

VILLAGE DIARY

February

- 3 Footpath Group – Village Hall – 2.00 pm
5 P.C. Meeting – 7.30 pm followed immediately by meeting of the Planning Committee
16 Quiz in aid of Village Hall – Hall – 7. for 7.30 pm
20 & 27 Lunches for Lent – Church – 12.30 – 2.00 pm
20 History Society – Albert Granville – The Raising of the Mary Rose – 7.40 pm – Village Hall

March

- 3 Footpaths Group – Village Hall – 2.00 pm
5 P.C. Meeting – 7.30 pm followed immediately by meeting of the Planning Committee
6,13,20 Lunches for Lent – Church – 12.30 – 2.00 pm
16 Art for Enjoyment Group First Exhibition – Hall – 10.30 – 4 pm
20 History Society – Dennis Chambers – Haunted Pluckley

POLICE SURGERIES have been arranged for 5th April and 12th May – 3.00 to 4.00 pm in the Village Hall

PRESS RELEASE : Sweet Dreams: An exciting new book by Jennifer Button (author of the Haunting of Harriet) is being launched at Waterstones, Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells on Friday, 1st March, 2013

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes for the March issue by 17 February.*

Congratulations to

Ted & Doreen Vincent who celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary on January 7 (Ted's birthday)

James and Alice Byron on the arrival of Arthur Ronald who was born in Bath on 14 December weighing 9lb 4oz. A very special grandson for Alastair and Christine.

Martin & Debra Cronk, of Cromar Nursery are pleased to announce the engagement of their eldest daughter Charlotte to Justin son of Patrick & Kim Morgan of Maidstone.

This month we have had to say farewell to **Roy and Ann Honor** of Pippins at the top of Red Hill, where they have lived for the last 44 years or so. Both Roy and Ann have been an intrinsic part of the village for all of this time, and have both taken a keen interest in the church, school and village. Roy has kindly given a number of books of local interest to the library of the Wateringbury Local History Society. Ann was a Governor of the Village School for a number of years, herself being a former Headmistress until she left to continue the education of the children who starred in the film "The Darling Buds of May". Roy ran the family business of Corn and Seed Merchants in Earl Street Maidstone, which for over one hundred years served customers throughout Kent. These premises are now occupied by Waterstones the booksellers. Their two sons Simon and Andrew were brought up in Wateringbury, and both Roy and Ann now rejoice in their grandchildren. With increasing years they have decided to move to be closer to family in Woking and will be well looked after at Coxhill Manor. We are sorry to see them go and wish them many more happy years together.

RIP

Elisabeth Atkinson died just before Christmas in Aberdeen where she and David had made their home on retirement close to their daughter Wendy and her family. She will be remembered for many things including - her amazing cakes, as a caring nurse and for re-building the Sunday School in the early 1980s.

Joy Boorman 29.06.29 to 04.01.13 Joy was taken ill on Boxing Day and died in hospital in Yorkshire with her six children at her bedside. The Boorman family lived in Old Road, initially in Boorman Cottages and then in Lime Tree House. In retirement Joy embarked on a new adventure moving to Sandhutton, Yorkshire. In the 1960s Joy started a children's nursery at her home, which she ran very successfully until her retirement. She had a mini bus and collected children from surrounding villages. Her husband Eric (who died in 1988) ran the family butchery business initially in Old Road then in Bow Road (now the estate agents). Upon her husband's death she followed many of her children and became a bell-ringer. Joy's sunny smile and positive, supportive spirit will be sadly missed by friends and family.

Kathleen Ruck It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Kathleen. She was 91 years old, and died in Israel on 29 December while on a visit to her children. She loved living in Pizien Well, and had created a beautiful cottage garden. She and her late husband (Harold) bought the cottage in about 1950 when he joined the East Malling Research Station. Kathleen, also known as Kath or Bunt, was a gentle and kind-hearted woman, and will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

ART EXHIBITION - Saturday 16 March 2013. 10.30am – 4.00pm.

