

# Good News Parish Magazine

## High Downs Parish

Serving the villages of Eastling, Otterden,  
Stalisfield and Throwley

[www.goodnews.rf.gd](http://www.goodnews.rf.gd)



On National Thank You Day, the 4th July, there was a very special celebration service at St Mary's Stalisfield to give thanks upon their retirement for the work of Jean West, Church Warden, Sheila Moger, Secretary, Steve Ruston, Treasurer and the members of the Stalisfield District Church Council who have retired after many years of service to the Church.

Jean was Church Warden for many years and part of the Stalisfield PCC since she came to the village over 50 years ago.

Although due to the covid regulations the congregation were unable to join in with the hymns in church, music was an integral part of the service with a small choir, organ and a Celtic harp. Towards the end of the service the congregation ventured outside to join in with the final hymn, Jerusalem, and were surprised and entertained by a 'flash choir'.

Jean, Sheila and Steve were given gifts of plants by the new team to thank them for their hard work over the years and for the support they have given to the new team as they continue the work.

## August

### AUGUST 2021

- 1st Special Service  
Eastling Church 10.30am
- 4th Otterden & Stalisfield W. I.  
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.30pm
- 8th North Downs Sponsored Walk  
Harrietsham Church start 9-11.30am
- 20th Copy deadline for September's  
Good News
- 28th Stalisfield & Otterden Village Party  
Stalisfield Village Hall 6 - 11pm

### SEPTEMBER

- 4th Eastling Village Party  
Eastling Village Hall

### OCTOBER

- 9th Stalisfield Harvest Supper  
Stalisfield Village Hall

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If you would like to advertise a local event in the Good News, please contact the editor on [goodnewsmagazine@me.com](mailto:goodnewsmagazine@me.com)

## Village Party

To be held within the confines of Stalisfield Village Hall & Garden for **Residents of Stalisfield & Otterden ONLY**

### Saturday 28th August

6pm - 11pm

You will be welcomed with a glass of **Pimms**, **Pizza** will be served between 6 - 8pm, and our local Band **Group Therapy** will be playing from 8pm onwards

**Bring your own Drinks!**

There will be some of the usual fete stalls for your enjoyment so bring some **pennies for donations**

**Tickets MUST** be obtained in advance - Contact Katie Toombs at [mrscat@me.com](mailto:mrscat@me.com). Numbers will be limited to ensure a safe environment for all - no ticket, no entry.

We would encourage you to **bring and wear masks** whilst in the hall itself, & maintain social distancing

Contact Melanie Carter: [mjcart64@outlook.com](mailto:mjcart64@outlook.com) / 07961 566 814 for more details.

## **'Practice makes perfect'**

Whatever your experience of the Covid pandemic has been, it is certainly true that some industries have been hit harder than others. The hospitality industry is one of course, and also the creative industry of which I am a part.

Prior to March 2020 my working week typically included running 4 choirs and performing at care homes, hospices or Intensive Care Units on behalf of the charity I work for. Of course all that stopped completely and we are just now tentatively finding ways of getting back into those activities. This period of time has enabled several discoveries; amongst them I have found that without the prospect of a looming concert or performance, I lack the incentive to practice!

Practice is part and parcel of the life of any musician, but it is also a part of all our lives. I'm sure you're familiar with the adage 'practice makes perfect'. I'm not sure that's quite correct. Perhaps better to say 'practice makes permanent'. The things we choose to repeat will become ingrained as habits, whether that is playing scales &

arpeggios, learning to drive or to swim or play golf. Or whether it is practising attitudes, behaviours; translating what we believe into what we do.

The longer we are given to spend on the journey of life, the more opportunity there is to encounter both blessings and woes. The blessings we can thoroughly enjoy, but how do we become skilled at negotiating the woes? How do we learn not just to shelter from the storm, but to dance in the rain? Perhaps practice is the answer.

The teaching of Jesus in his sermons on the mount and on the plain offers us a real counter-cultural look at life. He tells us 'blessed are you who weep now'. I confess that I never feel very blessed when I'm weeping; but it is true that grief, loss and disappointment has softened me as it has done others, making them more compassionate and understanding of people, and more mature and resilient in themselves.

