

# The Sundridge Village News

## June 2021



In this issue we bring you news about the Dibgate 9 Art Exhibition, news from Sundridge & Brasted Primary School, churchyard musings, liturgical colours and their meanings, plus a few dates for your diary as we gently travel towards a more normal way of life.

### Parish Services for June 2021

**Sunday 6th**  
09.15 Toys Hill Morning Worship  
10.30 Sundridge Holy Communion

**Sunday 13th**  
10.30 Ide Hill Holy Communion

#### Rector

Rev Pam Davies, email: rev.pamdavies@sky.com  
Telephone: 01959 467223

**Sunday 20th**  
10.30 Sundridge Holy Communion

**Sunday 27th**  
10.30 Ide Hill Ide Hill  
*Open Air Service on the Green. All welcome - bring a chair and an umbrella!*

#### Churchwarden, Sundridge

Althea Chapman  
email: althea.chapman@outlook.com

**The Church is open for private prayer every Wednesday and Sunday**

### Forthcoming Parish Service dates for your diary

**Sunday 5th September**  
9.15 Toys Hill service followed by Church Open Day

**Sunday 12th September**  
10.30 Ide Hill service followed by Church Open Day

**Sunday 19th September**  
10.30 Sundridge service followed by Church Open Day

### Churchyard Musings

If one is interested in social history, there is no finer history book written than on the gravestones in Sundridge churchyard. The late Miss Margaret King, who was interested in all aspects of life in Sundridge and in particular the church and churchyard, wrote about a small, unpretentious stone bearing the inscription:



“Beneath this stone lies the remains of a body, name unknown. Rest in peace.”

Margaret wrote that, from the style and design, one would date it to the last quarter of the 19th century, perhaps 1875 – 1900, but it shows no date. I have passed this stone without even knowing of its existence many times on my way through the churchyard. I was keen to find out more, so I continued to read what Margaret had written some 35 years ago. She, too, was interested to know who lies there and who paid for the stone and the inscription. The most likely explanation she thought was that it was the body of a tramp making his way to the Union Workhouse up the hill (now known as Birchfield). In those days, who would have been sufficiently concerned to care? Certainly not the Poor Law Authorities of the day.

In the “Holmesdale Parochial Magazine” for July 1896, there is an entry which offers a possible answer. It reads:  
Burials, Sundridge  
June 2nd 1896. (By Coroner’s order) An unknown woman aged about 55 years.

Was this her? Margaret continues to write, “Was this an ageing woman tramp dragging her ground-length black skirts through the wet grass of the Warren, stumbling in her broken boots on the long walk to the Workhouse? Sitting down, perhaps, wearily, near to the spot where she now lies and taking from her skirt a quarter bottle of gin



to drain the last few drops. We shall never know, nor is there any record, but it is a likely possibility.

May she and the compassionate soul who gave her a memorial, if hers it be, rest in peace.”

It got me thinking about the Workhouse in Sundridge. Charles Dickens painted a bleak picture of life in the Workhouse but I gather that, although harsh and monotonous, conditions for poor people may have been better than life on the outside.

The parish Poorhouse of Sevenoaks was taken over for use as the Union Workhouse until 1845 when the inmates were removed to the new Union Workhouse at Sundridge.

My husband reminded me of his research into the purchaser of the land our house is built on. For the sum of £60 pounds, in 1893, Mrs Jane Cowlard, laundress, wife of Edward, a farm labourer, both of 6 Waterloo

Place, Sundridge Street, Sundridge, bought plot 1 of 3 from Sir Charles Gibbons of Stanwell Place, Staines. They were the offspring of parents who were 'residents' of Sundridge Workhouse.

*Anyone else got any other Workhouse stories?*



## Brasted, Ide Hill & Sundridge Gardening Society

The first outing of the Brasted, Ide Hill & Sundridge Gardening Society will be to the wonderful garden of Maurice Foster on 23rd June in Ivy Hatch. Maurice grows a wide range of trees and shrubs, many from his collecting trips, but our reason for visiting at this time is to marvel at his magnificent collection of hydrangeas, which should be putting on a sensational early summer display.



