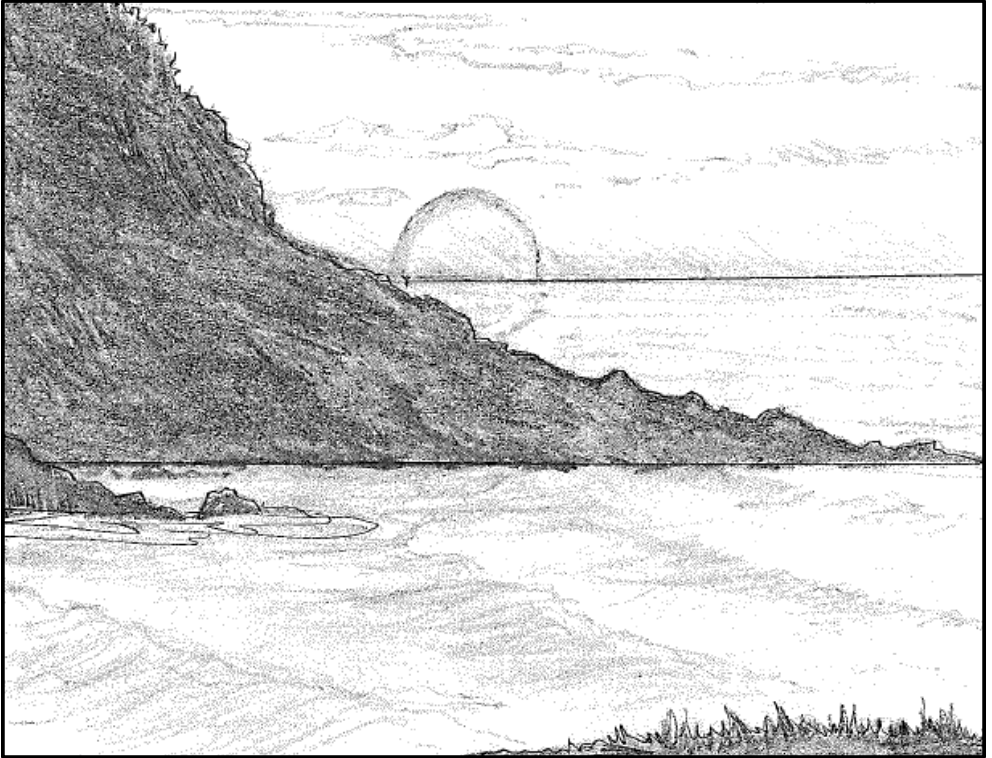


ASH WITH WESTMARSH
PARISH MAGAZINE
SEPTEMBER 2026
£1



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>	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 September 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

Sunset off the coast of Normandy. By Pat Coles

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Share Your News

Email copy for the next magazine edition by **Thursday 17th September** 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.

BLESS THE BACKPACK

Sunday 6th September
10.30am St Nicholas Church Ash



Benefice Praise

St Nicholas Ash

5.00pm
Sunday
20th September



What's On

THE GOOD COMPANIONS meet at Ash Village Hall on September 1st, 15th and 29th from 2-4pm for games, conversation and companionship.

ASH PARISH COUNCIL full council meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd September from 7.30pm at Ash Village Hall.

HAPPY HOUR at Elmstone Church (or Church Meadow if the weather is fine) Friday 4th September from 6.30pm. For more Elmstone news, see page 32.

ASH HERITAGE GROUP host the community coffee morning at Ash Village Hall on Saturday 5th September from 10am-noon. See page 12

ASH WI meet 10th September to hear from Sheila Caulfield on Colour me Confident. 1.30pm Ash Village Hall.

SANDWICH HISTORY SOCIETY 10th September. Professor Emeritus Kenneth Fincham, The Church under Charles II: conformity, controversy and St Clement's, Sandwich Guildhall, 6.30. £5 non-members. www.sandwichhistorysociety.org.uk

FROM FIELD TO TABLE – ASH THROUGH THE AGES self-guided walk and exhibition from September 11th-20th. See page 17.

THE CHURCHYARD BASH. Saturday 12th August. 9am-noon at St Nicholas Church, Ash. Join volunteers to maintain the church grounds.

JOIN THE CHEQUER INN CHALLENGERS for the Macmillan Darts Marathon on Saturday 12th September. See page 16.

A FLOWER FESTIVAL will be held at St James's Church, Staple on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September. See page 34.

A BBQ AND DOG SHOW will be held at Westmarsh and Ware Village Hall on Sunday 13th September from 1pm. See poster, page 14.

ASH HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Autumn Show. Ash Village Hall. Saturday 19th September. 2.30pm. See pages 18 and 29 for details.

SHEEP AHOY Open Day on Sunday 20th September, 12-4pm at the Guilton field. See poster, page 20.

ASH RFC's first game of the season. Ash Rec. September 26th. 3pm. See page 16.

THE 81st EAST KENT PLOUGHING MATCH September 30th at St Nicholas Court Farms, Monkton. Tickets £12 on the gate or £10 from www.ekpma.co.uk

THE ARTS SOCIETY SANDWICH have two lectures in September at The Guildhall. See page 32 for details.

Regulars

Baby Rhyme Time – Ash Library. Mondays from noon-12.30pm. Suitable for ages 0-4 years. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Ash Pain Management Support Group – For anyone who suffers from long-term pain. 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 Welcome Space – Thursday 11am-1pm. There is free tea/coffee and a mug of hot homemade soup with a roll.

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

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.) www.ashheritagegroup.org.uk

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

Church Services for September

Sunday 6th September

Holy Communion 9am Holy Cross, Goodnestone

Holy Communion 10.30am Elmstone Church

Family Worship 10.30am St. Nicholas, Ash - Bless the Backpack Service

Holy Communion 10.30am St. Mary's Nonington

Sunday 13th September

Holy Communion 9am All Saints, Chillenden

Holy Communion 10.30am St. Nicholas, Ash

Family Worship no communion 10.30am St Mildred's, Preston

Breakfast Church 9.30am St. Mary's Nonington

Sunday 20th September

Holy Communion 9am Holy Cross, Goodnestone HARVEST

Holy Communion 9am St Nicholas, Ash

Service of the word 10.30am Elmstone Church HARVEST

Holy Communion 10.30am St Nicholas, Ash HARVEST

Benefice Praise Service 5pm St Nicholas, Ash

Sunday 27th September

Holy Communion 9am All Saints, Chillenden HARVEST

Holy Communion 10.30am St. Nicholas, Ash

Evensong 6.30pm All Saints, Stourmouth

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.

Help Needed for Parish Magazine

Could you spare an hour to help the friendly team who bundle up the parish magazine for distribution each month?