Wateringbury's 'Art for Enjoyment' group will be hosting its first exhibition in Wateringbury Village Hall on Saturday 16 March. Delicious homemade cakes, tea and coffee. Please come and join us.

DRAYHORSE MEADOW

Following the public meeting in October the Parish Council applied for borrowing approval to take out a loan of £200,000 from the Public Works Loan Board, with the aim to purchase any suitable land that may come up for sale in the village. Residents will be aware of the ongoing action to move the occupants from Drayhorse Meadow. In fact the owner of the land, Mrs Anne Medhurst, had left the site some 5/6 months ago and let it out to a new family. This family then moved off quite suddenly and the Parish Council decided to approach Mrs Medhurst to see if she wanted to sell the land. She was contacted on Friday 9th November and confirmed she did want sell, but quickly, as she did have other families interested. From this point things had to move fast and a meeting was arranged with Mrs Medhurst, The Chairman of the Parish Council, Council's Solicitor, Richard Long and Clerk to the Council on Monday 12th November in the village hall. It was on that morning the Parish Council got borrowing approval. With Mrs Medhurst at the meeting was a Mrs Wyatt-Jung, who is the owner of the field adjoining Drayhorse. Before the meeting started she was asked if she would be prepared to sell her land as well. She was quite adamant she would not unless the Parish Council would pay her £1/2million. As this was not an option the Chairman felt there was some leeway in negotiating a price with Mrs Medhurst. After discussion Mrs Medhurst agreed to sell to the Parish Council for £165,000. The purchase was finally completed on Friday 7th December. This amount was higher than Council would have liked to pay but the Chairman, taking account of the strength of feeling within the village about this land, used his discretion on agreeing the purchase price. All Councillors supported this action. The land had been left in a bad state and although a number of residents offered help to clear it, for which the Parish Council thanks them, it was felt it was too hazardous and employed a contractor to carry out the work. This commenced on Monday 7th January. The Parish Council aim to lease out the stables and grazing to generate an income towards the repayments of the loan, and this will help to reduce the cost to the rates for future years.

CAN YOU HELP My son goes to Wrotham School and you might be aware there is no direct bus route, he has to change at Kingshill and because it is 2 different 'zones' has to buy 2 tickets, it costs £6 a day just to get him home! I am looking for a parent or two that drives to the school, (it could just be a return journey) who would be able to take my son for a contribution towards petrol, it wouldn't be every day. I live in Danns Lane so it would be an easy pick up and as my husband does shifts we would be able to do some of the return journeys and also help out if the 'driver' was unwell etc.

Failing that is anyone currently using private transport they could give me details of? Many thanks,
Lisa Francis 01622 812602 07739340499

HISTORY SOCIETY

Our speaker in February is Albert Granville whose talk is entitled 'The Raising of the Mary Rose'. Albert, who lives in West Malling, was in 1982, Chairman of the company whose crane lifted the Mary Rose from her watery grave. The talk will cover both the ship's history and the operation to raise her.

Our talk in November on Hops and Hop Picking by Richard Filmer was heard by a very large audience. Richard told us that the hop plant has been in Britain for many centuries but attempts to cultivate the plant were not made until the beginning of the 16th century. Kent was known as the major hop grower in Britain but in 1892 there were 72,000 gardens in the UK, stretching from Aberdeen down to Kent. We were told about the traditional tools and methods of growing hops, initially they wound straight up poles but gradually changes were made until all gardens were laid out with poles supporting wires and string for the hop to grow up.

Richard took us through the farming year of the hop, describing the different jobs carried out by the workers, and the tools used, often home-made, both out in the fields and also during the actual hop picking time when the Oast house would be fired up to dry the hops. His talk brought back many memories to those in the audience who had experienced 'hop picking' in the past, and also gave us a greater insight into the hop plants' influence on our lives.

In December we held a social evening, commencing with carols sung to us by the choir from Wateringbury Church, during which a collection was made for the chosen charity of the choir 'Malling Community Service', The Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Rodd Nelson-Gracie gave a short talk on his duties so far this year, and then we tried our hand at a quiz featuring questions relating to the village both past and present. Our thanks go to the committee who arranged the evening and kept us supplied with drinks and nibbles throughout the evening.

