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Telephone 859352
Email: andrew.rogers3@btinternet.com

Chairman Vacant

Treasurer Steve Brown
Email: treasurer@harrietshamfishscheme.org

Secretary Nicola File

Network Magazine

Editor Nicola File
Email: editor@harrietshamfishscheme.org

Editorial Team Amanda Ward, Denise Williams and Rod Martenstyn
Email: editor@harrietshamfishscheme.org

Advertising Manager Steve Brown
Email: adverts@harrietshamfishscheme.org

Distribution Manager Jackie Bevan
Faygate, Ashford Road, Lenham ME17 2DA
Telephone 859310

Visit our website: www.harrietshamfishscheme.org

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Wednesday 1 January 2025 12 noon advertising and copy deadline for January Network.

In addition to printing the magazine and distributing it to all homes in the village, Network is uploaded to our website by the 1st of each month.

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Please send copy to: editor@harrietshamfishscheme.org.

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Contents

Clubs and Societies

Harrietsham Gardening Society	8
Harrietsham History Society	10
Harrietsham In Bloom	9
Harrietsham Lawn Tennis Club	8
Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls Club	9

Churches

Christian Message	30
Friends of St John's	21
Len Valley Benefice Service Times	19
Local Church Contact Details	22

Information

January Diary	25
Editorial	7
Local Directory	16, 17
Public Services and Emergencies Directory	23
Who's Who	3

Features and General Articles

Accessible Wellbeing	28
Countryways Quilters	15
Harrietsham Garage & MOT	29
Holocaust Memorial Day	15
Lenham Film Club	24
Lenham WI	27
Quiz Corner	9
Answers	27
Soup Saturday	20

Join the Fish Committee	30
-------------------------	----

Tours at Harrietsham Primary School	12
-------------------------------------	----

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Message From the Editor

Happy New Year, and welcome to the January 2025 edition of the Harrietsham Network. As we start the new year, we look forward to continuing our role as a hub for news, events, and updates in the community.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors and volunteers who supported the Network throughout 2024. Your efforts have been invaluable in keeping the village informed and connected. As always, we welcome your stories, photos, and suggestions for upcoming issues.

We are also reminding residents of the Harrietsham Fish Scheme's need for new committee members. This is a chance to make a meaningful contribution to the village with a manageable time commitment. If you are interested, please get in touch.

On behalf of the editorial team and committee, we wish you a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2025.

Thank you for your continued support of the Harrietsham Network. Your contributions and feedback are always appreciated. Please feel free to share your stories, photos, or ideas with us at editor@harrietshamfishscheme.org.

Visit our website: www.harrietshamfishscheme.org

Cover photo by Sebastian Hietsch: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/fireworks-during-nighttime-10967/>

Whilst every effort has been made to include as wide a variety of information as possible, the editor reserves the right not to publish, or to edit, any item. The editor's decision is final. Responsibility for the information and views set out in articles and notices in this publication lies entirely with the authors.

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Harrietsham Network

Harrietsham Gardening Society



Members were entertained to a very interesting talk on birds of the Medway Estuary by two volunteers from the RSPB, the well-known Golden Wonders, Messrs Smith and Walker. They showed slides of at least 60 different species to be found along the estuary and that's not all because many birds predominantly found on-shore were excluded, which just goes to show the wealth of wild birds to be found in our county. The talk included a brief description of each species, its habit and identifying features. A very useful free app is 'Merlin' which can be helpful in identification, in particular it will identify a bird if you hold your phone so it can hear the birdsong, croak etc.

Our January meeting is the postponed talk by Dilogen de Alwis entitled 'In praise of weeds' which should be a bit of a turn-around bearing in mind what most people think of them or try to do to them. This will be followed by our AGM; it is important that as many people try to attend as possible as this is when Officers are elected etc.

Finally, wishing everyone a happy and prosperous New Year and I hope your New Year resolutions to join the Gardening Society in 2025 meet with expectations and are sustained!

