



Rostrum December 2015 and January 2016

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our readers, advertisers, distributors and contributors

VILLAGE DIARY

December

- 1 **Parish Council** - Hall - 7.30pm followed by Planning Committee
- 5 **Kent Chamber Choir - Music for Christmas** - Church - 7.30pm
- 6 **Footpaths Group Walk** - Village Hall car park - 2pm
- 12/13 **Cribs and Angels plus Teas** - Church - 2.30-4.30pm
- 16 **Life upon the Wicked Stage** - History Soc - Hall - 7.15pm (early start)
- 17 **9 Lessons and Carols by Candlelight** - Church - 8pm
- 18 **Carols in village for Demelza Children's Hospice** - from 6.30pm
- 24 **Christmas Eve Karaoke** - Wateringbury Club
- 24 **Crib Service 5pm - Midnight Communion 11.30pm** - Church
- 25 **Christmas Family Communion** - Church - 10am
- 31 **Members Family Knees-up** - Wateringbury Club

January

- 3 **Footpaths Group Walk** - Village Hall car park - 2pm
- 5 **Parish Council** - Hall - 7.30pm followed by Planning Committee
- 9 **Coffee Morning with cake stall** - Church - 10.30-noon
- 20 **Royal Visits to Kent talk** - History Society - Hall - 7.40pm
- 29/30 **Aladdin - Wateringbury Players Panto** - Village Hall

DIARY DATE WATERINGBURY VILLAGE FETE - SUNDAY 5 JUNE

CAROLS ROUND THE VILLAGE FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER AT 6.30PM

All ages are invited to come 'a wassailing' around Phoenix Drive and surrounding roads, singing carols and collecting for the Demelza Children's Hospice. Latecomers most welcome - just follow the singing! Friday 18 December, meet at 6:30pm at the start of Phoenix Drive. Bring warm clothes and a torch. For more info contact Bob (813396).

Are you passionate, enthusiastic and up for a new challenge? Do you like meeting new people, want to learn new skills and provide valuable support to local residents? Kent County Council is piloting a new exciting **Volunteer Support Warden** role located in selected areas making a real difference to local communities. We are delighted that Wateringbury has been chosen as one of the pilot areas. As a Volunteer Support Warden, you will be the eyes and ears of the community, helping to encourage social and positive behaviour and, in so doing, ensuring Wateringbury continues to be a lovely place in which to live. There is no requirement for a minimum number of hours and you will be provided with a uniform, for when you are on duty, making you recognisable to the community. We would encourage anyone interested in volunteering for these important roles to contact Community Wardens on 03000 413455 or visit kent.gov.uk/communitywardens for more information. Closing date is 1 February 2016.

VILLAGE PEOPLE Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 January for our February 2016 magazine. Entries are free.

Wedding Congratulations to Andrew Searle and Rosie Othen who plan to marry on Sunday 29 November at The Bell in Ticehurst.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Syd and Vera Thompsett who celebrate their **Diamond Wedding Anniversary** on 17 December. Syd and Vera first met in 1947 at the Phoenix Brewery in Bow Road where Vera already worked as a shorthand-typist and Syd was employed as senior assistant to the Chief Surveyor. In 1967 they purchased a plot of land in Red Hill Wateringbury and built the bungalow in which they still live.

Big Birthday wishes to Ted Vincent who will be 90 on 7 January 2016

Delivery thanks to Esme Mercer who is retiring from distributing Rostrums in Hanbury Close and thanks to **Liz Farndon** for taking over the deliveries.

FAREWELL GREENSTED

Abbeyfield Greensted Care Home in The Orpines closed its doors on Friday 6 November. Abbeyfield have submitted plans to T & M Borough Council to demolish the building and build a complex of 55 assisted living flats for the over 55s. The KCC began building the Old People's home in the summer of 1973. It was a very modern building with a detached house on the site for the Matron. Over the years Greensted was forward-looking in the care of its elderly residents and always encouraged visitors from the village community. In the 1980s as a result of fundraising by the then matron Pauline Unger (who was also Brown Owl) a mini bus was purchased to allow the residents to

enjoy many outings. When the KCC sold all its Old People's Homes Greensted was taken over by housing charity Abbeyfield. The KCC also sold the Matron's house together with building plots on which two detached houses were built. Thank you Greensted staff for all the love and care you have given to the older members of our community over the past 40 years. We will miss you.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all residents. We thank all residents for their support in 2015 and hope that in 2016 many of you will come along to Parish Council meetings and some will be motivated to become Parish Councillors and join us working to enhance our village.