Visit the History Society site on

<https://sites.google.com/site/wateringburylocalhhistory/>, for further information

W.I. 14th February – Your Chance to be a Judge – 2.30 pm – Village Hall – lots of audience anticipation – should be fun. Non members welcome

EASTER PROJECT

Calling all Primary school aged children in Wateringbury...join us in celebrating the Easter Story. A morning filled with fun, songs and craft activities on Saturday 30th March; £2 per child and starting 9.30am until 12.30pm in our church.

Booking is essential; see www.wateringburychurch.org.uk for form or contact Debbie on 01622 814793.

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

Central Government has in the past made payments to local authorities to make up for the income they lose through Council Tax Benefit. However for 2013/2014 Central Government has withdrawn this payment instructing local authorities not to pass this loss down to Parish Councils through the precept .

With only a few weeks to go before precept requirements were calculated by Parish Councils Central Government did a U turn and instructed local authorities to pass this loss down to Parish Councils through the precept. Central Government agreed to make a one off payment to local authorities to distribute an amount fairly calculated to individual Parish Councils.

To calculate what each Banding will be charged for the precept the local authority issue a tax base figure, which they use to calculate how much each Band will pay. Due to Central Governments change of instruction this year's tax base figure has gone down on previous years, and resulted in a rise on each banding.

The Parish Council would like to point out that although it is accepted there would a rise in the precept due to the loan of £165,000 (not the full £200,000) taken out to purchase Drayhorse Meadow, approximately 32% of the increase you will see on your council tax bill is due to the result of the reduced tax base figure as set out above.

THE VILLAGE HALL Back in the early nineties the Parish Council formed a committee to oversee the development of a new hall. Architects were selected and designs submitted which were displayed in the old hall for public viewing and comment. A design was chosen and a bid was made to the Big Lottery from the Millennium Halls fund to pay for it, but unfortunately this was unsuccessful. There was still local enthusiasm for the project, however and in 2000, it gained charitable status and a fresh start was made when a small Trustees' Committee was established and met virtually every Sunday evening to plan for our new hall. Extensive fund raising from individuals, families, charities and local companies continued until April 2006 when the hall was officially opened by the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling.

The business plan focused on the hall's use and it's fair to say that after nearly seven years the hall is very successful: the following regular activities take place: Yoga, WeightWatchers, art classes, line dancing, badminton, Zumba, Baby & Toddler Group, children's dance classes, ballet, ballroom dancing, History Society; WI, children's singing lessons; Tai Chi; Pilates, Sugar work, Cup Cake classes, Foot Clinic, Eating Disorders, Open University, birthday parties, anniversary parties, wedding receptions, family functions, business meetings and the annual pantomime by the Players. Details of all these are on the notice boards inside entrance hall; do take a look - there maybe something to suit you.

VILLAGE HALL QUIZ EVENING

Come on, it's time to wake up the old grey matter after those Christmas and New Year festivities. This is your chance! Our very own Quiz Master Phil Rex is hatching the questions to test you as you read this. Our annual QUIZ EVENING is to be held on

SATURDAY 16TH FEBRUARY at WATERINGBURY VILLAGE HALL

Doors Open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start.

So if you want to join in this brain teasing fun evening, you need a team of 6-8 people (or if you want to come on your own, we will match you up with others to make up a team). As usual, a raffle...and prizes for the quiz winners...(and losers!) Please bring your own food and drinks. Tea and coffee will be available. The cost is £6 per person and proceeds will be used to help maintain and equip our lovely Village Hall. To book a place...or a table...please ring Phil Rex on 01622 814483 or e-mail annerex@btinternet.com

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?

I am looking to arrange a **Singing Workshop** on Saturday 9 or 16 March from 10am – 4pm with an hour lunch (you need to bring a pack lunch) **£15.00 for the day**. I sang in one before Christmas in Chichester in a church hall, with a guy called Chris Rowbury who is a Natural Voice Practitioner, singing workshop leader and choirmaster. Take a look at his Website www.chrisrowbury.com. If you would be interested in taking part please could you email me your interest as soon as possible. I need to find at least 30 people to make it viable. I will email and update everyone when I gauge interest. This is for anyone who enjoys singing; the point isn't to be a good or polished singer, I loved every minute and can't recommend it enough.

