



Speldhurst News

June 2025

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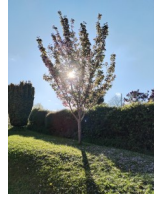
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Welcome & Contents



Dear Readers,

As I write this we are in the midst of an unexpectedly glorious spring and even my cat has left his box on the windowsill once or twice to experience the real world. He seems quite exhilarated at times but then realises where he is and bolts inside to his safety zone.

Will the weather last for this year's Fete? I do hope so as last year's was not the best. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our village's major fundraiser of the year.

Unfortunately, I need to close on a note of sadness as we have learnt of the death of Alan Ford, one of our regular contributors and a popular and active member of our community who will be sorely missed. Our condolences go to Heather and the girls.

Best wishes, Andrea

News Editors: Maria Turner, Andrea Burgess & Judith Malim

Please send emails before 10th June 2025 for the July Issue to:

speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred.

Inside this month....

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SPELDHURST NEWS endeavours to include articles in addition to village, church and chapel news. These are taken in good faith and without prejudice; therefore the committee will not be held responsible for the accuracy of the content, nor will it be held responsible for any work or treatment received from the advertisers. Readers should satisfy themselves of advertisers' abilities before accepting a job quotation or undertaking a course of treatment. All articles & inclusions should be sent as a word, pdf or Publisher file. The editors reserve the right to amend submissions where they feel it is appropriate.

Speldhurst News Annual Subscription Collections

I have noticed a few comments on our current subscription collection system, asking why it cannot all be done electronically. I would love to do this but by allowing subscribers to pay by bank transfer I would not be able to allocate specific bank receipts to individual names and addresses. Without being able to have a list, street by street, of households and amounts paid I would never know which amounts are unpaid. You would not believe how slow the collection process is with sums coming in throughout the year.

I would love to avoid counting and banking £2000 of subs and the distributors would also love to have their procedure simplified but unless each household is allocated a unique reference I am afraid we will have to keep the existing system.

I hope that you understand.

David Lamey {Treasurer}

London Marathon in aid of Nourish Community Foodbank

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who sponsored me for this year's London Marathon. Thanks to your amazing generosity I have raised just over £4100 for Nourish.

A truly magnificent amount for which Nourish are extremely grateful.

Many thanks once again.
Paul Eames



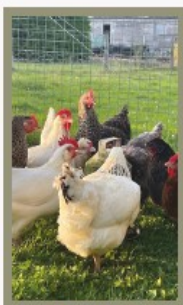
We're Open!

*Hello from
Dragonfly Farm
Shop & Cafe.*

We're excited to announce that the Dragonfly Farm Shop is now open in Speldhurst - and we can't wait to welcome you. The café will follow shortly, so stay tuned for updates!

Our farm shop is filled with a carefully curated selection of quality goods, including some of our favourite local finds like **Birchden Vineyard Honey**, **Rye Chocolate**, and **Bignose & Beardy Ciders**, along with a few standout products from further afield.

This has been a real passion project, inspired by our love of great food, local produce, and creating a warm, welcoming space for the community. Whether you're picking up everyday essentials or something special, we hope you'll feel right at home.



Thank you for the support so far, we're so happy to be open and look forward to seeing you soon!

Stay tuned for café launch updates and upcoming tasting events.

Warm wishes,
The Dragonfly Team

Visit our website:
dragonflyfarm.co.uk

Follow us on Instagram
[@dragonfly_farm_speldhurst](https://www.instagram.com/dragonfly_farm_speldhurst)



DRAGONFLY FARM
SPELDHURST

CRAFTS WORKSHOP

**JUN
2**

GLASS PAINTING

Where is it?

Kent Cottage, Barden Road
Speldhurst TN3 0LE

What time?

7:30 - 10:30pm



How much does it cost?

£25 - which includes 2.5 hours of tuition, wine and nibbles. And of course you get to take home your creation which could be a bottle, vase, or window hanging.

How do I book?

Contact Julie on 07917 606542 or
email- giftsbyjuliep@gmail.com



As I write this entry for the magazine on yet another very lovely spring day, it is hard to believe that we are only at the beginning of May and yet the sun has shone for days!

