

NEWSLETTER

FROM THE WELL HILL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

December 2010

RESIDENTS CAROL SERVICE

The WHRA Carol Service will be on Tuesday 21st December from 7.45 pm in the Mission Church.

All are welcome whatever your faith. Meet and chat with your neighbours and enjoy coffee and a mince pie afterwards. This is always a popular event and a lovely way to start the Christmas season. It will also be a good time to say goodbye to Canon Leslie Virgo who will be retiring very soon.

CAROL SINGERS NEEDED

Every year the Residents Association organises a traditional carol service one evening before Christmas at Well Hill Mission Church. Anne Ireland organises a small group of singers to form a choir to perform three or four carols on their own in addition to the carols that everyone sings. If you are a singer and would like to join this small group (there are usually about 6 to 8 of them), you would be very welcome. They use the Carols for Choirs green book and/or the 100 Best Carols, and aim to do four-part harmony (SATB), or, if they have enough singers, may select a 5-part carol. They rehearse for an hour or so on the evening of the service. If you would like to sing with the choir then please contact Anne Ireland, on either anne@westacre.eclipse.co.uk or 01959 534467.

HELP THE POLICE TO HELP US

Metal thefts are occurring across the country and are thought to be because of the increase in the scrap value of metal. There have recently been thefts from substations and electricity poles in many places close to Well Hill, including Eynsford, Farningham, and Swanley. Electrical cable is targeted because of its copper wire core. Our part of Kent has seen a lot of these thefts. BT installations or electricity sub-stations in ru-

ral locations are targeted because the chance of thieves being disturbed or observed is not high. If cable is taken the outer cover will be burnt off leaving the copper.

The Police ask that you report any suspicious activity to them; including people working at the road side with vehicles that don't have any sign writing or are not displaying warning signs of their activity; anyone seen pumping out water from a manhole, or fires being lit in fields close to the road side. If you believe that a crime is in progress call 999.

It is important that the police are informed of suspicious activity as, if cable is stolen, it can leave an area without electricity or telephone for several days.

With high scrap metal prices, criminals are also stealing catalytic converters in areas around Well Hill. If you see any suspicious activity - for example an unmarked van with someone under a vehicle, contact the police.

SUSPECT VEHICLE

Police are keen to trace a vehicle suspected of being used by potential thieves. The vehicle registration is RF04 HLK. It is a black Mitsubishi L200 pick up.

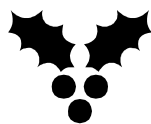
If you see this vehicle in the vicinity please contact the police on 01622 690690.

REFUSE COLLECTION

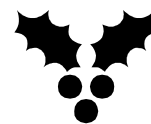
Over the Christmas and New Year holidays, refuse collection throughout the Sevenoaks District are as follows:

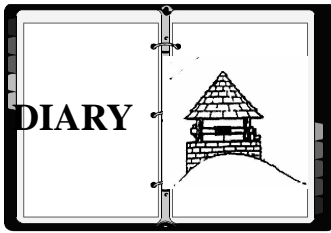
- Monday 27 December and Monday 3 January - Next collection Tuesday 4 Jan
- Friday 31 December - No change

The revised collection times for the London Borough of Bromley are unknown at the time of going to press.

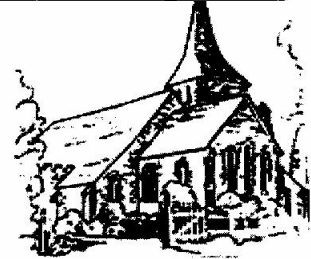


The committee wishes all residents a
**MERRY CHRISTMAS &
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**





CHURCH SERVICES



Thursday 9th December— Choir singing

Carols—at the Five Bells

Tuesday 14th December—Carols around the

Christmas Tree outside the Five Bells

Saturday 18th December—Father Christmas

at the Five Bells 3-5pm

Sunday 20th December—Family Carol

Service at the Well Hill Mission Church

Tuesday 21st December—Residents Carol

Service at the Well Hill Mission Church

7:45pm

Wednesday 22nd December—Get together at

Parish Rooms, Skeet Lane 7:30pm

ST MARTINS. CHELSEFIELD.

