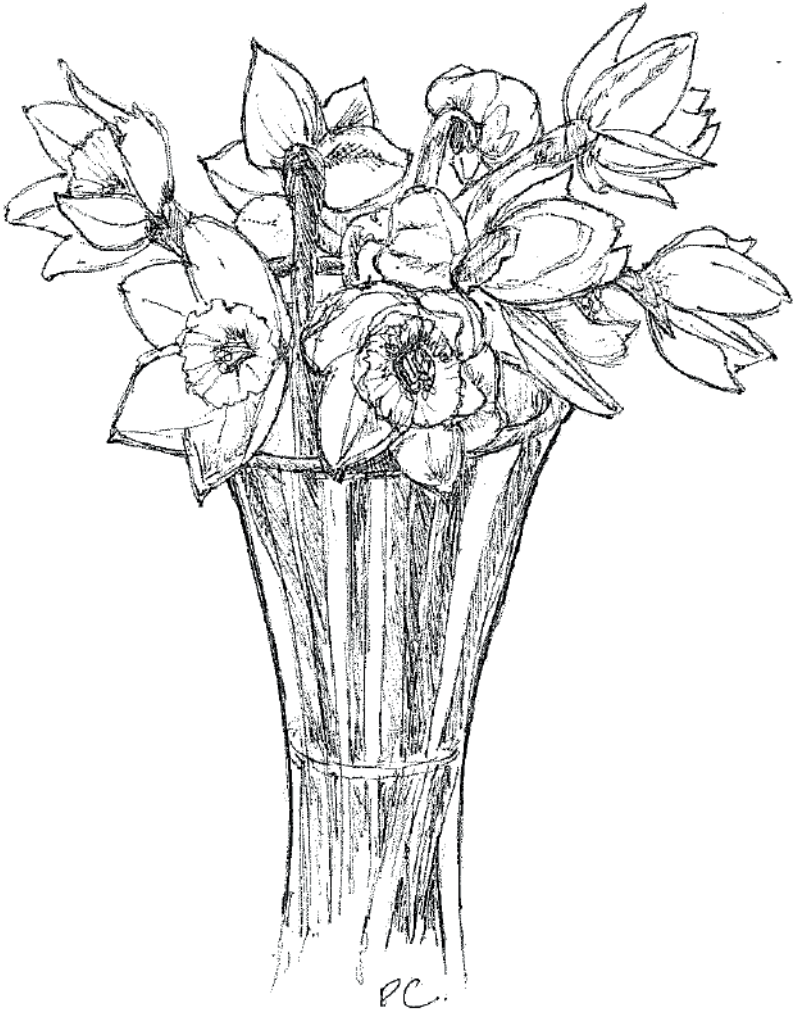


ASH WITH WESTMARSH
PARISH MAGAZINE
MARCH 2026
£1



The Canonry Benefice of
Ash – Chillenden – Elmstone – Goodnestone
Nonington – Preston – Stourmouth

Useful Contacts

Service	Organisation/Name	Contact
<u>Emergencies</u> 999	Gas Emergency (24hrs)	0800 111 999
	UK Power Networks (24hrs)	105
	Water Leak Line (24hrs)	0800 820 999
<u>Community</u>	Community Warden, Kerry Skirrow	07977 982184
	www.kent.gov.uk/communitywardens	
	Non-urgent and other enquiries	101
	Ash Neighbourhood Watch	
	Josh Coombs	07546 212154
	Crime Stoppers	0800 555111
	Community Safety Dover	01304 872220
	Childline	0800 1111
	Kent County Council	08458 247247
	Dover District Council	01304 821199
	District Councillors:	
	Cllr Trevor Bartlett	07980 300084
	cllr-trevor.bartlett@dover.gov.uk	
	Cllr Martin Porter	07733 111334
	cllr-martin.porter@dover.gov.uk	
	Sir Roger Gale MP	01843 848588
	suzy@galemail.com	
	Ash Parish Council	07398 584 053
	clerk@ashparishcouncil.gov.uk	
	Citizens Advice (Dover area)	0844 8487978
Ash Village Hall Enquiries	07947 832807	
Environmental Health	01304 872215	
Trading Standards	0845 4040506	
Ash Library	01304 812440	
<u>Healthcare</u>	NHS Medical Helpline (24hrs)	111
	Out of Hours Doctor Service	0844 8001234
	Ash Surgery	01304 812227
	Hospitals - Kent and Canterbury	01227 766877
	QEQM Margate	01843 225544
	William Harvey	01233 633331
Pharmacy - Ash (Boots)	01304 812242	
<u>Education</u>	Cartwright and Kelsey School	01304 812539
	St Faith's Prep School	01304 813409
	Sandwich Technology College	01304 610000
	Sir Roger Manwood School	01304 613286

Times can be tough. There's always someone you can talk to 24/7.

The Samaritans: call 116 123 or visit samaritans.org

~ If an error is noted please inform the editors ~

Welcome to the March Magazine

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Magazine Subscription

Never miss an edition of your favourite parish magazine!
To arrange a subscription including magazine delivery to your door (within the parish) phone Rebecca on 07443 605873 or email rebeccasmith.ash@gmail.com

Front cover

Daffodils – a foretaste of Spring – on a wet and windy day. By Pat Coles

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canonryvicar@gmail.com

Churchwarden

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ash_chwarden@thecanonrybenefice.org.uk

Benefice Administration

Beth Barber
thecanonrybenefice@gmail.com

Share Your News

Email copy for the next magazine edition by **Thursday 12th February** to rebeccasmith.ash@gmail.com or post hard copy at 69, The Street, Ash.

Advertise in the Parish Magazine

Reasonable rates and a loyal readership

Send advertising enquiries to ashpm.ads@gmail.com

Publisher's note:

This magazine is produced by St. Nicholas Parish Church. We welcome items from individuals and local organisations. All items should come with a note of the contributor's name. The editor reserves the right both to edit and not to publish anything she receives. Items on church matters do not represent the official position of the Church of England.

Regulars

Ash Pain Management Support Group – For anyone who suffers from long-term pain. Every second Wednesday 11am-1pm at Ash Scout Hall, Molland Lea. £2 entry includes refreshments and a raffle. Contact Maureen on 07922 096932 or email maureenloveash@gmail.com with any queries.

St Nicholas Church Warm Space – Thursday 11am-2pm. There is free tea/coffee and a mug of hot homemade soup with a roll.

Ash Bowling Club Weekly Free Community Catch Up – from 10am-12pm every Monday at the club in Moat Lane. All residents of Ash are welcome. Free tea/coffee and biscuits.

Age Concern Sandwich Meet, Eat, Heat – two course lunch for £4.50. Mondays and Fridays.

Ash Library opening times

Monday 11:30am - 5pm (closed 1pm - 2pm)

Tuesday 9:30am - 1pm

Wednesday 9:30am - 2pm

Thursday: Closed

Friday 11:30am - 5pm

Saturday 9am - 2pm

Sunday: Closed

Bank holidays: Closed

Ash Toddler Group – meet on Mondays in Ash Village Hall from 10am-11.30am in term times.

Ash Heritage Centre – opens Saturday mornings 10am-12noon and is home to a wide range of local historical items and records. (Not August.)

Walk and Talk – slow-paced walking group meeting on Fridays at Ash GP surgery. 11.30am

Guides, Brownies and Rangers

1st Ash Brownies 7-10 yrs: 1stashnextsandwichbrownies@gmail.com

1st Ash Guides 10 - 14 yrs: 1stashnxtswichguides@outlook.com

1st Ash Rangers 14 - 18 yrs: 1stashrangers@gmail.com

What's On

WRESTLING TRAINING DAY – free entry Sunday 1st March with Lock Horns Wrestling. See page 25.

