

COLLIER STREET NEWS

April 2022



Look Back Photography © c.harwell



THIS ISSUE:

Village Clean

Spring Lambs

School Report

Words from Margaret Tate

Words from Father Paul

Woodpeckers

Ramblings

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Spring in Den Lane

COLLIER STREET

PAPER DELIVERY

There is a paper delivery service to the village at around 6am every morning. It is supplied by Jackie's News Limited based in Tenterden, they can be contacted on 01580 763183. Cost of delivery is £3.51 a week.

Rubbish, food waste and small electrical items

11th April and 25th April

Recycling, food waste and textiles

4th April and 18th April

Please place your bins at the property boundary by 7am on the morning of collection. If you subscribe to the garden waste service, please check MBC website for collection details.

CUTE PET OF THE MONTH - POPPY



PCSO NICOLA MORRIS

If you are worried about crime and antisocial behaviour in your area, I am the local Police Community Support Officer for **Collier Street, Laddingford and Yalding.**

If you would like to talk to me, please ring - **Mobile: 07870163411 / Non-emergency: 101**

There is a very successful Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Collier Street involving over 100 residents.

However there are many more households within the Parish who are currently not involved in the scheme. If you would like to be part of the NHW scheme and receive notifications of any suspicious activity or crime then please send your email address to Barbara Grandi at:

barbaragrandi@aol.com

COPY DEADLINE 20TH OF THE MONTH

Collier Street News Easter Egg Hunt—there are 10 easter eggs hidden throughout the magazine, see if you can find them all - no prizes for finding them!

If you want to read the Parish Council Minutes of the March meeting please look on the Parish Council website: collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk.

We always welcome new articles to include in the magazine, things that residents might find of interest. If you have any items or photos we could use please email: editorparishmag@mail.com.

It's been lovely to see some sunshine and see the signs of Spring around the village, we hope you all have an enjoyable Easter.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We would love to hear from you with information, articles or photographs you wish to feature in the village magazine.

Or please send us a picture of your pet for 'cute pet of the month'.

Without your contributions there would not be a magazine, so please send to
editorparishmag@mail.com

FLY TIPPING AND POTHoles

Did you know that anyone can report pot holes or fly tipping in the village.

Please go to the Maidstone Borough Council website and click on the "Report It" tab.



COLLIER STREET PARISH COUNCIL HAVE A NEW WEBSITE:

<https://collierstreetparishcouncil.co.uk>

WHEELCHAIR AVAILABLE

FOR BORROWING ON SHORT-TERM BASIS

FOLDS FLAT
NOT SELF-PROPELLING
PHONE SUE 01892 730393

(picture not actual chair)



LOCAL BABYSITTERS

- Lucy Anderson 730244 - Weekdays and weekends
- Rosie Ridd 730816 - During term time Friday and Saturday evenings only
- Edward Simmonds 730306 - Any time in Holidays, own transport
- Victoria Simmonds 730306 - Anytime, own transport
- Jonny Bentley - 730252
- Georgie Barham - 730247
- Olivia Brown—07460 243707—weekends



VILLAGE CLEAN

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who helped clean the village on Saturday (or any other time). It looks fantastic and I'm sure gives great pleasure to all the people here and also anyone passing through.

Having lived here all my life (84 years!) I feel so proud that you all help so willingly. The pleasure, I know, the litter pickers feel, when all the rubbish is picked into bags is beyond measure. I know litter picking is going on all the year, so that is wonderful.

A special mention to Gay Jenner who cleans Sheephurst Lane all year.

Also, thank you to Stuart Highwood and Nigel Jenner for picking up all the sacks and other rubbish, including 3 large gas cannisters—perhaps they dropped of a lorry!

Thank you to: John and Teresa Dobing, Erica, Dan and Ben, Ruth and Keith, Janet Richardson, Michelle Morrison, Richard and Maureen Bassett, Jason Day, Brian and Vicky George, John and Nicole, Roger Hart, Christine Tucker, Liz Simmonds, Rob and Jacki Fogg, Ray and Barbara Grandi, Steve and Jo, Dave Seeley, Stephane and Margaret MacKay, James Guillam-Scott, David Goff, Pauline and Christine Bailey, Steve Barham and Dawn.

I hope I haven't missed anyone! Margaret Ashworth



“Well we just finished clearing up two truck loads of rubbish from the village cleanup. Good job and thank you to all who helped pick up all the trash. By far Longends Lane had the most, nearly as much as the rest of the village put together!” - Jack Highwood



SPRING LAMBS



Spring lambs are so, so cute
Each tiny foot like a charcoal stick
And they'll butt and lick
Your fingers, and nip with tiny teeth
Looking for the milk, beneath.