Sally Barton email sbarton@london.newsquest.co.uk

TESTON & WATERINGBURY NURSERY GROUP (Registered charity 1044257)
www.testonandwateringburynursery.co.uk

Admissions and all enquiries: Amanda Vidler 07805 796353

It may be New Year, but we haven't quite finished with Christmas yet. The run up to Christmas was so exciting: we rehearsed our Concert, as Christmas drew near; we sang Christmassy songs, loud & clear; we made Christmas Cards, sparkly & bright, & our Christmas decorations were a beautiful sight! We played our own CD's & danced to the songs; we brought in warm clothing (but no long-johns!); we read Christmas stories & brought our own books & made yummy biscuits cos we're fabulous cooks!! Roll on next Christmas... And, of course, our Christmas Shopping Evening was yet another superb evening full of music, mince pies & shoppers – if you missed it, you missed out! Huge thanks go to everyone involved, not least, the committee for organising, running & clearing – a glamorous job!! Yet again, we raised a lot of funds, which, as always go towards the running of the Nursery Group, so thanks again – you really help the Nursery Group do the amazing job it does. The same goes for our Christmas Concert – so many smiles and 'ahhs' from parents & grandparents as they watched their little ones perform in their starring roles (pun intended!), followed by refreshments and a few fun stalls, raising yet more funds. With the New Year firmly in situ, we have welcomed lots of new faces & are thrilled to see our extra sessions filling up nicely. Please see our website above or call Amanda for further details. Here's to another exciting year!

AT BLACKTHORN we have just had our Christmas event which was a wonderful finale to our popular fundraising events during 2012. We are looking forward to organising our first one of 2013 on Saturday 27th April which will be a celebration of Spring., Be sure to put the date in your diary.

The garden plant nursery will then be open every Saturday in May to sell a huge selection of bedding and perennial plants to help bring your garden to life again. Don't forget that beautiful hand-made crafts, jams, oils, herbs and teas all made here at Blackthorn are available in the Café and our Bee Calendar for 2013 is available, containing some absolutely stunning photography provided by one of our workers. We hope that you will visit us early in the New Year for a warm welcome! For more information about Blackthorn or any of our events. Please contact Emma at emma@blackthorn.org.uk or call 01622 747112.

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH WALKS – 2013

3rd February – A local walk of 3½ along the river to Nettlestead Place back via Rock farm and Mill Pond – may be muddy if rain previously, if so will change

3rd March – A 3½ mile walk along the river to Teston, return via Tutsham Farm and Darnold Woods – should see some early spring flowers out in the woods

7th April – Mereworth – A return for this 3.8 mile walk along the Swanton Valley through Mereworth Woods, popular walk, passing the lake that is the head waters of the Wateringbury Stream

5th May – Our annual Bluebell walk up to Cattering and Hoath Woods to see the splendid show of spring flowers here

2nd June – Local 4 mile walk to Pizien Well then out towards Kings Hill golf course, return via Canon Farm

7th July – West Peckham. This is a requested walk out to Roydon Hall just over 3½ miles taking in the old East Peckham church as well. The route will follow the Wealdway outward and Greensand Way on the return.

Full details of times and meeting places will be shown in Rostrum, together with walks for the remainder of the year which have been planned

SNOWDROP SUNDAY – HUNTON CHURCH – 10 FEBRUARY

One of the most charming harbingers of spring are snowdrops and several kinds are to be seen in the churchyard. The Friends of St Mary's Church will be welcoming snowdrop visitors to both its churchyards which have a wealth of snowdrops in a charming setting. Open between midday and 4pm. Refreshments, information and displays. Entrance free

MAIDSTONE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Registered Charity No.287986"