Kevin Harlock

Harrietsham Lawn Tennis Club (Est. 1924)



Pickleball - Sunday afternoons 2-4pm in Harrietsham Village Hall

The Tennis Club now has a regular booking on Sunday afternoons from 2-4pm to play Pickleball in the Harrietsham Village Hall.

Everyone is very welcome - you don't need to join the Tennis Club, just turn up & play - all equipment provided. The cost of the 2 hour session is only £3 per adult-accompanied children under 16 are free. We have had a few trial runs in the Autumn and it is a fun game - similar to tennis with a low height net but very different with solid rackets (paddles) and plastic balls with large holes!

Do come along and give Pickleball a go - we start up on Sunday 12 January.

For any further details please ring Andrew on 079000 23399 or visit our website harrietshamlawntennisclub.weebly.com for the latest news.

Andrew Rogers - Tennis Club Chairman

Harrietsham In Bloom

January is a quiet month for Harrietsham in Bloom but at the end of the month the volunteers and sponsors will gather at The Taste of Bengal for our annual meal. Our thanks go to Ash and his staff for agreeing to host us. We look forward to an enjoyable evening.



Roger Bevan has surveyed the broken planters and repairs will take place when weather and time allows. Also painting of planters will take place over the next few months.

Thanking all for your support.

Audrey Joy MBE

Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls Club



By the time you read this Christmas will be over, so I hope you have all had a Merry old time and forgotten about green mats and bowling balls for a while. Looking ahead I hope we all have a Happy New Year and stay safe and well, fresh for a new start to a good bowling year.

Hopefully we can continue with the excellent start we have made in the East Kent Winter League, three wins from three games at the last report is a good effort we just need to keep up that momentum. We continue to have good roll up sessions and this support along with any friendly games helps to keep our club in a healthy position, so keep on bowling and enjoying this social sporting activity.

All the best for 2025

Phil Gooda

Quiz Corner

Round 15

1. What is the smallest British rodent?
2. Which confectionery brand, founded in 1907, was a boy's name spelled in reverse?
3. Originally, what colour stone covered the Pyramids of Giza?
4. What kind of weapon is a Falchion?
5. Who invented the Rabies Vaccine?
6. Approximately, what is the diameter of the Earth in miles?
7. Which country hosted a formula one race for the first time in 2011?
8. What is the shortest English word containing the letters ABCDEF?
9. Which fish's skin was once used commercially as sandpaper?
10. Which two scrabble letters both have a points value of 8?

Answers on page 27



Happy New Year from Harrietsham History Society!

We hope you had a wonderful festive season and are ready for a history filled 2025.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported us at the Harrietsham Primary School Christmas Fayre. Our stall was a great success, with many engaging in discussions about the village's rich history and several potential new members who will be able to enjoy the talks and events we have planned in 2025.

2025 – Schedule

28 January 2025 (Tuesday)

Time: 1400 – 1600

Topic: A look at crime in Victorian Kent

Location: Village Hall

3 March 2025 (Monday)

Time: 1900 - 2100

Topic: Islands in the Medway Estuary

Location: Percival's Rest

27 May 2025 (Tuesday) - Trip

Time: TBC

110th anniversary of the death of Able Seaman Ray Alexander

Location: Chatham Naval Memorial

29 September 2025 (Monday)

Time: 1900 - 2100

Topic: Wartime letters from India

Location: Percival's Rest

4 November 2025 (Tuesday)

Time: 1400 - 1600

Topic: Colour in Medieval Art and Experience

Location: Village Hall

We would also love to hear your stories about life in Harrietsham - past or present. These stories will help us enrich the historical archive of Harrietsham and preserve your memories for future generations. Please share your memories, photos, or documents with us at any of our meetings or by contacting me directly – chairmanhhs@gmail.com.