You'd think their legs would break
The way they tremble and shake
But they have strength to take
A blizzard in their stride
Snuggled in against their mother's side.

Enjoy this sight before they grow
So fast, they spring into sheep.
Do they know, do they keep
Those early days, locked fast
Within that wispy, tiny frame



When life was just a game
Before the winter's blast?



By Keith

Collier Street Pop-In Get Together 2022

St Margaret's Church

Margaret, Barbara, Jacki, Christine and Lorna invite you to come along and enjoy: home-made cakes and savouries, friendly company and a raffle.

2 - 4pm the second Wednesday of the month:

The dates for this year are:

April 13th, May 11th, June 8th, July 13th, August 10th, September 14th, October 12th, November 19th, December 14th

The Pop In on Wednesday March 9th was a 'special' event arranged by Sheila Guillum-Scott with all proceeds donated to **Dementia UK**. Sadly many families are affected by having loved ones suffering from the effects of dementia.

There were lots of cakes to choose from and many generous donations were given on the day and afterwards. Altogether £135 was raised for this worthy cause.

Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of progressive conditions that affect the brain.

Each type of dementia stops a person's brain cells (neurones) working properly in specific areas, affecting their ability to remember, think and speak.

Doctors typically use the word "dementia" to describe common symptoms - such as memory loss, confusion, and problems with speech and understanding - that get worse over time.

Dementia can affect a person at any age but it's more common in people over the age of 65.

There are over 200 subtypes of dementia. The most common are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia and mixed dementia.

By 2025, it's estimated that over one million people in the UK will have a diagnosis of dementia - and almost all of us will know someone living with the condition.

You can find lots of useful information online at www.dementiauk.org or you can call the help line on 0800 888 6678





Collier Street School Report

Malawi Day

Last month we held our first 'Malawi Day'. This was the launch day of our partnership with Kaputu Primary School in Malawi. School partnerships are an ideal way to enhance the global curriculum, by offering pupils an interactive dimension to their study of global issues. By partnering with a Malawian school we will be able to learn about the historic, cultural, social and political ties between our two countries.

The day started with assembly led by Cathy Penfold who is the School Links Co-ordinator from Starfish Malawi. Starfish Malawi are Christian in calling and outlook, seeking to share God's love with others. They were founded in 2003 by Chris Knott, following a mission trip to Kenya and Malawi that changed his outlook on life. Starfish currently links 30 primary schools in the UK with the same number in Malawi through educational partnerships to develop global citizenship for children in both countries. Developing regular contact between the linked schools is encouraged and the children are very excited to learn more about the children at Kaputu Primary.

Throughout the day the children followed a range of activities: Russet class listened to a traditional Malawian story of 'Kalulu the lazy hare'. They used the moral of the story of 'working together' to help them work collaboratively and problem solve how to cross the playground using planks and blocks only. Then they made starfish collages and learnt the 'Starfish Malawi Song'.



Pippin class made fact-files and chose interesting information that they had learnt both from Cathy and by reading a range of texts to retrieve information. In the afternoon they made Malawian Cookies using fair-trade ingredients and learnt the 'Starfish Malawi' song.



Bramley and Discovery classes followed a carousel of activities including drama through traditional stories, drumming and learning the 'starfish Malawi' song, map work and investigations on the geography of Lake Malawi.



The day was a huge success but it didn't finish there! We also welcomed a team from the 'Education Group' and the children made African Masks and learnt African Dances!



“You are the God who sees me” (Genesis 16:13)

I have been looking at the names of God. Names don't have the same significance today as they did in Bible times. For example Jesus means “God Saves,” and Matthew means “gift of God.” Ruth means a “friend” and Esther a “star.”

One of the names of God from the Bible which has interested me is “El Roi” (pronounced El-raw-ee)

This means “The God who sees me.”

In the story of Abram and Sarai (see Genesis chapter 16) it was Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian slave girl, who bore a son for Abram, and even though this was done with Sarai's consent she changed her mind when she saw that Hagar was pregnant and drove her out into the desert. In her distress, Hagar cried out to God and learned that “El Roi” was watching over her and had a plan to bless her.

How do you feel when you hear the name “El Roi” – the God who sees me? The God who is ever watchful sees even the smallest sparrow fall to the ground. You are so precious to God that he guards you even as the apple of his eye. (Deuteronomy 32:10)

God hears all our cries of distress and despite our disbelief, God's watchful care is always there. Try talking to God as you would to your best friend, for he is my “El Roi” – the God who sees me. If God appears silent it does not mean that he has abandoned us.

