

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Rostrum sends the Season's Greetings to all its readers. We thank all who have helped with the magazine over the past year especially:

- ✿ Our advertisers whose support enables the magazine to be delivered free to all households in the village
- ✿ The road reps who deliver the magazines so promptly
- ✿ Tony Gosby for his delightful cover illustrations and to
- ✿ All who contribute items for the magazine.

We are always happy to receive news and short articles for the magazine which should reach us by 17th of the month. Christine, Janet and Ted

VILLAGE DIARY

December

- 3** Stormking – vocalist and disco – WM Club from 7.30pm
- 6** Parish Council Meeting – Hall – 7.30pm
- 14** Carol Singers in village for Demelza House Hospice from 6.30pm
- 15** Lessons and Carols by Candlelight – Church – 8pm
- 21** History Society Members' Social Evening – Hall – 7.30pm

January

- 1** Footpaths Group local walk - meet Hall Car Park – 10.30am sharp
- 3** Parish Council Meeting – Hall – 7.30pm
- 12** Traditional Dance and Music - WI talk – Hall – 2.30pm
- 18** History Soc - Rochester Bridge – James Gibson – Hall – 7.40pm
- 27/28** Wateringbury Players' Pantomime – Red Riding Hood – Hall

ADVERTISING IN ROSTRUM IN 2012

We have contacted all existing and prospective advertisers inviting them to book advertising space in Rostrum in 2012. Any advertisers who have not received their letter (either by e-mail or general mail) or others who are interested in advertising are asked to contact Rostrum without delay.

CAROL SINGING FOR DEMELZA CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

On **Wednesday 14 December** carol singers will be in the village between 6.30pm and 8.30pm to help you get into the Christmas spirit and also raise money for the local children's hospice. Please come along and join the carol party (you don't need a great voice). Bring your own torch. The singers will be meeting for a 6.30pm start at the junction of Bow Road and Phoenix Drive.

MAIDSTONE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,

Under its conductor, Brian Wright, the orchestra will perform on Saturday 3 December at 7.30pm at Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park, Maidstone. The programme consists of three works: Brahms – Variations on a theme by Haydn, Mozart – Clarinet Concerto. Soloist David Campbell, Dvorak– Symphony No.5. Concert tickets £10, £19 and £23, seats for students with a student card £5, available from Membership Secretaries on 01622 735830, with cheque payment, collected on the concert evening at Mote Hall. Or from Maidstone Leisure Centre Mote Hall Box office on 0845 1552277 when payment can be made by credit card, a booking fee applies. Bookings can be taken on www.mso.org.uk using the booking form. Tickets for all children up to and inc 18 years of age FREE.

WATERINGBURY WEATHER WATCH OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Since a very wet June and an above average July the last 3 months have been much drier than usual. In August, September and October we had a total of 91.2mm (3.59") of rain as compared to an average of 191.1mm (7.53"). However September and October were both warmer than usual.

The first half of November also produced hardly any rain although a lot of low cloud and mist made it feel damp and miserable at times. On the other hand it was much warmer than average. But whether or not this will last remains to be seen as last year the cold did not kick in until the second half of the month with the snow starting on the 29th. AB

Slimming World - Barming

West Borough Primary School, off Queens Road
every Tuesday at 7.30pm
call Faye on 01622 721588 for more info

ART LESSONS

Relaxed, informal art lessons in dry media with local artists
Jan Wilson and Sue Pearce
coloured pencil, graphite and pastel.
Small groups - Beginners very welcome - Barming area
07772 632050 - www.janwilsonart.co.uk

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 January for our next issue in February 2012*

Double Wedding Congratulations to Paul and Maggie Smart who celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary on New Year's Eve and to their daughter **Paula** who marries **Howie Mainwaring** at The Old Kent Barn, Swingfield on 31 December.

Early Arrival Congratulations to Amy Smith and Dan on the very early arrival of **Eliza Mary Meheux** who was born at 32 weeks on 14 September in Pembury Hospital weighing 2lb 9oz. Eliza is now back home in Larkfield and weighs 5lb. A first grandchild for **Gill Smith**.

Belated Birthday greetings to Irene Ockenden who was 90 years young on 11/11/11.