THE ARTS SOCIETY SANDWICH talk on Greek Vase Painting. Monday 2nd March. 6.30pm for 7pm. Guests £7. See page 29.

THE GOOD COMPANIONS meet at Ash Village Hall on Tuesdays 3rd, 17th and 31st. 2-4pm.

HAPPY HOUR at Elmstone Church (or in Church Meadow if the weather is fine) will be held on Friday 6th March from 6.30pm. For more Elmstone news, see page 28.

THE COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING at Ash Village Hall is hosted by Ash Guides and Rangers on Saturday 7th March from 10am-12noon.

SANDWICH HISTORY SOCIETY talk Echoes of the Past – St Clements Churchyard – its history and people. Thursday 12th March. Sandwich Guildhall 6.30pm for 7pm. See page 29.

GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN Saturday 14th March 1pm-3pm meet at Ash Village Hall. Poster page 21.

THE CHURCHYARD BASH. Saturday 14th March. 9am-noon at St Nicholas Church, Ash. Join volunteers to maintain the church grounds.

NIGHT FALLS a play by Riding Lights Theatre Company Saturday 21st March. Ash Village Hall at 7pm. Tickets £5 from Boots, Welcome or Poparound. See article page 20 and poster page 18.

ASH VILLAGE HALL OPEN DAY Saturday 22nd March 11am-2pm. Find out more about clubs and societies. See article page 15.

ASH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Chris Anderson on Preparing for a show. Thursday 26th March, Ash Village Hall. 7.30pm. Chris is a lifetime gardener and past chairman of Preston, Stourmouth and Elmstone Horticultural Society. Visitors welcome. £3.

Coming up next month: Saturday 11th April Ash Horticultural Society Spring Show – see poster page 16.

A photograph of a woman and a young child smiling and holding pink tulips. The woman has her hair in a bun and is wearing a striped shirt. The child is also wearing a striped shirt. They are both looking at each other and smiling. The tulips are in the foreground, and the background is blurred.

**Mothering Sunday
Services
15th March 2026**

***Celebrate those who love
& care for us ***

9.00 Holy Cross, Goodnestone

10.30 Elmstone Church

10.30 St. Nicholas, Ash

Refreshments afterwards

Church Services for March

1st March

Holy Communion 9.00 Holy Cross, Goodnestone
Holy Communion 10.30 Elmstone Church
Family Worship 10.30 St. Nicholas, Ash
Holy Communion 10.30 St. Mary's Nonington

8th March

Holy Communion 9.00 All Saints, Chillenden
Holy Communion 10.30 St. Nicholas, Ash
Family Service 10.30 St Mildred's
Breakfast Church 9.30 St. Mary's Nonington

15th March –

Holy Communion 9.00 Holy Cross, Goodnestone Mothering Sunday Service
Holy Communion 9.00 St Nicholas, Ash
Service of the word 10.30 Elmstone Church, Mothering Sunday Service
Holy Communion 10.30 St. Nicholas, Ash, Mothering Sunday Service

22nd March

Holy Communion 9.00 All Saints, Chillenden
Holy Communion 10.30 St. Nicholas, Ash

29th March

Fifth Sunday Benefice Service 10.30am St Nicholas, Ash - Palm Sunday with procession along The Street from Pound Corner at 10.10am with song, waving palm branches and of course, the donkey!

Lent courses continue on Tuesdays March 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th. For the morning course (9.30-11am) contact Rev Barbara Way via thecanonybenefice@gmail.com For the evening course (7.30pm) email canonryvicar@gmail.com.

Private Prayer

Churches are open at the following times:

St Nicholas, Ash	All week 9.30am to 3pm
Holy Cross, Goodnestone	All week in daylight hours
St Mary's Nonington	All week in daylight hours
All Saints, Chillenden	Weekends 10am-5pm
All Saints, Stourmouth	All week in daylight hours

Other churches can be unlocked on request. Please note services may be taking place during this time.

Donations to Liberty House Mum & Baby Refuge

Thank you to all who donated to the St Nicholas' Church collection for Liberty House. We have received a lovely letter from Rising Sun, the charity which manages the refuge, please see some excerpts below:

'We are so grateful to you for choosing to support our charity with a Christmas collection of essential items and gifts for the residents of our supported accommodation, Liberty House.

For many survivors of domestic abuse, Christmas can be an overwhelming time. For the residents of Liberty House, they may have recently fled an abusive relationship, may be experiencing their first Christmas alone, feel particularly vulnerable with their pregnancy or worried about being unable to purchase gifts for their baby. Whatever their circumstances, the goodwill of your community has meant that they feel seen, heard and supported this Christmas. Your support means so much to us, and doubly so for the mums and children we support. Thanks to the kindness of your collection of essential items these young women have a safe and secure place to live, supported on their journey to heal from their traumatic experiences and move on to live a safe, healthy and independent life.

Those who donate will never know the impact of their gifts on each individual survivor, but the following message gives an insight into the difference your kindness makes at what can be an incredibly difficult time of year:

"It was such a lovely gesture of support. Please pass on massive thanks to everyone who puts that stuff together for people. I don't mean to sound cheesy but it made me cry just feeling the generosity and feeling cared for like that."

Thank you all, for your kindness

Jenny Taylor

Parish Register

Funeral

Stephen Larkins, Barham, 26th January

Wedding

Katarzyna Szatkowska and Danny Michael Wheeler, Holy Cross, Goodnestone, 31st January

EASTER AT ST NIC'S FAMILY EVENTS



PALM SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday 29th March - join us as we carry the cross to the church accompanied by the donkeys - 10.10am at Pound Corner.

Bring flags and palms to wave!!!

Service starts in the church at 10.30am

PASSOVER CELEBRATION FAMILY MEAL

Maundy Thursday 2nd April starting at 6.00pm

An immersive experience. Find out what happened at the Last Supper, with singing and good food. Sign up on our website below.

EASTER TRAIL

Good Friday 3rd April 2.00 - 4.00pm

Lots of activities, crafts and fun for families as we find out what Easter is all about. Come and meet the donkeys.

EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday 5th April 10.30am

Followed by an Easter Egg hunt and our annual church family photo



St Nicholas Church,
Ash

[@thecanonrybenefice.org.uk](http://thecanonrybenefice.org.uk)



Parish Letter

We are well into the Church's season of Lent now. Lent is an old English word for Spring, the time for growth and new life, not only in the wonders of Nature, but in our own lives, very much part of Nature.

This is a season in the cycle of the Church's year, lasting 40 days, when Christians commemorate the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and praying in the desert before entering upon the final phase of his mission to be 'the Light of the World'.

This mission would lead to his betrayal, public humiliation, torture and cruel execution BUT, through this gruesome end, to an astounding event, attested by many at the time: resurrection to a new life, with hope and tremendous significance for all humankind to the end of time in the mystery of the Universe.

Part of this theme will be dramatically portrayed in the Riding Lights Theatre visit to Ash in 'Night Falls' on 21st March.

For Christians, this is a particular time for a look at ourselves with a reviewing eye, an honest appraisal of our hearts and minds, and bodies, all intimately connected. It is a time and opportunity for spiritual awakening and inner growth on our journey to become better versions of ourselves.

This Lent, in our Parish and wider Benefice, people are meeting weekly to work through a course of reflection and prayer called 'Lent Wise':

'As we journey through life, we face challenges - both big and small. What spiritual essentials will help us survive life's storms? We are exploring themes that speak to our deepest needs:

Compass: finding direction;

Nourishment: keeping going;

Light: gaining wisdom;

Shelter: finding security;

Water: enjoying refreshment.'