In this season of Lent as we prepare for Easter, try spending some time listening to God as well as talking to him. Spend five minutes each day reminding yourself that this is the God who sees you in all you do, since you are chosen by God and precious to him and he loves you. (1 Peter 2:4)

The eyes of the Lord are everywhere. No matter how tough life is, no power can thwart his plans. It is his nature to bless and to love each one of us.

Look at how he has persistently blessed you, how could he desert you?

So, instead of counting chocolate eggs at Easter, count your blessings, and ask God to help you be a blessing to others.

He is “El Roi” – the God who sees me, and he has a plan to bless you as he blessed Hagar in the desert, so listen to his word and be blessed by his love.

Margaret N. Tate, licensed lay minister emerita

Stewardship of Animals

We share our planet with many other species and in many ways we are dependent on each other for various regulatory environmental processes from food chains to pollination in the proper functioning of our life together.

But how should we behave in relation to our fellow animals? What is good moral practice and what should we avoid, especially when there are various movements and lifestyles available which suggest a rather more restrictive attitude than might have been shown in the past?

Using animals for food, for protection, for transport, for work, for clothing, for sport, and for companionship is very much part of human life on earth. How should we regulate this?

The book of Genesis (chapter 9) illustrates the covenant that God made with Noah, and indeed, all of creation after the flood, to renew the covenant made with mankind in the Garden of Eden. It clearly states that all creatures are given into our hands and that they will be food for us, along with the previously permitted fruits and plants (Genesis 2:16, 3:2, 3:18).

But, having the right to eat meat does not mean we are obliged to do so. Neither does having dominion over other species mean that we can treat them without due care and concern. Surely, such a right also entails a responsibility not to be cruel or exploitative, to cause pain or destruction, or to treat with apathy or disdain?

We need to make our own decisions about how we treat animals and what is appropriate with regard to the covenant we share. Jesus tells us that we should not judge others or we risk judgement upon ourselves (Matthew 7:1) and that pointing the finger at the behaviour of others is ridiculous if we do not first consider how we behave for ourselves. Moral responsibility begins at home.

He also points out that animals, however intelligent they may be, are not our equals, and uses the example of dogs and pigs as creatures who are not our equivalent in terms of worship or wisdom (Matthew 7:6). We cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility by claiming equality for animal rights, otherwise we would offer them education, healthcare, and the vote!

Instead we must ask ourselves some important questions as to what sort of relationship we should have and how we might best carry out our responsibilities.

Perhaps we can first consider the use of animal products and the question of eating meat and make sure that if we do eat animals then they are farmed and slaughtered with care, not exploited and treated as objects with no regard for their welfare. Low prices can indicate low standards, and we should reflect on both quality and quantity of the meat that we eat and the clothes that we wear and the consequences for the animals concerned and for the environment in which they are raised.

But we should also avoid becoming too sentimental about animals since it is we who are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and therefore concern for our fellow human beings should take priority. If we buy food for our pets, perhaps we should also consider a tin for the food bank at the same time.

And we ought to think about lower life forms like bacteria, perhaps even sub-microscopic genetic material like viruses, and ask whether everything that exists necessarily has a right to life if we are to be responsible stewards of God's gifts.

Father Paul

Dates for your diaries:

At present not all dates, venues and talks are confirmed. Members will be advised via the website as soon as possible. The website address is www.yaldinggardensociety.org.uk – just click on the underlined link and you should be taken there. Those without computer access will be advised separately.

Sunday 10 th April	Jane Bird and Jennifer Raikes are opening their gardens from 2 to 5pm to raise funds for the church. There will be an Easter Egg hunt for U10s.
Wednesday 4 th May	Hole Park, Rolvenden - £13.50 entry. 11am meet. The visit will be by car - lifts to be arranged. See notice board at the Spring Show. There will be a guided tour by the owner and light lunches available in the cafe.
Monday 11 th July	Summer Picnic – from 5 to 8pm at Parsonage Oast. Full details nearer the time.
September	Possible visit to Wisley - date to be advised.
Saturday 24 th September	Autumn Show at the Village Hall. See schedules on website or by request.
Monday 3 rd October	Talk Subject and venue tbc
Monday 7 th November	Talk Subject and venue tbc
Monday 5 th December	Christmas Party at the Village Hall.

HAPPY EASTER FROM THE EDITORS



NEED HELP OR ADVICE?

CONTACT: PADDOCK WOOD COMMUNITY ADVICE CENTRE

01892 818619

Info@pwadvice.org

<https://www.pwadvice.org>

Open Monday—Friday 9.30am—1.30pm

Telephone consultations and video calls also available

MARDEN WALKS

Dear Walkers,

The first item to mention is that our new series of six Walking Guides "Six Historic Walks around Marden" is now published and available from No 47 or the Library for £6, further details in the attachment.