Martyn Avis - Chairman



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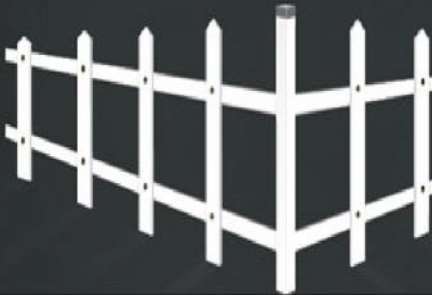
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New Reception Cohort Tours at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

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We are writing to invite all families with a child due to start school next September to our school tours over the next couple of months. We know how daunting choosing a 'big school' for your little one can be, and we know how important it is that you choose the right school for your child, so we warmly invite you to visit our school to see for yourself what life at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School is like.

Please feel welcome to bring along your little one too – its always good to see what they think of the school.

We will have lots of children with their smiles at the ready to greet them as they tour!

Tours will be held every day of the week on the following dates:

- **Monday 20th January – Friday 24th January: Every Day at 10am and 2pm.**

Please call the school office to book a place on a tour: **01622 859261**.

If you would like any information about our school in the meantime, please visit our website: www.harrietsham.kent.sch.uk

We look forward to welcoming you to our school and telling you all about life at Harrietsham.

Kind regards,

Jackie Chambers
Headteacher



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Holocaust Memorial Day

This year will see many anniversaries associated with the Second World War, but few will be more poignant or relevant to today than the 27 of January.

For it was on this date, in 1945, that units from the Soviet 60th Army of the Ukrainian Front, arrived at the gates of a massive sprawling camp of barbed wire and huts near the recently liberated Polish city of Cracow. This was Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Here they liberated over 7,000 starving and exhausted prisoners but also discovered over 600 unburied corpses, at a cost of 230 Soviet soldiers killed in the fight against desperate units of the Nazi SS and Wehrmacht.

Since 2001 this date has been marked as Holocaust Memorial Day. With antisemitism on the rise across the World following the terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023- consequently, it has never been more important to learn the lessons of where prejudice and intolerance will lead us. For Auschwitz was responsible for the murder of not only Jewish people, but also gay people, gypsies, disabled people and anyone considered racially inferior by the Nazis.

Therefore, help mark this important anniversary on 27 January by putting a candle in your window and lighting it at 8pm. This will show we all care and respect each other and hopefully we will all work together to make our World more compassionate and accepting.

(picture from Holocaust Memorial Trust website)

Mike Bishop



Countryways Quilters

Happy New Year everyone. After the last few weeks of relaxing, eating, partying and more eating and drinking it's time to kick start the year with something new and adventurous. We have lots of fun things on the program this year for beginners and advanced stitchers alike. I'm here to teach you if your a little unsure and before you know it you won't be a beginner anymore.

Our first meeting is on the 7 January and we will be working on any quilt you have in progress. If you are not working on a quilt then bring anything you like.

On 21 January we will be making shabby chic fabric flowers from plain cotton or polyester fabric. These will be used on a later project.

I do hope you'll come join us and try your hand at something new or just enjoy the company , have a chat and a cup of tea. An enjoyable way to spend an afternoon. We have our meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month except December and would love to see you. We meet usually in the Osbourne room in the Lenham Community Centre from 1:30 to 4:30.

If you would like more information on our group or would like a copy of our 2025 program please contact me, Pamela Gillard at 07914 809946 or e-mail moonbeamspinner@gmail.com

Pamela Gillard

Harrietsham Network

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Len Valley Benefice January 2025



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For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you. *Isaiah 41:13*

Sunday 5 January

- 9.30am Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion (BCP)
- 9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church
- 9.30am Harrietsham: Family friendly Morning Worship
- 11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Wednesday 8 January

- 9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)
- 11.00am Harrietsham: Chippendayle

Sunday 12 January

- 9.30am Harrietsham: Holy Communion
- 9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church
- 11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion
- 11.00am Ulcombe: Holy Communion
- 6.30pm Boughton Malherbe: Choral Evensong

Sunday 19 January

- 8.00am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)
- 9.30am Boughton Malherbe: Holy Communion
- 9.30am Harrietsham: Holy Communion
- 9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church
- 11.00am Ulcombe: Holy Communion
- 11.00am Lenham: Morning Worship

Sunday 26 January

- 11.00am **Benefice Holy Communion at St John the Baptist, Harrietsham**
'Re-Sourced in Christ - Foundation'



The Friends of the Church
of St John the Baptist,
Harrietsham

Registered Charity No. 1090622

invite you to come along and bring your family to

Soup Saturday

Enjoy a bowl of hearty soup with crusty bread at
the village church. Meet people and enjoy lunch
without any preparation or washing up!

