

ROSTRUM MAY 2012

VILLAGE DIARY

MAY

- 1 Annual Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm followed immediately by meeting of the Planning Committee
- 5 Churchyard Plant Sale – plus Books, Toys, Teas – 10am-4pm
- 6 Footpaths Group Bluebell Walk – Village Car Park – 2.30pm
- 10 WI – Hall - 2.30pm
- 13 T & M Ramblers meet Wateringbury Station - 10.30am - 7 mile walk
- 16 Annual Parish Meeting - 7.30pm – Village Hall upstairs room. Presentation by Ian Paterson, Community Rail Project Officer with Action with Communities in Rural Kent
- 16 History Society Annual Outing – Chapel Down Winery and Tenterden - visitors welcome
- 28 Sports & Recreation Association AGM - Working Men's Club - 8.00

JUNE

- 3-5 Jubilee Celebration Carpet of Flowers & Jubilee Displays – Church
- 4 Jubilee Churchyard Fete & History Society Guided Walks – 2-4pm
- 6 Parish Council Meeting (please note change of date due to the Diamond Jubilee) – Hall - 7.30pm followed immediately by a meeting of the Planning Committee
- 14 WI – Hall - 2.30pm
- 20 History Society – AGM then Peter Hartley talk on Queen's Jubilee Hall – 7.40pm
- 24 Cream Teas at Church plus Flower for Remembrance - 1-4pm

SUMMER ISSUES OF ROSTRUM

Contributors and advertisers please note that this year the combined summer issue will cover the months of August/September. **So if you are holding an event in August or September the deadline for copy is 17 July.** The deadline for the July issue is 17 June and for the October issue will be 17 September. Contributors are also respectfully reminded that their copy should be no more than 250 words (ie half an A5 page in Arial 10 font).

WATERINGBURY SPORTS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION will be holding their AGM on Monday 28 May in the Working Men's Club commencing at 8.00 p.m. All members of the Public are welcome.

PARISH MEETING –

WEDNESDAY 16 MAY - 7.30PM - VILLAGE HALL UPSTAIRS ROOM

This is less formal than a Parish Council meeting and gives residents the opportunity to raise any issues with the Council. We are fortunate to have Mr Ian Paterson of Action with Communities in Rural Kent who will give a presentation entitled 'Community Rail in the Medway Valley'. He will explain how the local Community Rail Partnership came to be set up, who is involved, what they have achieved, and future plans. He will focus on Wateringbury and on the Wateringbury Station Partnership and answer any questions raised. Refreshments will be provided.

APRIL PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

At the start of the meeting the Chairman announced that:

* The council meeting on **1 May** will be the annual meeting at which the chairman is appointed for the coming year and councillors are allocated to the various sub committees.

* The Annual Parish Meeting takes place on **Wednesday 16 May** in the upper room of the village hall at 7.30pm. The **guest speaker will be Ian Patterson who will talk on Community Rail, the Medway Valley Line and Wateringbury station.**

Diamond Jubilee Medals A sample of the medals was shown to councillors and the public. The Parish Council has donated a medal for each child in the school to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The school have suggested that the medals are presented to the children by parish councillors at a date yet to be agreed.

Queen Elizabeth II Fields Trust To celebrate the village playing fields being listed under the scheme it was proposed that an event be held at the fields. Various dates, options and suggestions were discussed by the councillors and the public. It was decided to investigate some of the suggested possibilities and discuss the matter further at a future meeting.

Police Matters The village's new **PCSO Phillip Harrison** introduced himself to the meeting. He lives locally and has been a PCSO for 5 years. Prior to this he spent 18 years in the army. He said villagers would be able to meet him when he was patrolling the village. He believed that there were very few problems which cannot be resolved. He said he can be contacted via the new 101 police non emergency contact number.

PCSO Harrison reported that there had been 3 crimes reported in the village last month. Number plates had been stolen from a vehicle parked in commercial premises in Canon Lane; Power tools, Sat Nav and high visibility BT jackets had been stolen from a motor vehicle parked in Fields Lane and a double-decker bus had been broken into and driven round the station car park in a manner which caused damage to parked vehicles.

EDF Contract The terms of the council's 3 year contract with EDF relating to street lighting were discussed. It was decided to write to OFGEN to seek their advice.