Jesus was obviously a man with a charismatic power, which caused many, many people to flock to listen to his words and to follow him, to acknowledge a powerful hope and purpose to their lives, mostly the poor and the oppressed, and some in high places. His words and lifestyle had the ring of truth and integrity about them, sadly lacking in many of our world leaders today; he was one of those rare beings in whom the messenger

and the message fitted together in a magnetic authenticity. He allowed himself to become vulnerable to the powers at the time, Roman occupying overlords, puppet Monarch, High Priests and all the establishment, not resisting, nor arguing politics, nor begging for release. He spoke and lived a different way, spoke of a different kind of kingdom, with different values: love and mercy, forgiveness and healing.

As we look at ourselves this Lent, I am hoping to find some Springtime buds of spiritual essentials that will bring me to a better understanding of the power of vulnerability to lead me through difficult and dark times to experience more of the ultimate life essentials of human and spiritual connection: good relationships, with love and mercy and joy at their heart. I seek the best relationship I can have with myself, with God, with others and with Nature.

I can highly recommend this brief, non-religious TED talk on YouTube: 'The Power of Vulnerability' by Brené Brown.

Philip Moore

We are relaunching Snics!

Snics is an after-school club open to all children of primary-school age. 3.30 to 5pm in St Nicholas Church. We need more volunteers to join the parent volunteers from Cartwright and Kelsey school to welcome children once a month to our 'messy church' style gathering. We enjoy tea together, have fun with art and craft activities, play games and take time for quiet reflection. Let Rev Caroline know if you are interested in helping.

Sing-a-long Evensong!

Join us for a wonderful evensong on 22nd March, at St Nicholas church with Cheerful Voice. Rehearsal 2pm. Evensong 5pm. Refreshments afterwards. All welcome.

Community Donation Drop Off Points

Donations for Deal Foodbank can be made at St Nicholas Church, Ash. The donation bin is through the main glass doors. Donations are collected by Deal Foodbank to distribute to those who come to them in need.

There is also a collection box for recycling fundraisers for Cartwright and Kelsey school. Any brand of bakery plastic packaging and bread bags/closures are accepted, but not paper bags, wax packets, or combined paper-and-film window bags.



Coffee Morning

Ash Village Hall

Saturday 4th April

10am to 12 noon

Everyone welcome

Bacon rolls * Coffee and chat * Exciting raffle

Cake and Savouries stall * Bric-a-brac stall * Book stall

Information about how Christian Aid is supporting poor communities around the world

If you have donations for the raffle, book stall and bric-a-brac stall do leave these in the church porch. Any cake and savoury donations can be brought to the village hall on 4th April.

Thank you!

Onlooker

A councillor's view of Ash Parish council meetings in February.

The monthly Full Council meeting and the Finance Committee meeting were held in February. Councillors reviewed the 2025/26 accounts, approved the 2026/27 budget, and recommended the 2026/27 precept.

Local Government Reorganisation: The Government is consulting on the biggest proposed change to local government in 50 years. Councils across Kent and Medway have submitted options for replacing the current two-tier system (Kent County Council + district councils) with a smaller number of unitary authorities delivering all services in one area. Residents, organisations and businesses are encouraged to take part in the consultation to help ministers understand the implications for local services. The consultation link can be found at www.gov.uk/government/consultations Deadline: 11.59pm, Thursday 26th March

Village Assets: The Recreation Ground is a valued parish asset used for sport, recreation and community events. Residents wishing to hold an event must follow the Events Policy for the Hire of Ash Recreation Ground to ensure safety, fairness and appropriate use. This can be found on our website. We are pleased to support Eastry Ravens Football Club, who are temporarily using the Recreation Ground while their pitch is repaired.

Neighbourhood Development Plan: Two residents asked the council to consider reviewing the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan, which was adopted by referendum in July 2021 and which will help shape the future of Ash for years to come. Policies cover how new homes can meet design standards that enhance the local character of the village and the surrounding countryside. Biodiversity and climate change policies will help improve the quality of homes and life for all. There is protection for the much loved and used green spaces in and around the village. Policies also cover health, community facilities, parking, broadband provision, infrastructure, as well as supporting local businesses. The Council agreed to consider an initial gap-analysis review in late 2026 to identify updates needed as legislation and local priorities evolve.

Current Work & Achievements: Although some projects take time to reach completion, the Clerk and Councillors are progressing a significant workload, including:

- Finalising legal and administrative work for Play Area 2 at the Recreation Ground – a major project for the parish
- Public consultation on a 20mph speed limit within the village
- Updated risk assessments and policies for parish assets
- Review of the Pavilion lease

Dates for Your Diary: The Great British Spring Clean – Saturday 14th March. Ash is delighted to partner with Dover District Council. The Great British Spring Clean is the nation’s biggest mass-action environmental campaign. Each year, more than 400,000 volunteers clear litter from our streets, parks and beaches across the UK.

Meet at Ash Village Hall, 1-3pm. All equipment provided; everyone welcome.

Annual Parish Meeting – 29th April, St Faith’s School 7pm.

An open meeting where Ash’s charities and organisations present their annual reports and updates. All residents are encouraged to attend and hear about the work happening across our community.

Dover District Update: District councillors continue to support Ash with issues that fall under DDC’s responsibility, including:

- Repairing broken street lighting
- Deep-cleaning accumulated litter at Molland Lane car park (“the Council Yard”)
- Addressing dilapidated garages near James Close
- Ongoing parking concerns

They remain available to assist with any DDC-related matters

Reach Awards: DDC has launched the fifth year of its popular REACH Awards as part of the Council's support of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean Campaign 2025. This year the awards are sponsored by Veolia. The REACH Awards (Recognising Environmental and Community Heroes) recognises our district’s unsung heroes who work hard to improve the appearance of the Dover District, helping to maintain our environment while uniting the local community. In the last 2 years, Ash residents have been worthy winners in both the Litter Picker of the Year and Junior Litter Picker of the year categories! More information on how to nominate can be found at www.dover.gov.uk/reachawards

Potholes: Ash is not alone in its frustration—67 potholes have been reported in Ware and Westmarsh alone in recent weeks. Please report every pothole promptly via the Kent County Council website or by

calling 01304 821199 during office hours. KCC is responsible for roads, pavements and Public Rights of Way. Our KCC Member is Cllr Peter Evans.

Kent Police Update: We are pleased to welcome PC Bowler back to the parish. Residents are encouraged to sign up to MyCommunityVoice for local policing updates and dates of community drop-in sessions.

- www.ashparishcouncil.gov.uk

Ash Village Hall – Open Day

Sunday 22nd March 11am - 2pm

When I first moved to Ash I was amazed at the number of activities and events that took place in the village. Over 23 years later, I am still impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of all the volunteers that offer such a diverse range of ‘things to do’.

Books clubs, bowling, cricket, drama, Guiding, gymnastics, heritage, horticulture, knit & natter, Pilates, rugby, Scouting, Tai Chi, tennis, wrestling, yoga (to name a few!) are readily available, so whatever your interests you are sure to find a group to join.

To celebrate our active village and to showcase all the organisations that enhance our community, we are taking part in ACRE's (Action for Communities in Rural England) Village Halls Week which takes place between the 16th - 22nd March.

Please come along to our Open Day where many of the groups and classes will be represented so you can find out what is happening and how you can join in.

- Perhaps you are new to the village and not sure what is available?
- Perhaps you have recently retired and have some time on your hands?
- Perhaps you would like to take up a new sport or hobby?
- Or perhaps you would just like to chat and enjoy some refreshments?
- And if you find there isn't a group for you, perhaps you'd like to suggest one?