Engagement congratulations to:

Oliver Cann and Alyson Adam, who live and work in Sheffield

James Gaster and Abbi Shepard who are based in London

Farewell and thanks to Tony Morgan who is shortly moving to the coast. We will miss you Tony, especially your skills in organising the annual house-to-house British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Best Wishes to Where Memories Meet, tea room, antiques and curios centre which opened for the first time on 24 November, after months of preparation, at 188 Tonbridge Road, by the traffic lights.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Christmas Greetings to all customers from **Beni and Rupal at the Handy Stores**. Please note winter opening times from 1 December are Monday to Saturday 6am to 8.30pm and 7am to 2pm on Sundays. They will be closed on Christmas Day and open on Boxing Day and New Year's Day from 7am to 2pm.

Tanya would like to wish all her **Zumba** class which meets in the village hall a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Last class before Christmas Tuesday 20 December returning Tuesday 3 January 7pm. If you haven't tried Zumba yet come and join them, just turn up on the night. All welcome! Email tanyagrafham@yahoo.com or call 07531 839159 for more information.

TESTON CLUB

We hope you'll manage to pop in over Christmas; our new Games Room furniture should be arriving in December and with our decorations up, our lights switched on and a glass of your favourite tippie, you'll be hard pressed to find a more comfortable place!

Thurs 1 Dec – Christmas Lights Switch On – 6pm. Mince pies and mulled wine available throughout the evening

Sat 10 Dec – 6pm - Pickled Onion Competition 7pm - Mince Pie Competition

8pm - Christmas Draw!!

Sat 17 Dec - Father Christmas 3 – 5pm. Father Christmas will make an early visit for a quick drink and mince pie, collect some carrots for Rudolph and have a little chat with the children. There will be a small present for every child.

Sat 31 Dec - New Year's Eve 8pm. Fantastic live music from the Muddy River Soul and Blues Band seeing us into the New Year! Complimentary food and raffle

Wednesday Afternoons, 2 – 4pm

DECEMBER 7th – Bingo, 14th – Christmas Party, 21st – Christmas sing-a-long, 28th – Post Christmas “chill out”

JANUARY 4th – New Year's Resolutions, 11th – Quiz, 18th – Beetle Drive, 25th – Burn's Night!

A very Merry Christmas to you all and a very Happy New Year!

BLACKTHORN TRUST

The end of another year at Blackthorn. We are delighted to introduce ourselves to the people of Wateringbury, some of whom hopefully already know and have visited us down the road in Barming. We are a charity offering specialist therapies and supported work placements to those struggling with health. We would love you to come and visit us in the new year for coffee or lunch, in the meantime visit our website or facebook page to find out more.

This year has been very special for Blackthorn as it has celebrated its 25th year. This amazing achievement has been reached with the support that Blackthorn has received both in terms of funds, time and kindness. In turn it has given support to people who need the special kind of care Blackthorn offers at a vulnerable time in their life. This care is needed just as much now as it was all those years ago, with one in four people suffering a mental health problem sometime in their lives. We all know that times are hard and for Blackthorn to continue its work it needs your support more than ever. Whatever you can give, be it time, money or support you can be assured that it will be used wisely and it will be much appreciated. Thank you for your help. We wish you all a very happy and contented Christmas and look forward to a fulfilling New Year.

WATERINGBURY W M CLUB

Do come along and join us. A warm welcome awaits you.

Saturday, 3 December **“STORMKING”** Vocalist and Disco from 7.30 pm

Christmas and New Year Opening Times

Saturday, 24 December – Christmas Eve* 12.00 – 11.00 pm

Sunday, 25 December – Christmas Day 11.30 am – 1.30 pm

Monday, 26 December – Boxing Day 12.00 – 6.00 pm

Saturday, 31 December – New Year's Eve* 12.00 – 12.30 am

Sunday, 1 January – New Year's Day 12.00 – 6.00 pm

(New Year's Day)

* **Entertainment on these evenings**

WATERINGBURY BABY & TODDLER GROUP

Have you got your ticket yet for the Christmas party of the year? You haven't?! Be quick as they're selling like hot cakes! What party? It's only the Toddler Group Christmas Party! Hip hip hooray! It's on Friday 9 December from 10am. Tickets are priced at £2.50 per child, and places are strictly limited. We'll have the marvellous Music Mayhem coming to entertain us (sorry for the error in last month's edition) and there will be a surprise visit from a certain guy in a red suit (you know the one!!) with presents for all good little boys and girls.