If you can help, please contact Rebecca Smith at 07443 605873 or email rebeccasmith.ash@gmail.com

Parish Letter

September is a time of returning and fresh starts: back to school, back to work, and back to Parliament after the Summer holidays. For some, it marks a new beginning - a new school, college, university, or perhaps a first job. In our church and village communities, it also marks the restart of regular groups, clubs, societies, sports teams and the like, when people gather for a variety of purposes.

In some of our churches, home groups will meet again regularly to share ideas, experiences, issues of faith and everyday life, and, importantly, to forge deeper relationships and friendships with fellow members of the church community. Odd as it sounds, it's quite easy for a person to attend church regularly for years and never get to know very many of their fellow churchgoers, just a smile and a nod as you come and go – even if that sometimes.

The founder of the Church (the 'Ecclesia' or 'Assembly of believers'), Jesus Christ, said: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I with them". The whole point of 'going to church', whether it be in an ancient or modern church building, a school hall, village hall, in someone's home, or a function room in a pub, is to meet together and build a living relationship with Jesus and with one another. We are to get to know each other, to create a sense of belonging, and to share the best of human values, inspired by the divine source of all life and love.

So, to create a deeper sense of community, teaching, sharing, with acceptance of diversity of personality, background, education, worldview and kindness, we invite anyone to join others in meeting in someone's home, say every two weeks, when they can, to share life experiences, matters of faith, socialise, party, and to support each other if needed and so on. Up to 50 people meet up in these groups around the St. Nicholas Church, Ash, Community; 2 evening groups, 1 morning group, a men's breakfast group and a women's breakfast group, both meeting monthly.

There is also the Welcome Space each week in the church porch; and anyone is welcome to drop in. Each group is different and not all who come are church members. It's not all 'religious' talk either; we talk about life and listen, sharing our stories in trust and without judgement, and often with laughter.

We often talk about Church as a 'family', where there are people from all generations from 0 to 90, from different walks of life and experience: it's fascinating to get to know each other, to 'sing from the same hymn sheet', sit at table with one another, and work together in various ways, such as making and taking meals to local people who are having a hard time with illness or other troubles in their lives.

I was so grateful 5 years ago when several people offered to drive me to and from radiotherapy sessions in Maidstone Cancer Centre, let alone pray for me.

If anyone reading this would like to try one of the above groups, please just ask and we would be delighted to welcome you. You can contact Vicar Caroline, Churchwarden James or Benefice Administrator Beth, whose contact details are at the top of page 3.

Have a super September.

Philip Moore

Jean Jones

August 11th 1942 - July 13th 2026

The funeral service for Jean was held on Friday 7th August at St Nicholas Church which was filled with family and friends.

Following music and hymns, the first Eulogy was read by Jean's husband, David. It was part amusing and part a story of their life together, but above all, it was his expression that "Jean was a force of nature" that summed it up. We were reminded of her energy, commitment and strong caring determination that underpinned all she did.

Her sons Mark and Matt gave a Eulogy and read from the Bible.

Following an address by Rev Caroline Turvey, Jean's grandchildren placed flowers and candles on her coffin and gave their own tributes.

Following the Committal, Jean left the church to Frank Sinatra's lyrics... "I did it my way..." She certainly did. The loss of Jean is felt keenly by family, friends, former colleagues and many at the Pilgrims Hospices.

Mary Smith

- More memories of Jean in October's magazine.

St Nicholas Church Welcome Space

On September 11th the regular Welcome Space at St Nicholas is holding a fundraiser for MacMillan Cancer. Head along for cakes for sale and a raffle from 11am-2pm.

Parish Register

Baptism

Harry Tungate, 23rd August, St Nicholas, Ash

Wedding

Erin Watkins & Kyle Deane, 28th August, St Mildred's, Preston

Funerals

Jean Jones, 7th August, St Nicholas, Ash

Theresa Christie, 24th August, Elmstone Church

The Friends of Kent Churches Ride and Stride

This event takes place on Saturday 12th September, when anyone and everyone is encouraged to take part by cycling or walking between any churches of your choice and contributing to this annual fund-raising effort through sponsorship.

Ash St Nicholas Church

Full details, including sponsorship forms, are available from Peter Ewart (peterewart83@btinternet.com) or at the Church. This is a real fun day assisting a worthwhile cause.

It will be necessary to welcome and register riders and striders at St Nicholas from 10am on the day and if you can offer a "slot" in our porch of an hour or so it would be very helpful - and appreciated. Just have a word with Peter.

Preston, Elmstone & Stourmouth

This event, arranged by the Friends of Kent Churches with local organisers such as myself in Preston, Janette Nickols in Elmstone and Carol Harris-Deans in Stourmouth, is a sponsored event to raise money for the maintenance and preservation of our local churches. The aim is to walk or cycle to visit as many local churches as possible between 10am and 6pm.

Virtually all Kent churches will be open and manned on this day to receive those taking part. If anyone from Preston would like to take part, I have sponsorship forms and can be contacted on 07942 735688.

Chris Anderson

Harvest Festival Services

We will have 2 services on Sunday 20th September, one at 9am, a shortened spoken Holy Communion service, followed by our usual service at 10.30am. We do hope you will be able to join us.

As is our custom, we will be supporting the Salvation Army in Margate. We are so grateful to the village community, who give so generously to this most worthwhile of causes, and would really appreciate your help and support once again! We have a shopping list, which is as follows:

Suggested List Non-perishable foods

(Please ensure tinned products have ring pulls)

- Tinned Tuna
- Tinned fruit
- Cuppa Soups
- Pot Noodles
- Instant Coffee Sachets
- Squash

Long-dated perishable Foods

- Cereal (Individual portions/ Variety Pack)
- Jam, Marmalade, Honey Nutella Individual Portions (15g)
- Crackers
- Cheese sticks/bread sticks
- Crisps
- Cereal Bars
- Paste (Beef/Fish/ham etc.)

Suggested List Hygiene Products

- Hairbrushes/Combs
- Toothbrushes / Toothpaste (travel size)
- Sanitary products
- Travel Shampoo/Conditioner/Shower gel (Travel Size)
- Deodorant
- Wet Wipes
- Hats/gloves

There will be collection boxes in the church porch from Saturday 12th September until Sunday 20th September.

Your help and support is really appreciated.
Thank you.

Jenny Taylor



Ash Heritage Group



are hosting the monthly

Coffee Morning

at

**Ash Village Hall - Sat 5th Sept
10am to 12 noon**

**Browse our Exhibition of Everyday Histories
& you may even help us identify faces in
unknown photographs**

Meet your fellow villagers and enjoy:

Our Exhibition - Our Display of Unknown Photographs -

Tea & Coffee - Local Stalls - Raffle



Proposed Parking and Loading Restrictions in Ash

Dover District Council has restarted its consultation on proposed changes to parking and loading restrictions.