Sports & Recreation Mike Witts reported to the council that the remedial work on 700 sq m of the playing fields has been completed, the top soil had been spread and turves laid, these were growing well. . It was a mammoth task and he thanked his 5 colleagues on the Sports and Recreation committee and the members of the cricket club for their help with the work. In October it was proposed to improve a further 1000 sq m of land by rotovating and sowing grass seed. Litter was proving a problem at the fields. It was suggested that another 'Bash the Trash' day be considered.

Village Hall Hire Charges Councillor Dennis Stones reported that the cost of hiring the hall will be increased from September 2012. The increase is a modest one of about 50p per hour (5%).

Highways and Transportation More volunteers are needed for the village speedwatch teams. More volunteers will mean that the teams will be able to do more sessions in the village envelope to make the roads safer for all.

High Pollution Levels The traffic lights at Wateringbury is the worst of the 8 areas in the borough with pollution levels higher than permitted. The cause is traffic emissions when there are queues of traffic waiting to get through the lights.

No 7 SUNDAY BUS SERVICE From 1 April there is a 2 hourly Sunday Service. Weekday times have been slightly changed. Travellers are advised to check before setting off.

Parish Partnership Panel Councillor Talbert reported that T & M borough council, which was an award winning council for the quality of its services, had written to the central government about the amount it receives from them. The national average is £51 per head, but T & M only receive £35.47, much lower than neighbouring boroughs.

There is a desperate shortage of foster parents in the area. The KCC would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to know more about this worthwhile task.

The council welcomes members of the public to its meetings which are held in the village hall and start at 7.30pm: General Meeting Tuesday 1 May, 7.30pm, Annual Meeting Wednesday 16 May with guest speaker from Rail network.

FLOWER CLUB

April meeting - Trisha Bashford - Floral Fantasies We welcomed Trisha to the club for her demonstration Floral Fantasies, and it was not disappointing, they really were a fantasy. Trisha is a

well renowned demonstrator and we were lucky to get her as she is usually booked so far in advance. The colours in Trisha's designs were so vivid and all so different - each one a work of art. We also had our club competition, not as many entries as normal, but all excellent in their own right. Trisha judged the competition entries for us, and we congratulated the winners, all entries were excellent.

Our May meeting sees us with a workshop which has been organised by the committee. We are making our own containers and showing members how to personalise them for different uses. It promises to be a good evening and an excellent learning experience for everyone involved.

Jean Schofield Chairman Wateringbury Flower Club

MAIDSTONE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Charity No.287986

Under its conductor, Brian Wright the orchestra's next concert is on Saturday 19 May 2012 at 7.30pm in Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park, Maidstone. The programme consists of 3 works Debussy – Fetes/Nocturnes. Beethoven – Piano Concerto No.3. Soloist Maurizio Baglini. Elgar – Symphony No.1. Concert tickets cost £10, £19 and £23, students with a student card £5, children under 18 Free - available from Membership Secretaries on 01622 735830 or from Maidstone Leisure Centre Mote Hall Box office on 0845 1552277. Bookings can be taken on www.mso.org.uk using the booking form.

Maidstone Mencap Plant & Book Sale

Saturday 19 May 2012

Doors Open: 2.30pm

Cobtree Hall, Mote Park

School Lane entrance off Willington Street

Contact: Margaret Leeds 07903 196333

Music at St. Mary the Virgin, West Malling

Saturday 19 May at 7.30 pm

Pianist Junko Kobayashi lived in West Malling

for six years and is returning to give another recital.

Junko has performed at the Royal Festival Hall,

the Wigmore Hall and on Radio 3.

She will be playing works by

Beethoven, Schubert and Weber.

Tickets £10 on the door. Children under 16 free.

CAN YOU HELP?

Do you have a tailors' dummy or a mannequin that I could borrow for the weekend of 1st/2nd September, 2012? In September 2002 we held a Wedding weekend to which we personally invited all the couples who had been married at St. Mary the Virgin, Nettlestead over the previous 50 years to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. We displayed some 30 of their wedding gowns and bridesmaids dresses last time. Now 10 years on we shall need more means of displaying the gowns. If you are

able to help please ring me, Marguerite on 01622 871272. I will be very happy to collect and return them. Thank you.

