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PARISH MAGAZINE



August 2026



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Churchwarden	Mrs Gilly Halcrow	01342 826183
Churchwarden	Mrs Jane Osman	01892 515883
Sexton & Verger	Mr John Collins	01892 662389
Licensed Reader	Mr Donald Yonge	07872 529740
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Blackham Church	Mrs Sue Schooling	01892 740397
Withyham Flower Guild	Mrs Jill Pardey	01892 661882
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From the Rectory

Dear Friends,

August is often a slightly different month, and a time to relax or break off from normal routines. If we do go away anywhere on holiday, many head for the coast. As a child, my parents used to take us to the northwest Highlands of Scotland. However, after one year when we suffered 18 wet days in 21, they decided to alternate with the West Country.

The sea has certain qualities which no lake or river can begin to emulate, with the constantly changes of light at different times of day. By the sea, we can be reminded of the sheer beauty of God's creation; but also of its power, and of how insignificant we are in comparison. Whilst younger children love to race into the sea, as we get older many of us prefer to just look at the sea rather than spending time in it. Our Island Nation is blessed with a varied coastline – great contrasts between our South Coast of white cliffs, river estuaries, sandy beaches and urban seafronts or, say, North and South Cornwall... we are so fortunate.

Many poets have attempted to capture these things. In 1882 Christina Rossetti wrote a short three-verse poem entitled *Birchington Churchyard* which was published in *The Athenaeum*. She composed it in memory of her brother, the artist and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who died on Easter Sunday, 9th April 1882. He is buried in the Churchyard at Birchington, just west of Margate on the North Kent coast, near the south door of the Church.

*A lowly hill which overlooks a flat,
Half sea, half countryside;
A flat-shored sea of low-voiced creeping tide,
Over a chalky, weedy mat.*

*A hill of hillocks, flowery and kept green
Round crosses raised for hope,
With many-tinted sunsets where the slope
Faces the lingering western sheen.*

*A lowly hope, a height that is but low,
While Time sets solemnly,
While the tide rises of Eternity,
Silent and neither swift nor slow.*

Whatever your August brings, may it be a peaceful one.

James Campbell

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Churchwardens' Notes

by Gilly Halcrow & Jane Osman

July started with our Church and Village Fête, and this year we were lucky with the weather, which meant that the visitor numbers were high. The dog show was a success as was the bird display, the children's races and the May Pole dancing, performed by children from St. Michael's Primary School. All the stalls were kept busy and gross income was in the region of £9,500, which will be distributed between the village and the Church.

The Pet Service, outside the Rectory, took place on 19th July, on yet another lovely summer's day, with dogs of all shapes and sizes, each introduced to the congregation during the Service.

We both attended the Archdeacon's Visitation and the swearing in of Churchwardens on the 29th July, and as Jane is our new Churchwarden this was her first time.

New red carpet has been laid in front of the altar, and new red curtains are being made for the Belfry, with both replacing old, faded predecessors.

If you are not already aware, James and Mary Campbell will be with us for a while longer, before their departure to Scotland, with James's final Service on Sunday 31st January 2027.

Church Calendar – August 2026

St. Michael and All Angels, Withyham, with All Saints, Blackham

All services at Withyham unless stated

Sunday 2nd – 9th after Trinity	9.45 am	Zoom
	11.00 am	Holy Communion
	6.30 pm	Evensong
Sunday 9th – 10th after Trinity	11.00 am	Matins
Sunday 16th – 11th after Trinity	11.00 am	Matins
Sunday 23rd – 12th after Trinity	11.00 am	Matins
Sunday 30th – 13th after Trinity	11.00 am	Matins, Blackham
Sunday 6th Sep – 14th after Trinity	9.45 am	Zoom
	11.00 am	Holy Communion
	6.30 pm	Evensong

Parish Registers – July 2026

No entries month.

Our Departure by James Campbell

On 12th July I announced that, for a variety of reasons, Mary and I have delayed our departure from St. Michael and All Angels, Withyham, and All Saints, Blackham, until the New Year. We can now celebrate Christmas together. My last Sunday will be on 31st January, and we plan to move to Scotland at the beginning of March.