Statutory notices have been reissued, and residents now have until noon on Friday 11th September to comment on plans which include changes to loading areas in The Street and Chequer Lane and imposing a four-hour maximum stay in The Street and Queens Road car parks between 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Saturday.

Documents explaining the council's reasoning and plans showing the locations of the changes can be inspected at Dover District Council offices by appointment or online on the council's parking policy and strategy pages.

Anyone submitting an objection must explain the likely impact of the proposed restrictions on traffic for their response to be considered valid.

Responses can be emailed to parking-onstreet-consultation@dover.gov.uk or posted to: Parking Services, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PJ.

Ash Village Advent 2026

Plans are underway for a month of festive fun and charity fundraising as Ash Village Advent returns.

This year's celebrations will begin with the Tractor Parade on November 29th followed by the much-loved Advent Windows Trail and other events throughout December.

This year fund raising will support three charities: Porchlight – working with people experiencing homelessness, CALM - suicide prevention and the Deal Foodbank.

If you can offer time, ideas, baking, crafting, raffle prizes, or would like volunteer at the Tractor Parade or take part in the Advent Windows Trail please email AshVillageAdvent@gmail.com to get involved

Rebecca, Karen, Christine, Andy, Steve & Louise

— WESTMARSH & WARE VILLAGE HALL —

BBQ & DOG SHOW!

SUNDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2026 1PM START



ENTRY
£2 per Class



Best
sausage catcher!



Fluffiest
friend!



Most
obedient 'sit'!



Scruffiest
scamp!



Golden
Oldie! (8+)



Best
Turned Out!



Waggiest
Tail!



Most
beautiful
eyes!



A fun afternoon for all the family!



Save the Date - Beating of the Bounds 2026

Ash Parish Council is progressing plans for the next Beating of the Bounds, the much-loved tradition held every five years in our village.

The custom dates back centuries, when parish boundaries were physically walked to ensure they had not been moved. Today, it continues as a celebration of Ash's heritage, landscape, and community spirit.

It is expected year's walk will take place on Saturday 17th October.

The full boundary of Ash is approximately 19 miles, including several miles along the River Stour. Completing the route takes around 10 hours. Read about the 2021 walk on the Ash Parish Council website.

Further details - including how to take part - will be shared soon.

Cllr Louise Venny

Jon Smashes Arch to Arc Challenge

Jon Cook from Ash has completed an extraordinary 290-mile journey from Marble Arch in London to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, raising more than £7,100 for charities that supported him following a spinal injury.

Jon, a former football referee, was diagnosed in 2016 with rare tumours on his spinal cord. Following surgery and intensive rehabilitation, he was left with permanent nerve damage from the waist down.

The Para Arch to Arc Challenge involved an 87-mile handbike ride from London to Dover, a 21-mile row across the Channel, followed by a further 182-mile handbike ride from Calais to Paris. Jon, 46, completed it in just four days, despite soaring temperatures, ferry delays and a gruelling final leg into Paris. Jon was raising money for charities including WheelPower, Aspire, the Spinal Injuries Association and Dover Rowing Club.

Ash Level Solar Farm Appeal

An appeal against the refusal of the planning application for a solar farm at Gosshall Valley, East Street, Ash, will begin at Dover District Council on September 15th.

The application was unanimously refused by the Planning Committee in November 2025. The appeal is expected to last several days,

Sandwich Take Honours in 200th Anniversary Game

Sandwich Cricket Club emerged victorious when they faced Ash in the 200th anniversary of the first recorded game between the two clubs.

Held during Sandwich's cricket week at The Butts ground, the home team batted first, posting 206. Ash went into their innings confident of chasing down the target, but an early batting collapse left them with too much ground to make up.

Despite recovering to post a respectable total, Ash ultimately came up short. There was no disappointment, however, with Ash having won the fixture several times in recent years.

Join Chequer's Darts Marathon

Louise Venny is organising a team to take on the Macmillan Darts Marathon to raise funds for people living with cancer. The challenge - playing 12 hours of darts or 100,000 points, whichever comes first - will take place on Saturday 12th September at The Chequer Inn, 11am-11pm.

The Chequer Inn Challengers are hoping to be joined by as many people as possible on the day. You can join for 5 minutes, an hour or for as long as you want – and you don't have to be a darts expert to take part

Anyone wanting to play can sign up at the MacMillan Cancer Darts Marathon website donating a minimum of £2 towards the fundraising.

Rugby Returns to the Rec

Ash RFC start the new season with a 2-week delay decided by the RFU amid concerns over player welfare due the long hot summer.

Minis and juniors start on Sunday 6th September and the seniors begin their defence of the league title on September 26th at home to Tonbridge Juddians starting 3pm.

Senior training is on Tuesdays and Thursdays 7pm and minis meet every Sunday 10am. Both at the Rec.

All ages and abilities are welcome to come and give rugby a go. See ashrugbyclub.co.uk for more information.

Explore Ash's History – From Field to Table

From Field to Table – Ash Through the Ages is a self-guided walk as part of the national Heritage Open Days from September 11th-20th.

From Field to Table explores the lives and trades that fed a village featuring some of the people, buildings and sites the heart of Ash that formed a key part of everyday village life including bakers, butchers, grocers and publicans.

To bring the story to life, there is a self-guided QR trail around the village, explore a dedicated exhibition in the Heritage Centre (Saturdays only). A souvenir booklet will also be available to purchase.

Apply for Educational Grants

The Cartwright Godfrey and Kelsey Charity offer educational grants to individuals or organisations in the Parish of Ash.

Over the years grants have been given to the Cartwright and Kelsey school for a range of educational needs and to individuals for items such as book grants when they move to further education. The charity has also helped Scouts and Guides attend international working groups abroad.

If you would like to apply for a grant or find out more about the grants, please email Peter Chandler peterchandler1.pc@gmail.com

Ash Gardens are Blooming

Ash had two winners in the annual Dover District Council tenants and leaseholders garden competition.

Running annually from May to July, the competition includes eight categories including Best Communal Space and Best Garden Designed by a Young Person.

Best Front Garden was named as 10 Chilton Field and Second Place in the Best Back Garden was 20 Holness Road.

The Chair of DDC, Cllr Susan Beer, invited participants to the Maison Dieu for a special prize-giving ceremony to celebrate their achievements.



Ash Horticultural
Society

AUTUMN SHOW

Saturday 19th September

Classes Open to All

Photography • Cookery
Flower Arranging

Ash Village Hall

Entries 8.30 to 10.30am

Show open for viewing
from 2.30pm

Refreshments available

Prize giving at 4pm

www.ashhortsoc.org.uk

As I See It

Olly Laslett is Ash's youngest bell ringer. Here he explains why he loves the ancient art.