Michael Cayzer, Chairman, on behalf of all Parish Councillors.

We wish everyone a Joyous Christmas and a Peaceful New Year. Thank you all for your support for our Parish Church over the past year which is much appreciated. We hope many of you will be able to join us this Christmas.

Peter Bond and Joanna Fyson (Churchwardens)

Penny, Pat, Nathan, De, Cathy and Jenny at The Post Office send Season's Greetings to all readers. **The last Posting Dates are Saturday 19 December for second class post and Monday 21 December for first class items.** The PO opening hours will be 23rd and 24th: 9-1pm; Closed 25th-28th; 29th 9-5.30pm; 30th and 31st 9-1pm; Closed New Years Day.

Benny and Rupal at The Handy Stores wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Over the holidays their revised opening times will be:

24th 7am-6pm; Christmas Day - Closed; 26th 7am-2pm; New Years Eve 6am-8pm and New Years Day 7am-2pm.

ADVERTISING IN ROSTRUM IN 2016

We are currently arranging our advertising for 2016. All existing advertisers and those who have expressed an interest in advertising should have been contacted. Anyone interested in advertising in our village magazine in 2016 who has not been contacted should get in touch with us as soon as possible at rostrum2@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Co-option of Councillor At the start of the meeting Mrs Catherine Moreland of Red Hill was co-opted to serve on the Parish Council.

Allotments Whilst most allotments are in good order a few are not, so there will be an inspection before renewals are offered in March 2016.

Crime Report The police submitted a written report giving details of five Crimes of Note in October: Attempted theft of power cable from a generator located near the crossroads, owned by UK Power Network; Theft of parts of a stable being constructed in a field in Fields Lane; theft of a packet of pasta worth £2 from a store in Bow Road; theft of tools from a works vehicle parked overnight on a driveway in Glebe Meadow and theft of 2 phones and 2 work cameras from contractors working on the roof at the school.

Defibrillator It transpires that the defibrillator to be installed on the outside of the village hall needs to be connected to electricity so an electricity point will need to be installed. The village hall trustees are to obtain an estimate from their electrical contractor. The annual cost of the electricity will be about £10.

Fly Tipping It was reported that on three occasions in recent weeks quantities of household items had been placed on the pavement close to the traffic lights in Red Hill. After a brief discussion it was decided to report this to the village CPSO since it constituted anti-social behaviour.

Overhanging Vegetation The Clerk was instructed to write to KCC asking them to deal with the dangers of overhanging vegetation on Tonbridge Road, Bow Road and Red Hill. All householders are asked to cut back overhanging branches from their boundaries.

Planning The Chairman announced that Greensted Care Home would close on Friday 6 November. It was not known when the planning application for the replacement of the present building with 55 supported housing units would be considered by T & M planning committee.

The council has no objection to the application for a Lawful Development Certificate for existing stables and garage for the keeping of 4 horses and 2 cars at land adjacent to Lyn Glen, 70 Teston Road. Provided the public footpath is not restricted at any time council had no objection to the application for the installation and operation of a ground-mount solar PV array with associated substation and access track near Mereworth Business Centre, Danns Lane.

Sports and Recreational Association It was reported that the refurbishment of 7,000 sq metres of the fields is going

to plan. It will be rolled shortly and then the rest of the sports area will be fertilised. Further incidents of petty vandalism have taken place.

Future annual Village Fetes will be organised by an independent committee and not the Sports and Recreational Association. Arrangements for next year's fete on Sunday 5 June 2016 are well in hand.

Traffic Pollution A meeting has been arranged with Jane Heeley, Chief Environmental Officer of T & M BC to discuss the long-standing problem of pollution caused by traffic queuing for the traffic lights at the cross roads. It has been known for some years that the air pollution in the village is one of the worst in Kent and it is feared the problem can only worsen, given future housing developments, if no actions are taken.

The next meetings of the Parish Council, to which members of the public are welcome, take place on **Tuesdays 1 December and 5 January at 7.30pm** in the village hall.