Everyone is welcome!

Come along, support YOUR village hall and the various volunteers who make our village such a special place to live.

Hazel Howard, Vice Chair, Ash Village Hall Management Committee

Time to Enter the **SPRING SHOW!**

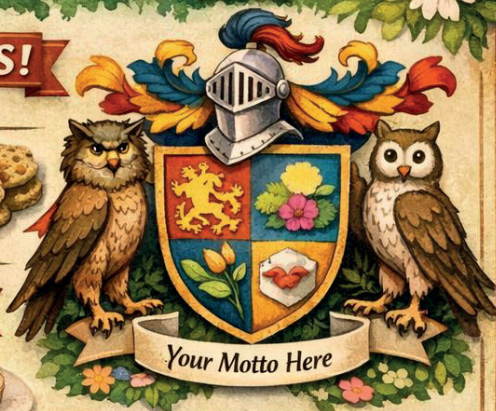
SATURDAY 11th APRIL
Ash Village Hall

CREATE A COAT of ARMS!

— Design your own shield! —

Use paper, wood, clay, fabric,
LEGO, anything goes!

Be creative & have fun!



*** COOKERY CLASSES ***



- 5 Welsh Cakes • Fruit Loaf • Jam Tarts
- Ginger Cake • Lemon Curd
- Any Chutney

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

6 & Under • 10 & Under • 15 & Under



Fruit in Jelly • Veggie Animals • Cornflake Cakes

FLOWER ARRANGING *** OPEN CLASSES ***

- Apple Arrangement
- Foliage Display
- Pearl Anniversary
- Oasis-Free Design



*** PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST ***

Close-Up of a Flower



A Winter Scene



Night Time



A Question of Balance



www.ashhortsoc.org.uk

Meet PC Bowler

PC Jon Bowler is due to be attending the Warm Space at St Nicholas Church, Ash on Thursday 12th March between 11am and 1pm. This is your opportunity to raise any concerns you may have and to find out what is being done to tackle the issues that matter to you. Everyone is welcome.

New Ash Players



The New Ash Players would like to thank everyone who came and supported our latest Panto, Beauty and the Beast. We entertained over 500 people.

We were delighted to have welcomed some new talented younger members, together with some new 'adult' members.

As usual, the Friends of St Nicholas ran the bar for us, with all the profit going to their Society.

Debbie Revell was the winner of the hamper. Apparently, she was amazed at the amount of products in the hamper!

We are beginning to benefit from the grant kindly given by the Jack Foat Trust to Ash Village Hall to update the lighting and sound system.

- Friends report, see page 26 and panto review page 32.

**RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY
PRESENTS**



**NIGHT
FALLS**

BY PAUL BIRCH

**"RIDING LIGHTS
WORKS MIRACLES"**

The Stage

ASH VILLAGE HALL

21st MARCH 2026, 7PM

TICKETS £5

**Tickets available at Boots, Welcome or
Poparound**

**RIDING
THEATRE
COMPANY
LIGHTS**



Ash Bowling Club

We have another great year ahead in 2026!

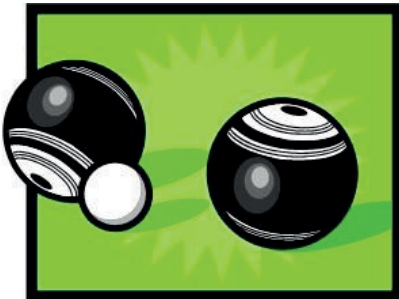
Our AGM was held on February 16th and it was great to hear the Executive Committee keeping everyone informed of the fantastic progress the Club continues to make.

Our focus this year will be to increase our membership and promote the Club more widely in the Community.

Steve is working really hard preparing the outdoor green ready for the next outdoor season which starts in April, and our indoor short mat continues to be very popular.

The Short Mat competitions are in full swing with the finals due to take place later this month. Short Mat organised games are played Monday & Wednesday 2-4, Thursday 7-9 and Saturday 10-12.

We have a new weekly Free Community Catch Up from 10am-12noon every Monday morning at the club, and all residents of Ash are welcome. We offer free tea/coffee and biscuits. This is a great opportunity to have a chat in the warmth of the clubhouse with a coffee. Please come along - it's completely free and will run until the end of March.



Throughout the year we will be hosting different social events which you will see advertised through our Facebook page, or alternatively you can visit our website: www.ashbowlsclub.org.uk or contact Roy for further information - secretary.ashbowlsclub@gmail.com

Our next event is a quiz on 14th March. See our website (below) for details.

If you are interested in coming and joining us or having a go just either come along any Friday night after 5pm or contact us through our website: www.ashbowlsclub.org.uk or via email: secretary.ashbowlsclub@gmail.com - we'd love to hear from you.

Roy Allen

Get Your Tickets for “Night Falls” Now!

Riding Lights Play coming to Ash Village Hall on March 21st

Hopefully by now, you will have seen a poster or two, an advent window, been to a coffee morning, seen me after Lorraine’s yoga class or seen a social media post alerting you that “Night Falls” is coming to the village. If not, where have you been?

Our fund-raising quiz night this month raised £338.50 towards the cost of putting on the production and helping to keep ticket prices low – only £5! Thanks to everyone who worked hard on the quiz night and those who came and joined in the raffle. It was a good night. Roger Hill regularly puts on quiz nights, so if you enjoyed it, look out for his other evenings next month.

As well as coming to our own Village Hall on the 21st March, the tour also calls at The Lowry in Manchester, The Bear Pit Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon and both Chelmsford and Bradford Cathedrals, finishing the tour in April at the Spring Harvest festival in Minehead.

The performance is suitable for audiences aged 12+.

“Night Falls” is a fresh, vivid and dynamic retelling of the Easter Story, creating a new way of thinking about Easter:

Four final days before an execution that will change everything.

Three enemies that want to put an end to the so-called Messiah.

Two strangers torn between faith and doubt, hope and grief, trying to prevent Jesus of Nazareth from getting himself arrested.

One safe house in Bethany.

The hours are running out, but even as night falls, a strange hope is wrapped in a secret that both strangers share

The evening is a rare opportunity to see professional theatre within walking distance of our homes. Look out for posts on the Ash Village Facebook page, including an upcoming trailer!

The Chequer Inn will be running a pop-up bar on the evening too and there will be exclusive Riding Lights merch for sale. We hope everyone will come along and enjoy.

The play is in Ash for one night only, so limited numbers of tickets are available, all at low cost of £5. Tickets are on sale at Boots, Welcome, Poparound or by dropping an email to ashopenhouse@gmail.com

Gina Holden

JOIN THE GREAT BRITISH

SPRING CLEAN

13th - 29th March



Come and join us. Everyone is welcome.

Ash Village Hall

Queen's Road, Ash

Saturday 14 March 1pm - 3pm

Collecting just one bag of litter can make a big difference to our local environment.

We'll also be on hand with fun games to educate younger visitors and information to help you reduce, reuse, recycle.

ONE BAG
BIG
DIFFERENCE



Email: envcrime@dover.gov.uk
or call 01304 872289 to discuss
this year's campaign

dover.gov.uk/gbsc

Please scan the QR code
to report litter or visit
dover.gov.uk/report



League of Friends of Kent and Canterbury Hospital (Ash Branch)

Since last November we have raised £453.80 at the monthly coffee mornings and also received a very kind donation of £100 from the Ash Good Companions group. Ash sales of the League of Friends Christmas cards 2025 raised a further £71.25. Sincere thanks to each and every one of you who has supported us.