Faith really shows its worth when it is tested, and I have found it helpful to spend time thinking about the attitudes

and skills I would like to possess that will see me through the tricky times. I like to keep in mind the list of 'fruits of the spirit' which you can find in the book of Galatians chapter 5: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control'.

On my own, and especially under duress, my natural inclination wanders a long way from these ideals, but happily...

*'Our effort is not a self-conscious striving to fill ourselves with the important Christian virtues; it is more getting out of the way and allowing [Christ's] Spirit to transform all our activities. Christ will do the rest. His Spirit has joined ours and will never abandon us.'*

*(Richard Hauser).*

So that is my role....it sounds simple, but getting myself out of the way and allowing Christ to do the rest is not my inclination and in order to become a permanent fixture, it needs daily practice!

With love, light and the blessings of Christ

Lissie Bayford

### ***Prayer Pointers***

#### ***August 2021***

**Mondays** - Pray for our world and those affected by weather extremes.

**Tuesdays** - Pray for our use of the world's resources as the climate changes.

**Wednesdays** - Give thanks for our families and friends who help us through difficult times.

**Thursdays** - Pray for Christians living under persecution.

**Fridays** - Give thanks for our emergency services and pray for all who work within them.

**Saturdays** - Pray for families living in poverty in this country and abroad.

**Sundays** - Give thanks for our local churches and pray for their upkeep.



"When she said to pay attention to her sermon because there would be questions later, I thought it was a joke."

# A SPECIAL SERVICE AT EASTLING

**Sunday 1st August, 10.30am**

We will be holding a service of Holy Communion on 1<sup>st</sup> August when our Rector, Steve Lillicrap will be the celebrant and the new curate, Caroline Turvey will preach.

Following the service we are hoping to go to the village hall (Covid precautions permitting) for a

## **Celebration of Norman and Sylvia Fowler's ministry**

and to present them with a gift.

Donations towards the gift will be welcome and can be made by cheque, payable to High Downs PCC, or by BACS: email [eastlingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:eastlingchurch@gmail.com) for bank details

### Smile Lines:

A woman went into the kitchen to find her husband swatting flies. "I killed three female and two male ones." he said triumphantly. She asked him how on earth he knew that.

"Easy. Two were on my beer can and three were on the phone."



## Otterden & Stalisfield WI

At the time of writing we are still hoping the next Meeting of Otterden & Stalisfield WI will be on Wednesday 4th August at 7.30 p.m. at Stalisfield Village Hall. This is dependent on the infection rate of Covid-19 which is increasing as society is gradually mixing together again. It will be a social occasion rather than a formal meeting with speakers.

Wednesday 1st September is scheduled to be our deferred AGM to bring us up to date. There will also be social time of course, once the required business has taken place. To keep our small group operating, we do need Committee Members. Please consider joining the Committee.

Our first Speakers of the year are reserved for our October Meeting on Wednesday 6th at 7.30p.m. Robin and Denise Golding will speak to us about

their all consuming hobby of Metal Detecting, bringing along with them examples of their finds from within the local area. This subject brings to life the history of the area we live in.



Contact our President, Ellie Cameron if you would like to join our friendly group on 01795 892016.



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## Sunday Services

subject to Covid restrictions and  
ministry team availability

### 1st August Trinity 9

Ephesians 4. 1 - 6, John 6. 24 - 35

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Wychling 4pm Evensong

### 8th August Trinity 10

Ephesians 4. 25 - 5. 2, John 6. 35, 41 - 51

Throwley 10.30am Morning Worship

Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

### 15th August Trinity 11

Ephesians 5. 15 - 20, John 6. 51 - 58

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship

Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

### 22nd August Trinity 12

Ephesians 6. 10 - 20, John 6. 56 - 69

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion

Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

### 29th August Trinity 13

James 1. 17 - 27, Mark 7. 1 - 8, 14-15, 21-23

Newnham 10.30am Benefice Communion

### 5th September Trinity 14

James 2. 1 - 17, Mark 7. 24 - 37

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion

Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Wychling 4pm Evensong

### BREAKTHROUGH

Lynsted Church 6pm Every Sunday

## Online Daily Worship Continues

As well as the services in our churches, the daily  
9am Morning Prayer at Lynsted will continue  
and be live online on

[www.kingsdowncreekside.co.uk](http://www.kingsdowncreekside.co.uk) - also on the  
YouTube Channel 'Breakthrough at Lynsted'.