Our plans for April walks are as follows:

Long Distance Walks:

The South Downs Way walk is now fully planned with accommodation booked for the first three two-day walks, starting 4-5 April. Later sections will be one-day walks driving from Marden. For more details please contact Ian Balmer on 831578 or igbalmer@gmail.com

Sunday Walks:

On Sunday 3rd April I will lead the old Claygate Walk. This is 6 miles following the River Teise for part of the route and the railway line on the way back, starting at 10 outside the Library as usual.

On 8th May there will be a walk to Marden Meadow to view the orchids.

Then on 22nd May we will hold a special "Beating the Bounds" walk as this is Rogation Sunday. This will start at 2 p.m and visit several boundary Stones to the northeast of Marden around Wanshurst Green. There will be two options, a 6 mile walk from Marden Library, or drive to Wanshurst Green then do a shorter 3 mile walk. Further details about this next month.

Saturday Walks: Meet outside the Library at 14.00

April 2nd Share cars to Loose, follow Greensand way towards Boughton Monchelsea

April 9th Library, Church Farm, Underlyn lane, Tilden Lane; two stiles, two sets of stairs

April 16th Turkey Farm via Westfield House, no stiles.

April 23rd Copper Lane via Stanley Road, no stiles

April 30th Plain road Millennium Avenue, no stiles

Happy Spring walking and enjoy the flowers!

Regards Steve Mcarragher

THE FLYING SCOTSMAN VISITS KENT

Many people were lucky to catch a glimpse of The Flying Scotsman as it travelled through Paddock Wood on its way to Canterbury on 17th March. This must have been an amazing sight, provoking many memories of days gone by when train travel was all powered by steam.



YALDING POST OFFICE - MOST LOVED POST OFFICE IN KENT 2016 /17/18/19/20/21

OUR PRODUCTS, LOCALLY SOURCED, LOCALLY SOLD

APRIL 2022

We have been planning to open up the ex-sorting office room next door as a stationery / card and gift shop, but owing to circumstance beyond our control these plans are currently on hold for the moment. However, we have revamped the space we use presently and are pleased to say that we have received only compliments for our efforts. We don't have much space to play with, but we do try to make the best use of it.

News from the Post Office concerning Post Office Card Account. (POCA) This is of interest to those that cannot, for any reason, have access to a regular bank account. The termination of POCA has been delayed by a year and will now finally take place in November 2022. Dept of Work and Pensions (DWP) will replace the card with a payment voucher service which will be issued either on a card, a text or email attachment and will be operational by August 2022. A few customers now have the new cards and the system appears to work satisfactorily.

The Coronavirus emergency is nearing its end. (We hope) Normal service will be resumed. There will be no requirement to wear masks or socially distance in the Post Office, but you can do so if you wish and we will respect your decision.

We offer all main PO postal & basic banking services, plus phone and energy meter top-ups, fishing licences, Moneygram, Health Lottery etc.,

EU parcels need a correctly completed customs label.

Foreign Currencies. We stock Euros and US dollars and can order other currencies, as you plan your trip abroad

The Post Office gift card is an ideal gift for that person hard to buy for. They can be used at pretty much every major retailer in the UK and online. See us for details.

Shop & Local Produce

Croissants and other pastries from Hari Covert will cease from 1st April. We are looking for a replacement supplier.

Coxheath bakery items on sale every day. Orders taken.

Cold drinks, unique greetings cards by local artists, Yalding honey, Joan's jams. Bit Spicy curry mixes, hand-made fabric items, stationery, Yalding mugs, fresh eggs from local chickens, Loddington Farm fruit juices & Oakapple Farm fresh produce – all in stock now.

Royal Mail are changing their postage prices from 5th April.

1st class stamp 95p

1st class large £1.45

1st class small parcel (to 2kg) £4.45

1st class medium parcel (to 2kg) £6.95

"Signed For" letters. £1.40 (no change)

"Special Delivery" no change up to 2kg.

International letters £1.85

Parcelforce inland significant price decreases. (Don't faint)

Parcelforce Worldwide some decreases.

New stamps sets this month are the **NHS Heroes and FA Cup** collection. Other Philately products in stock or can be ordered on request.

Foreign Currencies. We still have a stock of Euros and US Dollars... POL have informed us that credit on Travel Money Cards can be encashed at all branches in UK currency.

Your Post Office offers free cash withdrawals with most debit cards, pay bills, top up gas and electricity cards and keys, pay in cheques and cash to most banks using your debit card. We do Health Lottery, phone Top-Ups, Fishing licences and Moneygram. And, of course...we sell stamps and send parcels and letters all over the world. A list of nations that cannot accept mail at this time is on the Royal Mail website. **Mail to Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are now subject to restrictions**

Our opening hours are 9.00am to 1.00pm. 2.00pm to 5.30pm. Closed on Sundays.