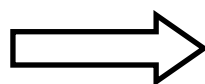
The shop has had on its shelves for a couple of weeks amazing asparagus and luscious strawberries, both locally grown. We have all had impromptu barbecues and picnics with hams and cheeses from our local shop and the choice of some wonderful wines.

At this point in time though our younger generations are perhaps in the early stages of sitting exams. Why not show them you remember this fact by popping a Good Luck card through the letter box, available from our shop.

Father's Day is around the corner and we have a choice of beers and wines, chocolates and cheeses for those Dads to enjoy on their special day. We have a new selection of coffees from a very local supplier expected at any moment, along with a selection of cards to let them know how much they are loved. It isn't just Mums we have to appreciate!

Following closely on the heels of Father's Day we are into Wimbledon Season. How about inviting friends to watch the final with Strawberries and Cream from the shop? Keep your eye out for fresh deliveries or maybe put in your order to guarantee you get some.

Soon the summer will be here and your thoughts will be looking towards the summer holidays. Do not forget your currency - we stock Euros and U.S dollars in the post office and can order any currency you need.



You should also not forget that if you order your paper and bread regularly, you will need to alert the Shop and Post Office about your upcoming break!

News of the progress on the Chapel will be as usual under separate cover, but we have to thank Gavin and his team for their cheery smiles, willingness to help and understanding regarding the difficulties caused by heavy traffic coming to the site. Our neighbours have been wonderful as well and we thank them for persevering with patience through this difficult period. By the time you read this, hopefully the heaviest of trucks on site will be done and dusted and instead of demolishing we will be well into constructing. Please take care though with parking on the road at the Northfields' / Barden Road junction. The yellow lines are there for a reason and should be adhered to, particularly during this renovation and build of our Community Shop and Post Office.

Another month gone, and another month closer to our lovely new space. For those involved it is coming very quickly, and their enthusiasm and energy is still flowing.

Have a happy spring everyone.

Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office

Advertising Role with the Speldhurst News Team

We wrote last month about our need for an advertising editor but as yet we have received no response. Could YOU help?

Speldhurst News is put together and run by a group of volunteers and we very much rely on advertising income to keep costs down. Our previous advertising editor is retiring after years of faithful service and we are looking for someone with around two hours per month to spare to help us.

If you are interested or would like to find out more please contact David Lamey on lameyld2016@gmail.com



Follow us @ speldhurstchapel

Speldhurst Chapel update

With all of the glorious spring weather we've had Gavin and the team have been able to crack on with the foundations for the side extension. The extension will house our new community space, a small kitchen and bathroom as well as a new office for the shop staff.

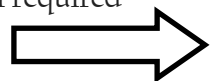
Trenches were dug and concrete was poured in to create the foundations. By the time you read this the block work to come out of the ground will have started.



Scaffolding has gone up at the back of the building where we are adding a Velux roof window that will form a light well that will allow natural light into the new stock room.

We also had a visit from Speldhurst Parish Council at the beginning of May to see our progress. Alan Rowe was enthusiastic about how far we've come in the last few weeks!

We have managed to get some second hand shelving from a farm shop that had closed down in Sussex. Any one wishing to help with a sander or paint brush will be welcome to spend a few hours helping create our new shop shelving and making it brand new. No particular skill required but many hands make light work!!



Deb Cambridge has been doing a sterling job on the design of the interior space sourcing some second hand pieces to keep our costs down.

Em Foster has been documenting our progress on our Instagram and Facebook pages. Please follow us to keep up to date with our progress!

Any questions please contact Lynsay.bischoff@gmail.com

What's on in Speldhurst for the Under 5's in June

Bumps and Babes enables new Mums in the village to get to know each other.

We meet for coffee fortnightly in each other's homes on Mondays from around 10.30am.

This month we'll be meeting on 2nd, 16th & 30th June.

Do contact Jenny if you are interested in joining the group.

Praise and Play, St Mary's Toddler Group, meets in the church on Wednesdays (9.30-11) and Fridays (9-10.30) during term time. We have great fun playing with the toys, doing a craft, ringing the church bell and sharing story and song time together. All are welcome.

Meanwhile if you are new to the village and have pre-school children, or know someone in that position, do get in touch with Jenny on 07891318123 or at jenny50fitz@gmail.com so she can give you more information.