The Christmas party is our last session for this year but be sure to come back and join us when we start up again on Wednesday 4 January 2012, with new craft ideas and a brand new chairperson! Yes, Tina has stepped down so a big, huge thank you to her for her leadership over the past few years. She will be a tough act to follow, but we have just the lady to fill her boots! A big welcome to Linda Simmonds who will be taking over the reins from the New Year.

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 the Wateringbury Village Hall. There is a small charge of £2 for the first child and £1 each for subsequent children over 12 months old. Adults continue to be free. We also hire out our tables/chairs and toys in the hall; ideal for birthday parties, Christening celebrations etc. If you are interested please contact Tina/Linda on our usual number - 07506 735137.

HISTORY SOCIETY

In December we are holding a Members' Social Evening, when we will be enjoying short talks from local residents, taking part in a quiz, and drinking wine (if wished) in place of tea and coffee accompanied by mince pies and nibbles.

Our first speaker in the New Year is James Gibson who is coming along on 18 January to tell us about the History of Rochester Bridge. Dr Gibson has been the Bridge Archivist since 1987 and is a member of the Rochester Bridge Trust.

Barbara Stevens came along in October to tell us about Downe village and its most famous resident Charles Darwin and his family. She told us that in 1842, when Darwin moved to Down House, around 330 people lived in Downe, the population has now risen to over 1,000. It is still a picturesque village and the High Street has changed very little since Darwin's time. It was suggested that Downe become a World Heritage Site, but a committee sitting in Brazil, could not reach an agreement so the decision has been postponed. Charles Darwin moved into Down House with his wife Emma in 1842, where they lived with

their family, until Charles died in 1882. Darwin and his wife, Emma Wedgewood, were cousins and both 30 years old when they married, they produced ten children, but unfortunately three died in childhood. Charles worked on and formulated his famous ideas on evolution whilst living at Down House, using the evidence he collected during his voyage on the "Beagle", and from the experiments he conducted in his garden. Both the house and gardens have been preserved as they were during his occupancy. Following his death Charles was interred in Westminster Abbey, much against Emma's wishes, but a memorial to Charles can be seen in the local Church.

POPPY THE TAWNY OWL

After the Remembrance Service some of the children spied an owl crouching in the undergrowth in the churchyard. The owl was unable to fly and adults were recruited to help. It was put into a box and taken to Folly Wildlife Rescue near Tunbridge Wells. The owl was named Poppy. She was found to be in a very poor condition and unable to feed and therefore too weak to fly. The cause of the problem was diagnosed as canker of the mouth, which apparently is caused by eating wood pigeons or collared doves who carry the disease. Treatment was started but sadly Poppy died the next day. She was however in very loving hands and free from stress.

Folly Wildlife Rescue is on the A26 at Danegate, Eridge Green TN3 9JB ☎ 01892 750865. Folly is a registered charity and relies solely on donations to specialise in the care and hand rearing of wild animals, mammals, birds and nestlings. They run a 7 day helpline ☎ 07957 949825, 8am-8pm to give advice on caring for wildlife casualties. They also have a helpful website.



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

Busy times once again for the pre-school and out of schools club. During bonfire week we celebrated with a fire pit, toasted marshmallows and toast dipped in home-made tomato soup – nothing better. All the children learnt to cook, take turns and respect fire. They also learnt about floating and sinking when we dropped the wood embers into a bucket of water and watched what happened (no it didn't melt a hole in my bucket).

We have borrowed some brilliant building blocks from the Treasure Chest and all the children have enjoyed building dens, surfing and creating magnificent structures with the blocks. We borrowed these after the school had used them in order for our children to continue and extend the play already started at Wateringbury School.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our fashion show it was brilliant to see so many friendly faces supporting the Group. We raised in excess of £600. That's a lot of play sand! Plenty of Yule fun to come. We are linking up with Nettlestead Church for Christingle Service on 1 December and Nativity Play on 14 December - all parents/carers and children are very welcome. Our End of Term party and visit from 'someone special' is on Friday 16 December at 1.30 pm and our end of Term party for afterschool clubs will be on Thursday 15 December. If you would like to come and visit please ring on 01622 813120 or email us at nettlesteadandwateringbury@yahoo.com or visit our website www.nettlesteadandwateringburypreschool.org.uk
FINALLY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

Easy to post gifts with a Wateringbury Flavour

All available from the Post Office

Wateringbury Tea Towels and Village Notelets (£3.50)

Lest We Forget - Wateringbury in World War 2 (£3.50)

(proceeds to Church Funds)

History Society books with tales of bygone Wateringbury
including the newly published

History of Wateringbury to 1086 (£2.50)

(proceeds to History Society Funds)

IN PRAISE OF THE POST OFFICE

I have lived in the village of Wateringbury since 1978; that's a long time and in all that time the village post office has provided a service second to none. Looking exactly as a small village Post Office should; an inviting, historically interesting old building; right in the heart of the community; it is a veritable Tardis bulging with useful and essential goodies. It also provides a life line for those among us who would find having to get to Maidstone a real chore; even an impossibility.

