredients for making your very own Christingle will be provided. Refreshments will be provided from 10:30am .

Sunday 17th December 4.30pm Christmas Carol Celebration at the Croxted Farm Hotel Eastbourne Rd, Halland BN8 6PT. Traditional Carols with nativity followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Sunday 24th December 6.15pm A quiet reflective service by Candlelight in The Space.

Sunday 25th December 10:30 am Christmas Day All Age Service at the Village Hall.

All of the above services will last for approximately 1 hour. For further information please contact Revd Guy Partridge on 01825 891133 or email: guy newlifechurch@btinternet.com

UCKFIELD SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Uckfield Singers will be performing a Christmas Concert with the Buxted Symphony Orchestra on Saturday 9th December 2017, at 7:30 pm in the Uckfield Civic Centre.

Tickets are £10 each, (under 16s £8) available from 13th November at Gale & Woolgar Jewellers, High St, Uckfield.

Proceeds from the raffle will be supporting the East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service.

For more information about the choir, please visit our website at http://www.uckfieldsingers.co.uk

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Please collect all plastic milk bottle tops. They can be handed in at the following locations/venues: Framfield & Blackboys Monday Club Framfield Market Green Acres, Halland Park Farm Grange Evangelical Church, Uckfield

They all go to The Hurstwood Park Neurosciences League of Friends, Haywards Heath.

> FRAMFIELD VILLAGE MARKET Memorial Hall, Framfield The market opens from 10 am to 12 noon.

Last market this year on 16 December



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Framfield Parish Council MEETING SCHEDULE 2018

On each date detailed below, generally two meetings will be held plus an informal Trust update.

(Planning Committee may be cancelled if not essential):

- Planning Committee commencement time will vary (6/6.30 pm)
- Trust update commencing at 7 pm
- Parish Council commencing at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 30 January (PC meeting) – Village Hall, Blackboys

Tuesday, 27 March (PC meeting) – Memorial Hall, Framfield

Tuesday, 29 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting, and Annual Parish Meeting [8 pm]) – Village Hall, Blackboys

Tuesday, 26 June (PC meeting) – Memorial Hall, Framfield

Tuesday, 31 July (AGM of the Trusts) - Village Hall, Blackboys

25 September (PC meeting) – Memorial Hall, Framfield

27 November (PC meeting) – Village Hall, Blackboys

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 PARISH COUNCIL - REPORT

Framfield Village Market (usually 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 Memorial Hall. The last market of the year is on 16 December 2017, doors open at 10 am. Dates for next year are detailed below.

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.

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

The Parish Council wishes everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

Ann Newton (Parish Clerk): 01825 890182.

Email: framfieldpc@gmail.com.

Postal Address: 'Highlands', Blackboys TN22 5LR.

Website: www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk.

FRAMFIELD VILLAGE MARKET Dates for 2018 Memorial Hall, Framfield The market opens from 10 am to 12 noon.

27 January

24 February

24 March

28 April

19 May

30 June

28 July

August – no market.

29 September

27 October

24 November

15 December

Protecting the protectors

One of the issues that comes up frequently at surgeries across Wealden, in Uckfield, Mayfield, Hailsham, Crowborough and Wadhurst, is the protection of the people who protect you and me, ensuring that we live in safe, free communities.

After spending time with our police, fire and hospital staff, I have seen firsthand how assaults and attacks on emergency service workers affect them and their families. Aggression towards the people who give up so much to protect us is completely unacceptable, so I was pleased to be able to speak in and support a recent debate in the House of Commons on the 'Protect the Protectors' Private Members Bill.

This bill doubles the jail term for people convicted of assaulting emergency workers on duty, and creates the power to take blood samples, with consent, from people who have spat at or bitten emergency workers. This bill will also be the first major piece of legislation which I will be taking through Parliament in my role as a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Home Office.

Over the next few months, I will be ensuring that these crucial changes to legislation make it onto the statue books, sending a clear message that attacks on our emergency workers will not be tolerated, and those who are violent towards them will feel the full force of the law.

Without the courage and commitment shown by our fire officers, police officers, paramedics or any other emergency services, this time of year would never be such an enjoyable time for the rest of us. At one point or another we are all likely to experience a situation in which we are forced to rely on an emergency service worker. It is only right that we show them the support and solidarity they deserve.

NEWS FROM YOUR WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

A few items which might be of interest:

Cabinet has discussed specifications for the new Joint Waste Contract which will go out to tender in the New Year. This will ensure that a new service is ready for June 2019 when the current contract with Kier ends. The viability of a separate food waste collection has been discussed and it was felt that the likely take-up of such a service would not justify the cost. The option of taking the service back 'in house' has also been ruled out because continuing to outsource provides the best value for tax payers. It is likely that with the new service all recyclables, including glass, will be collected in just one wheelie bin and the option for the charging of garden waste collections is also under consideration.