**BULKY REFUSE FREIGHTER - FIELDS LANE - 11AM TO NOON
SATURDAYS 5 AND 19 DECEMBER, 9 AND 16 JANUARY,
6 AND 20 FEBRUARY**

In addition to the usual refuse freighter for general rubbish T & M are currently running a trial service which can collect electrical items and scrap metal for recycling. A smaller vehicle will park next to the Saturday freighter and will collect any of these items for recycling:

Small household appliances (kettles, electric toothbrushes, alarm clocks, etc); **Large household appliances** (cookers, fridge/freezers, washing machines, etc); **Electronic games and toys; TVs, monitors and computers; Batteries, including car batteries; All metals.**

Residents are requested to use these free facilities or to contact T&MBC and arrange for named large items to be collected on a given date from outside properties. The council will collect fridges and freezers free of charge. Otherwise up to 6 large items can be collected for a charge of £48.20p. Recently there have been cases where such bulky items have been left on the pavement for long periods of time to await collection. This is classed as fly-tipping for which there can be large fines imposed. It also poses safety issues for passers-by and is considered to be anti-social behaviour.

VILLAGE COLLECTIONS FOR BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

The provisional total for the village house to house and business collections is £2,300 which includes £614 donated in the collection at the Annual Parish Act of Remembrance Service. Thank you all for your generous support.

FOOTPATHS GROUP

Next walks **Sunday 6 December** meet at the village hall car park at 2pm for a quiet lanes stroll to Pizien Well. and **3 January** meeting again at the village hall car park at 2pm for a winter river walk (weather permitting).

On a sunny 1 November our walk was altered from going out to Livesey Street owing to the byway there being underwater in places on my reconnoitre. Instead our walk took us to Kings Hill golf course via the Millpond, Old Road passing the old Duke's Head and Wistaria Cottage then returning through Cattering Wood. A good walk enjoyed by all, it was nice to see a new face and some old ones as well. If anyone would like to suggest an area in or around the village for us to walk in 2016 please let me know either 01622813763 or kevin.f.reynolds@btinternet.com.
Kevin Reynolds

PADDOCK WOOD CHORAL SOCIETY SINGS THE GLORY OF CHRISTMAS Saturday 12 December 2015 An Around the World theme featuring Vivaldi's *Gloria* and pieces by Philip Stopford at St Andrew's Church Paddock Wood at 7.30pm. Tickets : £12 (£2 under 19) Box Office tel: 01892 822448 or www.paddockwood-choral.org.uk

WAR NEWS - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1915

November 6 Allied offensives on Western front grind to a halt.

25 Battle of Ctesiphon: British fail to take Baghdad.

December 19 Sir John French replaced by Sir Douglas Haig as Commander of B.E.F.



Arthur Mires, aged 23, was a professional soldier from near the North Pole who enlisted in 1910 and was serving with the Royal West Kent Regiment in India when war broke out. His battalion was sent from India to Iraq in January 1915. We do not know how he subsequently died there on 2nd November 1915. His battalion of the Royal West Kent suffered many losses from sickness in Iraq, but Arthur's citation for the D.C.M. (see Rostrum September 2015) shows he was not afraid to expose

himself to danger in action. Arthur's parents were still hoping for a letter from him in February 1916 when his photo was in the Kent Messenger in connection with his medal.

A day after Arthur, **Augustus ("Gus") Leney**, aged 68, also died, not at war but at home in The Orpines, following an accident a few days earlier when his horse threw him while out hunting in Boughton Monchelsea. He had been Master of the Mid-Kent Stag Hounds since 1894 and Gus Gimling, in Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man*, was based on him. Since 1881 he had been the driving force behind Frederick Leney & Co Ltd, a major employer in the village at the Phoenix Brewery, which he had taken public in 1896 when it owned or leased over 150 pubs, receiving £235,000 (equivalent to £25 million today) for his stake. He continued as Chairman after the public float until his death.



Wateringbury Girls' School log reminds us that the girls were still sending a variety of parcels (previously sweets and cigarettes, but in November boxes of apples) to the men of one Torpedo Boat, receiving a photo in return. Caning was a frequent punishment: on 24th November Nellie S. was caned "for stealing food and sweets from a girl's basket in the lobby" and on the same day Queenie J. and Ida L. were caned for "bad language".