I'm Olly and am 14 years old. Earlier this year, I went to the yearly art exhibition held in the church (mostly because I love going up the church tower to see the fantastic views from the highest point of the village). I went into the belfry (where the bell ringers play) and met the lovely Tower Captain (Marilyn) who chimed the bell a few times and explained the basics of how a bell is rung. When I got back home I began to wonder if it would be fun to give it a go myself. About two weeks later I went to Goodnestone where a ringing competition was taking place. I met the Ash ringers' group and asked if there was any chance that I could join along to the weekly Friday afternoon practice. Yes, was the answer and I was buzzing with excitement!



Is it as difficult as it looks?

Yes! Definitely. Knowing that the bells can weigh up to a ton gave me a scare when I rang one for the first time but now after more Friday sessions I feel much more comfortable about handling the bell. Many people believe that it would be hard to pull (from the weight) - which it can be depending on which bell you ring - but the harder part is actually getting the ringing technique spot on so that the risk of injury to yourself and the bell is reduced.

What do you enjoy about it?

I enjoy ringing the bells overall but specifically because I am part of the tradition that has rung out across England for many centuries and hopefully more in the future. For this to happen though the churches need more young people to join otherwise the beautiful sounds will begin to stop. I would suggest to other people reading that you should give it a go just like I did and I am sure you would love it! Every time, before I go up the tower, I am still excited to ring them just like I was when I first went up there - It never gets boring!

- **More News from the Belfry, page 27.**

SHEEP AHOY OPEN DAY



**SUNDAY 20th SEPTEMBER
12-4PM**

GULTON FIELD, ASH

STALLS, FOOD AND FUN!

Dogs on leads welcome; toilet facilities available

The Chequer Inn Ash Society

Open Community Share Offer Launches This September

The Chequer Inn has been at the heart of our village for generations, and this September we're delighted to launch a new Open Community Share Offer, giving more people the opportunity to become part of its future.

Many residents will remember the tremendous community effort in 2018, when local people came together to save The Chequer Inn through a Community Share Offer. Thanks to that support, The Chequer Inn Ash Society (CIAS) now owns the Grade II listed building and its gardens, ensuring this much-loved village asset remains in community ownership.

The pub itself continues to be professionally run by our tenants, who provide the warm welcome and excellent hospitality we all enjoy.

Since 2018, many new people have made our village their home and may have missed the chance to become members of CIAS. This new Open Community Share Offer is an opportunity to join our growing community of members, have a stake in the future of The Chequer Inn, and help safeguard this important village landmark for generations to come.

Owning a historic Grade II listed building brings significant responsibilities and ongoing maintenance costs. The new Open Community Share Offer will help secure the long-term future of the building while also broadening our membership, encouraging more people to become involved in protecting and supporting this valuable community asset.

To find out more, including how to apply for community shares, read our Share Offer Document and Business Plan on our website at chequerinnashsociety.co.uk, or simply scan the QR code in our advertisement elsewhere in this magazine.

We hope you'll join us in helping to secure The Chequer Inn for future generations.

CIAS Committee

The Parish Magazine welcomes articles and information from groups and individuals. Share your stories, news and views.
Email rebeccasmith.ash@gmail.com or post hard copy at 69 The Street, Ash.

Ash Bowling Club

News from the Clubhouse

We hope everyone has been enjoying the very hot weather we've had recently. Some of our friendly games have had to be rescheduled as the weather has simply been too hot to play safely.

A lot has been going on over July and August. We've had our club BBQ, our Annual Indoor V Outdoor Challenge (followed by another BBQ) as well as our friendly matches and internal competitions.

There's a lot coming up in September:

The Ash Memorial Open Tournament on September 12th
Finals Days on September 18th and 20th
Alan Norris Trophy and Closing of the Green on 26th September.

But that's not it...

Indoor Short Mat bowling continues all year round with organised games on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday as well as Social Bowling on a Friday night. Coaching is available for beginners so do feel free to come along and give it a go - we know you'll enjoy it!

In the lead up to Christmas, we are planning bingo and quiz so do look out on Facebook for further details.

Our weekly Community Coffee Morning every Monday from 10am-12pm runs throughout the year - do come in and see us. It's a great way to connect with others and also learn a little about the club.

We appreciate the support from not only our village, but also from our surrounding villages. If you would like to come and see us then do drop in, you'll be made very welcome.

For pictures and further club information - visit our website
- www.ashbowlsclub.org or follow us on Facebook.

Roy Allen



AGE
Concern
SANDWICH

DEMENTIA ROADSHOW

ST GEORGES CHURCH, DEAL
FRIDAY, 2ND OCTOBER

10 - 1

**FREE
ENTRY**

**DISCOVER LOCAL SUPPORT FOR CARERS
AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA**

Join us to explore the range of support available in your community to help improve the lives of carers and those living with dementia.

Meet many local organisations offering advice, activities and practical support tailored to your needs.



Stilwell & Singleton
SOLICITORS



HI Kent
WeKare

Visiting Angels



Lifeline365



Kent Fire & Rescue Service

Ash Girlguiding

Ash Guides/Rangers

The Summer term found Rangers practising their first aid and resuscitation skills for their KSS Air Ambulance Mission badge and planning for a Ranger Camp in mid - September. Rangers are able to undertake their Lead Away Permit which would allow them to take a small group of Guides/Rangers on a camp by themselves. This camp is giving them practice in planning a camp, deciding on activities, menus and risk assessing, so lots of leadership skills. The Rangers have also enjoyed making mug cakes and blind tasting different types of chocolate and chocolate milks. Luckily, we had some fruit to taste in between!

The Guides have been designing & creating and planning which badges they would like to do next term. We have tried out the new play area on the recreation ground which is a resounding hit with the girls and have been looking after the new Guiding tree.

It was lovely to see many of the Guides taking their promise at the end of the term which is always an important moment in their guiding lives. We also had a great time with the Ash Brownies running a stall at the Ash Fayre on the recreation ground, listening to the band, eating ice-cream and promoting Guiding.

Big Gig, the Girlguiding Pop concert at Wembley is coming up in October, the coach is booked and we can't wait!

Ash Brownies

This year has been very busy for Brownies, we've had new joiners, enrolments, lots of badges and girls leaving to go up to Guides. During the hot summer term we spent time in the park working on our tree, bird and butterfly identification ending the meeting with a game of rounders.

We also visited the church and climbed up the tower to admire the views, enjoy the breeze and try to spot our homes! The girls had a fab visit and enjoyed strawberries and chocolate brownies after their climb while we learnt about the history of the church and some of its artifacts.