8.00am Holy Communion

9.45am Family Service (not 5th Sunday)

11.00am Holy Communion (1,3rd,5th Sundays)

11.00am Matins (2nd & 4th Sundays)

6.30pm Evensong

Rector of Chelsfield and Advisor in Pastoral Care
& Counselling for the Diocese of Rochester is:

Canon Leslie Virgo

The Rectory

Skibbs Lane

Chelsfield

BR6 7RH

CONGRATULATIONS

To Emma and James on Well Hill

Lane, on the arrival of their daughter

Amelia in August.



WELL HILL MISSION CHURCH



09.45am Morning Prayers (1st Sunday)

09.45am Holy Communion (3rd Sunday)

A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR

After 37 years as Rector of St. Martins I shall be retiring on the 31st January. I will not be taking services after the end of December. I invite you to the Christmas Services : the Christingle on the 24th at 5 pm; Well Hill communion on 24th 7 p.m. Midnight Mass at St. Martins 11.30 pm. 11 am Christmas Party Service 25th.

'Goodbye, and thanks for all the fish' *Leslie Virgo, Rector for the Parish of Chelsfield and Well Hill.*

BT SUPER FAST BROADBAND

Over the next five years BT is rolling out super fast fibre optic broadband across the UK. The five areas with the largest percentage of votes by December 31st 2010 will win the chance to bring super fast broadband to their area.

Cast a vote for super fast broadband to your home at <http://www.racetoinfinity.bt.com/>.

Website - visit the website <http://www.whra.org.uk>



WHRA Committee

Chairperson & Correspondence -
Nick Coulson (01959 532885)

•Vice-chairman & •Minutes Secretary -
Jean Crossfield (01959 534288)

•Treasurer -
Mike Peek (01959 533339)

•Neighbourhood Watch

Tony Barton (01959 534723)

Mike Sharp (01959 533600)

Terry Sparkes (01689 823749)

Chris Courtney (01959 535022)

Jill Eldridge (01959 533971)

PRODUCE SHOW

On the 4th of September another successful produce show was held in Chelsfield village hall.

The number of entrants was up by one from 2009 at 51 people. There were several new faces among these. Unfortunately very few children entered despite several categories being specifically for children.

The number of different entries was up from 260 to over 280.

Judging is carried out by visiting experts in their field. Leslie Virgo presented the prizes including the best in show which he chooses. He always finds this very difficult as such a wide range of talents are represented.

Fruit – Vegetables – Flowers – Photos –
Baking – Crafts – Wine

As well as 1st 2nd and 3rd places for each category there are various cups awarded for specific categories.

The trophies were awarded as follows:

- Knox Cunningham Cup – Household with highest number of points in adult sections—
Lyn Stone
- Well Hill Cup – Household with highest

number of points in all classes—Coulson family

- Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee – Highest points other than above—Patricia Peek
- Allotment Cup – Highest number of points in vegetable class—Trevor Weeden
- Children's Cup – Alex Nikodem
- Wine Club Tankard – Andy Roberts
- Country Fare Cup – Lyn Stone
- Triss & John Cottenden Flower Trophy—
Julia Sparkes
- Tom Castleton Rose Bowl – Best garden in Chelsfield village—John & Jenny Leach
- Ken Pickering -Best in Show—Gerda & Alex Nikodem

Those who know the families in this area will have been able to work out that Well Hill residents won 7 of the 9 cups they were eligible for while the good folk of Chelsfield village won 2.

FASTER BROADBAND

Progress is being made to bring faster Broadband into Well Hill and Park Gates. As reported in the previous Newsletter, three companies were short-listed from their original proposals. They have each given presentations to a group of representatives from the two parishes who are now considering the way forward.

It is hoped to announce the preferred company by January 2011. Depending on the company chosen, faster (more than 3Mb/s) could be delivered in 2011 or 2012.

WATER AND ICE ON ROCK HILL

On a very cold Friday, the 26th November, when there was slushy ice near the top of Rock Hill, representatives from Well Hill met with Kent Highways and Cllr Roger Gough to assess the situation. From the discussions a scheme will be put forward to put in proper drainage for the Chelsfield side of Rock Hill to prevent water running down Rock Hill and turning to ice. However, the scheme would be expensive and, in the current economic climate, may take many years to be implemented.

Meanwhile, Cllr Roger Gough will see if Rock Hill can be given a higher priority when roads are salted.