Maidstone Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Brian Wright, will perform on **Saturday 2 February 2013** commencing at 7.30pm at Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park, Maidstone. The programme consists of three works – Sibelius : Karelia Suite – Rachmaninov : Piano Concerto No.2. – Nielsen : Symphony No. 4. "Inextinguishable". Concert tickets £10, £20 and £25, students with a Student card £5, Tickets for all children up to and including 18 years of age are FREE. Tickets are available from Membership Secretaries on 01622 735830,

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOLS CLUB (charity No. 1144343)

Welcome back to a Happy New Year. Everyone would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to Malcolm Pursey and his Team of workmen who came in over the Christmas break and repainted and repaired everywhere – what a brilliant job they have done – highly recommend them to anyone wanting a expert job. Also THANK YOU to One Stop Cleaning who keep our building so tidy and clean, I have never seen windows sparkle so beautifully!

We welcome all of our families back and especially the New Starters who have all settled into their new surroundings without a backward look. All of our lovely new staff have settled in and are looking forward to celebrating the year of the Dragon.

Don't forget we have spaces for 2 year olds and are able to access funding if appropriate. Holiday clubs are available on Weds, Thurs & Fri along with cover for staff development days, just ring or email. If you would like to come and visit Please ring on 01622 813120, or email us at nettlesteadandwatingbury@yahoo.com or visit our website www.nettlesteadandwatingburypreschool.org.uk Finally we would like to share a quote from a parent with you, "thank you so much for taking the best of care of our little girl, she's all ready for school now."

FRIENDS OF WATERINGBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL (FOWPS)

Registered charity 1038836

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our Christmas Fayre on 24 November so enjoyable. The event set a new fundraising record, with a profit of £3,600 thanks to the fantastic support of children, parents, staff and local businesses.

The year has begun with more great news. We have secured funding from Kent County Council's Member Community Engagement Grant Scheme which will pay for new playground markings in the spring. A special thank you to County Councillor Richard Long for supporting our bid. Watford Jaguar (www.watfordjaguar.co.uk) has also donated a PA system to us saving us hundreds of pounds.

2013 has started just as busily as 2012 ended with an Unwanted Gift Day for recycling "unwanted" and duplicate Christmas gifts, a film club night for the children and a quiz and curry night (8 February). Our school will join schools throughout the UK and in other parts of the world for the annual Sign2Sing world record attempt on 6 February. Term 3 ends on 15 February. We are now looking for supportive sponsors who would like to help us with our plans for 2013. Sponsors are now being sought for various events and activities throughout the year. Email chairman@fowps.org.uk if your company would like to find out more about the opportunities available. In return for your support we will publicise your involvement to a wide audience. Gail Isted

WINTER MEDWAY VALLEY COMMUNITY RAIL UPDATE

Wateringbury Station

As part of an improvement programme along the Medway Valley Line, Southeastern have installed a new cycle hoops at Wateringbury for rail passengers wishing to cycle to the station rather than arrive by car.

The Community Rail Partnership hopes that local train users are pleased with the recent platform improvements carried out in conjunction with the Wateringbury Station Partnership. The new flower planters and station mural were launched last Autumn and certainly brighten up the station environment. These build on the previous bulb planting exercise at the end of the Maidstone bound platform.

December Timetable.

I hope that passengers have found the new winter timetable an improvement with its increased connection times and adjusted running times. Timetable booklets are available from Post Office and Railway pub , as well as from the Tea Room.

January Fare Increases

Rail fares increased by an average of 4.2% in the New Year. Example new cheap day returns from Wateringbury – Maidstone £3.20, Tonbridge £5.80, and Strood £7.50.

Your Local Railway

The Medway Valley Community Rail Partnership works towards promoting and improving your local rail service and station facilities and environment. If you have any queries or comments, please let me know, using contact details below.