'OLYMPIC' TORCH IS COMING TO WATERINGBURY

Wateringbury missed out when the route for the Olympic Torch procession was announced so the Friends of Wateringbury Primary School have decided to organise their very own torch procession for the village. Bow Road will be closed on **Saturday 14 July** from 11.45am to enable schoolchildren to carry the 'Olympic' Torch and flags from the village hall to the school, just prior to the opening of our Olympic-themed Summer Fete at 12 noon.

We hope that the whole village will join us to line the route of the procession, which will be led by our Year 6 leavers, and then come along and join in the fun at the school fete. More details will be announced soon but we hope it will be a real community celebration.

Thank you to The Flag Consultancy at West Kingsdown for their generous donation of a new flag pole for the school as well as flags to help us mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. The flag pole was unveiled on St George's Day. Wateringbury Parish Council has generously supported our bid for financial assistance to provide the schoolchildren with a Queen's Diamond Jubilee souvenir. The children will receive special keepsakes on the last day of term, Thursday 31 May.

Thank you also this month to: The Gallagher Group for donating a container to us to replace our dilapidated storage sheds; Wateringbury Parochial Church Council for a £115 donation from the Lent Lunches towards our shaded area project and all the families who helped us at our annual Operation Ground Force outdoor jobs day on 21 April.

One of our dads, Ciron Phillips, is taking part in his first triathlon in Norfolk on 27 May to raise money for FOWPS. Please show your support for Ciron by sponsoring him. Email your pledges to ciron.phillips@astrazeneca.com.

This is a busy and exciting term for the Friends of Wateringbury Primary School (FOWPS). If you want to support our activities in any way, please contact Gail Isted, Chairman, Tel 01622 813716 or email chairman@fowps.org.uk. Keep up-to-date on our activities via our website at www.fowps.org.uk

CHILDRENS SOCIETY

Once again thank you - a total of £537.59 was raised from the House-boxes this year. These boxes help to raise over £2 million a year for the work of the Children's Society. Your continued support is appreciated. ..Maria White

STEP BACK IN TIME

VILLAGE CELEBRATIONS FOR THE QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE 1977

On 2 July The Parish Council and the Field Committee ran a Jubilee Fete at Wateringbury Field. Organisers Mrs Joyce Woodward and Mrs Dorothy Norris aimed to make this an "All Village" celebration and all organisations were invited to take part. A full and varied programme was arranged. At 1pm there was a Carnival Parade through the village, starting from the station. The Chatham Marine Cadet Band provided music for the procession. Following the band were the Jubilee Queen, and Princess. There was then a procession of floats, decorated cars, prams, cycles and wheelbarrows from people and organisations in the village. The parade reached the fields at about 2pm and the Fete began.

Rostrum printed a report of the event: "Despite adverse weather forecasts July 2 dawned fine and hot, in fact too hot for some. The parade of the band and floats assembled in the Station Car Park at 1.00pm organised by Tim Allen, for judging by Messrs Bevan and Leschallas. The band struck up, the Majorettes pirouetted and the procession proceeded up Bow Road and through the Village. The Rolls whispered along carrying Mrs Rogers who was the Seniors' Queen followed by the float from the School with the Princess (Dawn Unger) and her attendants. Then came the rest of the floats, the Scouts and Guides, the Working Men's Club, Allington and Orpines Estates and many others entered by various groups of villagers and individuals. The judging must have been difficult. After a very hot hour they all arrived at the field.

“The Queen cut the cake and celebrations started on Wateringbury Field at 2pm. Many stalls were evident; the Flower Club made a very colourful display in their tent; later these arrangements were auctioned and made a fine profit. The WI handicraft exhibition showed the wide-ranging talent around. The Seniors’ display of mementos of previous jubilees was much admired. The children’s painting, art and cookery looked good and a lot of effort was put into all exhibits. Still the sun beat down but undeterred the band marched and counter-marched and the Majorettes gave a display. The children’s fancy dress was a sight to see. Mrs Young (widow of Admiral Young of Gransden) judged the competition. Beer flowed freely and wisely and eventually ran out but no one complained.

“Just to prove Wateringbury could take it at 8pm until 1am there was a barbecue, again on the field. Mr and Mrs Norris again very much in evidence with many assistants and a very good, and not too noisy time was had by all.”