Early closing on Wednesdays and Saturdays (12.30pm Saturdays).

Many thanks for your wonderful support for Kent's Most Loved Post Office.... Telephone...01622 814327

Look us up on our Facebook page and website.

*“A light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period -
When March is scarcely here.”*

Emily Dickinson, A light exists in Spring.

And isn't it hard to believe that March is here already!

We are, at the moment, very busy. Our current waiting times is 4-6 weeks to see either a GP or our paramedic practitioner, Sonia, which is higher than it was a few months ago. We are trying to offer as many appointments as possible, and every day have a full list of slots available for urgent matters. Sonia has 31 slots every day and can deal with all sorts of health issues.

We are looking for new staff to help, as well as change, the way we are running services and are confident that in the near future our waiting times will settle.

Our dispensary staff are also working very hard and are, at times, struggling to cope with the demand for prescriptions. As such, we will be trialling new opening hours for dispensary: 8am to 12 midday and 3pm to 6:30pm. Between these hours, the hatch will be closed to give us time to process requests and help things run more smoothly for everyone.

Restrictions for Covid-19 are changing. To ensure the safety of our patients and staff, we are still asking our patients to comply with certain precautions, such as wearing a face mask. If you have any trouble with this please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate.

The Friends of Yalding Surgery quiz will be on Saturday 2nd April. This promises to be a fun night and a great opportunity for everyone to meet up and test your wits. The surgery will be putting a team together - please go easy on us!

A final word that, no matter how busy we are, if you need anything, please let us know and we will do our best to help you.

Thank you

Yalding Surgery

CHERYL THE POSTIE...

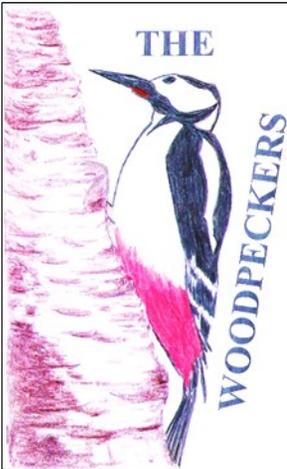
As you may be aware, last month our lovely postie Cheryl left Royal Mail for pastures new. She doesn't yet know what those new pastures are, but we are sure she will be a great success in them.

We had a quick collection for her in the Post Office and were able to present her £360 with a card signed by many customers and a selection of little gifts. She was with us for 5 years.

She has sent us a card thanking the village for looking after her so nicely. She didn't want to leave Yalding, but Royal Mail were changing too many parts of her job to make it a pleasure any more.

We are certain she will reappear occasionally and hopefully let us know how she is getting on.

Tim and June.



Woodpeckers- clearing up after the storm

It was a very cold morning on Saturday March 5th but enough regulars arrived to tidy the Churchyard. There was quite a bit to do because of the gale force storm on February the 24th and 25th.

We expected to see some significant tree damage because of the vulnerable aged trees in the churchyard but were relieved to see that it wasn't too bad at all. Our regular sessions throughout the years meant that the frail and fragile trees had already been trimmed or removed and there were no major 'victims'. However, there was a 'carpet' of small branches and twigs covering the ground and graves so we spent our time clearing away as many of those as we possibly could.

Everyone gathered in the entrance to the Church for tea/coffee and cake because of the bitter wind outside but it meant we had a good chat together. Liz had brought a sponge and some scrumptious flapjacks which were enjoyed by all.

We had all worked hard before the tea break and the churchyard looked a lot tidier so we decided to pack up early and return to the warmth of our homes.

We meet at St Margaret's Church on the first Saturday of each month at 10am and finish by midday with our usual tea/coffee cake break at about 11.15am. We take one or two of our own tools such as: secateurs, loppers, grass rakes, hand forks and trowels, spades and digging forks. Many hands really do make light work and we achieve so much without having to do a lot of 'hard labour'. It's a very sociable group and we always manage to have a chat and a laugh while we are there so if you enjoy a couple of hours of fresh air and some very basic gardening please come along.



Easter Comes But Once A Year By *Johann Sebastian Bach*

Easter comes but once a year
But when it does, we all know its
here
Children filling themselves with
chocolate
Dad's down the pub for a pint of
beer!

We go to the church for the wine
and bread
Dad's half asleep, and jerking his
head
Baby sister is here too, munching
away
On the free Easter egg that the
Priest gave us today.

But remember we must, that the
Lord died for us
And ascended into heaven to give us
fresh lives
For each and every one of us.