The Speldhurst Village Flower Show 2025

The Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show will be back on **6 September 2025**, and it is always a joy to see what you talented folk have been growing and making. It's time to start planning, now that the weather is getting warmer.

As well as the usual vegetable categories, which will include potatoes, beans, courgettes, beetroot tomatoes and more, a special one this year will be an 'Emoji Pumpkin'. Did you ever, as a child scratch your name into a pumpkin when it was young, and watch with amazement as your 'personalised' pumpkin grew? Our twist on this idea is for you to scratch your own emoji design on to your young pumpkin – let us know how you are feeling – we're hoping some emoji-pumpkin fun will cheer us up in September! Start sowing your own pumpkin seeds soon (check the seed packet for instructions) or come and buy some pumpkin plants at the flower show stall at the Village Fete on 21 June!

In fact there will be a whole host of categories that children can enter and with the summer holiday's in the not to distant future - now it the perfect time to start thinking about which crafts or bakes they may want to prepare. Categories include, lego models, decorative slime pots, cakes, hand print pictures, clay models and much more.

We would also happily welcome any new members to the committee – if you are interested (horticultural prowess not required) please contact Iain Fenn on 864908 or Katya Hall on 07747808833

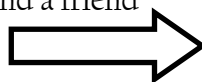


NEWS FROM SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL



THANK YOU, ALAN FORD

As we write, preparations are being made to present the Kent Association of Local Councils award at our Annual Parish Meeting. This award celebrates someone who has contributed significantly to their community, and this year, councillors voted unanimously to present it to Alan Ford. With the sad news of Alan's passing, we will pay tribute to his outstanding contribution over many years, in looking after the countryside and wildlife in Speldhurst Parish, and a friend will accept the award on his family's behalf instead.



A member of our Environment Working Group, Alan played a leading role in our biodiversity project at Pocket Park, Speldhurst. With his guidance, we left an area of grass to grow each summer, and 3 growing seasons later, we have seen many new species of plant and animal life emerging, indicating that the rewilded area is returning to its native 'meadow' state. During this time, Alan regularly inspected the park, flagging new species and explaining what they meant for biodiversity. He photographed everything (his photos were always beautifully shot) and helped us build an archive. It's a wonderful piece of natural history, providing an invaluable snapshot of the changing state of the land from year to year, and we couldn't have done it without him.

Alan was always generous with his time and expertise, explaining the best way to do things so we could be sure of genuinely investing parish money for the good. Last year, he helped install bird and bat boxes at Pocket Park, showing us the best places to attach them to attract all sizes of birds and bats. His tireless enthusiasm also saw him get up at 5 am to inspect moth traps he had laid the night before, and what he didn't know about moth markings on leaves wasn't worth knowing!

No doubt many of you have warm memories of Alan too; from his must-read wildlife column to his involvement with the Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show -he was such a vital part of village life. For our part, we just wanted to say: Alan, for all you did – THANK YOU!

TIME FOR A TRIM?

We've spotted many industrious residents trimming their hedges already this growing season, which seems to have begun earlier than ever. For those of you yet to do so, please heed our gentle reminder to schedule a cut, especially if your property borders a pavement. This is particularly important on narrow paths, where overgrown hedges can force people with pushchairs or mobility aids into the road.

FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME

Monday 2nd June, 7.30 pm - Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall

TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL: Call the Clerk, Katie Neve:

01892 862927/07760 769513 or email:

clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

For helpful information, visit www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk



Garden & Allotment News



Early Arrival of White Cabbage Butterflies Poses Risk for Gardeners

I couldn't believe it. White cabbage butterfly eggs on my brassicas in late April and into May! Is this a precursor to a bumper infestation of caterpillars this year?

April saw an unusually early emergence of white cabbage butterflies. Their premature appearance due to unseasonably warm spring temperatures, disrupting the traditional lifecycle of many garden pests.

Typically, cabbage whites begin to lay their eggs in late spring or early summer. However, the spell of sunshine and higher-than-average temperatures in April / May accelerated their breeding cycle.

An early egg-laying spells trouble for us crop growers – especially for our cabbages, kale, cauliflower or broccoli. Once hatched, the caterpillars feed voraciously on the leaves, quickly skeletonising plants and stunting their growth. Left unchecked, an infestation can wipe out young seedlings in a matter of days.