### June/July 2020 diary dates

#### 5th to 20th June Art in June - Dibgate 9

10am-5pm daily Dibgate Farm, Chevening Road

#### 12th June Fundridge Cheese and Wine

7.15 Sundridge Village Hall, £15.00 per head in tables of 6 only and must be booked in advance. Contact Fiona at [fparkin@avocade.com](mailto:fparkin@avocade.com)

#### Sunday 13th June NGS Gardens Open for Charity

Chevening 2 to 5pm must be booked in advance check website for details: [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk)

#### Wednesday 23rd June Brasted, Ide Hill & Sundridge Gardening Society: Visit to Maurice Foster's garden

Contact Julia Ricci - email [juliaricci@rocketmail.com](mailto:juliaricci@rocketmail.com)

## Art In June – Dibgate 9

These 9 artists are longing to share their 2-years-in-the-making art and craft with visitors, so please come along and support them. The exhibition is open daily from Saturday 5th – Sunday 20th June, 10am - 5pm daily.

**All are welcome and entry is free.**

Have a sneak preview on the website of a wonderful “flip book” – <http://www.artinjune.org> There you will

see the images and opening times/dates for all the amazing 50 artists, their enticing studios and a delightful trail through Sevenoaks and the Eden Valley.

All efforts will be made to ensure safe viewing. There will be regular cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces. Visitors are asked to wear masks and use hand sanitizer on entry.





# The Changing Colours within the Church

While I write this, St Mary's Church in Sundridge is open on Sundays and Wednesdays and free for people to wander in and take a look round, or spend some time in private prayer. If you take the opportunity to venture inside and marvel at this amazing and historic building, perhaps you may note the colours on the front of the pulpit and the altar as they change according to festivals and seasons of the church. But what do they mean?

## Green

Green is often considered to be symbolic of quiet growth, hope and life. It is the colour that is most used during the church year, when there is no specific festival or season.

## Purple

This is used during the lead-up to Christmas and during the 6 weeks before Easter (Lent). Purple reflects penitence and preparation, and used for times of deep thinking and reflection.



So, when you next either visit the church or go to a service, take note of which colour is displayed on the altar and, if you can, take a closer look as several of the altar frontals were designed and stitched by people who live in the village.

*Fi Parkin*

## Red

Red is symbolic of sacrifice and fire and used during Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter Day) and Pentecost (40 days after Easter, the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit). It is also used for the Apostles and saints who died as martyrs.

## Gold/White

These colours represent joy, celebration and purity and are used on Easter Sunday and the Easter season, Christmas Day and the Christmas season, along with Trinity Sunday, Ascension Day and All Saints' Day.

## No Colour

On the night of Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter Sunday), the church is usually stripped bare and no colour is used until Easter Sunday. The altar will be stripped of all decoration revealing the bare wood symbolising the barrenness and desolation of the Crucifixion and time in the tomb.

*The Friends of St Mary's Sundridge cordially invite you to visit the garden and enjoy*

## Afternoon Tea

*at*

**The Red House, Church Road, Sundridge**

*by kind permission of Jane and Nigel Belle*

**from 3.00 until 5.30**

**Wednesday 21st July 2021**



**Not only will there be a great Afternoon Tea to enjoy but also a well stocked Plants Sale and a Raffle with wonderful prizes**

**Admission £5.00 to include a cream tea**

**Please book in advance**

*Tickets available from*  
**Jane Belle, belles@waitrose.com 01959 565444**



## Fundridge Seniors' Afternoon Tea

The sun shone, the tea, sandwiches and cakes were delicious and the conversation and laughter were in abundance at the Fundridge Sundridge Seniors' Afternoon Tea.