In July, Brown Owl and 7 of the Brownies went on a festival themed camp with Eastry Brownies. The girls had a very busy few days which included a colour run, - followed by a water fight to tidy up - a neon disco, tie dye, and of course a campfire. Where we practised our songs, toasted

marshmallows and gave pizzas on the fire a go! Lots of laughs were had over the weekend, and of course lots of biscuits and marshmallows to keep everyone fuelled!

We are looking forward to the new term in September where we will welcome 2 new Brownies to our unit.

Ash Rainbows

September will see the re-opening of Ash Rainbows! We are very excited and looking forward to welcoming 11 new Rainbows in September, with more due to join after Christmas! Rainbows will run alongside Brownies on a Thursday 5.15-6.45pm in the Village Hall.

If you are interested in supporting Ash Guiding or have girls who would like to join any of our units, Rainbows 4-7 years, Brownies 7-10 years, Guides 10-14 years or Rangers 14-18 years, please contact us, we would love to hear from you.

Have a look at our picture gallery on our Instagram's to see what we have been doing in Ash GirlGuiding.

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. Find us on Instagram: 1stashrangers and ashrainbowsandbrownies or email 1stashrangers@gmail.com

*Madelaine Lambie,
1st Ash Rangers*

Ash Wildlife Friendly Village

Citizen Science Month

Reports have been flooding in as part of our second Citizen Science Month revealing an incredible variety of wildlife across the village and surrounding countryside.

Throughout August, Ash Wildlife Friendly Village encouraged everyone to note wildlife in all its forms – from plants to birds, insects and mammals – to help build a picture of local biodiversity.

Sightings included five hedgehogs together in one garden, including a tiny juvenile, Hummingbird hawk-moths, young Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Goldfinches Greenfinches. A Common Lizard was spotted taking a drink,

while two frogs were found in a garden pond. Two bats were seen flying around a house, and Buzzards, Kestrels and Sparrowhawks have all been recorded hunting or soaring overhead.

Gardens are buzzing too, with bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers all making appearances. A full round up of sightings will follow in next month's magazine.

The Quicks Cleared

Thanks to the seven volunteers who helped to shift 8 sacks of weeds and rubbish and to the kind resident who donated a bottle of Coke to keep us cool.

The Quicks is now weed free, easy to navigate and you won't get stung by nettles. The 60-minute makeover was finished off with a glyphosate free weed killer.

There are lots of footpaths in our village that need clearing but we are a small group of volunteers and can't do it alone.

Just 60 short minutes made a huge impact. If you're inspired and have any capacity to get involved to help us support wildlife and rural living, email: ashwildlifevillage@gmail.com

Sunken Garden Eco Fair

Ash's Steve Edney will be one of the speakers at this year's Sunken Garden Eco Fair in Westbrook.

One of Kent's best-known horticulturalists, Steve, former head gardener at The Salutation in Sandwich has won multiple RHS Gold medals for his work. Steve and his partner Louise run The No Name Nursery, a sustainable plant nursery in Sandwich

He will be speaking on the topical subject of drought tolerant plants.

The Sunken Garden Eco Fair is organised by the Sunken Garden Society and will feature around 40 local and national organisations offering a day of workshops, talks and activities focused on wildlife, ecology, conservation, sustainable gardening and living.

Visitors will be able to discover everything from bee keeping and foraging to bike repairs, growing edible plants and protecting local wildlife. Steve's talk is part of a programme that also includes speakers from Quex Farms on regenerative farming and wildlife campaigner Nik Mitchell.

The Sunken Garden Eco Fair takes place from 11.30am to 4pm on Saturday 20th September at the Sunken Garden, Royal Esplanade, Westbrook. Entry to the fair is free, although some talks and workshops are ticketed, with fees helping to cover the event and the upkeep of the garden.

For more information and booking details, visit www.thesunkengarden.co.uk

News from the Belfry

While Eastry's bells are out of action we have been using Preston and recently Goodnestone to allow us to make progress with the more advanced members of our band but on August 17 we had the pleasure of holding our Monday morning practice in our own tower where we were able to ring all 10 of our bells (although they are hard work). Preston and Goodnestone only have 6 bells in the towers so it does limit us to what we can teach.

Going into September we needed to find a new venue for our Monday ringing and we do now have a new, semi-permanent venue using the Waterloo Tower in Quex Park. The tower is home to a ring of 12 bells and it's the Powell-Cotton family mausoleum, - no complaints about us ringing from the Powell-Cottons! It is a very unique place and we are looking forward to our new temporary tower.

Fridays practice at Ash is still very much focused on our new ringers. Monday ringers all come along on Fridays to support our ongoing teaching.

Sunday service ringing is twofold. The first few lots of ringing are done by new ringers. The "service touch" by those who ring on Monday mornings.

Marilyn Barden

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www.chequerinnashsociety.co.uk

Please note: The Chequer Inn Ash Society (CIAS) owns this grade II listed building, and garden, and leases the property to professional tenants to run the pub business. Buying shares in CIAS does not mean buying into the business.



Ash Horticultural Society

Autumn Show

The Autumn Show is on Saturday 19th September at Ash Village Hall. Open Classes are open to all, so whether you are a member or not, why not have a go? There are classes to suit a range of interests, including:

- Photography
- Cookery
- Flower Arranging
- Size & Shape Matters

Entries should be brought to the hall between 8.30am and 10.30am. The show will open for everyone to view the exhibits from 2.30pm.

Refreshments will be available, and the prize giving will take place at 4pm. The deadline for free entries is Friday 18th September at 2pm.

For full details of classes, rules and cups to be awarded, visit:

www.ashhortsoc.org.uk

Question time with Lou, Steve and Gary

One of the best attendances of the year assembled for this meeting; not surprisingly, given the wealth of practical advice on offer, and who was giving it: Steve Edney, long-time patron of the Society, Louise Dowle, joint proprietor with Steve of the No Name Nursery in Sandwich and Gary Bradbury, Chair of the AHS committee, an agronomist with decades of experience. Here is a summary of the questions from the audience and the panel's responses.

What, if anything, can be done about horsetails (aka mares' tails)?

The short answer to the question of is there a cure is No. One or two companies have products which they claim can deal with these invasive plants, eg Neudorf's 'Super-fast long-lasting weedkiller', which shows horsetail on the label. But without chemicals, every time you see it growing, pull it up or quickly cut off the shoot. The main problem is that the roots go very deep - they have even been found in coalmines, apparently. Most importantly, don't let the plants produce spores. Thanet weed, which propagates itself from its roots, is dealt with in a similar way. Herbicides can work, as it has a coarse leaf, unlike horsetails, which have a silica coating so that liquid runs off them. Bindweed can also be controlled like this; a tip from Wisley was to put canes in the ground for it to grow up, then paint herbicide on it, which avoids spray drift.