£4 per portion

Tea, coffee and biscuits also available - 50p extra

Saturday 11 January 2025

12 noon to 2pm

at St. John's Church Harrietsham

Proceeds go to the upkeep of our beautiful village church.





The Friends of the Church
of St John the Baptist,
Harrietsham

Registered Charity No. 1090622

Soup Saturday

All being well, we will have a Soup (tinned) Saturday this month on **Saturday 11 January 2025**. Usual time – 12 noon to 2pm. Tea, coffee and biscuits also available. Look out for the posters! All profits go to the upkeep of our beautiful village church. The 100 Club lottery draw will also take place at 1pm.

100 Club Lottery Results

The results of the Ninety-Sixth Draw of the Friends of St John 100 Club drawn on Saturday 9 November 2024 by various diners at the Ploughman's Platterday lunch under the supervision of Michael Gear (Independent Adjudicator) and Chris Roots (Promoter) are:

- First Prize £70.50 – number 11 – Pat King
- Second Prize £42.30 – number 91 – Mrs Christine Wood
- Third Prize £28.20 – number 28 – Majorie Darby

There were 141 numbers included in the draw giving a prize fund of £141.

Event Reports

We are so sorry that we had to cancel our Singalong in December. We couldn't find anyone to play for us which was so disappointing. BUT we do have some news – we are hoping to have a Musical Concert, date to be confirmed – something to look forward to and enjoy. Arrangements are still being made, it's something new for us so please watch this space for more details later.

Please make a note in your diaries – our AGM this year will be held on **Friday 28 March, 7pm in the church**. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

If you would like further information or an application form to join either the 100 Club or as a Friend, please email Chris Roots at friendsofstjohn@outlook.com or phone 851 885.

Please remember that Audrey is standing down as our Chair at our AGM this year and we are hoping that someone will come forward to take up this role. Audrey has been an excellent Chair, leading us always and setting an example. We are also looking for new committee members, could this be you??

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and on behalf of the Committee, we wish you all a healthy and happy 2025.

Valerie Brown - Secretary

Local Churches

Parish Church of St John the Baptist

Vicar: Revd. John Huggins
01622 850280 vicar@lvb.org.uk
(Day off: Wednesday)

Assisting priests:

Revd. Millie Hart 07766 555415
millie.hart@uwclub.net

Readers:

Pamela Cuerden 01622 859442
pamela@lvb.org.uk

Benefice Office:

Sarah Hills 01622 850604
churchOffice@lvb.org.uk
For details of services see p.23

United Reformed Church

Week Street, Maidstone

Minister: Rev Andrew Royal
Sunday Service at 10.30am with creche. No evening service.
01622 686053
maidstoneurcoffice@talktalk.net

Baptist Church

Knightrider Street, Maidstone

Minister: Bill Miller
Office: 01622 686013
Sunday Services at 10.30am with creche, and at 6.30pm
www.maidstonebaptist.net

Bearsted and Thurnham Methodist Church

Bearsted (next to Station)

Minister: Revd. Robert Zachar
117 Crossways
Sittingbourne
ME10 4RN
01795 422573
Sunday Service 10.30am

Church of the Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Church

Rectory Lane, off East Street,
Harrietsham

Parish Priest: Fr Geoffrey Pointer
Deacon: Rev Cyril Durbin 736100
Mass every Sunday at 8.45am and
Wednesday at 10.00am
Holydays Mass 7pm

St Peter's Roman Catholic Church

Button Lane, Bearsted 736100
Confessions, Saturday 5 – 5.30pm
Saturday Evening Mass 6pm
Sunday Mass 10.30am
Weekday Mass generally
Monday and Tuesday 7pm and Friday
10am
Holydays Mass 10am and 8pm

Pathways Church, Maidstone

1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at
10.30am in Lenham Community Centre.
Wednesday evenings in homes in Lenham and Harrietsham.