More information is updated weekly on

St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>

## High Downs Parish

**Rector** Reverend Canon Dr. Steve Lillicrap  
01795 522510 [highdownsvicar@gmail.com](mailto:highdownsvicar@gmail.com)

**Curate** Reverend Caroline Turvey (01795 886351)

**Reader** Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)

### Churchwardens

**Eastling** Andrew Baxter (01795 890598)

**Administrator** Janet Payne  
E mail: [eastlingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:eastlingchurch@gmail.com)

### Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King (01795 890366)

**Administrator** Shirley Pritchard  
Email: [Stmarystalisfield@gmail.com](mailto:Stmarystalisfield@gmail.com)

**Throwley** Gaynore Moss (01795 890995)

**Parish Office** Email: [eastlingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:eastlingchurch@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/highdownsbenefice](https://facebook.com/highdownsbenefice)

## From The Registers

### Baptism

Alice Proudfoot

18th July 2021 at Throwley

### Marriage

Jack Pursey and Daisy Bridgford

3rd July 2021 at Throwley

### Interment of Ashes

Doris Skinner

19th July 2021 at Eastling

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### CONTACT THE GOOD NEWS EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338

If you would like to submit articles, or to  
advertise in the September 2021 magazine, send  
your submission by 20th August 2021 to:  
[goodnewsmagazine@me.com](mailto:goodnewsmagazine@me.com).

Past and current issues of the Good News may be  
viewed on [ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/  
goodnews](http://ccgi.northdowns.plus.com/goodnews) or [www.goodnews.rf.gd](http://www.goodnews.rf.gd)





# Eastling Village Party

**Saturday 4th September**

in Eastling Village Hall

*by kind permission of the Trustees*

It's been a long time since we held a Get Together for the whole village [or it seems like it!]

On 4th September 2021 we are holding a party for all Eastling villagers so everyone has a chance to meet up, catch up and enjoy themselves.

There will be **Afternoon Tea** and later that evening a **Hog Roast** and live music from local band **Under the Wood**.

Other activities include a **'Sports Day'** for the younger members of the village and an appearance by our very own village **'Circus Rum Baba'**.

As word of this plan has spread we have had really good support for the idea. However to make it happen, we need as many donations as possible to cover the costs.

## ENTRY is by TICKET ONLY

There is no set price for tickets. They are available by **donation** so please do give what you can

You can donate by:

1. The Just Giving page

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eastling>

2. If you wish to donate and book tickets personally then contact Tish either by phone [07875 356294] or email [tishneaves@gmail.com](mailto:tishneaves@gmail.com) and she happily arrange this for you.

3. Lauren will be outside the Carpenters Arms on Tuesday 10th August from 6pm and she too will help with donation and tickets.

Please could we ask you to dig deep and support this financially if you possibly can, it would be greatly appreciated and the more we can raise the more festivities we can provide.

The party will of course take account of any covid secure requirements that are deemed necessary at the time.

To date we have raised nearly £1200 towards our target of £4000

We'll keep you updated with more details and news of the fundraising progress here in the Good News and also on the village Whats App group. Tim Philpott is the administrator for this so, if you're not on it please do contact him and he will be happy to add you (07850 080007).

It's a great way of staying in touch.

Please save the date, **spread the word and contribute** if you can

Thanks and see you there!

Tim Philpott, Anne Adams, Lauren Brand, Rich Maxted and Tish Neaves



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## Don't be afraid to fail

by Colin Hammacott

In my local church, we use a parish prayer which includes the line: 'Help us to be brave enough to fail - but try again.'

Encouraging words indeed, and if we look back throughout the centuries, many men and women who have made the world a better place have taken those words to heart.

For example, where would we be today without electricity? Yet at school, Thomas Edison was told he was "too stupid to learn anything." He was sacked from his first two jobs; and made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. But in the end, he succeeded, and changed the course of world history.

Car manufacturer Henry Ford revolutionised transport in the USA, but he had five businesses fail before he founded the successful Ford Motor Company.

Winston Churchill was a Nobel Prize-winning, twice-elected Prime Minister, but he struggled at school, was defeated in early elections for public office, and did not become Prime Minister until he was 62.

As the late Nelson Mandela wisely observed: "Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

So, let us commit ourselves to loving God with all our hearts, to putting our abilities at His disposal, and to never giving up.