As a result, at the end of 2025 we were able to pledge £500 towards two Accuvein Viewing Systems for the stroke service at Canterbury Hospital. This is an infrared device which locates veins more accurately and quicker, resulting in less pain and bruising for the patient.

We also pledged £1,076.27 towards an Omni Retractor Set for emergency robotic surgeries and aneurysm repairs. This can be fitted to the hospital bed rather than being hand-held during often very long operations: the amount we pledged for this was the balance of the cost after the League received a £15,000 legacy.

Please continue to let us have any unwanted remnants of knitting wool and your used stamps and old coins. Overall, the League of Friends raised £3,107 from the sale of stamps and coins last year.

In 2025 the League overall, pledged £350,000 towards the purchase of equipment to help patients, staff and visitors.

In addition, money continues to be raised for the League's Special Project: Surface Guided Radiotherapy which is an advanced localisation technique that allows treatment to be faster, more accurate and more comfortable for patients. The new equipment is already in use at the hospital: staff have been trained and patients treated.

In Ash we are always seeking to welcome new members to our small committee. The work is not very time consuming and is extremely rewarding. Please do contact me if you are interested.

We look forward to seeing you again on Saturday 7th March 10am -12noon in the village hall for the next monthly coffee morning.

Hazel Damiral
01304 772363



RAINBOWS IS GIRLGUIDING FOR 4 -7 YEAR OLDS

WE WOULD LIKE TO RE-OPEN THE ASH RAINBOW UNIT THIS YEAR, ALONGSIDE THE ASH BROWNIES ON THURSDAY NIGHTS AT ASH VILLAGE HALL, BUT WE NEED ADULT HELPERS TO ACHIEVE THIS.

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING VOLUNTEERING, WE CAN PROVIDE FLEXIBLE OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER IN A WELCOMING, FRIENDLY TEAM WHICH HAS LOTS OF FUN.

CONTACT US AT : 1STASHRANGERS@GMAIL.COM IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH ASH RAINBOW UNIT.

Ash Guides & Rangers

We had a busy run up to Christmas. The Ash Rangers planned and went on a trip to London to the Science Museum and to see the London Christmas lights. The Guides and Rangers have also enjoyed a hot chocolate and Christmas film night followed by a Christmas craft and karaoke night enhanced with their own mocktail concoctions.

We have been thinking International, learning about the five Guiding World Centres and completing the Sangam challenge badge, Sangam is the World Centre in India. The Rangers celebrated Diwali with indoor fireworks, tried Mehndi designs and cooked an amazing curry.

Moving into 2026, there is lots to look forward to, more cooking, campfire night with Sm'ores, getting our tickets for BIG GIG, a national Girl Guiding pop concert at Wembley and planning for our camp in May.

Ash Girlguiding is hosting the Community Coffee Morning in March at Ash Village Hall, so if you would like to know more about Girl Guiding come along and learn more about what Ash Girl Guiding has to offer.

Our Guiding units are all run by volunteers and we always need support. We are hoping to re-open the Ash Rainbow unit this year, which offers Guiding for 4-7yr olds, but we need adult helpers, so please get in contact if you would be interested in helping.

There are many ways you can support, not just as a Unit helper/leader, but by offering some time to help with promotion, fundraising, running our social media or at events. We offer flexible volunteering, so if you can't commit to weekly unit meets, don't worry, you will be very welcome to join our teams and volunteer in a way that works for you.

If you are interested in supporting Ash Guiding or have girls who would like to join any of our units, Brownies 7-10yrs, Guides 10 – 14yrs or Rangers 14 – 18yrs, please contact 1stashrangers@gmail.com, we would love to hear from you?

We are proud of our UK national Guiding statistics that girls in Guiding are 30% more confident and 15% happier than the UK average girl. So come along and join in.

Madeline Lambie 1st Ash Rangers,
Instagram: 1stashrangers

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Friends of St Nicholas Church Ash

Fun Race Night

On Saturday 31st January The Friends welcomed over 100 people to their Annual Fun Race Night on Ash Village Hall racecourse colourfully decked out with bunting and posters.

Many of the excited race goers were new to the event and couldn't wait for the fun to begin. There were 7 races and the winning horse owners all received a rosette and bottle of bubbly. Their jockeys received a free drink at the bar.



With lights flashing at the start of each race the crowd went wild cheering on their favourite steed as volunteer jockeys reeled them in over the full length of the hall course. As the finishing line approached the noise was deafening and the winning horse and jockey were met with huge cheers. A tremendous atmosphere was created helped no doubt by the well-stocked reasonably priced licensed bar, which was kept very busy.

The evening also included a tasty home cooked meal with veggie option; a raffle with 21 prizes, including a 3-course lunch for two at the famous Mermaid Inn in Rye, a mystery prize which turned out to be a cream tea for two at the Rose Garden Café, Staple, DFDS day trip tickets, £50 bottle of champagne from The Olde Gate Inn, Canterbury, etc, generously donated by local businesses and; a large LED Lantern for the lucky entry ticket winner; and additional chocs for the night's best jockey.

The last race auction of horses resulted in a further £55 prize money for the winning owner and a bottle of bubbly.

As always, we are indebted to our advertisers and the 25 Race Night sponsors who helped us raise in excess of £2,200 (exact amount to be published later). This tremendous total was also after paying out £368.30 at the Tote and £64 worth of prizes (not including raffle prizes), so a massive thank you.

The money will be used, as all our funds are, to help maintain the fabric of our historic church and churchyard. Latest projects include repairs to the church clock and the steps at the western end of the churchyard.

Thanks also to Tony Jones who acted as MC; all the hardworking committee and their partners and friends for their help; and all who attended and were so generous. Some were already asking about the date for next year's race night and our other events! A brilliant well organised fun evening well supported and enjoyed by all who attended.

Please note that this event was sold out within 2 weeks of the tickets going on general release and some couldn't get tickets, so to avoid disappointment for our next race night (January 30th 2027) and our other events, eg Shuffleboard (10th October), contact me (01304 813138) or another committee member for a Friends membership form and you will receive preferential treatment for tickets and early preview of the artwork in our very popular annual Art Exhibition, this year on 2nd -4th May.

Panto Bar

The Friends of St Nicholas Church once again provided a very reasonably priced well stocked licenced bar for the 5 excellent performances of Beauty and the Beast staged by the New Ash Players in Ash Village Hall during January.

Every performance was very well attended or sold out, consequently the bar was very busy and made a huge profit of £740.31. The Friends would like to thank everyone who used the bar and helped us raise such a large amount.

The Friends would also like to thank the New Ash Players for once again inviting us to provide the bar for them, our 15th consecutive year, and retain all the profits.

All the shows were well received and the cast obviously worked so hard to ensure audiences went home smiling and happy. Well done and thank you.

Once again, if you would like to join the Friends (min £5 per year) to avoid missing out on future events, contact me or our Secretary Chris Denby (fstnicholas@gmail.com) for a membership form.

Chris Burnside, Chairman of the Friends

Friends of Elmstone and Preston Churches

Ride and Stride

The results of 2025 Ride and Stride have recently been published and both Elmstone Church and St Mildred's Church, Preston have done brilliantly yet again, coming in the top 4 of fund raising for the East Kent area for the 4th year in a row.

Elmstone raised £500. and St. Mildred's £580. The money raised is split equally between The Friends of Kent Churches and the individual church.

Well done to all involved and watch out for the posters later in the year for the 2026 Ride and Stride, which is to be held on Saturday 12th September. Elmstone and St Mildred's churches will be attempting to keep up our fabulous record.