WATERINGBURY SPORTS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

If you have visited the playing fields recently you will have noticed that the area south of the cricket square has been renovated. This was the area most affected by the rabbits.

WSRA wish to express their grateful thanks to the following :

Matt Phillips from Essential Land LLP, who organised the groundworks to the area at no cost to WSRA.

WSRA purchased the topsoil and turves from Medway Landscapes, and we would like to thank them for their excellent service and invaluable advice.

Simon Jessel, our Borough Councillor, who supported our successful grant application.

Members of Wateringbury Cricket Club, who helped WSRA Committee members spread 24 cubic yards of topsoil, lay 700 square metres of turves, and water them. Without their help we would not have been able to complete the task.

WSRA are proposing to sow wild meadow flower seeds in two areas of the playing field during April-June. The aim is to bring colour to the area and all the flowers will be bee, butterfly and insect friendly. If you want to find out more about WSRA and even consider coming onto the Committee, please contact Mike Witts (01622 812027).

WATERINGBURY WOMEN’S INSTITUTE

Our membership is made up of ladies from Wateringbury, Teston, Nettlestead, Yalding and Allington and we welcome members of all ages. We enjoy a variety of speakers and events and our speaker in April, Mr Eric Spear, who spoke about Japan and, in particular, the schools and pupils in that country – most enjoyable.

Our May meeting, on Thursday 10 May, at 2.30 pm at Wateringbury Village Hall is our Resolutions/Annual Meeting at which we also run a Silent Auction so, members, please remember to bring an item to be sold.

Mrs Anna Astin’s subject at our meeting on Thursday, 14 June will be ‘From Motorina to Racing Driver’. Visitors most welcome.

Diana Burbridge 01622 813148

BLACKTHORN NEWS

The gardens here are looking beautiful and the bedding plants, vegetable plants and herbs for sale are creating a truly diverse spectacle around the greenhouse. Our new vision in the plant nursery, an ethos of ‘beautiful, practical and natural’ is evident in the inventive hanging baskets designs; ‘The Italian Pizza’ (tomatoes, baby courgettes, basil, oregano and other herbs), ‘The Flower Salad’ (Nasturtium varieties and other edible flowers) and ‘The Stir Fry’ (radishes, pak choi and other Chinese leaves) to name but a few! The **Plant Sale is on Saturday 26 May** and will include talks and demonstrations to promote our new vision.

Please come along to the **Viennese Café** on **Sunday 13 May**. A concert by the Hess Quartet will take place and the Blackthorn Café will be transformed, Viennese-style. We will be serving exquisite delicacies such as meringues, ice-creams and gateaux as well as the usual hot and cold drinks. Tickets from the Café or the reception in the Medical Centre (£10 per person, £8 concessions and £35 for a family ticket). If you could help with a contribution of homemade food or serving or washing-up on the day, please contact Cristina (07905 115534) or Renate (07780 518492).

Also for your diary, **Dr Jazz** will be in the Garden, picnic-style, on **Friday 22 June**. We very much hope you will join in with some of our fundraising events this summer and help us to continue rebuilding lives here at Blackthorn. For more information please get in touch. Emma Halpin 01622 722219 emma@blackthorn.org.uk

DOGS

Concerns have been raised by some parents about their children being worried or even frightened by dogs approaching them in the playing fields. Owners are reminded their dogs should be accompanied and supervised at all times especially when there are young children in the play areas.

Regretfully, dog fouling continues to be a problem in the village as some owners are not 'picking up' after their dogs and using the bins provided. It is against the law to allow a dog to foul in a public place and the Borough Council Dog Warden has been asked to step up patrols around the village. Dog fouling is not only very unpleasant but is a health hazard especially to young children. It is sad that despite many requests this still continues. It is not the dogs fault, but the owners - and you know who you are! PLEASE PICK UP!

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP

The next walk is on **Sunday 6 May**, starting from the Village Hall Car Park at 2.30 pm (sharp). It is a walk of approximately 3½ miles through local woodland and is our annual Bluebell Walk, so hopefully they will still be in abundant flower. All welcome and if interested just turn up at the start.