Ian Paterson Community Rail Project Officer Action with Communities in Rural Kent The Old Granary, Penstock Hall Farm, Canterbury Road, East Brabourne, Kent, TN25 5LL Tel: 01303 813790 Mob: 07917 841005 (**Monday to Wednesday only**) www.ruralkent.org.uk

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

February is our AGM and this takes place with members only, any members wishing to stand for election to the committee is always good news, nominations will be accepted until the week before the meeting on the 21st February, the committee will be treating the members to an evening of fun after business. Any member can volunteer to help out at meetings as we are always in need of help to set up, clear away etc. Please check our website for future meetings and our photo gallery. As a club we did exceptionally well in the Kent area of flower clubs, we won the club class and the Lady Falmouth trophy at the county Show, we were second in the club class at the Area show at Lordswood, and our member Susan won the Kent area photography competition, if we can build on that for 2013 then we will be proud, we are a friendly club with members of all ages and abilities, do come along and try us out, you may be surprised.

J.Schofield Chairman

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER 2012

Councillors voted to increase the budget for the QEII celebrations at the Playing Fields to £1700 as KCC Councillor Richard Long could not contribute as hoped since his Members' Allocation had been used in other areas. Parish Clerk Sue Cockburn outlined the plans to date and thanked village organisations and individuals for their enthusiastic support of the celebrations scheduled for on Sunday 2 June 2013.

Police matters PCSO Phillip Harrison reported that the reported crime in November had again been very low. There were 4 incidents – 2 car related when vehicles parked in Leney Road and Cobbs Close had been broken into and 2 concerning thefts of items from Fields Lane, in one horse blankets had been stolen. To keep up to date with local crime there was now a national website www.police.uk. Up to date information in a given area or postcode can be obtained. Councillor Talbert reported that he understood that PCSO's shifts will in future be re-arranged to allow them to attend at least 2 out of 3 parish council meetings. The 'ring fencing' of funding for PCSOs will end in March although the overall police funding will not be reduced. The law preventing scrap metal dealers from paying for scrap metal with cash comes into force during December 2012 and this will hopefully have an impact on the theft of metal locally and nationally.

Councillor Chris Talbert reported on the meeting of the TMBC Parish Partnership Panel which he and Richard Tripp had attended:

Bus Passes which expire in March 2013 will be automatically renewed and sent to the last address. Anyone who has moved since their pass was issued should notify T & M without delay.

Severe Weather KCC have launched a website that can be used to obtain information on closures of schools, libraries, etc. It also gives information on any disruption to public transport. www.kent.gov.uk/winter. KCC now has 60 gritting lorries and 150 farmers supplied with snow ploughs to help keep our roads open this winter.

KCC Councillor Richard Long reported that he had received approval to use £5000 from his KCC Highway's fund to support Operation Rover. This will mean that the scheme will run for several more months and should help to reduce motorists travelling too fast through the village and surrounding

areas. He has also been able to support the Friends of Wateringbury School's application for funds to help provide more playground equipment.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 2013

At the start of the meeting Chairman Michael Cayzer announced that the sale of Drayhorse Meadow to the Parish Council had been completed on 7 December 2012. The possibility of using a small portion of the land, which adjoins the playing fields, for car parking on match days will be investigated as this would alleviate the parking of cars in surrounding roads and consequent congestion. If this option was followed there would still be 6 acres of land to let together with 5 stables. Lambert & Foster will be consulted with regard to the letting.

The T & M Environment Act 1995 Air Quality Progress Report was discussed with particular reference to Wateringbury. The report identified the area on the Tonbridge Road by the Shell garage, part of Red Hill and Tonbridge Road by the traffic lights as areas with high pollution levels.

The chairman informed the meeting that the Crime Report format had been changed. The police would no longer give full details, instead 'Parish Feedback' could be obtained from the police website www.police.uk. He had obtained information about 3 crimes in December: thefts of parcels from doorsteps in the Phoenix Drive area and two, non-racial assaults, one in Bow Road and one in The Orpines.

Councillors approved the budget for 2013-14. Mike Witts reported that he had obtained a grant of £250 for the playing fields from the Fields in Trust Board.

The History Society's proposal to reinstate the village stocks, close to the village lock-up, was welcomed by the council. The next step is to approach the landowner (KCC Highways) to seek approval. The costs will be met by the History Society and Rostrum's amenity fund.