Jacqui Bakes

Biscoff Tiffin

Oh my! This is truly delicious. My kitchen smells like Easter, I'm going to bag these up & give as Easter treats to my family, if I can get in first before my boys polish it off.

Tiffin ingredients

200g Milk chocolate (broken into pieces)
200g Dark chocolate (broken into pieces)
200g Biscoff spread
250g Biscoff Biscuit (keep 6 whole, break remaining into pieces)
100g Raisins
100g Pecans (chopped)

Topping ingredients

150g Milk chocolate
150g Dark chocolate
6 whole Biscoff biscuits
100g Malteaser of chocolates of your choice

Method

Line 9x9 baking tin.

Place milk & dark chocolate into a heatproof bowl, melt over a saucepan of simmering water.

In a separate bowl, melt the Biscoff spread until smooth & runny.

Pour Biscoff spread into melted chocolate, combine fully.

Add broken biscuit, raisins & pecans, stir to combine. Pour into prepared tin.

In another bowl melt topping chocolate over a simmering pan of hot water, pour melted chocolate over the tiffin. Place whole Biscoff biscuits & Malteasers on top to decorate.



Allow to cool, place in fridge to set.

Cut into desired sized pieces.

ENJOY!



Collier Street Ramblings 'cute lambs'

You will have noticed the beautiful spring flowers and tantalising hints of green as many trees, shrubs and plants start to grow again.

Despite the tremendous buffeting our trees and plants received during the storm of late February they have come through with the astonishing resilience of the natural world. In my garden the early flowering pink cherry blossom is out, the magnolia is resplendent with branches of blooms hanging low over our pond and the daffodils and primroses are dazzlingly bright in the sunshine.



As I walk down the lanes I see tiny lambs curled up like clumps of cotton wool on the grass and hear their older brothers and sisters bleating to stay in contact with their mothers.

It's thought there are more breeds of sheep in the UK than in any other country.

A sheep is a flock animal which means it likes to be in a herd, they will usually graze together and lie together. They feel safest when they are in a group; hanging around in groups is one of the ways they protect themselves from predators. You'll also find that breeds tend to stick together, even when they are placed in a mixed herd. However, some breeds have a reduced flocking instinct, particularly the hill breeds.

Sheep also have a strong instinct to follow. When one sheep decides to go somewhere the other will follow it. They'll do this whether or not it's a good or bad decision. Generally, the oldest members of the flock will take the lead, the sheep will then follow them. Lambs will instinctively follow their mothers and other older herd members. We noticed this a couple of days ago when we visited West Dean Gardens in West Sussex. There is a designated park walk for visitors which is through a hilly landscape occupied by a flock of hundreds of sheep. We took our young Collie through (on her lead and very well behaved) and there was a very immediate reaction with loud bleating which led to all the sheep coming towards us from every area of the parkland, most were moving quite fast. They decided to pass us and go through to an adjoining section of the park which had a narrow open gateway. We moved further up and just watched as they all poured through before they decided it was a waste of time and started to drift back again! It seemed very odd that they all ran towards us and the dog that had apparently caused alarm.

The flocking behaviour in sheep has been exploited by farmers helping them to keep sheep together on unfenced pastures and hill farms. It also helps shepherds move large numbers of animals over ground and terrain, sometimes with the help of sheep dogs or other herding dogs. Sheep can also be led (usually with a bucket of feed) rather than being herded; once one sheep follows the rest will usually do the same.

If an individual sheep is ever separated from the group they will become agitated, they won't feel safe when they're on their own and will try to run back to the flock if given the chance.

A healthy sheep should be alert and curious. They'll have a natural wariness of humans. A sheep that can be easily approached and handled could indicate something's wrong or the animal is ill. You can find exceptions, namely when they have been kept as pets, and when they are lambing.

When sheep are lambing they will usually try to find shelter and they'll give birth away from the herd. This could be under a wall, a tree, a hedge, etc. This behaviour can be used as a sign that an ewe is ready to give birth. Depending on your breeding programme you may need to assist the ewe or bring her inside to lamb.

Sheep are non-aggressive animals; they'll usually try to flee from any predators or threats. However, ewes with lambs and rams of breeding age are exceptions. A ewe with newborn lambs will often stamp their hoof and adopt an aggressive posture when they feel threatened; they may also try to head-butt the threat. One large sheep actually walk towards us on our parkland walk, it stamped its feet and our Collie hid behind our legs!

EASTER ACTIVITIES

The National Trust is arranging Easter adventures in London and the South East. Discover family-friendly trails with fun activities and challenges inspired by nature to do along the way. Complete the trail and collect your Rainforest Alliance chocolate egg at the end. Put your best foot forward and hop along to one of the fun-filled days out in the South East.