**Editor's note:** Being British, we know it was really Joseph Swan who developed the first successful incandescent light bulb!

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## Stalisfield Highlife

### Stalisfield Village Hall

28<sup>th</sup> August Village Party  
9<sup>th</sup> October Harvest Supper  
Village Panto - Postponed  
12<sup>th</sup> Dec Children's  
Christmas Party  
18<sup>th</sup> Dec Seniors' Tea



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## Five things we've learnt about Truth in the pandemic

I'm involved in a project rooted in the Church of England's St Albans diocese, north of London. We bring together people from a range of backgrounds and faiths to address the question

### 'Where is Truth now?'

A vital issue for us from recent months has been How has truth fared during the pandemic? Here are five key points.

#### **Truth can save your life.**

Knowing the truth about the Covid-19 virus and vaccines gave vital protection during the pandemic. The advice of scientists, health professionals and researchers has been widely sought out and debated. But we've also seen a rise in conspiracy theories, anti-vaccination campaigns and growing confusion as people challenge the extent of the pandemic, and whether Covid-19 is really a threat. Social media algorithms stand accused of spreading misinformation faster than reliable facts and corrections.

#### **Truth comes from trust.**

Knowing who to trust is one of the fastest growing challenges facing anyone wanting to know more about the pandemic and its causes. While faith in doctors and scientists is generally good, trust in politicians has remained low, and scepticism and confusion are growing.

#### **Truth can be found on your doorstep – but not always.**

Local information has become more important, especially during lockdowns. But with local newspapers and radio in decline, neighbourhood social media networks have been taking their place, spreading information – not all of it verifiable and sometimes incorrect.

Often, it's fear that drives our response to the stories we read. We eagerly consume stories highlighting a new 'threat' from Covid or scapegoating people not keeping to the lockdown rules. We respond emotionally, 'with our gut' – rather than our brain or intellect.

#### **Truth has to be valued and protected.**

Reliable, trusted journalism has been at a premium. ITV News journalist Julie Etchingam defended the role of the media during Covid-19. The news presenter, a practising Roman Catholic, explained: "Many in our front-line services and the wider public are demanding answers. We are there on their behalf."

In December 2020, Yorkshire Post editor James Mitchinson, published his response to a reader who believed social media posts over his newspaper's reports. The open letter, headlined 'Do not believe a stranger on social media who disappears into the night' sets out the contrast between verified public interest journalism and disinformation posted online.

#### **Truth can be complicated – and that's ok.**

Throughout the pandemic, politicians have spoken about 'following the science.' This, they have said, has guided their decision making. Yet scientists can have a range of views, based on similar research findings. It's in the discussion and debate that scientific truth arises. People accept that the 'scientific evidence' is not always straightforward. We know that truth can be complicated, from our own daily lives. So politicians who level with their electors about the complexity of the decisions are often received with more credibility.

In continuing to ask the question 'Where is Truth Now?' our modest project is helping to keep the conversation going – and encouraging others to do the same.

*By the Revd Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.*



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## Eastling Neighbourhood Watch

### Village Warden

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For interest, there have been 30 criminals locked up for over a total of 300 years recently in the North West of England regarding importing, supply and distribution of class A drugs - all part of one gang. How does this involve Eastling? Well they used a sophisticated operation for importation using helicopters flying in from Europe. Flight plans were lodged with the appropriate authorities and kept to, but arranged stop overs for the helicopters on the flight path which meant they needed to rent properties in the path for the drugs to be dropped off. One of the properties was in Dover the other being in Eastling, namely Crow Cottage. At no stage did the letting agents have any knowledge of what was happening. A large quantity of drugs was dropped off by helicopter at the cottage and subsequently collected. This happened in 2015. Obviously this involved all our crime agencies and the police forces from a few countries to bring this gang to justice but it has finally happened. We do tend to have quite a few helicopters flying over our area so it is worth bringing to notice any suspicious behaviour.

With the children on holidays at the moment please be extra careful driving through the village and take care as the harvest is due to be brought in and this will involve extra tractors and combines on the roads.

Now that the covid restrictions have been eased scammers will be offering cheap holidays and places for rent at silly prices, so please be aware.

Take Care, Alan

## Would you like to help run the Eastling Village Hall?

The Management Committee is looking for new members to help with the upkeep/development of Eastling Village Hall. No specific experience/skills are needed, just enthusiasm and a willingness to work as a team.