Borough Councillor Simon Jessel was at meeting and reported on matters of local interest including the proposal to build 600+ more homes at Kings Hill on land at present designated for commercial use. The main concern for the village is the adverse impact on our roads of more motor vehicles.

A proposal to enhance the conservation area by planting low growing shrubs on the grass verges beside Lodge Close was discussed and plans are to be drawn up for consideration.

The council had no objections to the following planning applications: Erection of detached garage to rear of property, driveway and extension of dropped kerb off to Leney Drive at 65 Bow Road. Conversion of garage to form habitable room at 15 The Orpines and cutting back flowering cherry and fir tree at 20 Mill Lane.

The Council's next meeting is on Tuesday 5th February at 7.30 in the Village Hall.

CHRISTMAS THANKS

We would like to thank everyone who made the Christmas Season in Church so memorable. Bijou Nursery for our Christmas tree and the cubs for their hand-made decorations. The flower arrangers for the wonderful arrangements and those who made donations towards flowers in memory of loved ones. To the cleaners and all who worked so hard behind the scenes. To the young ones for their delightful Nativity plays; the choir and our organist for their musical contributions and all our ministry team for conducting such moving services to enable us all to Praise the Lord and thank him for his wonderful gift of Jesus our Saviour.

Eddie Scarlin and Joanna Fyson – Churchwardens

THE BIG CHRISTMAS CARD

Thank you to everyone who signed the Big Christmas Card and made a donation to our chosen charity instead of sending individual cards to village friends. This year, including gift aid, £433.65 was raised to help the work of the Church Army.

A DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS EVENING

Thanks to all who helped with the Wateringbury Players presentation in the church in early December to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens. The cast really brought to life characters from his novels and we learned a little more of Dickens himself. The costumes and music were a delight and the snow making machine at the close an unexpected bonus.

TWELTH NIGHT QUIZ

Congratulations to the winner of this year's quiz - Derek Whitehead and to runner up Janet Coltham. The sum of £158 was raised for church funds and many little grey cells exercised in the process. Thanks too to quizmasters Jan and Mike Pursey and all who participated. The answers can be found on the church web site and on the church noticeboard.

THE LATE GEORGE BERRY

Patricia wishes to thank all village friends for their generous donations amounting to £525 to Cancer Research UK in memory of George.

THOUGHTS FROM THE VICARAGE

2 The Grange, East Malling ME19 6AH

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

CHANGE THIS NEW YEAR

A New Year has begun and by now your reflection on the past is probably complete and aspirations for this year would have been considered. I do hope last year went well for you and that you have much to look forward to for the future. I have done the same and given much thought to the year gone by and am still reviewing how I might change things for the future. Whilst last year began with sadness for me I must say it was a very full and successful year and there is little I would have changed.

The Church is in the season of Epiphany and that is very much about change. The Magi came from the East, in all their riches, to Bethlehem to praise and glorify the Christ Child who was clearly born into poverty. They were changed by their experience and we have been changed ever since too. But change can prove to be difficult, challenging and uncomfortable. We have seen so much of this expressed over the past year in the church of England. But the church is the one organisation that should not fear change nor find it difficult. But, sadly, it often does.

Let me offer a few recent examples: The appointment of a very new Bishop to become Archbishop of Canterbury is seen as a huge challenge, an important appointment and brave decision. No matter what your view may be, the issue concerning the Ordination of Women to be Bishops was an embarrassing mess and is likely to rumble on for a considerable period of time yet. Proposals by the Government for same-sex marriage are proving contentious for the church and could become a divisive issue. The moratorium on the appointment as Bishops of gay priests in civil partnership was lifted just before Christmas and came as a surprise to us all. It is not simply that the church fears change but rather that it is not good at managing the change as well and, when it does so, it seriously struggles to communicate the changes. Society looks on as the church so often, and sometimes rather successfully, makes a complete mess of such things.

What was it that changed the lives of the Magi travelling from the East? It was the manifestation to the world in that very Christ Child that brought about change. We sometimes lose sight of that and

become embroiled in all kinds of other activities and difficulties. In this New Year we ought to reflect on what took the Magi to see that Child and then we ourselves might be changed for the glory of God too! Happy New Year to you all.