CHAIRMANS LETTER

Once again winter has arrived on the Hill, and another year draws to a close. I'm not a fan of the winter, I hate hanging around railway stations in the dark with cold feet, and scraping ice off the windscreen before I can set off to work, only to find its misted up again before I reach the end of the driveway. And I guess I'm not the only one, so basically the purpose of the pre-Christmas Newsletter, should be to spread a little cheer with some witty anecdote, or some startling revelation.

Trouble is, I haven't really done anything new or interesting. Well, I grew a lot of vegetables, I even won a cup. But that's hardly going to get anyone turning off the X factor is it? Quite unjust I'd like to point out, growing the biggest marrow is not as easy as you might think. Still watching a marrow grow is probably more interesting than the X factor. I did pick up a couple of market gardener tips that I could share with you though. 1. Do not wash the inside of a glass house with a power washer. 2. If you harvest hot chillies, in your now newly glazed greenhouse, do wash your hands before handling anything sensitive. I won't go into detail, Jean Crossfield censors that kind of thing. But suffice to say you will only do it once. You can imagine.

I used to do lots of interesting things, but it seems I am middle aged now. Although I know its not compulsory to become a boring old codger, finding the time, well that's something else. So I have decided to indulge in a hobby worthy of my age. It occurred to me at the produce show, that we have a bit of a weak showing on the wine front. I have decided as Chairman that this will not do and now have various demijohns of noxious looking potions bubbling away under the stairs. So far it seems to be going ok, but then I don't really have a clue what I am at. Mr Barry Smith kindly donated some grapes which I had my daughter tread in a baby bath, it looks a bit brown and muddy at the moment. But I have convinced myself this is normal. Anyone got any Demi Johns and those bubble lock thingies they don't want then I'm your man. We can't have those old luses down in Chelsfield having it their own way every year. You will be amazed at the stuff you can ferment. Basically if it's edible you can make booze out of it. I think I have finally found my calling after all these years.

On another matter, I would like to appeal for some volunteers. The footpath down from Well Hill Lane designated "SR3A" has become very overgrown to the point it cannot be utilised. The Council say they are obliged to only clear the first 5 yards of it or something like that. Otherwise its normally for the land owner to keep it clear. However there doesn't seem to be much interest in keeping it open at all. I would like to point out that it came to my attention recently that the AONB is an amenity for us all, but if footpaths are not kept open it can compromise some parts of the AONB into being suitable for development. Now we can harangue the council to protect our surroundings, or we can just go down there with some machete's and brush cutters and get on with it. I was proposing that this be done sometime before spring so as not to disturb nesting birds. If we could get a few of us together then it would not take more than a mornings work. I was going to suggest the weekend of January 22-23. If you would like to volunteer – do give me a call one evening on 01959 532 885.

Apart from that do note the Christmas Carol Service dates, and I do hope to see you there. Wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year from the Coulson family and all my colleagues on the Residents association.

MOBILE HOMES IN WELL HILL

Many of you will be wondering what the outcome was of the recent Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for Mobile homes and Caravans in the field off Rock Hill.

The decision has been delayed by a legal challenge to the Government's plan to abolish the South East Plan. This plan gave guidance on the number and location of such sites across the South East of England (not just Kent). The decision to abolish this left all councils having to re-think their position.

The challenge was successful and the South East Plan has been re-instated. This should mean that a decision on the Appeal can be made in the near future.

FREIGHTER

Shoreham Parish Council will continue to provide the Saturday freighter service at Well Hill. It operates on the third Saturday in January, April, July and October with the following schedule:-

<i>Forge Way Shoreham</i>	<i>9.15-10.00</i>
<i>Badgers Road Badgers Mount</i>	<i>10.15-11.00</i>
<i>Well Hill</i>	<i>11.15 to 12.00</i>

The next visit will be on Saturday 16 January 2010.

PACT DISBANDED

PACT (Partners and Communities Together) for Well Hill and Cockerhurst has been disbanded. This does not include Park Gate which is covered by the Crockenhill PACT.

PACT included local residents and representatives from bodies such as the local council and the police.

In many ways PACT duplicated work that was carried out by the Parish Council. PACT raised expectations that it could achieve many things but in reality was no more than a talking shop and was not an effective use of peoples' time.

Shoreham Council and Police members of PACT do wish to keep in touch with residents and will be pleased to send a representative to Resident Association meetings if this is requested. Our PCSO, Alan Hearn, will be attending WHRA committee meetings to keep abreast of issues that matter to the Well Hill area.