The event was held at the Sundridge and Brasted Club and we were fortunate to be able to sit outdoors with a beautiful view of the bowling green and the river Darent beyond.

We had asked the attendees to bring to the event a photograph of themselves in their younger days and these proved a great talking point, leading to much reminiscing about the village and its residents in years gone by.

Fundridge has lots more great events lined up for the year ahead and we hope to see you in the future.

A big thank you to Barbara and Paddy Longbon for allowing us to use the club and for their assistance in the run-up to this event.

*The Fundridge Team:*

*John Banbrook, Vikki Allgood, Kate Henry, Alison MacMillan, Fiona Parkin, Henry Robertson-Nicol*



## The July/August edition

If you have any information for the "Dates for your Diary" section or an article that you'd like included in the next edition, please email by  
Wednesday 23rd June to:-  
[sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com](mailto:sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com)



# News from Sundridge and Brasted CE Primary School



*Greetings from Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School!*

It's been a great term! We have been COVID-free which is wonderful, the sun has been shining (almost), all the children have worked hard and we have been able to spread our school wings a little to include a few additional activities, COVID-compliant of course.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Sue Leather of St Mary's Church, Westerham to our school for Celebration Worship once a week. Sue has led worship for us on the top playground, enlisting volunteers to help act out the stories and discussing the themes of the worship with the whole school.

We also have a new school prayer, based on the thoughts and ideas of our School Council and in conjunction with our RE lead Mrs Taylor-Hicks:

*Dear God,*

*Thank you that we can come to you in prayer and that you hear us.*

*Thank you for your love for us. Help us to love each other.*

*Teach us to be respectful.*

*Help us to treat others the way we want to be treated.*

*Let us be kind to one another.*

*Help us to show kindness each day.*

*Thank you for the responsibilities we have.*

*Help us to be responsible.*

*Show us the importance of honesty.*

*Help us to be honest with each other.*

*Forgive us our wrong deeds. Help us to make things right.*

*Thank you for all the good things you give us:*

*thank you for the food we eat, the people we care about  
and for our school.*

*Amen*

As always, we are immensely grateful to Mr and Mrs Jack for allowing us to use their field. Hedgehog and Owl classes have been playing tag rugby on the Dairy Field and showing lots of sportsmanship and sporting skills.

Mrs Hendry of Sevenoaks School has joined us to lead our music teaching this term. She has worked with each teacher to ensure that the music relates to the class topic



and, as such, she has used instruments to represent 'sound pictures' for plants growing, space and space travel, the sounds of a bluebell wood and the sounds of Africa! The children have absolutely loved her creative inspiration and been thoroughly engaged in the lessons, which led to them all creating their own songs and music.

Sevenoaks School also lent us their Virtual Reality equipment for a week which was fantastic! Owl class visited the different planets in our solar system to find out about their atmosphere, temperature and surface. Squirrel class travelled to different habitats and discussed what animals you might find there. They then went on a wonderful adventure around the world. Fox class went to Ancient Egypt, explored tombs, watched pyramids being built and travelled along the Nile. They then looked at modern day Egypt to compare the two. We were immensely grateful to Sevenoaks School for the loan of such wonderful equipment. It was great!



Our oldest children took part in Safety in Action, which sadly had to be via zoom rather than in person, but nonetheless the lessons learnt were invaluable as the interactive event is designed to teach the children about some of the dangers they may face as they become more independent and prepare for transition to secondary school.

In other news, we are very excited to be working with Oxford University Press throughout terms 5 and 6, testing out their new Key Stage 2 Maths resources for them, teaching their lessons which are aimed at helping teachers deliver best practice in the classroom. As part of this venture, Oxford University Press will capture images of the lessons in progress to print then in their publications to illustrate the lessons in action.

We have also sent off our first batch of 'To My New Good Friend' letters to Rivermere Care Home, which is part of the National Literacy Trust initiative to enhance writing skills in school but also to help forge better links with the community. We very much hope that the residents of Rivermere have enjoyed our letters and will be writing back to us very soon.