Despite the war, a grand wedding took place at Wateringbury Church in early November, one "which excited the greatest interest at Wateringbury, East Peckham, and the neighbouring parishes." It was between the Rev. Geoffrey Ryley, the Vicar of East Peckham, and Esmay Maitland, a great niece of General Sir George Wolseley of the Thatched House, who gave the bride away. Full details of the elaborate decorations in the church, what the bride wore and her going away outfit are given in the Kent Messenger coverage of the event. There were lots of presents but no reception.

The first parish magazine of 1916 gives the vicar's thoughts on the war but confines his comments about its impact on village life in 1915 to some of the clubs: *The Football Club has ceased to exist. The Cricket Club has played no matches since the outbreak of the war. The Working Men's Institute still lives with a diminished attendance. The Gardeners' Society has continued its monthly shows last year, but relinquished its annual Summer Show and asked for no subscriptions.... In order to keep the Society going it was decided to continue the monthly meetings and to communicate with the regular honorary subscribers asking them kindly to give half their usual annual subscriptions for the year* (the list of committee members of the Gardeners' Society includes J. Cronk, from a family still involved today in village horticulture).

The year ended with a final war fatality on HMS Natal, an armoured cruiser, when it explosion, at anchor in Cromarty Firth. Over second Wateringbury man to die as a result naval ship; the other had been George had been a worker on the farm of Mr. Henry, was a "waggoner". He was one of 7 whom were dead by the time of the 1911 property in Canon Lane. Alfred enlisted at death was reported in the Kent Messenger photo opposite. Aged 19, he was the in the war
TERRY BIRD



30th December. **Alfred Gunner** died on sank, following an accidental internal 400 of the crew of 700 died. He was the of an accidental explosion on board a Hearn (see Rostrum, June 2015). Alfred Goodwin (Canon Court), where his father, children born to his mother, Rose, 3 of census. The family lived in a 5 room Chatham just before the war began. His on 22nd January 1916 along with the youngest of the 11 village deaths to date

See

<https://www.sites.google.com/site/wateringburylocalhistory/> or google *Wateringbury Local History Society*. There is a search box at the top right of each page and further details about Arthur Mires and Alfred Gunner can be accessed by entering their name.

WATERINGBURY PLAYERS' PANTO - ALADDIN

Well the pantomime season is nearly upon us and as usual the Wateringbury Players are busy in rehearsals for **Aladdin** which will be performed on the evening of **Friday 29 and Saturday 30 January 2016 – matinee and evening**. **Tickets** will be on sale from both the Post Office and Handy Stores from **Monday 21 December** and are priced £10 for an adult .ticket (all performances) and £5 for children on the matinee performance. There are no concessions for evening performances. We look forward to seeing you - "oh yes we do".....!!!" and remember "its behind you!"

WATERINGBURY CLUB

I'm still surprised when people say that they have yet to visit the village social club. We've been here for over 130 years and we continue to welcome new members. Isn't it time to visit and consider joining us? We continue to offer a good selection of drinks at below pub prices and now sell real ale (a new beer every week). We offer pool, darts, snooker, bingo and a place to relax and chat.

The last few months have been busy for the club with the arrival of a new pool table, and we have hosted a range of entertainment and charity events. In July, we held a charity race night successfully raising over £700 for a local charity, Clouds, which supports young people with learning disabilities. In August we held a BBQ and raised money to sponsor Harley Prebble, local motorbike ace, who risked life and limb at the Isle of Man TT races.

Over the next month we have the following entertainment booked: Christmas Eve - Karaoke and New Year's Eve - Members' Family Knees-up.

Opening times over Christmas: Christmas Eve 4-11pm; Christmas Day 12-2pm; Boxing Day 12-7pm; New Year's Eve 7pm til late and New Year's Day: 12-7pm. We wish all the village a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Andy Fisher Vice Sec Wateringbury Club, 201 Tonbridge Rd, 01622 812167

TROPIC SKINCARE AND MAKE UP - Pure, honest and effective natural skincare. NOT tested on animals, approved by the vegan society. Pamper parties- hostess gets 15% of total orders to spend, fairs and one to one. Once you have seen and smelt the products you will be amazed at how wonderful they all are. Email : lizfarndon@btinternet.com to book a party or arrange to see the products. Great Christmas gifts, you can shop direct on www.tropicskincare.co.uk/shop/lizfarndon

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Remembrance Day was marked with a special service. Lay Reader Barry Fisher from St John the Baptist joined us to share a 100-year old postcard. Barry's aunt received the card from her fiancé just before he was sent to The Front in 1916. Sadly, it was his last communication. An everyday object like a postcard is an excellent way to help children understand how war affects individuals. The service ended with Year 6 pupil Lottie Worrall sounding The Last Post on her cornet.