The risk is particularly acute at this time of year, as many of us are just getting our brassicas established. Young plants are far more vulnerable to damage, and protective netting may not be enough to deter them – they are determined critters.

Options to mitigate the threat include vigilant monitoring, inspecting the undersides of leaves regularly and removing eggs by hand where possible (I squidge them). Fine mesh netting can help reduce attack. Natural deterrents such as garlic spray or neem oil can be effective for a while – regular spraying will extend the effect.



While much attention is given to vegetable crops, rose growers also need to be on high alert. The same warm conditions that have brought an early surge in white cabbage butterflies are also accelerating the activity of rose-loving caterpillars.

Several types of caterpillars feed on roses, including the larvae of the large rose sawfly and various moth species. These pests lay eggs on rose leaves and stems, and their caterpillars can begin feeding almost as soon as young foliage appears.

This early outbreak is a stark reminder of how shifting weather patterns are affecting even the most routine parts of gardening. As seasonal rhythms change, gardeners need to adapt practices - planting earlier, protecting sooner, and staying alert to the signs of climate-induced pest behaviour.

If you are interested in these topics / types of discussions, there is a Facebook page where we go into this type of stuff. It is called Speldhurst Allotmenters & Gardeners and the web address is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/305824050847755>.

Hope to see you there.
Rob Kyte

TONBRIDGE MUSIC CLUB

London Handel Players, Saturday 14th June at 7.30pm
Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Tonbridge

Tickets for this concert cost £25, while for students and those under 18, the price is £5. Please go to www.tmc.org.uk, where tickets can be bought online, or call 01732 364204. Tickets may also be bought at the door, though there is always a risk of the event being sold out!



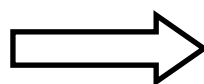
As I sat down on a beautiful sunny afternoon to write this month's article about another term at Speldhurst School, there was a loud squawking outside my open window – a very large, very red Macaw was sitting at the top of a tree in my garden. I know this parrot has found fame on Facebook locally (see photo below) – but I hope it's exotic presence won't eclipse the latest School news.



The pupils took part in their own marathon, quite a bit shorter than the London 26.2 miles but no less exciting for the children taking part with prizes and surprises along the route, including characters like a Beefeater and a Guardsman, both in convincingly splendid uniforms.



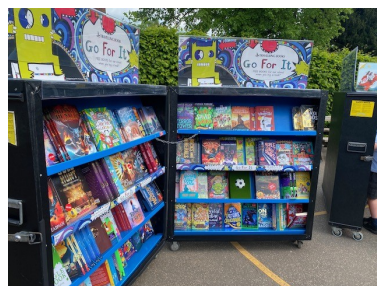
Rosettes were awarded to the top three girls and top three boys in each year at a special prize-giving assembly on the day. Additional awards were given for perseverance.



Funds raised by the PTA, who organised the event, will go towards new School iPads. Many thanks to them and everyone who took part.

Meanwhile at Tonbridge Grammar School, four budding mathematicians from Speldhurst excelled at a more cerebral challenge, winning the Primary Team Maths Challenge event. They were among 17 teams competing that day in a series of fun packed rounds of challenging Maths puzzles including warm up questions, pure Maths, logic and problem solving. The problems which the pupils were asked to solve, focused on working together to tackle mathematical challenges which stretched their understanding beyond the classroom.

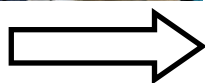
Back at Speldhurst, young minds and imaginations were further stimulated last term when the Scholastic book fair came to School, giving pupils a chance to browse the bookshelves and purchase new titles as well as much-loved favourites. We are fortunate to have so many avid readers and with every book purchase the school receives money to buy more books for our very special library which is decorated to create a magical storytelling space.



The School is also fortunate in having such supportive parents and one came in to share their expert knowledge of cheese with Year 4 children in Empire Class. Pupils were introduced to a whole range of cheeses – including the stinky ones which surprisingly they particularly liked. The children learnt answers to a multitude of questions from how long have humans eaten cheese and how is it made? To what are the benefits of eating it?



Learning about what we eat and how it is produced is part of encouraging a healthy life-style and for the last three years, Yr 5 pupils have



visited Bore Place where they were led by excellent guide Elliot through the beautiful grounds and slightly smelly dairy farm, to learn about organic and sustainable farming.