Can apricots be successfully grown around here?

Yes. But variety is important. Steve and Lou have grown King Alfred and Tomcot and last year got around 20kg. This year has been poor in

comparison. They are best grown against a sunny sheltered wall. They flower early, before many flying insects are around, so you may have to use hand pollination. Stone fruit trees such as these, and also plums and cherries, need summer pruning, to alleviate bacterial infection. This is best done before the end of July, when it is dry, never during or after rain. Pruning tools should be cleaned before use, and between trees.

Any tips for plants that will thrive in the changing climate?

The trend is for wetter winters and hotter summers with more intense and frequent heatwaves. At The Land they have planted a grove of trees from around the world, to see which ones will thrive (and which won't). A drooping conifer succumbed to the winter wet, after six years. One tree that is promising is the Golden Rain Tree, which is drought tolerant and needs very little soil. There is a book, *Drought friendly plants* (by Tony Hall), and Beth Chatto's dry garden book; most of the plants featured in this will grow well in this area. Instead of just thinking about the Mediterranean/dry garden scheme though, it is possible to engineer good conditions for a cottage garden using trees and shrubs to provide shade and lower the temperature. An American book, *Planting in a post-wild world*, contains a lot of useful information about establishing thriving plant communities in these conditions. Steve stressed the need to acknowledge the interaction between soil type and climate when choosing plants. Lou recommended going to specialist nurseries for advice, and to buy online. Gary urged us to plant more trees to create dappled shade.

Silver birches are very fast growing. Do they need to be removed from a garden?

They are a native British tree. They are susceptible to diseases and rotting and can become unstable as a result. They must be pruned only in summer. It is a good idea to raise the canopy by removing lower branches, to allow the wind to blow through and produce less dense shade. It is very easy to get this wrong, so consult an arboriculturist. Other kinds of veteran trees can be left after damaged parts are removed: these parts can act as wildlife havens. Make sure your house insurance covers your trees: you are liable if one falls over and damages someone else's property.

Vermiculite and Perlite: what is the difference between them and how should we best use them?

There's no consensus on this: people use them differently. Lou uses Perlite for cuttings and Vermiculite for seed sowing, to top off the seed

tray when you might need to let light in. Steve agreed with this. Gary added that he uses Perlite a lot, particularly early in the year for seed sowing, to get some more air in the mix. Vermiculite is much more water retentive. Both aid in drainage, particularly with peat-free compost.

How best to prune plants such as Ceanothus.

Ceanothus should only be lightly pruned, straight after flowering: too much can kill them. Choisyas, being fast growing, can be pruned at any time. Older shrubs are less resilient to hard pruning. Mulching helps them to recover well. Lou urged the audience to invest in a pruning book, such as the RHS pruning and training book, to avoid costly mistakes.

Black patches of rot at the end of tomatoes.

This is blossom end rot and has been a particular problem this year. It results from calcium deficiency in the growing cells. On very hot days, plants partially shut down, which slows the transport of calcium through the sap and it does not reach the further distant parts of the young fruits. It is often a problem with smaller greenhouses, which should be shaded in some way; they are too short, so the hot air is trapped too near the trusses. Misting the plants can help. Varieties with bigger fruit can be more susceptible.

Could the panel recommend plants for a raised bed that would not grow too tall (>1m)?

It is in full sun most of the day. Berberis is possible, and useful as a barrier. For toughness, pyrocantha: it is a very useful barrier, and provides spring flowers and autumn berries, which attract bees and birds. It is very easy to grow and to find. A good arrangement is to pick three plants and plant them in threes, for added interest. An ornamental grass, such as the African Love Grass, would complement these two shrubs. It has a scent, like coriander. Plant in the autumn and mulch well. Neil Lucas's book, *Grasses for gardens and landscapes*, is a good resource.

Also at this meeting, the results of the **potato trial** were announced. There were twelve entries. The highest yield was achieved by Helen Higginson with 2.93 Kg. Runner-up was Sue Anstey (1.9Kg), 3rd place Janet Searle (1.5Kg). Gary advised that the number of shoots (chits) remixing on each seed potato when you plant it determined the size of the potatoes produced: the more that are left on, the more smaller tubers you will get.

Ken Manktelow

Friends of Elmstone and Preston Churches

St Mildred's

Family Service – August: The well-attended Family Service, with Holy Communion and a Baptism, was taken by Anne Talbert. The children happily created papercraft items and made some lavender bags, all of which were shown to the congregation at the end of the Service.

Family Service - Sunday 13th September: This service will be taken by Stefan Thomas, the Area Dean, Eastbridge.

Elmstone Church

Harvest Service - Sunday 20th September, 10.30am: The Service of the Word will be taken by Anne Talbert and Nick Hassall. There will also be a Baptism during the service.

We would welcome donations of produce and dry goods which will be taken to Age Concern, Sandwich.

Happy Hours

The next two dates are Fridays 4th September and 2nd October, from 6.30pm, on Church Meadow, weather permitting, otherwise in the Church. Everyone is welcome.

Our Services for September

1st Sunday – 6th September - Holy Communion, Elmstone, 10.30am

2nd Sunday – 13th September - Family Service, Preston, 10.30am

3rd Sunday – 20th September - Harvest Service with Baptism, Elmstone, 10.30am

Refreshments are normally served after all our morning services.

Elizabeth Timms

The Arts Society Sandwich

Autumn Programme

After an extraordinary summer, we are delighted to be returning to the Guildhall Sandwich to complete our 2026 lecture programme.

Our autumn programme has plenty to look forward to, including a special Sandwich Arts Week (SAW) bonus lecture, which we hope will attract strong support from both members and non-members. (Please note that this is a paid for event for members and visitors)

Guests and non-members are very welcome at all TASS lectures. If you are planning to join us more than once, why not purchase our handy bag of three guest tokens for £18? Alternatively, you can simply pay £7 on the door while you consider society membership for 2027!

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Guildhall for another season of fascinating lectures, lively company and a shared appreciation of the arts.

- Monday 7th September – The Women’s Orchestra of Auschwitz: A Story of Survival and Music with Anne Sebba
- Monday 14th September - Famous female artists who changed the Art World with Crystal D Evans *This is a SAW lecture 7:30pm start, £8 on the door includes complementary glass of wine.*
- Monday 5th October – Vincent in Ramsgate: Van Gogh in England with Jacqui Ansell
- Monday 2nd November – Carry On Up the Khyber: Movies and the End of an Empire with Colin Shindler
- Monday 7th December - E H Shepard's Christmas (Illustrator of Winnie-the-Pooh) with James Campbell

Vicki Bates

Age Concern Sandwich

Dementia Roadshow

Age Concern Sandwich and The Sunflower Centre are bringing a Dementia Roadshow to St George’s Church, Deal, on Friday 2nd October, from 10am to 1pm.