Note:: There will not be a walk in June as this is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Weekend. However, the local History Society are doing two guided walks of approximately 1½ miles, at 2.30 pm and 3.30 pm on **Monday 4 June**, starting from the Church, so if you wish to learn more about the village and get some exercise please come along. For more information please call Syd on 812338

WATERINGBURY BABY & TODDLER GROUP

As promised, more about our Diamond Jubilee "Street Parties" coming up at the end of this month during our usual group sessions. Book the dates in your diary - Friday 25 and Wednesday 30 May (our last sessions before half term). Let's hope the weather's good as we aim to have lots of fun outside in the sunshine. We're currently practising our painting and gluing skills as we'll be making crowns to wear and flags to wave. Better come along and we'll show you how to make one fit for a Queen!

We start back again on Wednesday 13 June when we'll turn our attention to the men in our life ready for Father's Day. Also, look out next month for details on how to get tickets for our annual evening river boat cruise. Back by popular demand, it's an event not to be missed so pop 27 June into your diaries and find a babysitter!

If there are any parents/guardians wishing to join our friendly group, our sessions are held on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am to 12 noon at Wateringbury Village Hall. There is a small charge of £2 for the first child and £1 each for subsequent children over 12 months old. The children receive snacks and drinks half way through the session and there are free hot drinks for the adults. If you are interested please contact Linda on 01732 522437 or try our usual number - 07506 735137.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING RAMBLERS

The group meet at Wateringbury Station on 13 May at 10.30am for a 7 mile circular walk in Wateringbury. Details from 01732 851310.

HISTORY SOCIETY

Our annual outing this year, on 16 May, is to the Chapel Down Winery, at Small Hythe, which includes a guided tour around the vineyards. We then move to Tenterden for lunch followed by a guided tour of the town. The ticket price is £21 per person, which includes the coach, the tour and tasting at the winery, and the tour of Tenterden, but not lunch. Visitors very welcome.

In March, David Carder came along to tell us about six 'Historic Kentish Towns'; Canterbury, Rochester, Dover, Sandwich, Tonbridge and Faversham. Each of these towns, with the exception of Faversham, had been walled, and all had been important for their markets. David showed us slides of ancient and modern maps which illustrated how the towns still retain much of their original layout with parts of walls, moats and towers still in place. David also showed us slides illustrating two or three historic buildings in each town, and explained the history, architecture and use of these buildings, and what they have become today. This gave us a wonderful insight into the lives of those who had lived in these towns in the past, and a chance to see the changes that have taken place from a historic perspective. David finished by saying we were extremely fortunate to live in Kent surrounded by so many places of historic interest, and suggested that we make it a priority to visit some of the places he had shown us. Visit the history society site <https://sites.google.com/site/wateringburylocalhistory/>, for further information.

WEATHER

The dry, mild Spring continued in March with only 20mm of rain, less than half the average, making the last 6 months 135mm or 36% dryer than usual. The month opened with a balmy 15°C temperature, peaking to 20°C on 28th. Overall this March's average was 2°C warmer than usual for this time of year.

We probably have the Jet Stream to thank for this as it had a semi-circular northerly kink in it which kept high pressure close by. However it now seems to be reverting to its usual west to east flow which has allowed low pressure systems to come in from the west. As for April, the 22mm of hail stones on the 11th was a bit of a surprise but helped towards the total precipitation for the first half of April of 31mm. If this is kept up for the rest of the month it will be the first month of above average rainfall this year. WWW

TESTON & WATERINGBURY NURSERY GROUP (Registered charity 1044257)

www.testonandwateringburynursery.co.uk

Admissions and all enquiries: Amanda Vidler 07805 796353

Hail showers aside (not entirely sure 'showers' covers it!!), it's looking as though Spring has finally sprung, but before we get to that we'd like to congratulate our supervisor Amanda Vidler for achieving her Early Years Professional Status! It's been a long wait but worth it – well done Amanda!! Now, back to the Spring thing: the greenhouse is now full of carrots, tomatoes & strawberries...well seeds at least, so 'full' is a slight exaggeration (not like me...) but watch this space for further developments, and our caterpillars are growing as we speak so we're eagerly anticipating their winged transformation in the coming weeks. Our Easter Fun Day was greeted with slight apprehension, thanks to the weathermen, but not for long as a little chat with Mother Nature, rewarded us with the same glorious weather we'd become used to. The stalls were soon a hive of activity, especially 'Cuddle Corner', with many adorable bunnies that can only be described as live cuddly toys! A huge thank you to Pat Young and her helpers from Meopham Young Farmers, for providing all the cuddles. With their help, yours, and our hard-working committee we made another big dent in our yearly fundraising total so thank you to all for helping and making the day so enjoyable.