Church leaders: Ben and Kaat Doggett
info@pathwayschurch.org.uk
www.pathwayschurch.org.uk

For all church services please see information on page 21/22 or contact your own church for up to date information.

Public Services and Emergencies Directory

Doctors' Surgery (Lenham and Harrietsham)	01622 858341
Dentist, Lenham	01622 858204
Dentaline (out of hours emergency treatment)	01634 890300
Saxon Warrior Pharmacy	01622 858287

Hospitals:

Maidstone ME16 9QQ	01622 729000
The Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Pembury, TN2 4QJ	01892 823535
William Harvey Hospital, Ashford	01233 633331

Councils:

MP - Helen Whately	01622 758053
Kent County Council	03000 414141
Maidstone Borough Council - all departments	01622 602000
Harrietsham Parish Council - Parish Clerk	01622 850089

Police:

Emergencies only	999
Non emergencies	101

Samaritans, 48 Grecian Street, Maidstone	01622 674444
Citizens Advice Bureau, 2 Bower Terrace, Maidstone	0808 2505704
Childline	0800 1111
KCC Children's Social Services	03000 411111
KCC Adult Social Services	03000 416161



Lenham Film Club

at Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way



LENHAM
FILM CLUB

The Old Oak

Friday 10 January

Performance begins 19.30, doors open 19.00

Running time 1hr 53 mins

The pub, the lynchpin of any village, is irreplaceable, yet The Old Oak, at the heart of a former mining community in County Durham, is struggling to stay open. Warm-hearted and compassionate, **The Old Oak** (15, 2023) is the triumphant last film from the legendary director Ken Loach and it is a superb statement of adversity and hope. The pub is the last pub standing in the once thriving village, a gathering space for a community that has fallen on hard times. The landlord TJ Ballantyne is doing his best but the future looks bleak. Even the refuge offered by The Old Oak seems threatened when Syrian refugees are thrust upon the village and, as the villagers see it, these Syrians are invading their territory. But TJ is not defeated. One refugee in particular offers hope. **The Old Oak** is a superb way to raise a glass to 2025, so do come and enjoy it with us.

Greeting us on Friday 14 February will be St Valentine of course. What better way to spend it than watching You've Got Mail (PG 1998), in which Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks bring romance to this unforgettable comedy.

Please get in touch for more information or to join our mailing list.

Admission: Adults £5, under 16s £2; cash only, card payments not accepted.

lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com

www.lenhamfilmclub.org

@lenhamfilmclub



January 2025 Diary

Abbreviations:

HVH = Harrietsham Village Hall LCC = Lenham Community Centre

Thurs	2	7.30pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Fri	3	10.00am	Group Coffee Morning	HVH
Mon	6	9.45am	Purple Yoga	HVH
Mon	6	2pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Mon	6	7pm	Knit, Crochet and Craft	HVH
Wed	8	1.30pm	Craft and Chat	LCC
Thurs	9	7.30pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Thurs	9	7.30pm	Lenham WI	LCC
Fri	10	10.00am	Group Coffee Morning	HVH
Fri	10	7.30pm	Lenham Film Club	LCC
Sat	11	12pm	Soup Saturday	St John
Mon	13	9.45am	Purple Yoga	HVH
Mon	13	2pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Thurs	16	7.30pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Fri	17	10.00am	Group Coffee Morning	HVH
Mon	20	9.45am	Purple Yoga	HVH
Mon	20	2pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Mon	20	2pm	Knit, Crochet and Craft	HVH
Tues	21	2.30pm	Harrietsham Gardening Society	HVH
Thurs	23	7.30pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Fri	24	10.00am	Group Coffee Morning	HVH
Sat	25	1.30pm	Craft and Chat	LCC
Mon	20	9.45am	Purple Yoga	HVH
Mon	20	2pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Thurs	23	7.30pm	Harrietsham Short Mat Bowls	HVH
Fri	24	10.00am	Group Coffee Morning	HVH