The free event is for people living with dementia, carers, family members and anyone who would like to find out more about the support available locally.

A wide range of organisations will be there to offer friendly advice, information, activities and practical support. It is a great opportunity to meet local services face to face, ask questions and discover help that you may not have known was available.

Whether dementia is already part of your life, you are supporting someone else, or you simply want to be better informed, you are very welcome to come along.

Suzanne Winham



St James' Church, Staple

Flower Festival

"Through the Ages"

*Including displays of old photographs
highlighting the history of Staple and
surrounding villages*

Saturday 12 September 2026

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday 13 September 2026

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

*Floral displays provided by
local residents and businesses*

Refreshments available

Free Entry
Donations Welcome

Garden Jottings for September

This August as you all know has been the hottest and driest for as long as we can remember. Strong winds have also added to the dehydration. 1976 I can recall was similar but not so prolonged and disastrous. Hopefully we'll be back to normal by the time you read this article, but I wonder how many of our garden plants will be able to recover? Lawns will always revive but border plants and tender shrubs have had such a baking that I am fearful for their recovery.

I will say that Roses have been especially wonderful as have Hibiscus and Lavatera bushes. Wisteria, strangely, has had a second lovely array of blossom and leaf and will need much pruning back after the blooms fade. Pelargoniums (geraniums), as always, have given a good display along with blue Ageratum and white Marguerites. They have survived with minimal moisture managing to give a brave show in pots and troughs.

So, where to start - saving and reusing water should be at a premium. Obviously pots and greenhouses need a prolific amount of water so water pots carefully putting hose pipe or spout under leaves and really soak most needed areas every few days rather than a sprinkle each day. If water is really well applied it will go right down into the roots pulling them down, while a sparse dribble only brings roots to the surface which will then be baked and shrivelled in the heat of the sun. If possible, move pots into a shady position. They can withstand half a day in the sun but will surely perish if left baking all day. A suggestion was given to plant up perennials - readily available in garden centres - in pots. This sounds an ideal way of brightening beds and borders and is more sustainable than annuals but how can you dig a hole let alone water it and continue to give it all the extra moisture and attention needed to keep it alive and flourishing? This solution is all well and good if we get an appreciable quality of rain in the next couple of weeks and then the above idea may be feasible.

In the meantime, deadhead and shorten or remove stems on any dried or desiccated perennials, remove faded blooms on roses and prune at the same time to keep a good open shape. Cut back Lavender now to give time to make a little new foliage to cloak the stems. Don't cut too hard into old wood as they won't regrow very successfully. Cuttings of Lavender and Pinks will take in early September planted into pots of ½ coarse sand ½ potting compost. Pentstemons and any other plants that are not fully hardy are worth propagating in this way. Lavatera and small shrubby grey

leaved white Marguerite daisies which tend to go woody and die off after a few years are well worth growing from cuttings to have new plants as replacements. Dahlias and Fuchsias will give some late colour along with Michaelmas Daisies, Rudbeckias and Gaillardias. Look at your borders and see where there are gaps and the need for late colour. Japanese Anemones, Sedums, Heleniums and Chrysanthemums will all be good additions for next year. It is a thought to grow some hardy annuals to make sturdy plants to bloom earlier next year such as Clarkia, Godetia, Candytuft, Pot Marigolds and Antirrhinums. These should withstand the Winter as we don't seem to have really severe Winter weather now, however judicious placing of fleece over the area will ward off all but the most harsh weather.

Biennials such as Sweet Williams, Wallflowers, Hollyhocks etc sown in July should be making good plants if you have already pricked them out in an area of the vegetable plot. Do keep these small plants well weeded as they can soon be overwhelmed and which will stunt their growth.

Apple trees can be trimmed in late August/September taking back any overlong sideshoots being careful of any remaining fruit on the tree. However this summer, with such hot days, apples are ripening earlier and Autumn raspberries also giving good crop. Early windfall apples chopped and cooked go well with lovely blackberries from the hedgerows. A few of any soft fruit with a little apple make a lovely compote when gently poached with little sugar and water. If there is too much juice, it can be thickened with a little cornflour but of course the best dessert at this time of the year is summer pudding and cream!

Keep checking brassicas for caterpillars. Butterflies seem to find their way through even the best fastened and finest netting and cause devastation very quickly. Keep picking beans and tomatoes regularly to encourage more. Herbs can be tied into bunches and hung up to dry when they can be crushed and put into jars. Mint, chives and parsley can be potted up to grow for winter in a cold frame or greenhouse. I don't find these grow very well on my kitchen window sill where I would like them to but other people may be luckier than me!

Plant-up cauliflower, spring cabbage and lettuce where potatoes and onions have been harvested. If your French or runner beans finish cropping in spite of watering regularly spraying blossoms and mulching plants, save some pods of beans to dry for next year's crop. Try to leave

some big coarse old pods hanging on the plant to mature before removing them to dry off.

Collect seeds of Hollyhocks, Poppies, Nigella (love in a mist) and dry them in paper bags hanging them upside down to transfer to used envelopes after labelling and storing somewhere dry. Start looking for bulbs to buy. Daffodils need to be planted at the end of the month and into October. Tulips are to be planted later on into November. Most bulbs will flower well even if planted rather late. The flowers will arrive later on the Spring. Crocus, Snowdrops and Aconites can be planted this month. These look good around the base of trees and shrubs near front or back doors and pathways near the house. Hedges can be cut back now and some mulch can be placed along the route to conserve moisture and deter weeds. Keep an eye out for Ivy and wild Roses that can easily grow amongst the hedge and take over if not removed.

These notes are what we should be able to undertake at this time of year in a normal season. Who knows what the next few weeks will bring but I have a firm conviction that, as always, whatever goes around comes around. We should be aware of the changing climate and try to adapt and plant accordingly and try to keep enjoying all types of plants in our gardens many of which I hope will have survived the harsh few weeks to flourish anew.

Christine Brown, President, Ash Horticultural Society

Stories from the Archives (76)

The Jewel in Ash's Crown

Not many parishes in the eastern half of Kent are as big as Ash. For the seven and a half centuries of its existence (and, of course, even before then) these 7,000 acres have witnessed every aspect of history, whether local or national, and whether social, agricultural, demographic, religious, economic or military. It has been said that "Whatever happened to England happened to Kent first" because the county's geographical position ensured Kent was always in the vanguard of change, and our own little (or not so little) plot in this corner of the county has always been at the cutting edge, because so many new developments have arrived here from the continent.