Children in Need saw children and teachers dressing up as 'opposites' with pupils dressed as teachers, boys dressed as girls and teachers in school uniform! Our younger children also enjoyed dressing up their teddies. The fundraising events raised £250. Children, parents and staff also cheered on The One Show's Rickshaw Challenge team as cyclists pedalled along Bow Road.

The Christmas Season kicks off with our Christmas Fayre on 28 November from noon-3pm. We hope to see you all at this festive event. Then our younger pupils will perform their traditional Nativity on 8 and 9 December with Years 3 and 4 performing the following week. Our Carol Service takes place at St John's on 14 December at 6.00pm. Please join us for this special service featuring a professional brass ensemble.

Our annual 'Stories Round the Christmas Tree' on 16 December sees the children arriving in pyjamas with their pillows. Hot chocolate is served before families settle down to hear Christmas stories.

Term 2 ends on 18 December and Term 3 begins on 5 January. A very Merry Christmas to you all.

Chasey Crawford Usher – Headteacher www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk

TESTON & WATERINGBURY NURSERY GROUP

This term we continued to look at the seasons Autumn and Winter and with most of the leaves now off the trees in our garden we have been getting messy leaf printing. Next week we will be starting our Christmas preparations making shredded paper snowmen, Christmas cards and Christmas tree decorations. Also this term we will be baking hedgehog shaped bread rolls and teaching the children about different textures and smells. We will finish our term with our ever so popular Christmas concert in Wateringbury Village Hall on Friday 18 December for all our families and friends.

As part of our continued fundraising we have arranged a Christmas Wreath making evening on Tuesday 8 December, 7.30-9.30pm at Teston Village Hall. £20 per person with all equipment, soft drinks and nibbles provided. If you are interested and would like to book a place please speak to Tina Driver on 07805 796353.

I must also mention a big thank you to Teston Farm Shop who kindly donates fresh fruit for our children's café which runs throughout the morning playtime. Our children enjoy choosing from a fantastic range of seasonal fruits we receive every week. If you are interested in joining our preschool please contact Tina Driver on 07805 796353 and come along for a taster session. *On behalf of all our children and staff we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

HISTORY SOCIETY

On **16 December**, at the earlier start time of 7.15pm, we will be having our Christmas Social Evening, during which, whilst we are enjoying seasonal refreshments, Wilf Lower will be entertaining us with "**Life Upon the Wicked Stage**". Our first talk in 2016 on **20 January** will be by Colin Breed who is coming along to tell us about "**Royal Visits to Kent**".

Our talk in October by Peter Jones entitled "A Year at Chartwell", covered the very many aspects of looking after a National Trust property and gardens. We were shown the changes made during the very long occupancy by Sir Winston and Lady Churchill, to both the house and garden, to make it their home. The house is open to the public from 1 March to 31 October, the four months in between are spent on deep cleaning rooms and carrying out any necessary repairs. At present there is also major restoration work being carried out on the roof. Peter's visual tour of the house and garden gave us reminders of Sir Winston's life at Chartwell, the Visitors' Book started when he and his wife moved into the house and continued until the day they left, which had to be signed by **everyone** who visited Chartwell, whatever status they held. Sir Winston's seat by the fish pool complete with maggot box, the Golden Rose Walk, planted by their children to commemorate Sir Winston and Lady Churchill's golden wedding anniversary, and the statue of Winston and Clementine unveiled by the Queen Mother in 1990, all familiar to those of us who have visited Chartwell.