Shoreham Parish Council, which covers Cockerhurst and Well Hill, is very grateful to everyone for their support and notes that some

actions have been achieved albeit fairly slowly. Unfortunately that is often the way with local government.

POLICE COVER

PC Fran Croucher, who used to be our neighbourhood PC, is awaiting trial which is scheduled for February 2011. She was allegedly attacked back in January 2010 but was later suspended on accusations that she had fabricated the event. Because of the way Kent Police must not jeopardise the court case, our current neighbourhood PC - Brian Smith - is still regarded as being on temporary assignment until the conclusion of the court case. In a recent meeting between Kent Police and Shoreham Parish Council representatives it was made clear that, whatever the results of the case, Fran will not come back to this area but would be assigned elsewhere. Several officers from this area will be giving evidence against Fran and it would not be good for effective policing.

Kent Police are facing cuts but expect them to be in management grades. They want to prioritise Neighbourhood Policing so our PC and PCSO appear safe for the time being.

Both DC Brian Smith and PCSO Alan Hearn have settled into their roles and are very happy to be working in our area. Brian has spent many years as a Detective Constable but now wants to work as a PC. They hope to attend most Saturday freighter collections but you can contact them on:

DC Brian Smith	07972 004450
PCSO Alan Hearn	07772 225965

ARRESTS IN WELL HILL

On 12th November 2 males were arrested in Well Hill on suspicion of burglary and theft. They were later charged with these offences. Their vehicle, a white Ford Transit registration number S973 SHL, was confiscated.

OTHER CRIMES IN WELL HILL

Since May, the police are aware of two burglaries from a shed and a stable. They are aware of 4 thefts of: stable doors, a chain harrow, lead from a roof and transformers. A blue and white flat bed truck was involved in the last theft.

If you are aware of other thefts, please let PCSO Alan know—otherwise the police will not be looking out for the criminals.

The day has come as I knew it would, when my dear friend Leslie Virgo should choose to retire and leave this parish. Now I am not a particularly religious man, (whatever that means) but Jean Crossfield has asked me, as Leslie is my friend, to write a few lines for this newsletter. So as I stare at this blank sheet of paper I wonder what I could write to give those of you, who may or may not know Leslie, an interesting insight into our Vicar.

I have lived in this area for almost 60 years and have seen many people come and go from this once vibrant community, but lifestyles change so it is possible that some people of Well Hill did not get the chance to know Leslie whereas others of you have met him be it for a Christening or Wedding, or more frequently within the parish and I am sure for those of you whom Leslie has been a part of your lives no matter how small or large each of you will have your own fond memories of him.

I first got to know Leslie some 36-37 years ago after he took up the challenge of the Parish of St Martins and shortly after he christened my daughter Emma. He also christened my two sons, Toby and Oliver, in the following years. I realised very early on that he was a special character and liked him from the very beginning.

He has always been a man of the people and ready to lend a hand to anybody whether you were a churchgoer or not. He has in his time here touched many lives for the better. There has, since the announcement of his retirement, been much documented about his earlier life. For those who do not know, this modest man has had a very interesting time. Leslie was born into and brought up as a Baptist. Then, as a young man, he entered into the Royal Navy.

Now, John and Barbara Squirrel have written a very detailed and interesting article in the parish magazine about the war years. It seems that Leslie was serving on the mine sweeper HMS Loyalty. They had served, sweeping for mines from the Orkney, Scapa Flow to the North Sea and the Channel. It was during a time preparing for the D Day landings off the French coast with frequent attacks from E Boats and shore batteries. Whilst returning to Portsmouth they were hit by an explosion which was thought to be a mine. In more recent times this has been discovered to have been a torpedo from a U Boat. HMS Loyalty sank in just 7 minutes and Leslie with 29 of the surviving crew remained in the oily water for 2 hours until they were rescued. Leslie has had breathing difficulties ever since.

But back to more recent times, Leslie has always been a willing participant of village life and loved by many. I have served on the church PCC and believe me he has always been the Guvnor! I have only touched lightly and there were many things that he has done during his 37 years here but I hope for those of you who did not know him, this little note will give you some insight as to the remarkable man that he is.

Leslie will be a very hard act to follow and many people will be sad to see him go including myself and my family. So I wish my friend good luck for the future and am without doubt that he will be just as energetic and enthusiastic in his retirement as he has been here in Chelsfield and Well Hill.

Once again I shall be sad to see my friend Leslie go but wish him all the very best.

Terry Sparkes