Discover an Easter adventure in Kent this spring when you visit Chartwell, Emmetts Garden, Scotney Castle, Ightham Mote, Knole, Sissinghurst or Smallhythe Place. Follow a trail and learn how to identify birds, have a go at spotting creepy crawlies, try weather watching or make a pledge for nature, then let off steam in the gardens and natural play areas.

FREE Dino Easter FUN

Join in fun in The Mall from 9th April to 16th April for some Dino Easter fun-this Easter half term.

Dino Craft Bar

Everyday 10.30am to 3.30pm (11am to 1pm on Sunday) a Dinosaur craft bar will be open for FREE craft workshops including Dinosaur colouring, Dinosaur masks, Dino plate making plus more

Meet the Dinosaurs on 9th April

On the Saturday you can even meet Animatronic T Rex he will be based in The Mall but keep your eyes peeled for him in town too. You might even see the Rangers with Baby Velo Raptors and their the Jurassic Buggy in Jubilee square



The fun does not stop there!



Dino Egg Trail

Thanks to One Maidstone, this Easter Maidstone Town Centre will be hosting a DINOSAUR EGG HUNT! With the support of the wonderful businesses in Town, there will be 20 eggs to find! Each egg, designed by local artists and children from Maidstone, will show a letter... Collect all the letters to crack the code!

Hand your completed map back to Maidstone Museum for a FREE GIFT! Plus a chance to win 1 of 100 Spike the Dinosaur soft toy. It's simple to take part simply collect your trail map from Maidstone Museum or participating locations and get hunting. See themall.co.uk to download the map.

Maidstone's 10 Best Places to Enjoy your own Easter Egg Hunt

It is easy to set up an inexpensive 'Easter Egg Hunt' for your family and friends in Maidstone because of the abundance of fantastic spaces we have locally. It is true that most people simply utilise their back garden for such fun, but how many new hiding places can there be in one garden! Why not enjoy the spring sunshine and take your Easter Egg hunt into the great outdoors in one of the many free spaces Maidstone has to offer?

Below are ten favourite spots to create your very own Easter Egg hunt and all you will need is your eggs (chocolate/homemade or vintage you chose!) a pack of colourful card, a market pen and willing participants!

My Easter Egg hunt suggestion is simple. You will need one person to go on ahead and hide each egg (or take it in turns!) Take a piece of colourful card and write down the number of the card, navigation instructions (e.g fifteen hops to the left in the style of a bunny) and then place this under a rock and on you go until you see the perfect little hiding place for the stash! As long as you don't trample the lovely flora and fauna you can't go wrong. You can take along a 'booby trap prize' of real chicken eggs with silly faces drawn on them if you are in a particularly daft mood too!

You will be enjoying an Easter Egg hunt and at the same time supporting our parks and once the hunt is over you will be in a fantastic place for a picnic lunch too!

1. Vinters Valley Nature Reserve.

I think one of the reasons why this is in the top spot is because of its accessibility and quietude. This is a tranquil area sandwiched between two housing estates (Vinters Park and Grove Green) and the M20. It is surprisingly big - 90 acres of reserve including woodland, grassland, lake, scrub and marshes and it is this variety that makes it so special. Enter via New Cut Road, Lodge Road, Bargrove Road, Newenden Close, Netley Close or the footpath running between Huntsman Lane and New Cut Road. Free entry.

2. Mote Park, Mote Road, Maidstone.

Mote Park is a firm favourite of many Maidstonians for many different reasons. If your Easter Egg Hunt flounders you will find a whole host of other forms of entertainment to placate your tribe - boats on the lake, several children's parks a miniature railway and café. There is parking available and the park is pet friendly too. Free entry but the railway and boats are extra.

3. White Horse Wood County Park Detling Hill, Maidstone.

Why not enjoy panoramic views of the Kent Downs as you hunt for chocolate this Easter? This small but pretty park offers wonderful views of Kent and a slice of our history as you will find an Iron Age settlement within the park boundaries. Entrance is free but it is a pay and display car park.

4. Bearsted Woodland Trust

Enjoy 16 acres of woodland and meadow. This is an easy walk and relaxing atmosphere in a fairly compact space. The woodlands provide lots of opportunities for Egg hiding - just be mindful not to trample 'off-track!' The main entrance is opposite the Bowls Club on Bearsted Church Landway but there is no parking here - instead park at the Church Lane car park, Bearsted.

5. River Walk

The River Medway provides lots of opportunities for walkers and the river walk from Maidstone Town Centre through to the Malta Pub is a short but sweet section of the river walk. You can 'hide as you stride' down the river bank with a pub lunch as your goal or why not pack a picnic and peel off into Whatman park along the way! Start your walk from the Millennium Bridge and you can park at Lockmeadow.