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Family Support Work

July 2026 update

by Hannah Rothwell,
FSW Digital Fundraising &
Communications Executive

Dear Friends,

With summer in full swing, our summer newsletter 2026 is now available. Inside you'll find family stories from summer trips, a volunteer Q&A, updates from CEO – Martin Auton-Lloyd, and Chairman – Richard Bickersteth, plus the latest news from Family Support Work. If you haven't received a copy, please visit our website to read online or contact us for a printed version.

Get Involved With FSW: There are many ways to support FSW, from donating and volunteering to fundraising. Long-time supporter Peter Gayler is continuing his Cathedral, Abbey and Church (CAC) Pilgrimage across England, Wales and Scotland, attending services and exploring the history of each location. So far he has raised £8,415 and hopes to complete his challenge in April 2027. To support him or see his regular updates: justgiving.com/page/cacpilgrimage

Summer Food Donations: We would be very grateful for donations of tinned pasta, tinned vegetables (not pulses), tinned tomatoes, tinned fish, ketchup and mayonnaise, instant coffee, jelly pots or packets, and tinned fruit.

A Family Outing That Changed Everything: One of our practitioners supported a mum and her two sons on a day out to Bodiam Castle. After experiencing domestic abuse, the mum had lost the confidence to take her children anywhere unfamiliar. With support by her side, the family spent the day laughing, exploring, sharing a picnic and simply enjoying being together. The mum later said she felt safe, less alone, and able to face new experiences again. To everyone else, they looked like friends enjoying a day out but for this family, it was a vital step towards rebuilding confidence, creating happy memories and moving forward. Your support makes moments and days out like these possible.

Upcoming Events: For more information about our upcoming events, including Open Gardens and Waldron Classic Car & Bike Show and please visit: familysupportwork.org/events

June's work in numbers

- 205 home visits to families
- 207 phone calls or remote support to 234 adults and 179 children
- 56 supported meetings with other agencies
- 44 group sessions held supporting 520 adults and 256 children
- 75 food deliveries made
- 57 volunteers volunteering 637 hours

Prayer point during school summer holidays

- For many, the long break brings added pressures. Without free school meals, some parents struggle to keep food on the table, while the cost of entertaining children can leave families feeling isolated as others enjoy days out and holidays. Please pray for strength, provision and hope for those facing these challenges.

Contact me at hannah@familysupportwork.org.uk or on 01273 832963



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A Big Thank you

by Julie Ruse

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- Meet and connect with other local businesses
- Share ideas, knowledge and experiences
- Build stronger local relationships
- Explore opportunities for collaboration
- Support and promote our local business community

Whether you run a shop, a trade business, work from home, provide professional services, or represent a local organisation, we would love to hear your views.

What would make a local business network useful for you?

Please take a few minutes to complete our short survey and help shape the idea:

Scan the QR code or visit:

<https://forms.gle/ehxhHXSeBcRAycVW8>



Your feedback will help Withyham Parish Council understand what local businesses need and how we could support this initiative.

Together, we can help strengthen our local business community.

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£10 – Christine Marais

WINNERS for July 2026

£20 – Ali Hunnam

£15 – Judy Eliot

£10 – Jill Pardey

The Kings' Hall Withyham

Thank you for everyone's support but we are happy to encourage more local people to become members and help our fund raising for further maintenance and improvements to our hall. Our numbers have just dropped below 100 so new subscribers would be greatly appreciated.

Each number costs £12 per year, if you would like to join, please contact Rick Hunnam on 07851 638634 or email: chair@withyhamvillagehall.co.uk

What's on?

Forthcoming Events in the Withyham Village

FRIDAY CAFÉ: FRIDAY 14TH AUGUST 10:30 - 12:00

HALL LUNCH: THERE WILL BE NO LUNCH IN AUGUST, THE NEXT LUNCH
WILL BE ON 17TH SEPTEMBER

Bygone Days by Patrick Scott

Summer Holidays: About 18 months ago I took up running as a hobby and that took me back to about 1968, when we held a fundraising sponsored run from The Dorset Arms. I believe it was for the football club, and I was given the task of liaising with Buckhurst Estate to run on parts of the farm where there were no footpaths.