JN

St Mildred's

February Family Service with Communion: We were delighted to welcome the Archdeacon to this service, his first visit to St. Mildred's. Both Rev Caroline and Anne Talbert also took part, with the Archdeacon preaching. The service was well attended and was followed by refreshments.

Easter Service – Sunday 5th April: The Communion Service will be at 10.30am. Nigel Hale will be taking this for us.

Easter Lilies: If you would like to purchase lilies in memory of loved ones, please advise no later than Sunday 15th March, as these have to be ordered well in advance. They will again be £4.50 each this year. Orders can be given to me personally or left at Preston Village Shop.

St Mildred's Churchyard: We are planning to have another tidy up on Saturday, 21 March, from 10am - 12 noon. This work was very well supported last year and we hope this will be the case again this time. Please come and join us.

Elmstone Church

Mothering Sunday Service – March 15th: This Family Service, with Anne Talbert, will be at 10.30am.

Happy Hours: These events are held in the church on the first Friday of the month from 6.30pm. The next two dates are 6th March and 3rd April. Everyone is welcome.

Our Services for March - Month A*

- 1st Sunday – 1st March - Holy Communion, Elmstone, 10.30am
- 2nd Sunday – 8th March - Family Service, Preston, 10.30am * (No Communion)
- 3rd Sunday – 15th March - Mothering Sunday, Elmstone, 10.30am

Refreshments are normally served after all our morning services.

Elizabeth Timms

Sandwich History Society

Meetings are held at Sandwich Guildhall at 6.30 for 7pm. £5 for non-members at the door. For more information go to www.sandwichhistorysociety.org.uk

- Thursday 12th March: Jean Garforth & Lynne O'Donoghue (Researchers on St. Clement's Church) Echoes of the Past - St Clement's Churchyard: its history and people.

Mike Vaile

The Arts Society Sandwich

The Arts Society Sandwich (TASS) offers an inspiring way to spend an evening, bringing together art lovers and curious minds in the beautiful setting of the Guildhall, Sandwich.

Meeting usually on the first Monday of the month, members and guests enjoy a glass of wine, friendly conversation and a fascinating lecture, with refreshments from 6.30pm for a 7pm start.

The season features ten engaging talks across ten months, and guests are always welcome for £7 on the door.

Date for your diary:

- 2nd March – Greek Vase Painting

To see the full programme and membership details, visit www.sandwichdfas.co.uk and follow us on Facebook.

Vicki Bates

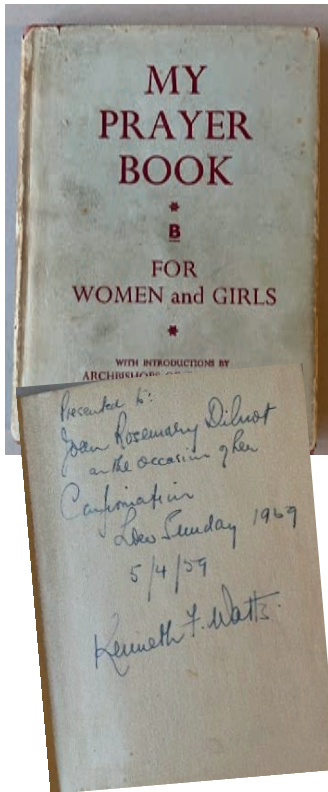
Food Story

A lost recipe, a prayer book and a kangaroo...

It reads like a 'whodunit' : What was the recipe for this beloved family favourite treat? Would I, after fifty plus years ever find it again? Who was the Vicar's wife that told us about it in the first

I now, happily have the answer to all these questions. The sweet treat in question was what we in the Dilnot household in Court Lane, called

'Kangaroo crunch' a delightful concoction of coconut, cornflakes, cocoa, flour and sugar, topped with thick chocolate! Imagine the sweet chocolatey aroma coming from the oven filling you with excited anticipation of what was to come!



My Mother, Joan Dilnot (latterly Foad) had told me she got the recipe from the Vicar's wife, this was back in the sixties.

I think she had tried some at a Church Garden Fete at Elmstone and the Vicar's wife, who according to my Mother was Australian gave her the recipe.

Thus ever after this bake was known as 'Kangaroo Crunch!'

I thought this Kangaroo Crunch was unique and known only to us and the Vicar's wife, until recently I discovered (in a book about food and recipes) that it was, in fact very much a thing in the sixties, big in Australia, sometimes

known as 'Aussie Crunch' and also extremely popular in the north of England, a school dinner regular in fact.

I then of course was able to Google it and find the recipe. and made some! – Happy days!

I still needed to know the Vicar and his wife's name, I felt it was on the tip of my tongue but could not quite remember. Then sorting through my late Mother's books, we found a prayer book that had been presented to her

on the occasion of her Confirmation in 1959, it was inscribed in the front by The Reverend Kenneth Watts – Yes! Of course it was the Reverend Watts and wife who had been eluding me.

Do try this recipe, goodness knows how many calories are in it, or what the fat content is – but each crisp chocolatey mouthful takes me back to the carefree days of Preston in the sixties – Bliss!

Pippa Riccini

Kangaroo Crunch

Ingredients:

- 200g Stork (you can use butter, but Stork gives it that authentic taste)
- 140g golden caster sugar (it's way better than standard caster sugar)
- 85g desiccated coconut
- 75g cornflakes (crushed up)
- 1 heaped tbsp good cocoa powder (like Green & Black's)
- 140g self raising flour
- 250g of Cadbury's chocolate

Method:

1. Melt the Stork in the microwave
2. Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl
3. Pour in the Stork and mix until well combined
4. Pour into a Swiss roll tin (I use disposable tray bake trays from Asda)
5. Squash it down with the back of a spoon - make sure you push it into all the corners!
6. Bake at 180c/gas 4 for 35 minutes.
7. Allow to cool.
8. When cool, melt the chocolate over a bain-marie (or gently in the microwave if you must...) and pour over the Crunch. Level off with a spatula and pop in the fridge to set.

Take out of the fridge about 30 mins before eating (so it's easier to cut) and cut into slabs!

- **We love a Food Story at the Parish Magazine so have a think and send us the tales of the food that is in your family history. Contact details page 3.**

Panto Review

What a Beauty!

This year's offering from The New Ash Players, Beauty and the Beast was announced by a stunning poster which teased us with visual clues about the plot.

The plot itself was originally conceived as a fairy tale in 1764. How it has been transformed since then! And how the production values of the New Ash Players have developed in the years since the group formed. Those of us "in the stalls" can only marvel at the quality of productions under the technical expertise of Matthew Titterton and be equally impressed by his ability not only to mastermind the production values, but work on the script with The Player's new Writer and Director Hannah Mitten. Add in fabulous costumes and make up. What a team. Professional standards!

How does one manage a cast of 28 and a backstage crew of 20? "Herding kittens" comes to mind. The logistics of the whole operation are phenomenal, particularly as everyone involved is doing it as a hobby and "a bit of fun."

The "fun" is what we saw. This year there were a lot of new faces. Bright, enthusiastic and energetic. That is not to say that the long standing members of the group were upstaged. It is fascinating to see the complementary skills of the more experienced balanced against the less so. And it was a production by all ages.

With such a large cast, and such great disparities in age, experience and role it is a bit unfair to name names. Everyone contributed. Everyone in the audience had a favourite. Beauty and the Beast made a lovely couple, Wartina and Blisterine sparred mercilessly while Ginny Tonic held things together manfully (oops!). Amber, Wendy and Brandy kept their spirits up delightfully. Sparky Delume was a shining light, particularly when she roamed around the village and Gaston Flexington looked stunning and sang beautifully. Time passed so quickly, despite Cogsworth Ticktock's stationary dial.