FRIENDS OF WATERINGBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Rostrum goes to print FOWPS are busy planning their annual Christmas Fayre at the school on Saturday 28 November 12-3pm with highlights to include a Santa's grotto, various stalls, children's activities, a secret wrapping room and a Christmas Café. The Fayre was kindly sponsored by local builder John Evans (Tel: 07743 380458) We would like to thank Heavenly Glaze, Tea at Hilltop, Where Memories Meet, Cromar Nursery, The Wateringbury, Diggerland, The Angel Centre, Hollywood Bowl, Hair Traditional, Tropic Skincare, Gravity Trampoline Parks, Bradleys Bakery and Food Distribution and P&O Ferries, as well as all stallholders, parents and the local community for their support at not only at this event but at previous FOWPS events over the year.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. FOWPS Committee

WATERINGBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE - The WI - inspiring women

On 10 December our members will be enjoying their Christmas Party (1.30 for 2pm). The first meeting of 2016 will be in the village hall at the new earlier time of 2pm on **Thursday 14 January** and promises to be interesting as Caro Wilson is coming to give a Foraged Foods Demonstration called Wild at Heart. Prospective new members are always welcome. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all readers. Elizabeth - 01622 812018 elizabethastrid@aol.com

Come along to the Church on

Saturday 5 December at 7.30pm.

and enjoy Kent Chamber Choir singing

Music for Advent and Christmas

conducted by Alan Vincent

with mezzo-soprano Tabitha Reynolds former winner of the Choir's Kath Topping Vocal Award, baritone John Harding and organist Geoffrey Lester. A varied evening's entertainment including gems by John Rutter to mark his 70th birthday year, and by the late Sir David Willcocks,

with traditional and less well known carols.

Tickets at £10 (£5 children/students) from Ros Diment 01622 813032, Rebecca Moate 07715399320 and Wateringbury Post Office.

COFFEE BREAK - Wednesdays 9 December, 6 and 20 January

Do come along to the church for coffee and cake and optional craft activities between **10.30-12.30**. Everyone is most welcome. Our winter projects are hats for the homeless in Maidstone; teddy bears and blankets from knitted squares for an orphanage in Africa; tiny blankets and teddies for premature and still-born babies and knitted angels for the church Angels and Cribs event on 12 and 13 December. Our winter meetings depend on good weather if you are unsure please phone Pauline 01622 814673 or Gillian 01622 813076

THE WATCH CLUB Sundays 6 December and 10 January

Watch Club ends the year with a Christmas party on Sunday 6 December in St John the Baptist Church and starts the year with an Epiphany Party on Sunday 10 January, 5-7pm in St John the Baptist Church. The club is for young people aged 10 and over and meets from 5-7pm. For more details phone Lisa 07950 852899. We wish everyone a Blessed Christmas

CHRISTMAS CRAFT BAZAAR

Many thanks to all who contributed in so many ways to making our annual Craft Bazaar such an enjoyable occasion. The provisional amount raised is an amazing £1,800 which is much needed to help with the day to day running expenses and upkeep of our ancient village church. Thank you to all villagers who turned up in the rain to support the church. We hope that you will be able to make it again next year on 26 November 2016.

Contact 01622 814324

Fr Derek writes

parishofficeemwt@gmail.com

Canon Derek Carpenter is a retired priest living in East Malling who is assisting in the Benefice

CHRISTMAS – AND CAROLS

By the time Rostrum arrives through your door, Christmas lights will be evident in many homes in Wateringbury, Christmas cards will already be arriving, carol-singers will be at our doors and in the streets, and on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning we will sing them in church, hoping that you may join us: I will look forward to greeting you at the Midnight Eucharist. Some of those carols have a degree of sentimentality about them, and the story itself has sometimes been sentimentalised – after all, the stable on our Christmas cards looks rather sweet; cherubs and robins flutter around it in equal numbers; the straw looks cosy, the animals content, almost smiling. But there was a brutal realism about Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph have travelled there from their own home in response to an edict from a government organising a census, treating people as numbers and not as individuals, compelling them to go to their home city to be counted. They were like refugees on the move – and Mary and Joseph were later to look for asylum in Egypt. There was the heavy hand of a State machine, and the birth was followed by the massacre of innocent children whose only crime was that they had been born in that part of the Mediterranean world. Asylum seekers, refugees, evil dictators, men, women and children hungry and homeless – it all sounds very modern: but if the focus of that story was a stable, the focus today is on a very un-stable world.

Against that stark background and the context of today's world, there is nevertheless much in our festivity that speaks of warmth, and security, and tradition; and of those traditions the singing of carols, dating back to the 13th century, is one that evokes a response. The carols themselves not only tell the story but also seek to proclaim Christian truth in what the media today refer to as 'soundbites'.