M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Harrietsham Network

HARRIETSHAM SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

VENUE HARRIETSHAM VILLAGE HALL

MONDAY AFTERNOONS, 1.45pm TO 4.15pm

THURSDAY EVENINGS, 7.15pm TO 10.15pm

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Lenham WI

Well hello 2025. Happy New Year to everyone. Last year ended with Helen Kendall-Tobias giving us a demonstration on “50 Ways to Tie a Scarf”. Helen is an image consultant who has attended garden parties at the Palace. She started her career fourteen years ago with 50 scarves she had in her wardrobe. She told us how to find the right colours for us – with Autumn and Spring being warm colours and Winter and Summer cool colours.



For our Christmas meeting we had a lovely social evening at Lenham Social Club. We were entertained by Miss Vintage and had some yummy food and drink.

Now we looking forward to another interesting year. We are in the process of booking our speakers including “Make-up for the Mature Woman”, Behind the Scenes at the BBC and Sloe Gin and Chocolate.

We hope to arrange some more days out and some of us are going to the Panto at the Community Centre later this month. Don’t forget there is the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch at the end of the month too.

In March we are off to Gravesend for our Federation Annual General Meeting. We are also continuing to arrange catering for events at the Community Centre.

The WI is unique in putting members at the heart of all our campaigning activity. This year we have four Resolutions to discuss and vote for – Let’s Talk about Incontinence, Bystanders can be Lifesavers, Join the Repair Revolution and Eliminate Landfill of Medication Packaging. One of these will go forward to the AGM in June and, if voted for will be the next campaign to take to the Government. Each one is important in its own right.

So watch this space for further information. We are happy to welcome new members so come along to any of our meetings held on the second Thursday of the month at Lenham Community Centre at 7.30pm. For further information please contact Chris Godden – 01622 858658, or email rgodden@btinternet.com.

Quiz Corner Answers	
4.	A single edged sword
5.	Louis Pasteur
6.	7,900 miles
7.	India
8.	Feedback
9.	Shark
10.	J and X
Round 15	
1.	Harvest mouse
2.	Trebor
3.	White limestone

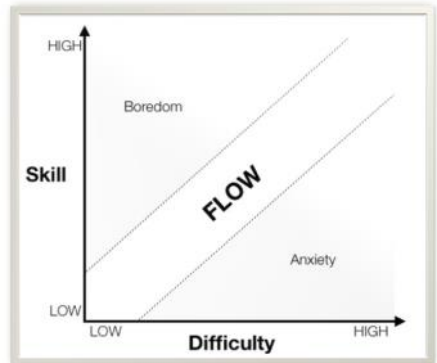
Accessible Well-being - Flow

Pict 1 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Last time I recommended engaging in a search for personal meaning in life as a way to improve well-being. Today I would like to talk more about how to bring more meaning into our lives. One of the ways to achieve it is by reaching the state of Flow, or getting into a “Zone”.

The state of Flow can be achieved when one is preoccupied with something they enjoy or value. Who hasn't had an experience when, while doing something, they lost count of time, and forgot about thirst hunger, or other bodily functions? We all have such experiences from time to time. But there is a way how you can achieve a state of Flow not accidentally, but deliberately.

The state of Flow and how to achieve it is extensively described by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his numerous works. The essence of his teaching is, that we need, voluntarily, to find a challenge that will stretch us to the limits (but not beyond) of our skills.



Applying this idea to any task you are involved in, will increase your well-being, will boost your self-esteem and self-worth, and will bring meaningful joy to your life. And here is the thing. If to talk about your day job, it might be easy to achieve a state of Flow if you are doing something that you love. Unfortunately, I believe I won't be

wrong to state that the majority of people are not so lucky. Yet, our day job is a place where we spend most of our lives. So, it will be a very sensible idea to put a conscious effort to turn our time at work into something personally meaningful and, be it in retrospect, enjoyable.