Revd Jim Brown

LUNCHES FOR LENT

A warm welcome awaits you at the Church of St John the Baptist, on

Wednesdays 20 and 27 February and 6, 13, and 20 March 12.30 - 2pm

Why not pop in for a chat over soup and bread or cheese, tomato and bread with tea, coffee or squash. Cheese sandwiches and small cakes available for children. Everyone welcome, voluntary donations invited for local charities. Transport available if needed locally. For further information please phone 01622 813032.

LENT COURSE - "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT"

This year we will be holding 5 group sessions for Lent, starting the week beginning Monday 18 February, under the heading of "My Grace is Sufficient". There will be evening and daytime opportunities - please see below. So whether you attend church or not you will be very welcome. Please feel free to go to any of the sessions.

Wateringbury - Mondays 8pm-9pm (coffee from 7.30pm), and/or Wednesdays 1pm-2pm (light lunches from 12.30pm). Both held in Church

East Malling - Wednesdays at 8pm at 6 Reeves Court, East Malling

Thursdays 12.30pm-1.30pm at St James the Great Church

Teston - Mondays at 8pm at "South Cottage", Teston

GLOW EVENT

On **Saturday 9 February between 10am and noon** all children are invited to go along to **Rochester Cathedral** for a fun time with other children from the diocese. During the morning there will be time to worship God with crafts, games, songs and Jim and the Spicy camels! Entrance is free but you do need to book. To find out more about Jim and to listen to his music go to http://jimbailey.org/site/Who_is_Jim_Bailey.html. Becky Bowie is very happy to help people with booking or organizing lifts. (01622 813396).

WATCH CLUB

The next club meetings will be on 10 and 24 February between 5-7pm in the Church. Young people in school years 6-13 are very welcome. For more details please phone Lisa on 01622 812661.

BENEFICE MOTHERS' UNION

The next meeting will be on Thursday 7 February at 1pm in East Malling Church when there will be a talk on the work of East Malling Research Station. Visitors and new members always welcome.

BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES

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

<p>Sunday 3 February</p> <p>8am Holy Communion – Teston</p> <p>9.45am Family Service – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Family Service – Teston</p> <p>10am Morning Praise – Wateringbury</p> <p>7pm Taize Service - Wateringbury - led by Bob & Becky Bowie</p>	<p>Sunday 10 February</p> <p>8am Holy Communion – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Eucharist – East Malling</p> <p>10am Holy Communion - Wateringbury</p> <p>6.30pm Evening Prayer - Teston</p>
<p>Sunday 17 February – First in Lent</p> <p>8am Holy Communion – Wateringbury</p> <p>9.45am Eucharist – East Malling</p> <p>10 am Family Service – Wateringbury</p> <p>6.30pm Eucharist - Teston</p>	<p>Sunday 24 February</p> <p>8am Holy Communion – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Eucharist – East Malling</p> <p>10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury</p> <p>6.30pm Evening Praise - Teston</p>
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	
For Baptisms, Weddings and other arrangements with the vicar please attend the Parish Office at the Vicarage on Wednesdays 6.30-7.15pm	

Ash Wednesday 13 February

There will be services of Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes at 9am at East Malling and at 8pm at Teston. These services are for everyone in the Benefice. If you need a lift please speak to a churchwarden.

Services of Healing and Wholeness at 8pm .

The next services will be:

Tuesday 5 February in Wateringbury Church – a Praise Service led by Rev Alan Searle and Barry Fisher

Tuesday 5 March in East Malling Church – a Taize style service led by Rev Jim Brown

Sundays Cool meets during the church service at 10am on Sunday 10 February. All children welcome but those under 4 are asked to come with an adult.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – FRIDAY 1 MARCH

This year the service will be held in the Roman Catholic Church in West Malling. Do go along and join your prayers and thoughts with Christians from around the world.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Holy Baptism 30 December 2012

Maximilian Sidney McKay and Rachel Elizabeth Hickmott