In keeping with learning about where food comes from, all children at Speldhurst get to experience life as a chef in cooking lessons provided by Cooking Pioneers. This term it was the turn of Y3 & 4 and on the lesson menu was pasta salad, tuna pate, summer pudding and a red power smoothie healthy and delicious.





Check your smoke alarms are in date!

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is urging people to check the expiry date on their smoke alarms, as they only have a lifespan of up to ten years.

Between 2022-2024, approximately 6,600 expired smoke alarms were discovered at properties in Kent and Medway during Home Fire Safety Visits carried out by KFRS with some residents unaware that they expire or how to check them.

The service has now launched its own campaign to raise awareness that smoke alarms expire, how to check their date and how to replace them.

Having an in-date smoke alarm is important in helping keep homes safe, as once they expire the sensors in the alarms become less reliable. This means that they might fail to sound in an emergency or could go off for no reason and could impact how effectively they work if there was a fire.

Rachael Spencer, Safe and Well Manager at KFRS, said: “Whilst many residents in Kent and Medway are great at checking their smoke alarms work, which we recommend testing once a week, we found an increase in the amount of expired smoke alarms on our checks as people don’t realise, they have an expiry date.

“Making sure your smoke alarm is in-date is so simple to do and provides an extra level of safety in your home that could make a real difference in case there is ever a fire.”



St. Mary's Church, Speldhurst | St. John's Church, Groombridge | St. Martin's Church, Ashurst

June 2025

1st June

- 10am Holy Communion at St Mary's, Speldhurst
11am Matins at St John's, Groombridge

8th June

- 10am Morning Worship at St Mary's, Speldhurst
11am Holy Communion (BCP) at St John's, Groombridge

15th June

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Mary's, Speldhurst
10am Holy Communion at St Mary's, Speldhurst
6pm Evensong at St Martin's, Ashurst

22nd June

- 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's, Speldhurst
11am Holy Communion (CW) at St Martin's, Ashurst
6pm Evensong at St Mary's, Speldhurst

29th June

- 10am All Age Worship with Holy Communion at St Mary's, Speldhurst
11am 400th Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving with the Bishop of Tonbridge at St John's, Groombridge



The Church Office can be contacted on 07960296027
or admin@speldhurstchurch.org
www.speldhurstchurch.org
facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/



St. Mary's Church, Speldhurst | St. John's Church, Groombridge | St. Martin's Church, Ashurst

Register for May 2025

Baptisms

4th May Frances Perkins, at St Mary's, Speldhurst
Charlotte Perkins, at St Mary's, Speldhurst
Edward (Ted) Perkins, at St Mary's, Speldhurst



Weddings

24th May Gary Stevens & Amy Halpin, at St Mary's Speldhurst

CELEBRATIONS!

400th ANNIVERSARY of ST JOHN'S

SUNDAY 29th JUNE 2025

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE (BISHOP of
TONBRIDGE) 11am**

**FOLLOWED by MORRIS DANCING below
the PUB 1.30pm**

**WATCH the DANCING with a PICNIC on the
GREEN or PUB LUNCH**

ALL WELCOME!



A Letter from St Mary's



Dear Speldhurst friends,

Today the weather is beautiful and I am shattered as I think about the lovely weekend I have just spent camping for two nights with Scouts and Cubs. The Beavers were with us as well for one night. I absolutely love being with them all, watching them grow and develop, having fun and getting to know their funny little ways. Sometimes there are little arguments and "fall-outs" and they hurt each other. Then I am sad but I don't stop loving them all.

God loves all us like that, too. His love is unchanging and eternal. No matter how many ups and downs we face in life, there's comfort in knowing that God's love is constant. We may find ourselves in moments of doubt or despair, but God promises that His love remains. I know I am far from perfect but I also know God loves me as His beloved child flawed, yes, but forgiven. Nothing can separate us from His love.