Having a large circle of friends in this fabulous village, I count myself very lucky. I dread to think what it must be like not to be mobile, starved of company and unable to take an active role in village life. The Post Office provides a line of contact for those less fortunate and it is up to us all to support this splendid institution while we still can.

I began to think of the many ways I use the Post Office and was astounded. Apart from the benefit of exercise, a gentle walk up Bow Road in my case, Penny always seems to have exactly what I'm after. I know I shall find the exact envelope I need; or receive advice on taxing my car; buying Premium Bonds; posting awkward packets, etc,etc,etc. Each Christmas I take about 200 cards for Penny to post. She happily stamps them for me, at what must be her busiest time of year, saving me a long unpleasant task - even in these days of self sticking stamps. Every year she sells tickets for the Wateringbury Player's Pantomime; she used to be key holder to the village hall and has run the box-office for all of the 'plays what I wrote' including the Waterbrat productions. I have watched her, without a hint of hassle, calm down anxious customers who have forgotten their pin numbers, patiently waiting for them to recover their wits. No matter how busy, Penny and her staff always have a friendly word for all, making a visit to their emporium a real pleasure.

Now I have a very special personal thank you to express. Penny has recently been selling copies of my book for me (THE HAUNTING OF HARRIET – unabashed advert!) and has sold an amazing 20 copies to date! I am deeply indebted to her for providing such an efficient service. How many villages are privileged to boast of such a wonderful asset? Thank you , Penny, long may you and the Wateringbury Post Office flourish. JENNIFER BUTTON

THOUGHT ON MATURITY

Maturity is the art of living in peace with that which we cannot change.

NOVEMBER PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The planning committee would appreciate the opinions of parishioners in relation to planning applications prior to its meeting to help formulate the response to T & M. Please send comments to the Parish Clerk, Redhill Cottage, Redhill or e-mail susan_jc@btinternet.com Alternatively come along to the planning subcommittee meeting which is held directly after the monthly parish council meeting in the village hall on the first Tuesday of each month.

Queen Elizabeth 2 Fields Challenge the clerk reported that to date 63 people had supported the plan to register the village playing fields under the scheme to mark the Queen's Jubilee by protecting open spaces for future generations. It was hoped that before the closing date of 16 November more support would be received on the dedicated web site.

October Crime figures PCSO Dave Gilham reported to the meeting that there had been 5 crimes - 3 thefts from motor vehicles parked overnight at the Premier Inn and 1 catalytic converter stolen from a vehicle parked in Warden Mill Close. The fifth crime was a vehicle not paying for fuel from the service station. Dave reported that the police were being restructured at the moment so for the time being the monthly police surgery in the village will be suspended.

Replacement of Village sign top discussions took place about replacing the stolen KCC dome on the signpost at the cross roads. KCC were not prepared to pay for a replacement. The Clerk had obtained an estimate of £1400 for making a replacement in cast iron. Councillors discussed alternative options and these will be followed up and the matter discussed at a future meeting.

KCC Councillor Report Richard Long reported that the KCC's £50 million invested in Iceland will shortly be returned. A Highways Application was being made in relation to the A26

Planning Application The council had no objection to the planning application for a first floor side extension at 23 Leney Road

Public Discussion Two items were raised:

- The parking of cars on KCC highways land at the junction of Tonbridge Road and Lodge Close
- The possibility of marking the Queen's Jubilee in 2012 in some way in the village, perhaps by planting of trees

Next Meetings Tuesdays 6 December and 3 January at 7.30pm in the village hall. Members of the public are most welcome to attend the meeting.