'He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all'

Christians have sung those words for 150 years: another hymn writer puts the same Christian truth in another way – 'Lo, within a manger lies He who built the starry skies'.

Our Christian faith is that God, the source of all life and all worlds, the Eternal One who was there before time and space, who will be there when time is no more and this universe returns to the nothing from which it was created, this God came into this world of His as a tiny child in the person of Jesus Christ. Do we believe that? Can we believe it? And yet that's what we're singing and hearing in our carols. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him – He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" – that's what St John wrote in his gospel. It is an event so incredible, so beyond our imagining and understanding, that to many it is the stuff of fairy tales and children's fables.

But unbelievable as it may seem, that is what our Christian faith proclaims – that Jesus came into this world to show us what God is like and what, by God's grace, we can be like. As you ponder that truth and realise its significance for you, may this time be for you one of real joy. A very happy Christmas to you all!

ANGELS AND CRIBS

AT WATERINGBURY CHURCH

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY 12 AND 13 DECEMBER

2.30-4.30pm

Visit the church to see displays of nativity sets and angels

Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and angel cakes and biscuits

Crafts activities for children to enjoy and take home

Raffle for Knitted Nativity Set

Craft Stall

Little Book of Angels to buy

And perhaps take an angel home with you!



TWELFTH NIGHT QUIZ

This year the theme is Famous People (dead, alive and fictitious) Quiz sheets still only £1 from Jan and Mike Pursey 814324. A good quiz to do with your Christmas visitors. Completed quiz sheets to be returned before Twelfth Night - 6 January 2015. Proceeds to church funds.



Come and join us for

Regular Coffee Mornings in 2016

First one **Saturday 9 January**

At the Church - 10:30 am-12 noon



This month there will be a Special Cake stall!

2nd Saturday of the month as announced

ITEMS LEFT AT THE CHURCH

A variety of items, mostly **clothing** are in the church lost property box (on the pew under the Visitors' Book to the left of the door). Many were left after the Shinning Bright Party and the Christmas Craft Fayre. So please do check the box. Kept locked for safe keeping is a **camera** which has remained unclaimed for about a year and a **mobile phone** which was found after the Craft Bazaar. For details of camera and phone please contact 01622 814324. **All items not claimed by 6 January 2016 (Twelfth Night) will be donated to Charity.**

CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

www.wateringburychurch.org.uk

Sunday 6 December - 10am Christingle *A praise service when we give Christingle Oranges with candles to everyone to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World.*

Sunday 13 December - 10am Parish Communion

Monday 14 December - 6pm School Carol Service

Thursday 17 December - 8pm Nine Lessons & Carols by candle-light

Traditional readings and well known carols

Sunday 20 December - 8am Prayer Book Communion

10am Family Service with Nativity Play

Christmas Eve

Crib Service - 5pm *A popular all age service to tell the Story of Christmas while building our Crib. Children may come dressed in costumes if they wish*

Midnight Communion - 11.30pm *The traditional service with blessings and communion*

Christmas Day - 10.00am *A Family Communion Service when children are invited to bring along a favourite present*

Sunday 27 December Benefice Communion - 10am in East Malling. No service in Wateringbury.

Sunday 3 January - 10am - Matins

Wednesday 6 January - 6.30pm - Teston Church - *a Benefice Epiphany Service and Feast to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany will include a "Bring and Share Supper".*

Sunday 10 January - 10am - Parish Communion

Sunday 17 January - 8am - Prayer Book Communion

10am - Family Service

Sunday 24 January 10am - Parish Communion

Tuesday 26 January 7.30pm - Evensong with choir

Sunday 31 January - 10am - Benefice Service in Teston Church

TODDLER PRAISE MONDAYS 2-3pm Guide & Scout HQ Glebe Meadow

Babies and pre-school children bring your parents, grand-parents and carers for an hour of fun on Mondays with action songs, stories, prayers, show and tell, musical instruments, story time, and refreshments all for free!

We are on holiday on 21 and 28 December. Details from 812922.

While we are awaiting a new vicar the parish office will still be operational. To arrange for baptisms, weddings or other services please visit the parish office at 2 The Grange,

East Malling on Wednesdays between 6.30pm-7.15pm phone 01732 843282

email parishofficeemwt@gmail.com