Our 'Materials' theme next term sees us getting creative with natural materials, using hammers (oops!) and drills (ouch!), making mobiles (not phones), sculptures and phones (now I'm confused...) and fabric printing to expand our outside den – I can't wait! There are also rumours of a Tea Party for a very select few, but more on that next month.

Congratulations to Mrs Sheila Cotgrove of Teston for winning last month's 100 Club draw.

HELP WITH TRANSPORT

The Red Cross can provide a driver with a vehicle to offer door-to-door assistance for those who cannot get about easily or use public transport and particularly those that live on their own. Besides transport, they can also provide an escort who, if necessary, will stay with a client throughout their journey. For more details, including costs, please phone 0800 0280 831. The Red Cross would also like to hear from volunteer drivers who would be happy to give a couple of hours say once a month, or a week. Again please call the above number for details of the scheme including the payments made to drivers to off-set the costs.

Come along and join in the celebrations

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE – CARPET OF FLOWERS

Sunday 3 June - 2-5pm

Monday 4 June and Tuesday 5 June - 10.30am-5pm

Come and see the Carpet of Flowers depicting the Jubilee

laid in the central aisle of the church

Exhibition of Watlington 1952 to present

Jubilee Cake Raffle

Cream Teas, Home-made Cakes and Refreshments

Monday 4 June 2-4pm

Churchyard Fete with various stalls, to include Pimms tent, cake stall, tombola, candyfloss, popcorn, children's craft activities ie a children's banquet with cake decorating, crown making and an opportunity to come dressed as a knight or princess,

sweet stall, face painting and much more

2.30-3.30pm Musical Entertainment by Tony Pepper on guitar

and Peter White on keyboard

Jubilee guided walks round the village

organised by the History Society with printed booklet

Walks at 2.30pm and 3.30pm

3.30pm Fete will conclude with the ringing of the church bells

Tuesday 5 June

Afternoon music by **Harpist Carys Hughes**

The 3 day event culminates with an

Evening Service of Thanksgiving at 7.30pm

Further information from 01622 813076 or 813032

Week-end supported by TMBC Community Enhancement Fund

Lunches for Lent

A huge thank you to those who supported the lunches with generous donation of food and cash. The amount raised for this year's chosen charities totalled £501.22, made up as follows: Leybourne Grange Riding Centre for the Disabled - £109.80, Cobtree Hall Playschool for Special Needs Children - £160.30, Wateringbury School for a shaded playground area - £113.23 and Christian Aid's Bowl over Poverty - £117.89. Thank you all for your support.

THOUGHTS FROM THE VICARAGE

2 The Grange, East Malling ME19 6AH

e-mail jamesbrown.brown21@gmail.com - Benefice office ☎ 01732 843282

Pray? Who us?

Who would have thought that tough macho football supporters would have spoken the religious language of prayer? Well, it happened following the recent collapse on the pitch by a Bolton Wanderers hero, Fabrice Muamba. Now his family is exhorting the country to believe in the power of prayer, and I suspect many millions of Britons, whether they have faith or not, will have felt moved to offer a silent appeal to an invisible power asking that the young footballer pull through his ordeal. Bolton Wanderers and Muamba's friends and relatives have said they have been touched by the out-pouring of goodwill towards the player. His club manager Owen Coyle said: "Everybody is praying for Fabrice, which is very important, and that has been a real source of strength to the family."

The dreadful sight of a young, apparently healthy, athlete collapsing in front of tens of thousands of football fans is a sharp reminder of the unpredictability of all our lives. We can never be in total control of our destiny and so, like generations before us, at times of stress or crisis we look to the heavens in the search for meaning and hope. This often means that we resort to prayer.

I don't want to get in to the discussion, in this particular article, about why did God save Muamba but did not use his miraculous powers to save 22 children who died in a coach crash recently. Interesting as that may well be, I am simply fascinated that this incident on a football pitch, in front of a worldwide audience on TV, resulted in such a wave of Prayer. It has been so refreshing and encouraging to hear folk of all ages and irrespective of gender speaking religious talk! It says to me that there is a basic human desire for a supernatural involvement in matters of health and wellbeing. Christians call this God.