RED RIDING HOOD PANTO

After the success of the Wateringbury Players last panto, its time once again to dust off those wigs and pull on those tights!! The 2012 panto, Red Riding Hood is now in rehearsals and due to make its debut on Friday 27 January followed by a matinee and evening performances on Saturday 28 January in Wateringbury Village Hall. The cast is made up almost entirely of local villagers so make sure you come along and cheer them on

Tickets are priced £7 for the Friday show and £8 for the Saturday evening. For the Saturday matinee child tickets are £4 and adults £7. Please note there are no concessions for the evening performances

The pantomime will be dedicated to the memory of Richard Ogilvie who had been a member of the Players for many years. His last performance was in the summer of 2009 when he took part in the hopping show "From Sunrise to Candlelight". Proceeds will be divided between the Motor Neurone Disease Association and St John the Baptist Church.

Tickets will be on sale from mid December from both the Post Office and Handy Stores so look out for those posters, demand is sure to be high – oh yes it is!!!!!!"

WI

The guest speaker at our November meeting was Mr Bob Ogle, who gave a most interesting talk about the wartime experiences of people living in and around Biggin Hill airfield, including the crews of aircraft and support staff based there during the war.

We are all looking forward to our Christmas party, with lots of good food and pleasant company to lead us into the festive season. This will include entertainment with Mrs Doreen Hulme giving us a concert of popular songs. (This event is for members only).

More music will be on the agenda at our meeting on 12 January when our speaker will be Mrs Sandy Sharp on the subject of Traditional Dance and Music. Visitors welcome at the village hall at 2.30pm.

Kathy Coates, 01622 814618

THOUGHT ON CHANGE

I wanted to change the world. But I have found that the only thing one can be sure of changing is oneself. - Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

CRICKET CLUB

This season we finished having played 27 matches. We won 12, lost 12, 2 were abandoned due to horrendous rain and 4 were cancelled because the opposition couldn't get a team. At our AGM we saw Cliff Hickmott becoming the new President replacing Mike Witts who stood down and retired from the club. He has been with us for many years and we would like to thank him for all the time, work and commitment he has given the club. Our Colts have come on in leaps and bounds and we now have 22 children turning up regularly to participate. They played some matches and the support from the parents has been fantastic. We look forward to seeing them all in the nets and in the new season.

The club does not rest for the winter and has entered the indoor 6 a side competition. It is my understanding that you have to be insane to play it which makes it perfect for our team. Nets start again on the 12th February. We will have our annual quiz night in the new year and look forward to seeing as many from the village as possible. We also will be looking forward to the tour which we hope will be Dorset way. We really would like to see new players. We play friendly matches only and have players of all ages and abilities. If you would like more information then either look at us on www.wateringbury.com or call 07773 681677.

FRIENDS OF WATERINGBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL (FOWPS)

www.fowps.org.uk

At the time of going to press, we were making our final preparations for our Christmas Fayre on Saturday 26 November (12-3pm). Thank you to FOWPS for putting so much hard work into staging this fun fundraising event. It has been a real team effort involving the committee, Class Reps, staff, parents, children and the wider community. Special thanks to all the local businesses and organisations who have so generously supported us.

In these tough economic times we are working hard to minimise our costs so that we can plough more of our fundraising income into important projects at school. We are currently fundraising for a shaded area on the infant playground. If you'd like to help us in any way in 2012 please call Chairman Gail Isted on 01622 813716 or e-mail chairman@fowps.org.uk

Thank you for all your support in 2011 and we look forward to a fun-packed 2012. Merry Christmas everyone! Gail Isted FOWPS Chairman

PS. We are trying to source secure storage containers for the school. If you can help with this, please call 01622 813716 or email chairman@fowps.org.uk

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

December's meeting is our members' Christmas dinner. This is going to be held in the village hall under the new roof, so it should be lovely and warm with all that new insulation and no leaks! Last year we had such a lovely time with everyone getting the chance to talk to others and we had 3 demonstrations by committee members; we hope to have the same programme again this year.

19 January 2012 is the first date on the calendar for the new year, and our first demonstrator is Jackie Arnold with her title New Beginnings. Jackie is an area demonstrator and is also the Demonstrators' Rep for Kent Area, a very talented florist and Chelsea medal winner. If you have not seen her before she is definitely worth coming along to see at Nettlestead Village at 7.30pm

November Meeting - Guest Demonstrator - Penny Stone - Dear Father Christmas We welcomed Penny to the club for the first time, and what a riot of colour erupted on to the stage, flowers of all colours were arranged into the most unusual designs for Christmas, not your truly traditional designs, something a little bit different. Penny finished with an enormous design that was built in two halves. The sale of raffle tickets for the flower arrangements went through the roof after the first half when members saw the unusual designs.