The final consultation for The Boundary Commission for England's proposals to change the number of Parliamentary constituencies is now open until 11 December 2017. It is part of the process to reduce the number of constituencies from 650 to 600 while keeping the number of electors roughly the same. The proposals will see the end of the Parliamentary constituency of Wealden to be replaced by a new constituency of Crowborough and Tunbridge Wells (which will include the Parish of Framfield) whilst Uckfield and Hailsham will join the Lewes Constituency along with Polegate. The proposals can be viewed on https://www.bce2018.org.uk/node/6488. The final report will be published in September 2018.

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

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 – aenewton1965@gmail.com



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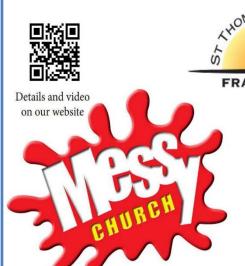






Our Family Friendly Service is a lively short happy service, where the children are actively involved.

Sunday 10th December at 10.00 am Sunday 14th January at 10.00 am





FRAMFIELD

No Messy Church in December Next one 21st January

Messy craft activities, followed by a short bible story, a song & then the delicious afternoon tea!

STARTS @ 4 PM



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.

We had a great turnout for our Macmillan Coffee Morning on 6th October (10am-12pm) where we raised over £165.00

This term it's our Christmas Show on the 8th December followed by a Christmas lunch and a special visit from Father Christmas. We will also have our raffle draw – tickets are now available £1 each or 5 for £4 from the pre-school. Prizes include: Fun abounds voucher, Staverton voucher, 3 bottles of prosecco, Little kickers voucher, Voucher for Blackboys Pub, Horam manor farm voucher, Heathfield Deli voucher, Hamper, and more.......

Our After School Club runs from 3.30pm to 6pm during term time, with a pickup 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: enquiries@blackboyspreschool.org.uk

LIVING WITH FUR AND FEATHER

CHLOE'S OPERATION.

I am writing this in early November before the deadline, the sun streaming through the window. Earlier this morning I took Chloe for a gentle wander round our little fields, my boots brushing through the frosty grass as I glanced up at the trees in their wonderful Autumn colours. I looked down at Chloe and thought how lucky I was to still have her.

Just over a week ago she became very III with a womb infection. On examination the vet said she needed an operation immediately and added it was very risky as she was very big and nearly eight years old which is quite old for a Newfoundland. I drove home without her, feeling terrible. The hours seemed to drag past as I waited to hear from the vet. At last I had the call saying she had had the operation. They had found a huge infection so thank heaven I had taken her to the vet as soon as I saw the signs. She was kept in overnight and we collected her the next day. I was warned that the first twenty four hours were critical. All the staff were wonderful and said how sweet Chloe was. That cheered me up. She was very sleepy at first and I slept downstairs to make sure she was all right.

The next problem was getting her to take the antibiotic pills. I have never had to force a dog to swallow a pill but always managed to hide it in a tasty treat. Either it was the smell, or the anaesthetic made her feel sick. I tried everything, even opening her mouth and popping it in; disgusted she spat it out and walked off in a huff. I felt terrible. The problem was exacerbated by the big pills being very hard to break into smaller pieces. After several attempts and a pile of pink crumbs we eventually had several small pieces. I then remembered I had saved some salmon skin for her, wrapped up in these she eagerly swallowed her medication. Unfortunately this had to be repeated twice a day for some time. By now she had eaten the salmon skin and we were back to square one she would not take the wretched pills. I tried corn beef, lamb and cheese. Frustratingly nothing worked. I then found a tin of red salmon in the pantry. Warmed and squashed up with a bit of pill hidden inside she enthusiastically gulped it down. Was it the strong fishy smell which made the medication more

palatable? She has now eaten nearly all of the tin I was hoping to enjoy so I will have to go and buy her some more.

After all the trauma of the infection and operation I was very surprised a couple of days later when she wanted to help me again, fetching my boots, finding my socks and even noticed I had dropped a glove as we went outside.

Soon it will be Christmas which made me think about anyone having a sick pet over the festive period. Luckily I have been able to give Chloe my full attention. With a house full of over excited children, guests staying, chaotic meal time's etcetera this would be very difficult. If you are unlucky enough to have a sick pet at this time it is important to have a quiet undisturbed place for it to rest. Keep to small regular meals. It would be tempting to cheer it up with some rich festive food. This would not be a good idea. It would be easy to forget it's medication or to take it out for regular toilet trips. Make sure you have the emergency vet's phone number handy. Hopefully you and your pets will have a happy and healthy Christmas.

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