It was fast paced, had all of the traditional content (Behind you!) and plenty of songs (that we all knew). Incredibly slick. A terrific evening. Lights, curtain, action. Make sure you go next year - the bar is set very high (Not you Chris).

From the Stalls



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- Fantastic health & social wellbeing advantages
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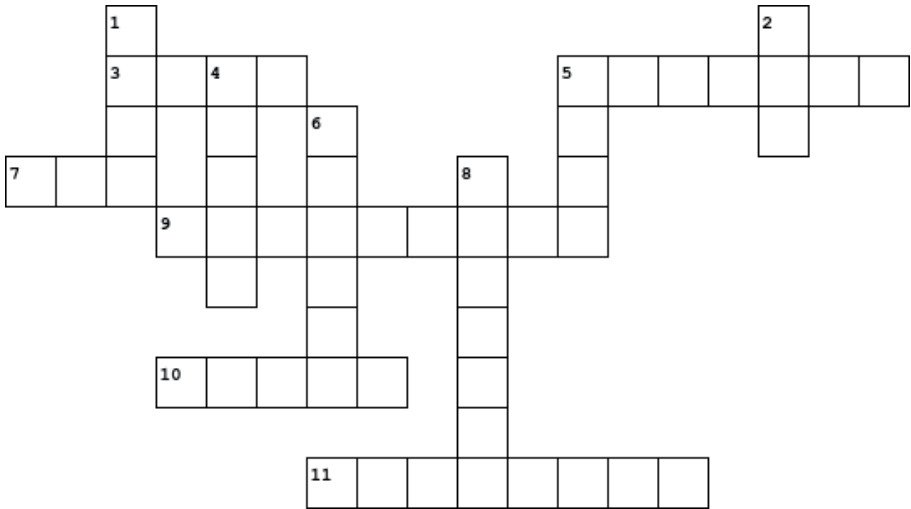
Come down on a Friday evening after 5pm.

**For further details, contact us at:
secretary.ashbowlsclub@gmail.com**

www.ashbowlsclub.org.uk

Across Ash: Neighbours and Notables

A monthly Ash Heritage Group puzzle. Answers in the April Issue!



Across

3. Kent building used for drying hops
5. Traditional village dance around a tall pole
7. Slippery catch once common in Sandwich's creeks
9. Historic Sandwich building that holds a copy of Magna Carta
10. How people crossed the Stour before bridges
11. Town famous for giving its name to the food

Down

1. Fee once charged at Sandwich's town gates
2. Crop that helped Kent earn the nickname Garden of England
4. River running through Ash and Sandwich
5. Common feature along the Stour used for grinding grain
6. Salt maker once a trade in Sandwich
8. Village official who kept animals out of crops

February answers

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. GUILDFORD | 7. FURLONG |
| 2. TITHEBARN | 8. DOWNES |
| 3. FERRYMAN | 9. HAYWARD |
| 4. HALLHOUSE | 10. MILLPOND |
| 5. MALTINGS | 11. YEOMAN |
| 6. BELLRING | 12. COPPICE |
| | 13. RECTORY |

Garden Jottings for March

Getting set for Spring

We have had rain on nearly every day this year with only one or two short glimpses of the sun to give hope of Spring days to come. Celandines are in evidence among the muddy sodden stream edges and there are hundreds of catkins of all varieties along roadsides and hedgerows, but many are being flailed and sadly left shattered and torn. However, in gardens, Mimosa, Camelia and Sarcocca are showing the beneficial effects of plentiful water to give rise to beautiful blossoms and perfume in the air.

Most shrubs will have been shortened by about 1/3 in the autumn but will need the main pruning completed. There can be a risk that cold frosty weather will damage hard pruned plants if carried out too early so be aware. Make sure to have some sturdy gloves and well sharpened and oiled secateurs and loppers at the ready.

Rose bushes will become tall and lanky without pruning and become unattractive. Pruning keeps their size in check and allows better air circulation preventing fungal infections such as black spot. Removing older wood encourages the growth of new stems full of vigour to produce more good blooms. The best time to prune is from late winter to March.

For all types of roses begin by removing all dead weak spindly or crossing stems. Hybrid Teas - those bearing single large blooms on one stem - should be cut back to 15cms.

Floribundas - which hold their flowers in clusters - need to be cut back to 30cms. Old fashioned shrub roses - which make large plants – should be reduced by 1/3 to maintain the shape of their large bush. Take out a couple of the oldest stems to ground level to encourage vigorous growth.

Rambling roses are best pruned in August after flowering and climbing roses during winter months into March. All roses should be pruned down



to an outward facing bud maintaining a nice open shape to encourage new growth from the base.

Climbers should be grown horizontally if possible, as more flowering shoots will break out from stems grown in this way. It is possible to train vigorous varieties up into trees or around a sturdy post, obelisk or pergola possibly twisting and twining around the support to encourage flowering shoots. Tie the growth securely to the supporting structure even a shed or arbour.

Later in the month Buddleia and Clematis can be tackled. Buddleia can be cut down to 45cms removing a few old stems. Clematis in Group 2 - The President or Nellie Moser for example - should be trimmed down to 45cms taking out damaged and broken stems down to a pair of healthy buds. Group 3 - late flowering varieties such as Perle d'Azure and Jackmannii - cut down to 6-12ins above soil level and over wintered Fuchsia cut right down to a good bud near the base.

All shrubs should be fed and roses sprayed against disease and aphid infestation. Now it is time to remove spent flower heads kept to protect the emerging buds on Hydrangeas. Cut stems back to a pair of nice fat buds. If none are apparent remove the whole stem and any other weak or dead ones if the cold weather has passed.

Late March is the time to clip over grey leaved shrubs – Sage, Santolina, Phlomis and Curry Plants. Firm all shrub and plants into the soil to prevent wind rock and the formation of water or ice damaging roots where a hole has formed around the stem. A mulch is beneficial on all woody plants but do not heap up around the stems or it will rot them.

Annuals can be grown in a greenhouse, conservatory or windowsill giving as much light as possible to avoid tall spindly plants. When a second pair of leaves appear plant them in sections in trays handled by their leaves not their stems. As they get larger pinch the tops out to encourage bushy sturdy plants. Cuttings can be potted up now and overwintered plants watered more often and fed.

Early potatoes should be planted by tradition on Easter Monday a little compost can be added to the rows. It is possible to plant seed potatoes without preparation, and they will grow but is still best to choose potatoes with eyes. These should have been chitted (put in a light place to shoot) last month and have short sturdy 'eyes' or shoots. Place them in the base

of the trench, shoots uppermost, 12ins apart. Early salad varieties are good for a small garden as you can't beat new potatoes fresh from the garden. Charlotte is a good kidney-shaped waxy type to grow.

Onions should be planted 6ins apart in rows on a well firmed soil bed to which some fertiliser – growmore - is raked in the surface. Garlic can also be grown in this way. Trim any long ends of the sets (small bulbs) before firming them into the ground or Blackbirds will think they are nest material or pull them up. It is a good idea to cover the bed with wire mesh or net to discourage them until they are well rooted.

Sow seeds of sprouts, cabbage or purple sprouting broccoli indoors. If broad beans, sown in Autumn, have not flourished sow some more in situ as they will germinate even in cold temperatures. Carrots can also be sown outside now. Seedling tomatoes will need to be potted into 8cm pots. Lettuce could be grown on into modules. Winter varieties can be grown outside if hardened off well before moving out.

Strawberries should be tidied up and new plants or 'runners' you have propagated put into a bed with plenty of well-rotted humus (compost or manure) dug into the soil.

Keep watering cans filled up in the greenhouse to avoid filling from the water butt as the cold will shock plants.