Saying that, we are also looking to fill the posts of Bookings Secretary and Finance Officer so anybody who wants to give these roles a go would be doubly welcome!

Anyone interested in helping-out should contact the Chair, Paul Ainsworth, on 01795-890176 or by email

at [kavallach6@btinternet.com](mailto:kavallach6@btinternet.com)

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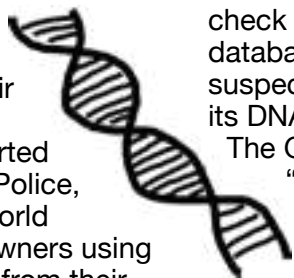




## Your dog's DNA could rescue him (or her)

Dog lovers will find this good news: canine DNA is to be collected by a police force to help stolen animals be reunited with their owners.

The scheme, supported by Gloucestershire Police, is thought to be a world first. It will involve owners using a kit to take a swab from their dog's mouth. The sample is then sent to a specialist forensic testing company that has developed a dog DNA database that is accessible to all police forces.



When it is suspected that a dog has been stolen, its DNA can be run through the database to check if it is missing. The database could also link a suspect thief to the stolen dog, if its DNA is found on them.

The Gloucestershire police are "confident" that the scheme will help reduce dog thefts and also reunite stolen pets with their owners. As one officer said, "We have to adopt whatever means we can to stop this shocking trade." If successful, the scheme could possibly spread to other parts of the country.

[www.dnaprotected.co.uk](http://www.dnaprotected.co.uk)

## Report from KCC Councillor Rich Lehmann

Since my last column about roadside verges, a great deal of my incoming mail from residents has continued to be about this topic. The hot weather in June meant that many verges that were assumed to have been deliberately left had grown up very quickly, and then when they were cut at the end of the month I received a number of complaints from disappointed residents. Especially those who had planted wildflowers in areas that KCC had agreed not to cut until the autumn only to see them mown down.

This is a topic that I will be continuing to engage with over the coming months with local residents, parish councils, Swale Borough Council and KCC to hopefully ensure that some sensible systems are in place for next year and that any reductions in maintenance are communicated to the contractors who undertake the work. I have also joined the 'Kent's Plan Bee' working group on KCC to help direct the project where I can and ensure that our area is doing what we can to help maintain, and hopefully rebuild, pollinator populations.

The school summer holidays are approaching, and parents may be interested to know that KCC are providing a huge funding boost to local schools and youth hubs to put on additional activities over the summer holidays as part of their 'Reconnect' programme. This ambitious project launched in April and will run through until August 2022. Its aim is to encourage children to get out and reconnect with friends and peers after a year of reduced social activity and it hopes to give children and young people a boost in both physical and mental health.

To find out what is happening over the coming month, please get in touch with KCC via the Reconnect web page at

[www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/reconnect](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/reconnect).

Although all of the activities for the coming school holidays are already now in place, the scheme will be providing funding for many more activities over the year to come. If you are a volunteer or run an activity centre for children and/or young people, please visit

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the URL above to find out more about how you can get involved with the project and whether or not you would be eligible for funding to help provide additional activities.

Rich Lehmann

[rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk](mailto:rich.lehmann@kent.gov.uk)

# Eastling Primary School News

**Eastling Primary School** celebrated Sports Week in style the week beginning Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June. It was an action-packed week for the whole school. The children all enjoyed cooking chicken teriyaki with Roots to Food on Monday and cricket led by the Oak class teacher Mr Glazier. On Tuesday the children worked with Charlton Athletic and Miss Sophie's dance school. Oak class went to Revolution Skatepark where they took part in scootering and climbing. Kinetic Circus visited the school on Wednesday and the children had fun learning lots of exciting circus skills. Silver Birch class went to Chatham where they took part in tobogganing and snow tubing. On Thursday Joe's Bows came to school and the children all took part in archery. Willow class visited Go Ape where they took on the treetop challenge. We ended the week with a sponsored Danceathon in aid of Abbie's Army with the school raising a staggering £1700. The school sports day took place with the school's two bubbles and unfortunately no parents were able to attend due to Covid restrictions. Acorn class ended the week with a trip to Chatham where they enjoyed snow tubing.