We have also signed up to NewsWise, another National Literacy Trust initiative, which aims to enhance and deepen children's understanding of the news, to help them critically navigate the news, discuss fake news and to encourage them to report their own real news stories. The Trust will provide resources and opportunities, all of which is a fantastic way of extending the children's critical thinking and writing skills.

If you have walked or driven past the school recently you may have noticed that our younger children are now using the lower playground as an extended outdoor area and, indeed, we have plans to remodel and refurbish the whole area to give the children an extended creative and inspiring learning environment.

Watch this space!! (In August!)

We are now going into the half-term break and will be back in June for the final term of the year. We are planning a sports event and hope to be able to organise an end-of-year production and leavers' events, all of which were curtailed this time last year.

As always, we send our very best wishes to the community and hope you all stay safe and well.

*Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School*

## Sundridge bells and their connection with the Whitechapel Bell Foundry

Over the centuries the bells in Sundridge have been repaired and sometimes recast. The earliest records are of three bells by 1619 – one of these, the Fifth, is still with us so we can imagine it in Sundridge ringing out to celebrate the coronation of Charles I.

The sound may have been somewhat cracked because there is an entry in the Parish Register in 1655 that there were three bells, two of which were broken, and parishioners were asked for money to repair them and add some more bells.

During the Commonwealth period in the post-Civil War when England was ruled without a King, the bells were not rung. Indeed, a Commission considered pulling the church down and building it somewhere else but decided that, although it was far from the village, they could not think where else to build it.

After the Restoration, things got back to normal. They did get their money and two bells were broken up and replaced in 1666 and a fourth was cast in 1683.

In 1737 the Tenor was added, making 5 bells. It was either not a good casting or hung badly or perhaps the clapper had damaged it – whatever the cause, it was broken up and recast by another foundry in 1885. In that year, the Treble bell was also cast making the present peal of six bells. Since then, the bells have been re-hung at least twice and the frame strengthened.

In 2004 the bells and the frame were inspected and it was found that two were cracked, the bearings worn out and the whole assembly rattled around when the bells were rung. Something had to be done, otherwise the bells would become too hard to ring and might fall down around the ringers' ears.

A quotation was obtained from Whitechapel Bell Foundry, one of only two foundries in England and

nearest to us. The repairs would cost £53,000 to take down the bells, take them to Whitechapel, grind out and weld up the two cracked bells, fit new headstocks (the mechanism from which the actual bells are hung) and bearings, strengthen the bell frame, tune the bells so that they were more harmonious, fit new wheels and re-hang them.

£53,000 was a great deal of money for a small parish to find but, mainly by hard work and initiative on the part of the bell ringers themselves, it was found in about 9 months. The bell ringers raised over £13,500 and the Heritage Lottery Fund gave them a grant of £18,900. Other grants were forthcoming from various charities and there were several fund-raising activities and generous donations from parishioners.

The bells were taken down in January 2005 by volunteers from the Kent County Association of Change Ringers who also provided a grant of £4,000. Mr O'Keefe and John Evans provided free loading and transport to Whitechapel, who took delivery of them on 17th January. The bells were repaired and returned to Sundridge in June and were operational again by the end of July. Bishop Brian rededicated the bells at a special service.

Unfortunately, Whitechapel no longer exists as a foundry as the Housing Secretary, Robert Jenrick, has just given the go-ahead for it to be transformed into a hotel. His decision has been met with dismay from heritage campaigners who accused the Government of selling off a piece of British history for the sake of "another charmless boutique hotel". The only good thing to be salvaged from the decision is that the hotel will be built around the bell-making facility, which will also include a modern foundry that will produce some small bells under licence.



### And finally . . .

*Taken from a Parish magazine –*

The vicar addressed the congregation: "I have good news and bad news," he said. "The good news is, we have enough money to pay for a new roof on the church. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."