After the excitement of the Church and Village Fête, the school summer holidays arrived and that included the annual Sunday School outing. We would meet outside the Dorset Arms and Hartfield-based Chessons Coaches, would drive us to Eastbourne or Hastings beach, with Tom Chesson behind the wheel of the coach. Grown-ups included my father, Bill Hudson who ran the Sunday School, and one or two other parents. Everyone came with a picnic, because ice-cream parlours aside, fast food outlets were not common back then. At the end of the day, on the way back home Tom would stop at a pub, and while the adults rewarded themselves with a pint of beer, myself and the other children played in the garden.

As someone who despised every single day of school, especially secondary school, the holidays were welcome. We would spend the summer days exploring the woods, building camps, playing football or cricket, and as we got a bit older, going on bicycle rides. On the hottest, driest days you could sometimes see black smoke coming from Ashdown Forest and hear the distant siren wailing in Crowborough summoning the firemen to duty.

We spent a lot of time on the Forest, our favourite place being the Gills Lap pine trees where Christopher Robin and Pooh went, after which we would go and play pooh sticks. On Thursday the Walls ice cream van would call in Withyham and it was choc-ice, cornet, or wafers with a small vanilla block, while Tonibell ice creams serviced Balls Green.

As the years passed and I became a teenager I would go bale carting – hard work but I loved it. One summer the baler broke down and I was sent with Bert Tasker to dig ragwort on the Knoll (the field below the Churchyard). It was a thankless task, and we were both delighted when Dennis Vaughan turned up, said the baler was fixed, and took us back to the cornfields. The Knoll was where Elizabeth Burfoot's horse, Meredith, and Jilly Goolden's horses, Blossom and Russell, grazed. The small paddock in front of The Rectory was cut for hay for the horses and for a couple of years we turned it by hand and gathered it in loose. But Arnold Christiansen the farm manager came to the rescue and then Dennis or Ted Pettit came from Buckhurst Farm to turn and bale it. My birthday was right at the end of the holiday and four or five days after that it was back to school.

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The Learning Curve

by Kate Phipps



Endings: There is something about the end of the school year that feels different from every other season. Displays start to come down, books are sent home, and a strange mixture of excitement and sadness fills the air.

For our Reception children, the summer marks the end of a year spent growing in confidence. They leave their first classroom a little taller than when they arrived, with new friendships, new skills and happy memories to carry with them into Year 1.

For our Year 6 children, however, this ending feels much bigger. A village primary school is a place built on familiarity, connection and community. Everyone knows everyone; older children instinctively look out for younger ones, and staff often know families across generations. Children arrive nervously clutching a parent's hand and, before you know it, they're confidently helping another child out.

Then suddenly, almost without warning, it's time to leave. The move from a small village school to a large secondary school is one of the biggest transitions a child will make. One day, they know every face, every classroom and every corner of the playground; the next, they are navigating hundreds of pupils, dozens of teachers, unfamiliar corridors and an entirely new routine. It's exciting. It's daunting. It's exactly as it should be.

Children are remarkably resilient. Given encouragement, patience and someone who believes in them, they often achieve far more than they imagine possible. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give them is the freedom to fail, dust themselves off, and find the confidence to try again.

Of course, it isn't just the children who experience these endings. Those of us who work in schools quietly collect moments. Muddy residential trips, sports days, laughter in the playground and countless conversations that will never make it into a school report, yet somehow stay with us forever.

Then, just as we've watched them grow into confident young people, we wave them off through the school gates one last time, with a lump in our throat. It's bittersweet, but that's the purpose of a school. To give children roots strong enough to feel secure and wings wide enough to carry them wherever life leads.



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Run For Hospice In The Weald
by Richard Moxham

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Choose your challenge: 5k, 10k, or Half Marathon – whatever your ability, you can run, walk, or just come along on the day to cheer on our incredible runners.

For more information and to register for the event please visit the events section of our website www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk/events/hospice-run-2026/

Alternatively, you can contact our fundraising team on 01892 820533, or email fundraising@hospiceintheweald.org.uk



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Computer Corner

Tiny things that confound computers by Roger Lyon



Why do things go wrong with computers? Rather than sparks and fancy ‘virus’ warnings, the cause is usually all but invisible. Let’s start with email.