I am often asked by the most unlikely folk to "send one up for me, Vicar!". When they begin to engage with me in such a way I am more than aware that they themselves are praying to God, although they are not able to articulate it themselves and acknowledge their belief.

In a recent survey commissioned by the Church of England 2,000 people were asked "What do you pray for?". A quarter said a family member and a similar number said World Peace. One in ten wanted forgiveness. Only 15 per cent said they would not pray at all! If that is the case then I shouldn't be surprised when a football stadium is transformed into a powerhouse of prayer. It also means that 85% of you will be praying to God at some stage, for some reason. Thank you for that but, if you would prefer, I would always "send one up" for you.

Revd Jim Brown

Free Summer Lectures to celebrate 10 years of the Benefice of East Malling, Teston and Wateringbury. There will be a talk in each of our churches, all **starting at 8pm**.

Church, State and Us!

A special series of talks enabling us all to reflect on how the church, nationally and locally, engages with society, particularly in this year of celebration.

The Church – Speaker Rev Ronni Lamont - 17 May - Teston Church

Rev Ronni Lamont is now a freelance ordained priest, working in all areas of ministry but with a particular interest in children's spirituality and needs. She is a prolific writer, speaker, producer, broadcaster and also manages a large School Assembly Website. Ronni will be most interesting, challenging and entertaining! Hear what she has to say regarding the church of today and where it is going in the future.

The State – Speaker Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin – 31 May – East Malling

Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin was born in Jamaica and has acquired a high profile within the Church of England as the chaplain to The Queen and The Speaker of the House of Commons. Her role is at the very heart of Church/State relationships. We are incredibly fortunate to have Rose join us as a speaker for this series of Summer Lectures. Don't miss her!

Us – Speaker Rev Jim Brown – 14 June – Wateringbury

Rev Jim Brown will use this as an opportunity to reflect on the past 10 years as a Benefice and the shape of things to come as we continue to minister and share the good news of the Kingdom to all those living and working in East Malling, Teston and Wateringbury. Just what is the challenge?

ANNUAL CHURCHYARD PLANT SALE

Bank Holiday Saturday 5 May - 10am to 4pm

Superb quality nursery plants plus home grown stall

St John's crafts, good condition books and toys stalls,

home made cakes, cream teas and refreshments

For further information please contact 01622 813032

BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES

Visit our website for full details www.wateringburychurch.org.uk

Sunday 6 May 8am Holy Communion – Teston 9.45am Family Service – East Malling 9.45am Family Service – Teston 10am Matins – Wateringbury	Rogation Sunday 13 May 8am Holy Communion – East Malling 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10am Rogation Service - Wateringbury 6.30pm Evening Prayer - Teston
Sunday 20 May 8am Holy Communion – Wateringbury 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10 am Family Service – Wateringbury 6.30pm Eucharist - Teston	Sunday 27 May - Pentecost 8am Holy Communion – East Malling 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury 6.30pm Evening Praise - Teston
Every Monday – 2-3pm – Scout & Guide HQ, Glebe Meadow – Toddler Praise	
Tuesdays (not 1 st in month) – 7.30pm in Wateringbury Church – Holy Communion	
Every Thursday - 9am in East Malling Church – Holy Communion	

Thursday 17 May – Ascension Day - Communion Service Teston 7pm

Quiet Hour 8-9pm Wednesdays 9 May and June 13. Come and go as you please. A chance to spend time in private prayer and contemplation.

Service of Healing and Wholeness. This month there will be two services both at 8pm on **Tuesday 1 May** in Wateringbury and **Tuesday 29 May** in East Malling.

Celebration of Ministry. As part of the tenth anniversary of the Benefice of East Malling, Teston and Wateringbury the work the Bellringers will be celebrated on 20 May at the Family Service.

BENEFICE MOTHERS' UNION

There will be a meeting in Wateringbury Church at 1pm on 3 May when Julie Gayler will talk on the work of Martha's Trust. On 7 June a visit and talk at Downderry Lavender Nursery, Hadlow has been arranged. Visitors always welcome. Phone 01622 814305 for more details.