We see the evidence of this wherever we look. Even before the Romans, local people here traded with overseas merchants and their wares and ideas influenced local life. After nearly four centuries of Roman domination, several hundred years of immigration from Scandinavia and

northern Europe were to leave their mark, not least in our own Jutish cemetery at Guilton. The Norman Conquest brought a new local nobility, new customs and laws and plenty of castles, not to mention an architectural style that prompted the building of a new generation of churches. Our local roads fan out from Dover and Sandwich, a legacy of the early routes between the continent and London via Canterbury and Rochester, along which kings, crusaders and an archbishop made their way through Ash when Sandwich was England's second port and fourth largest town.

The Flemings, Walloons, Dutch and French, whom we lump together with the name of Huguenots, came in two massive influxes in the Tudor and Stuart centuries, transforming Sandwich and its hinterland. To this day, their land reclamation skills, their brick-making, their weaving, their market-gardening, their architectural style and their artistry are evident everywhere in Ash, Sandwich and the surrounding countryside, as are their family and place names. Military defences from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries abound everywhere, a reminder of the ambitions of successive would-be invaders of England via Kent. So our burial grounds, our parish church, our ruined chapels, our medieval manor houses, our farms and small holdings, our redoubts and pillboxes – even our parish boundary, where the once mighty Wantsum Channel now masquerades as the meandering River Stour – remind us of an illustrious past. And yet ...

And yet, this huge parish of Ash boasts yet another jewel in our crown, a much older and a much larger feature than anything so far mentioned. We find it in the far flung eastern regions of our parish – the biggest structure ever built here and the oldest in Ash. It is the Roman fort at Richborough – Rutupiae or Portus Ritupis – whose gigantic stone walls were erected in the 270s AD and marked not only Rome's most important military and civilian establishment in their imperial Britannia, but also their first and their last presence in this farthest outpost of their empire. In just 17 years it will be exactly two millennia since Roman legions came ashore to establish their mastery in this land. Richborough was their invasion beachhead, their initial bridgehead, their early centre of operations, their civil service HQ, their commissariat and supply store, their first port, their first transport hub, their first town here and, arrogantly, their grandest boast. A massive triumphal arch announced to all those approaching by sea that this was the gateway to imperial Rome's farthest possession. This Rutupiae was also, on their abandonment of Britannia in around 410 AD, their last redoubt, their fallback position through which their retreating

legions made for the transport ships. It was where the last Roman soldier turned out the light. A remarkably historic place and an unforgettable sight on its prominent brow. And it's all here in Ash.

The people of Ash have always known this place. The Saxons sheltered under its walls and traded from it. Medieval Ash and Sandwich couldn't resist lifting a few(?) stones with which to build or restore their manors and churches. The sea abandoned the fort and, while doing so, took some with it. Since 1282 it has been – officially – part of Ash. The walls became more ruinous and their familiarity doubtless taken for granted but, eventually, the site attracted the interest of those fascinated by antiquity. Early visitors, even learned ones, were less knowledgeable than later scholars but they had none of the advantages of more modern historians and archaeologists, who – generation by generation - stand on the shoulders of those who've been before.

John Leland's travels throughout England in the 1530s and '40s were at the behest of Henry VIII and his antiquarian work became a basis for later local historians. In his five-volume *Itinerary* he remarked that he found more Roman coins here than at any other site in England, noting that local farmers routinely ploughed them up. He was highly impressed by the walls' dimensions and fascinated by the Roman tiles set into them, calling them "Briton bricks." Below the foundations of the former huge triumphal arch, he entered a sort of hollow and examined this "cave" by candlelight. He also appears to have acquired some artefacts from a hermit living on the site.

Half a century or so later another early historian of Britain, William Camden, embarked on a similar series of journeys, culminating in the publication of his topographical and historical work, *Britannia*, which included his report on Richborough. He was interested in the use put to the site by the post-Roman societies here, where Saxons and Jutes had settled. Noting not only that the ground had effectively swallowed up much of the remaining stone buildings during the previous thousand years or so, he also recognised the importance of crop marks in helping to detect evidence of former buildings. Ahead of his time, then! By the late 17th century this site was attracting the interest of an increasing number of antiquaries, among them the odd clergyman or two. One wonders where they stayed when exploring here: the Chequer, the Lion, the Ship – or perhaps in the Cinque Port of Sandwich? The Suffolk preacher, John Batteley, became Rector of Adisham in 1684 and got to know the Richborough ruins well. After another spell in East Anglia, he

was appointed Archdeacon of Canterbury in 1688. Amassing a collection of coins and other Roman finds from Richborough and elsewhere locally, his study of the fort was published in his *Antiquitates Rutupinae* in 1711, three years after his death. This was influential and it is highly likely that one of the most eminent antiquarians of the 18th century, William Stukely (later also a medical doctor and Anglican priest) was familiar with it.

Stukely is better known for his studies of Stonehenge and Avebury, but his early visit to Richborough in 1716 resulted in further important advances in the understanding of this historic site. He not only made the first published sketch of the fort but was also the very first to identify the amphitheatre nearby, noting the lie of the ground above this feature. Over a century later, Charles Roach Smith (soon to be closely associated with the famous Jutish cemetery at Gilton) and his friend William Rolfe, a Mayor of Sandwich and local antiquarian, were exploring at Richborough when they were prompted to dig at the amphitheatre site. Their successful excavations uncovered a curved Roman wall which was eventually revealed to be the arena's perimeter, together with gateways. Their publication of these and other findings at the site contributed to a better understanding of the Roman presence here.

The major excavations of the 1920s and '30s by Joscelyn Plunket Bushe-Fox were by far the most extensive carried out to date, and his research has been published by the Society of Antiquaries of London in a series of reports eventually concluded by Sir Barry Cunliffe. In addition, a very extensive collection of his original notes and photographs survives unpublished. Historic England's 2021 excavation of the amphitheatre produced even more exciting discoveries and the accumulated knowledge and understanding of the nature, character and importance of the fort, town and amphitheatre are explained in English Heritage's highly impressive museum display. Other scholars, too, have published their work on Richborough in recent decades.

The museum and the accumulated research bring us right up to date with a 20th and 21st century understanding of all that went on here nearly two millennia ago. Are we not all remarkably fortunate to live in a vast, ancient parish that not only contains a wealth of historical features but also the most important Roman site in England?

Peter Ewart

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If you need support for any of the below (or related), from someone who is honest, trustworthy and reliable with excellent references to support you, I can help.

I have 18 years of professional experience with all ages and difficulties, from birth to adults and have been a foster carer in my previous career (DBS up to date)

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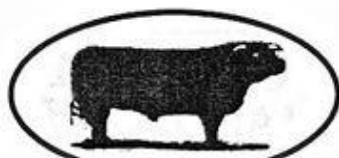
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