Look for emerging shoots of Lupins, Delphiniums and Chrysanthemums which can be taken to propagate new plants which will be the same colour and variety as the parent plant. Place the shoots (cut with sharp knife) just below the soil with a little of the root attached into small pots of well-draining soil consisting of sharp sand grit and compost. Set them around the sides of the pots as they will root faster here.

Keep an eye on temperature in the greenhouse as this is a tricky time with hopefully bright days and cold nights so try to air the greenhouse carefully according to the weather occurring daily.

This is the start of the busy growing season and if the list I have given seems arduous but with lengthening days and doing little and often the tasks will bring rich rewards - happy days.

Christine Brown, President, Ash Horticultural Society

Stories from the Archives (71)

Stephen Burfoot's sad local legacy

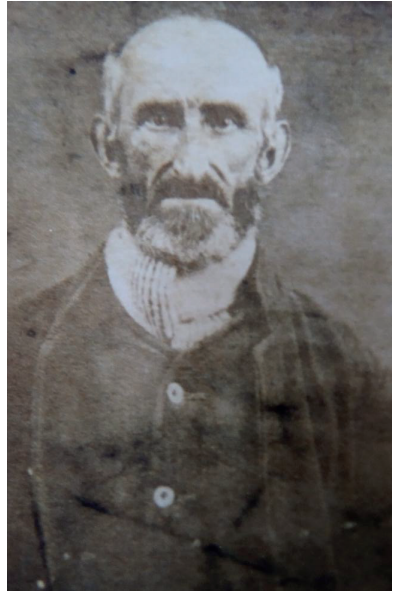
Stephen Burfoot, a native of Hever who farmed in the shadow of the famous castle there, brought up a large family between the 1820s and 1840s with his wife Elizabeth. One of their sons, another Stephen, originally earned his living as a grocer but during his twenties he left home and moved to this end of the county, to Ash, where he became a draper. Here, in 1848 and around his 30th birthday, he married the daughter of a local farming family, Ann Chandler, in our church of St Nicholas. The couple settled in the Street, close to the Lion Inn. It would seem that Ann's millinery and dressmaking skills combined well with her husband's drapery work – they could afford a house servant - but they were also busy parents and within a few years they were bringing up a large family, seven children arriving during the first ten years, including twins. They soon outgrew the premises and moved to a new home further east along the Street. A modern row of terraced cottages had been named after Queen Victoria and Stephen, Ann and their children now occupied the most westward dwelling in the row. Two more children would complete the family. Between their corner house and the large, neighbouring house and garden immediately to the west, today known as Griffin Cottage, a narrow path ran northwards from the Street towards the nearby fields.

How long was it before this pathway gradually became known by the name of the family who lived at the alley's entrance? Not very long, in view of their prominent corner position and well-known local business, especially as Stephen soon added the grocery trade to his activities, the work he had tackled earlier in life in western Kent. The surnames Burfoot and Burford were not uncommon in the district and at a time when only a minority could read and when dialect accounted for much of the local pronunciation of names, they were used interchangeably and would today be considered variants of the same surname. So the gradual acceptance of the name – Burfoot's or Burford's Alley – reflected a simple adoption of the term for convenience long before it was deemed an official local placename. In the early 1860s Stephen once again took on different work by becoming a carpenter and within a very few years was describing himself as a master carpenter (accurately, we hope). Perhaps he now worked for Brisleys, the builders and carpenters who occupied Vine House, just a few feet away from his doorstep across the Griffin Cottage front garden? Ann continued to combine motherhood with her

dressmaking and millinery activities.

At the other end of the county his father continued to farm about 80 acres with three of Stephen's brothers but he died in June 1862, leaving nearly £600, which may have enabled or prompted Stephen's move into carpentry, a change which occurred between late 1862 and early 1863. Six years later, in October 1868, the happy family occasion of a double wedding involving his brother William and sister Mercy both marrying in Edenbridge church, was followed only weeks later by tragedy back in Ash, when Stephen and Ann's daughter, also named Mercy, died at six years old and was laid to rest in our churchyard.

As the remaining children grew up and left home, life began to deteriorate for Stephen. He began to suffer from poor mental health, something that was not well understood at the time. Indeed, diagnoses were difficult, vague and almost certainly inaccurate, with the cause of the suffering being unknown in most cases although this didn't deter physicians from making wild assumptions. After six months of decline, Dr Brockwell's decision to certify Stephen was ratified by "Squire" Ingram Godfrey, JP, of Brooke House, Ash, and Ann's unfortunate husband was admitted to the so-called East Kent Lunatic Asylum on Chartham Downs one lunchtime a couple of weeks before Christmas, 1877, at the age of 59. All patients were deemed to be suffering from one "mania" or another and when Stephen was examined by the asylum doctor, he diagnosed a "religious mania", coming to the astonishing conclusion that this must be an hereditary affliction simply because a relative of Stephen's, one James Cook of Ash, was already incarcerated in the same asylum.



The form-filling was accompanied by one more thing – the taking of a photograph for the institution's records. This tiny portrait, shown here, is almost certainly the only occasion on which Stephen ever appeared in a photograph. Developed on very thin paper, it was pasted down on the page allocated to Stephen in the asylum's enormous, heavy ledger.

Stephen proved to be a rather loquacious "inmate" (the unfortunate term used at the time) during his early examinations by Dr Keneally, who recorded Stephen's physical and mental condition daily for the first week; then weekly and latterly less frequently. The patient advised the doctor that if he wanted to be the greatest medical practitioner in England, he "must sell Dr Morrison's pills." Stephen also offered him the choice of "all the houses belonging to me in Ash Street" and the nurse who cared for him would shortly receive a fortune. The doctor and Stephen would dine together on Christmas Day and the world would end, but not before Queen Victoria had been dethroned and Stephen governed the world. Six days before Christmas he became even more excitable, announcing his own forthcoming marriage to the Queen on Christmas Day and his elevation to the position of Archbishop of Canterbury.

Stephen's condition deteriorated during 1878, partly due to a disease of the kidney and, sadly, he became increasingly troublesome and threatening. Ten months or so after his admission, the asylum wrote to Ann on 23rd October to warn her of his "hopeless condition." At 9pm that same evening, Stephen passed away on Ward 4. Back in Ash, his widow carried on for a while but it wasn't long before she eventually moved away, settling in Ashford to live with one of her daughters, where she died in 1906, almost 90.

Stephen, Ann and their family had lived at the end of Burfoot's/Burford's Alley for no more than 25 years - probably a little less. And yet, today, nearly a century and a half after their departure, we still know this well-frequented narrow pathway by their name, albeit slightly corrupted or garbled over the years. It even has its own official sign and has recently been resurfaced! The occupation of their little corner clearly had a very sad and premature ending, but not before the people of Ash had conferred upon this spot the name of the family who'd made their mark there and who would forever be associated with "their" alley. So now you know where the name comes from!

This article is a revised and extended version of a short piece published in the Magazine seven years ago, before this series was begun. Research among routine genealogical and local sources has been augmented by the examination, nearly thirty years ago, of Stephen Burfoot's personal medical case notes, when the former asylum's patient files of an early period were opened for research. (Case files less than 100 years old are strictly embargoed).

Peter Ewart

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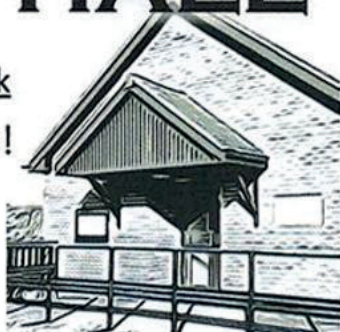


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