Unfortunately, our new Reception children who are joining the school in September were unable to have the normal transition sessions due to the current Covid restrictions. The families were able to attend a socially distanced Teddy Bears Picnic on the field which was lovely.

On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July the children in Years 4-6 had a sleepover on the field. The children enjoyed putting up the tents during the day and then returned in the evening. The evening began with rounders and a dance workshop with Miss Sophie. The children then watched Charlie and The Chocolate Factory or the Euro football match. They enjoyed eating popcorn, hotdogs and drinking hot chocolate. The last children went off to sleep around 2.30am and awoke a couple of hours later.

Oak class performed Charlie and the Chocolate Factory as their school production which the school had professionally filmed as parents were unable to attend. It was an enormous team effort with Mr Brunger making 3 amazing backdrops, Mrs Lee and Mrs Mckeith created all the props from the escalator to the human size tv set. Mr Glazier taught the children all the songs and of course directed the production. We had wonderful support from all the parents who made the costumes and helped the children

to learn their lines and the songs. The term ended with a socially distanced Leavers' Assembly on the field which the year 6 parents were able to attend.

There are a few spaces available across the school. Any prospective parents are welcome to call the office on 01795 890252 to arrange a visit. For further information please visit our school website where photographs and newsletters are displayed and updated regularly.

Melanie Dale, Headteacher

**Mouse Makes**

IN THE BEGINNING ...

What did God create in the beginning?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ V \_\_\_\_\_ H  
 and \_\_\_\_\_ H

What was the first thing God said on the first day?  
 "Let there be \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_"

What did God separate on the second day to create heaven?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_

How many great lights did God create in the heavens?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What grew on the dry land?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_

What did God create to fly above the earth?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

What did God make after all the creatures?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_

Find the answers to the questions in the word search then find all these words too:

CREATION • ONE • DARK • DAY • NIGHT • EVENING • MORNING • SEA  
 VEGETATION • LAND • SEEDS • FRUIT • THREE • SEASONS • YEARS • FOUR  
 SKY • FISH • FIVE • CREATURES • CATTLE • ANIMALS • GROUND • HUMANS  
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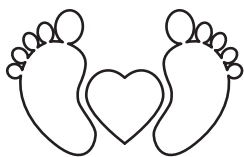
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rough walking)  
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Information and lots more events  
on [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/  
events](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/events)



## The Grey Owl

by Audrey Keen



A grey owl woke me in the night  
He called from a tree nearby,  
The sky in part was growing light  
The moon in the heavens was high.

The owl called out on a ghostly note  
And trembled an eerie sound,  
As he swivelled his head in a round about way  
Then looked upon the ground.

But from the corner of his round eye  
He thought he spied a mouse,  
That scuttled along a tunnel of leaves  
Until it reached the house.

The owl inquisitive waited  
On the homely broad oak bough  
And moved his head from side to side  
Where had his meal gone now?

All thoughts of going too-whit, too-who  
Were far removed from his mind,  
He reached down onto his feathered chest  
Then drew his head from behind  
He wriggled his face in a comical way  
And turned himself to the sky,  
Opened his mouth, drew in a breath  
And then let out a cry.

The sound was desperate,  
Baleful and pained with woe,  
So he shuffled his feathers  
Spread out his wings,  
For him it was time to go.

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*Ed: Having seen on TV the horrifying scenes of recent flooding in China, Tim Lenton writes about a previous*

## Great Flood of China

Just 90 years ago, on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1931, the Yangtze River and Huai River floods peaked in China. It was one of the worst natural disasters of the 20th century: up to four million people died, and the floods lasted from July to November.

The inundation followed a two-year drought and a particularly harsh winter which included nine cyclones, and then a massive amount of continuous rain. The floods covered an area equivalent to the size of England and half of Scotland, including widespread destruction in a number of cities, such as Wuhan, where a wall of water demolished nearly every house.

Here the calamity was blamed on the demolition shortly beforehand of the Temple of the Dragon King – a rain-making deity – as part of an anti-superstition campaign. Others blamed it on poor management of the rivers.

Thomas Harnsberger, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church, was a key figure in raising funds for reconstruction and relief efforts, but the floods, though massive, remain largely unknown in most of China.

The waters killed 15 times the number of people lost in the Indonesian tsunamis of 2004, but historians looking at 1931 concentrate on the war between Communists and Nationalists and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

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