Last month the club held a Photography workshop in the village hall - Derek Hodge the President of Maidstone camera club came and gave us hints and tips on how to get the best out of our cameras, this was a great workshop and although we had 3 hours of info and interaction, we are hopefully going to have another in the new year to

carry on where we left off. This will be open to non members of the club and their friends, further details will be published nearer the time.

Happy Christmas and a Good New Year - .Jean Schofield, Chairman WFC

THE FOOTPATH GROUP

A New Year's Day Walk is planned for Sunday 1 January 2012, to start at 10.30am from Wateringbury Village Hall.

We are a friendly unofficial group who just like to walk; we do not have anyone to lead walks regularly and would welcome volunteers willing to undertake this task for us occasionally. For more information please call 01622 812338 ST.



Nativity Play Sunday 18 December

As part of the worship at the Family Service at 10am in Church. This is always a delightful service so do come along.

FUN WITH FAITH members will be taking part in the Nativity Play and so the usual format of meeting in December has been changed. Members should go along to the 2 rehearsals in church between 10-11am on Saturdays 10 and 17 December.

The meeting on Saturday 14 January will also be in church between 11.30-1.30 for the usual format of fun activities and lunch.

TODDLERS NATIVITY AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Toddlers will meet in the Church on Monday 19 December at 2pm for their Nativity Play and Party. Visitors welcome. They will then be on holiday until Monday 9 January when they return to their usual venue in the Guide and Scout HQ, Glebe Meadow. All under 5s and their carers are always welcome to enjoy singing, marching, a bible story and prayer time as well as refreshments.

2012 - TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF BENEFICE

On 17 January 2002 Rev James Brown was installed as vicar of the newly formed joint Benefice of Wateringbury, Teston and East Malling. Special services are being planned throughout the year to celebrate this milestone.

On Sunday 29 January there will be a Benefice Service in East Malling Church at 10 am when the guest preacher will be **Bishop Brian of Tonbridge** (who is also celebrating the 10th anniversary of his appointment).

Every month each of the parishes will mark with thanksgiving the ministries of various groups, many of whom work behind the scenes to enhance the worship and life of the church. Other events are also being planned so watch future issues of Rostrum for more news.

SUNDAYS COOL meets in the vestry during the Sunday Church Services on Sunday 11 December and 8 and 22 January. For children of any age (under 4s are asked to bring a carer along).

THE WATCH CLUB our new club for young people in school year 6 and above meets fortnightly in the church between 5-7pm. The next meetings are on Sundays 15 and 29 January. Details from Lisa on 01622 812661.

THOUGHTS FROM THE VICARAGE

2 The Grange, East Malling ME19 6AH

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

OPEN AS USUAL

"Angels from the realms of glory", "O come all ye faithful", "Hark the herald" are well known, much loved carols of welcome. I look forward to greeting you all to our church this Christmas. There are a whole variety of services to come to and, whether it be a Nativity service, a carol service or Communion at Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the doors will be "open as usual" and a warm welcome will await you. The hospitality of the church is fundamental to its life and, whilst we may get a few things wrong as a church, the welcome that we offer is at the very core of our being. As the vicar I am confident that we will do a great job this Christmas, and throughout the year, at offering you a warm welcome to the church. I firmly believe that we, the regular church goers, do not own the church. It is God's church and Jesus Christ is the host! So welcome to the church to which you all belong.

By the time you read this article I am sure that the St Paul's Cathedral issue will have been resolved in one way or the other. I certainly hope that its doors will be fully open and visitors and worshippers will be free to worship this Christmas in the usual fashion. However, I have no idea how the matter will be resolved but I have a feeling that it may well force the church to re-examine its role in a capitalist society and how it engages in the debates of the day. With whom should we align ourselves? It is so interesting to think that at Christmas time we reflect on the story of the birth of the Christ child but he was unwelcome in Bethlehem and the doors were closed and the birth took place in some kind of stable. Jesus then was born as some kind of outcast, he was disadvantaged from the very beginning. So began his life and ministry which showed us all how to care for the outcast and provide a world for all to live in and enjoy and not simply to protect the interests of a few privileged people. The best we can do, therefore, is to ask the question "What would Jesus do?"