In Luke's gospel you can find a story called The Prodigal Son. It tells of a father and his two sons. All three work hard every day on their land. One day one son asks his father for his inheritance money as he wants to go off to explore the world. The father eventually agrees and waves farewell to the boy. Years pass. The son was lucky to find work as he travelled from place to place but eventually his money ran out as he squandered it and he had to sleep on the streets. Eventually he came to his senses and decided to go home and ask his father to forgive him for losing all his money. The father saw him from a great distance and ran to meet him, overjoyed that he had returned. He ordered his servants to put on a great feast for his son who he thought he had lost but had returned home.

God welcomes all who return to him like that but even if you don't he still loves you.

May God bless you all and I hope you have a lovely June.

Karol Leeves
Lay Reader at St Mary's Church

SPELDHURST VILLAGE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Age UK Lunch	Jan Mann	863931
Allotments	Mark Oddy	862746
Beavers	Jo Smith	518706
Bowls Club	Debbie Moon	861317
Bridge Club	Heather Hughes	863367
Brownies	Louise Scott	862972
Bumps and Babes	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Cricket Club	Ed Wesson	07799 731247
Junior Cricket section	Francis Booth	07738474144
Cubs	Karol Leeves	531104
Flower Show	Iain Fenn	864908
Football: Speldhurst Rangers	Ollie Crees	07919467576
GP Surgery		863040
Guides	Sybil Oddy	862746
Library	Pat Carter	861646
Men on Wednesday	John Perkins	863239
Mothers' Union	Christine Baker	540793
Mothers & Toddlers	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Nursery School		07984 793 974
Parish Council: Chair	Paul Curry	07515 938765
Vice Chair	Katrina Lyle	862070
Parish Clerk	Katie Neve	862927
Parish Councillors	Richard Ellery	864077
	Alan Rowe	863404
Police Community Support Officer	Laura Horn	
Primary School	Stephanie Hayward	863044
Rainbows	Alex Brown	
	speldhurstainbows@gmail.com	
Recreation Ground	Ed Wesson	07799 731247
Running Group	Paul Eames	07975 577630
Speldhurst Association of Men	Brian Tasker	862301
Snooker Club	Nick Fenton	864144
Speldhurst Art Exhibition	Maria Turner	863394
Speldhurst News Editors	Maria Turner	863394
	Judith Malim	864268
	Andrea Burgess	863362
Speldhurst News Advertising	Speldhurst.News@gmail.com	

St Mary's Church Rector	vacant	
Administrator	Rachael Foster	07960296027
Stoolball	Donna Burden	524793
		07810 048599
Scouts	Nick Burgess	07773044374
Shop & Post Office	Dima Taran	862824
Village Fete: Chair	Mike Harrowing	0772 5561154
Village Hall	Rachel Bourdin	07766 830303
Village Website	Miranda Hawkins	863601
Walking Group	Brian Tasker	862301

Opening Hours & Local Information

Buses	Timetables for bus 285 Speldhurst to Tun Wells - Hams Travel 01580 879629 For info: https://hamstravel.com/services
George & Dragon PH:	Mon-Thurs & Sun midday to 10-00pm. Fri & Sat midday to 11-00pm. 01892 280494
GP:	Mon - Fri 8am-6pm Tel: 01892 863040
Dispensary:	Mon - Fri 8.30am-1pm; 2.30-6pm (dispensary calls 8.30-11.30 only)
Library (village hall):	Monday 2-4.30pm.
Shop:	Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm; Sat 8-1pm; Sun 9-11
Post Office:	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9-1pm; Sun Closed

To advertise please email
speldhurst.news@gmail.com

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**ANTIQUE CLOCK REPAIRS AND RESTORATION:**

John Mathieson MBHI, West Dean/BADA Diplomas - 01732 359006  
[www.clockcare.co.uk](http://www.clockcare.co.uk).

**GREAT GARDENS:** Tim Welch HND MCI Hort.

Professional Gardening with 33 years in the industry. All types of pruning & training, border planting schemes and garden tidy ups undertaken. Based in Tunbridge Wells. Call Tim on 0759 777 6104 or email: [tim@twgardening.com](mailto:tim@twgardening.com).

**GUITAR TUITION:** All ages welcome. Are you starting from scratch or stuck in a rut? Jonathon's Guitar Studio can help. For further details, ring Jonathon - 07900 825495.

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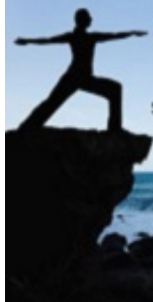
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