So, here is a practical task – If you feel that your job is a boring routine, or, contrary, it is too challenging and keeps you in constant anxiety, talk to your manager/supervisor so you can bring the work challenge to the right level, or find a way to increase/decrease the challenge yourself. Once you find the right balance in your work, you will be hooked.

“Of all the virtues we can learn no trait is more useful, more essential for survival, and more likely to improve the quality of life than the ability to transform adversity into an enjoyable challenge.”

— Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Classic Work On How To Achieve Happiness: The Psychology of Happiness

Next time we will touch on more ways how to achieve this valuable state...

Harrietsham Garage & MOT



Harrietsham
GARAGE & MOT

We are excited to announce the opening of Harrietsham Garage & MOT. Formally known as A.W Auto Repairs - S.L Motors run for many years by Nigel and Steve.

Darren Kennaway, the new company director and lead mechanic, brings more than 25 years of experience in the automotive industry. Many locals might recognise him from his thriving business, Maidstone Mobile Mechanic, which has gained a solid following in Maidstone and nearby areas. Over the years, Darren has earned an excellent reputation for his dependable and trustworthy services. With a growing number of satisfied customers, he's now set to expand his operations under the name Harrietsham Garage & MOT while still providing his mobile mechanic services.

"I am very much looking forward to this new venture", said Darren. "This is a great opportunity to offer our customers more services without the mobile workshop's limitations. I'm delighted to say Nigel has chosen to remain working at the Harrietsham garage"

Harrietsham Garage & MOT understand for many customers; it can be difficult to choose a garage that makes you feel comfortable and valued as a customer. Our team are qualified, trustworthy and always happy to help. Plus, Maidstone Mobile Mechanic boasts over 400 glowing reviews online.

Harrietsham Garage & MOT provides a range of services for our customers, including vehicle yearly servicing, cambelt, clutch, brakes, battery, suspension and exhaust replacements, diagnostics, MOT testing, air conditioning re-gas, tyres and mechanical repairs.

All existing and new customers will be welcomed by Darren, Nigel and the team.

T: 01622 859 580

M: 07923 291 980

www.harrietshamgarage.co.uk

Unit 4, Station Road Industrial Estate, Harrietsham, ME17 1JA.

Christian Message

January. Christmas is over! Are you relieved, or sad? But is it over?

Well, in a way, it's not, because the traditional date to remember the Magi or wise teachers from the East visiting Mary, Joseph and Jesus is 6 January. This is sometimes called an epiphany (a revelation or showing from above) or, in the Orthodox Church, a theophany (a showing from God). The Biblical accounts of the birth of Jesus are anything but ordinary, but the visit of these wise teachers after his birth is remarkable in that it revealed Jesus as, not just another wonderful newborn baby, but as somebody extraordinarily special. Indeed, as the very earliest Christians pondered this moment, they realised that the message was that God had come to them in this otherwise ordinary human baby.

Whatever the scientific explanation, a 'star' shows the wise teachers where to go. To quote some liturgy from the orthodox Church, "Using a great star as its mouth, heaven proclaims the presence on earth of him who has overwhelmingly become poor for our sake".

Gifts are given to Jesus. Frankincense was an expensive perfume associated with worship and proclaims Jesus as a priest. Gold was representative of ultimate wealth, and proclaims Jesus as king. And myrrh, another expensive perfume, used at funerals, proclaims Jesus as the king who will die- for you and for me!

What on earth did Mary make of it all, as these wise dignitaries bowed before her tiny baby in the humble surroundings of a manger- an animal feeder?

And what do we make of it? Now that the twinkle of the Christmas lights fades away and we start our New Year diets to get rid of the goose fat, will we still bow before the tiny baby who was God made human? Will we still wonder at the grace of a God who comes to us to seek us out? Will we bring gifts? What about the greatest gift that we can bring: the gift of lives offered to a God who seeks love as a way of living?

Revd. John P. Huggins

01622 850280

Join the Harrietsham Fish Scheme Committee!

Help support our community!

The Harrietsham Fish Scheme is looking for more members to join our committee.

It's a great way to make a difference without a huge time investment.

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