6. Brenchley Gardens

This small but gorgeous little park is a haven in the town centre. The pretty flower beds and the bandstand are all talking points and if you are doing an Easter egg Hunt for under five's this is the place for you. You even find coffee and ice cream stalls open here in the summer. Find the entrance next to the Maidstone Museum and Bentliff Gallery.

7. Clare Park (feeling energetic!)

This is not a picnic park – instead a little energy is required to enjoy this park to the full. If you have stropky, young teenagers to keep amused then check this out – there is a basketball court, tennis courts and swing park so you could book a court and make them play for their Easter Eggs!

8. Whatman Park

I like this park because it is a little quirky. There are areas to take a picnic and areas for little ones to enjoy the swings but there are also a few sculptures dotted around such as a giant double helix DNA strand! The park boasts adventure play areas, a skate park, nature reserves, an open air arena and raised board walk through the tree tops. The park does not have parking – nearest car park is on James Whatman Way, or there is access next to LA Fitness or take the Kentish Lady or Allington Belle boats and ask them to stop at the park.

9. Teston Bridge Country Park

A perfect place to relax and take in the day. The park has a pay and display car park, children's swings and play area and walks by the river. This is a very open park so you will have to be creative with your egg hiding but the views of the river are worth a little ingenuity.



10. The Boozy Alternative Trail.

Those of us old enough to enjoy a tippie and feel too old for the traditional Easter egg hunt this is for you! Start at Hotel Chocolat, Fremlin Walk, and buy as many packets of their 'boozy' selectors as you fancy and then let the Easter Egg hunt begin!

Each adult has a packet of boozy chocolates and each has to think of a hiding place in the Town Centre connected to either an animal, mineral or vegetable (for example under the 'Golden Boot'). Having hidden your chocolates, meet up again at a pub/cafe of your choice and whilst enjoying a drink of wine/coffee you can play the game of 20 questions to find your chocolate hiding places! Those who manage to hide their chocolates in a place where no one guesses gets to keep them!



Vinters Valley Nature Reserve



Mote Park



White Horse Wood Country Park



Bearsted Woodland Trust



River Walk



Teston Country Park

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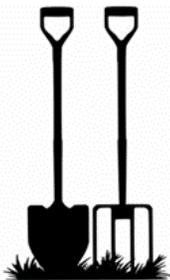
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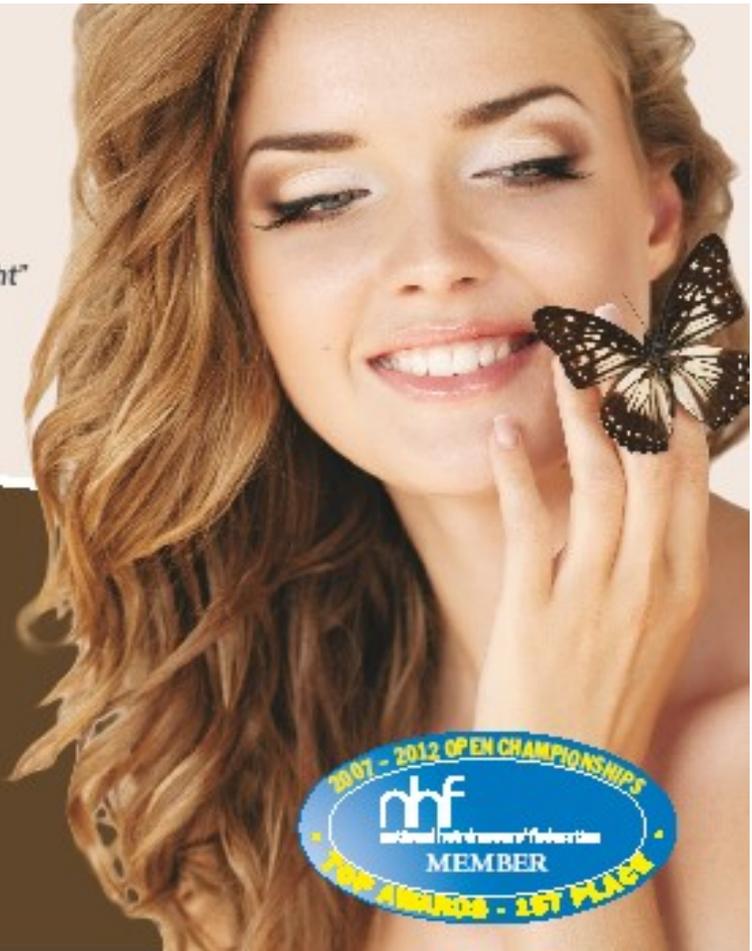
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