Whilst I am loathe to pass judgement because I am not privy to all the facts, I fear that the closure of St Paul's Cathedral could prove to be a catastrophic mismanagement that may affect the whole of the church. I am acutely aware of the pressure that is brought to bear on those who have to make such decisions (I have personal experience of that myself, albeit in a minor way), it is simply not an easy one and so please remember them in your prayers. I am sure, as Canon Giles Fraser is (the Canon Chancellor of the Cathedral who resigned over the Cathedral's legal pursuance against the protestors), that Jesus would have protected the rights of the protesters and worshippers alike. That in my mind is a matter of social justice. The stable doors were open to welcome the Shepherds and later the Wise Men. Jesus then led a life of openness, of caring for the marginalised, of eating and walking alongside the outcasts. He reminds us how to love one another and how to be a neighbour towards one another and none of this was to do with our love for money or material wealth.

It is important, therefore, for me to be able to welcome you this Christmas to your church where you will find the doors "Open as usual" and where your host, Jesus Christ, abides in all that takes place within. So come, all you faithful, so that we might herald the birth of Jesus Christ together!

God Bless - Rev Jim Brown

THE HEALTHY BREAKFAST CLUB

The first meeting of The Healthy Breakfast Club will be held on Saturday 21 January at 9am in the Church of St John the Baptist. The guest speaker will be Jean Brown who will give a talk entitled 'Other People's Needs'. Everyone welcome but for catering purposes please purchase £5 ticket in advance from 01622 813032.

REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND - 12-13 November

Thanks to all who came along on Saturday 12th to smarten up the churchyard and church in preparation for the Annual Parish Act of Remembrance.

The weather was unseasonably warm for the Service on Sunday 13th which was very well attended. The uniformed organisations are to be congratulated: their members were very smartly dressed and their behaviour exemplary both in the church and around the war memorial for the 2 minutes Silence. Thanks too to those who provided the activities in the vestry for the little ones and the welcome tea and coffee after the service. Last, and by no means least, thanks to Callum Graham for his bugle playing.

The collection, which has been donated to the Poppy Appeal amounted to £520.45 plus approximately £185 which will be reclaimed from the tax authorities for those who put their donation in the Gift Aid envelopes.

HELP THE HOMELESS THIS CHRISTMAS

Maidstone Christian Care Centre for the Homeless, a very deserving charity is not only in need of tins and non-perishable goods but is also in need of socks, wet-weather gear, fleeces and sleeping bags. A box will be available in Church each Sunday until 20 December when they will be delivered to the Centre in time for Christmas

Wk 1 Nov 27 – Beans and Blankets Wk 2 Dec 4 – Soups and Socks

Wk 3 Dec 11 – Scarves, Spaghetti and Sleeping Bags

Wk 4 Dec 18 – Winter Woolies and Warming Food

Thank you for your help and support

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

If you wish to make a contribution towards the Christmas Flowers in church in memory of a loved one please contact Gillian on 01622 813076 as soon as possible.

BENEFICE CHURCH SERVICES

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

Sunday 1 January 8am Holy Communion - Teston 9.45am Family Communion followed by Bacon Butties - East Malling Noon – New Year Praise – Wateringbury	Sunday 8 January 8am Holy Communion – East Malling 10am Holy Communion - Wateringbury 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 6.30pm Evening Prayer - Teston
Sunday 15 January 8am Holy Communion – Wateringbury 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10 am Family Service – Wateringbury 6.30pm Eucharist - Teston	Sunday 22 January 8am Holy Communion – East Malling 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 11.15am Eucharist - Teston 10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury 6.30pm Evening Praise - Teston
Sunday 29 January Benefice Service 10am in East Malling Church with guest preacher Bishop Brian of Tonbridge	
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	

Special Services in Wateringbury this Christmastide

4 December at 10am - Christingle Service when the children are presented with 'Christingles' (an orange with light stick and sweets - all symbols of the Christ light).

11 December at 10am - Eucharist

Thursday 15 December at 8pm - Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight

Christmas Eve

5pm Crib Service a delightful service when we build the Nativity Crib. This year children are invited to come dressed as a Nativity character or animal.

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day – 10.30am Family Communion

NEW YEARS DAY – Noon – Service to welcome in the New Year

Quiet Hour - Wednesdays 14 December and 11 January. Go along to the church at any time between 8-9pm for private prayer and contemplation or light a votive candle.

Service of Healing and Wholeness at 8pm. The 6 December service will be a Praise Service in East Malling Church The Service on 3 January will be in Waterringbury Church.