Why does perfectly good email end up in junk? When you press the send button, your message begins a tortuous and winding path through numerous computers, each weighing whether it is genuine, safe and correctly formed. One of the tests is a digital signature stamp made by the sender, rather like a tamper proof seal.

The difficulty is that legitimate systems sometimes alter messages after this seal has been stamped. A forwarding service may add a heading or a mailing system may adjust the formatting. While the message will still look perfectly ordinary to us, its digital seal no longer matches. As a result, it may land in junk or be silently dropped while we scratch our heads.

A different version of the same problem appears in tried-and-trusted libraries of software. Manufacturers rarely write every part of a product from scratch. They use these established libraries as recipes for common tasks such as encryption.

A rather unfriendly security researcher recently found a tiny flaw in one of these shared recipes. Instead of sharing this discovery with the team that maintains this recipe, the researcher popped a description of the problem – and handy code to demonstrate how to use it – onto a public website ready for criminals to exploit. Now manufacturers are racing to fix the problem caused by not checking the size of a tiny bit of memory.

Fortunately, this exploit is more a concern for larger companies. However, if you have a NAS box (network address storage) or a CCTV system whose NVR (network video recorder) uploads recordings then it would be a good idea to check with the manufacturer about updating its software.

Having the wrong time set on your computer can also upset your delicate digital friend. A big discrepancy (a few months) will make many websites appear untrustworthy because their certificates are dubiously out of date to your computer. Even a small discrepancy in the time can upset those short-lived login or security checks. So when a familiar website suddenly refuses to cooperate, check the date and time – and the time zone!

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The Final Word... on The Commonwealth Games by Robert Veitch

It may or may not have crossed your radar but the XXIII Commonwealth Games will be drawing to a close, or maybe finished by the time you read this. They began in 1930, as celebration of Empire in Hamilton, rebranding with the current moniker in Edinburgh, 1970. They've been known as 'The Friendly Games' for decades and although their prestige has withered with time, they seem to be enjoyed equally by participants and viewers.

To some observers they're a trivial school sports day on steroids – though hopefully not the competitors. To others they're a reminder of a bygone golden age, uniting member nations and fostering good relations around the globe, on equal terms, in a way the Victorians struggled to achieve.

These Games have been in Glasgow, after other hosts baulked at the cost, and as a result competitors and events are at their lowest since the XVI games of 1998 in Kuala Lumpur. For aeons they've been a staple on BBC, but this time they're on subscription channel, TNT, with free-to-air highlights on Channel 5. There's a school of thought suggesting the games should have been laid to rest with our former monarch, but with the XXIV centennial games already booked for in Ahmedabad they're set to continue.

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Chairman:	Rick Hunnam	01892 770347
Lettings:	Mrs Meg Stafford	07972 161243
Blackham Village Hall	venues4hire.org/venue/details4815	
Bookings:	Mrs Ruth Gubbins blackhamvillagehall@gmail.com	07890 303791
Groombridge & Hartfield Medical Practice	Withyham Road, Groombridge, TN3 9QP Old Crown Farm, High Street, Hartfield, TN7 4AD	01892 863326
Beacon Surgery , Beacon Road, Crowborough, TN6 1AH		01892 652233
Saxonbury House Medical Group , Croft Road, Crowborough		01892 603131
St Michael's Primary School	Mrs Katie O'Shea (Headteacher)	01892 770307
Withyham Art Group	Ali Hunnam	01892 770347
Dorset Arms Angling Club	Keith Grose	01892 652631
Withyham Cricket Club	Peter Hamerton	01892 655932
Blackham Country Players	Linda Weekes	01892 740261
Citizens Advice	Crowborough	08082 787811
Withyham Parish Charity	<i>Trust providing financial help for those in need</i> Applications should be made to Gilly Halcrow	01342 826183
Withyham Parish Council (WPC)	The Old Station, Groombridge, TN3 9RD www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk	01892 864557
	WPC office hours: Monday – Friday 09:30 – 12:00 Other times are available by appointment	
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