

VILLAGE DIARY

Welcome to our first issue of 2016. Many thanks to this year's advertisers for their support which enables the magazine to be delivered free to each home in the village. Thank you too to Tony Gosby for his cover illustrations, and all our road distributors. Christine, Trudy and Ted

February

- 2 Parish Council Meeting - Hall - 7.30pm followed by planning committee
- 7 Footpaths Walk - meet at village hall car park 2pm sharp
- 11 Life as a Tiller Girl talk - WI - Hall - 2pm
- 13 Coffee Morning - Church - 10.30am to noon
- 17 Toni Mount "Richard III a Man of Controversy" History Soc - Hall - 7.40
- 20 Village Hall Annual Fundraising Quiz Night - Hall - 7 for 7.30pm

March

- 1 Parish Council - Hall - 7.30pm followed by planning committee
- 5 Clean for the Queen Village Clean-up from 10am
- 6 Footpaths Walk - meet at village hall car park 2pm sharp
- 12 Coffee Morning - Church - 10.30am to noon
- 13 An Afternoon with East Peckham Silver Band - Church - 3pm
- 18 History Soc talk "Myths, Magic & Mistakes in Medicines" - Hall - 7.40
- 26 Easter Activities for children - Church - 9.30-12.20

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN NATIONAL CLEAN-UP ON SATURDAY 5 MARCH

Wateringbury is going to be part of the Clean for the Queen national clean-up to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday on 21 April. We are hoping to build on the success of last Spring's whole village litter pick to enhance our village environment. Volunteers are needed so please get together with your neighbours to smarten and tidy up a bit of the village that is important to you. You could polish your road sign, sweep up the leaves and clear the weeds from your boundary as well as picking up litter.

This will not only make the village better for us it will make our environment safer for our amazing wildlife and pets. Did you know plastic bags take 10-20 years to degrade, plastic bottles up to 450 years and glass bottles and chewing gum, never. Even orange peel and banana skins take up to 2 years to disintegrate. We can do it. We can all Clean for The Queen. **Please let Mike Witts know if you can help. (Telephone No 01622-812027).**

Litter picking equipment, high viz jackets, etc will be provided by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, and can be collected from the Sports Pavilion, Fields Lane on the day. The Clean-up will start at 10.00 a.m.

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

Roy and Shirley Jepson are thrilled to announce the safe arrival, at Pembury Hospital, on Sunday 22 November, of **Rachel Zoe Jepson-Potter**, weighing 7lbs 13oz. Proud parents Angela and Andrew are delighted that Sarah now has a little sister, and all the family are doing well!

Congratulations to first time great-grandparents Ted and Doreen Vincent on the arrival in Toronto Canada on 16 January of **Evelyn Sydney Vincent**.

Look out for Country Living Magazine as this year it has a very local interest for us. **Elizabeth Harbour**, who has lived in the village for 10 years, is creating the **quarterly crafts feature**. The first craft feature is in the March issue which comes out in February. If you want to develop your own creativity Elizabeth holds Art for Enjoyment classes in our village hall every Tuesday morning from 10am until noon as well as classes in Kings Hill and print workshops in the South East.

Thanks from Doreen and Ted Vincent We have been overwhelmed by all the best wishes, cards and love shown to us as we celebrated Ted's 90th birthday and our 68th Wedding Anniversary on 7 January. Special thanks to our church friends for all their prayers for us and for the beautiful basket of primulas.

Do you need any help? I would love to find some voluntary or charity or small payment work. Ideally for 1 day a week or a few hours over a couple of days. My working life has covered secretarial, GP receptionist and voluntary work for animal charities as well as over 10 years working in a charity shop. In a nutshell, although I have joined classes in Zumba, Pilates and Line-dance, and help look after my granddaughter, there are still many spare hours! If anyone has any ideas or would like to call me, please do so. Telephone: 01622 814075.

Poppy Appeal final total The final figure for the village British Legion Poppy appeal collection is £2,542. Many thanks to everyone

Wateringbury mums Gail Isted and Vanessa Brown will launch **KidzCoins** this month. KidzCoins are unique screen time trading coins to help parents to limit the time their children spend on gadgets, tablets, consoles or watching TV at home. KidzCoins are a positive response to growing concerns about the dangers of children having too much screen time. A key feature is the way the coins encourage children to control their own use of gadgets and screens. The new venture has the full backing of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. For more details or to buy, please visit the website at www.kidzcoins.co.uk or find us on Facebook. Thank you for your support.

HISTORY SOCIETY

In February Toni Mount will be coming along to give her talk "Richard III a Man of Controversy", when we look forward to hearing more about Richard III's rather troubled reign and unfortunate death.

In December last year we held our social evening where we enjoyed seasonal refreshments and were entertained by Wilf Lower who told us about 'Life Upon the Wicked Stage'. Starting in the 1850's, through to the present day, Wilf showed us how entertainment had progressed and changed. He said 'treading the boards' had always been a precarious profession with those taking part spending a great deal of their time "resting". Wilf's light hearted look at entertainment showed that happiness and despair frequently sat uneasily side by side and he reminded us of faces familiar to us at one time, but now forgotten, which fortunately have been replaced by others keen to entertain us.

Before Wilf's talk began the History Society acknowledged Syd Thompsett's dedicated involvement to the Society, as after 38 years of serving on the committee Syd announced he wanted to stand down in December. Syd has been a member of the Society since it was founded in 1977, joining initially as Treasurer, a duty he carried out for 15 years and he also served as Chairman for 2 years. Syd has always been an active supporter of the Society and his wealth of local knowledge has proved invaluable on many occasions. He has produced articles for all the history society's publications, which include 'A Walk around Wateringbury', a publication which is based on walks Syd has organised around the village and especially for Heritage Weekends. We wish Syd a very happy retirement from the committee and look forward to seeing him in 2016 for the speaker's meetings. Although we were sad to see Syd leave the committee there was cause for celebration also, as Syd and his wife Vera were celebrating their 60th Wedding Anniversary the next day, so many congratulations were sent to them from everyone for their very special day. We hope that they enjoy many more years of happiness together.

UNWANTED BIKES HELP MAIDSTONE HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS

Another 4 Bikes have been donated in December to the League of Friends at Maidstone Hospital. The sales so far of refurbished bikes are in excess of £7000. If you have any unused bikes which you would like to donate to the hospital, please contact Mike Williams on 01622 814529 or Bluys Bikes on 07711 760677.

TODDLER/BABY GROUP AT THE VILLAGE HALL

We would like to invite parents and carers to our baby and toddler group. We meet every Wednesday and Friday from 10.00am to 12 noon. During the meeting we have free play, a craft session and a singing session. During the year we organise various activities such as a 'teddy bears picnic', an Easter party and in fine weather we have 'water play outside'. So why not join us for a cup of tea and a chat while the children have their snacks. The cost is £2 for the first child and £1 for any others. For more information please contact Linda on 01732 522437.

FOOTPATHS GROUP

Our January walk was sadly a wash-out due to heavy rain for most of the day so let's hope the land dries out for our next walk on **7 February**, all welcome just meet at the village hall to leave at 2pm for a woodland walk out to the old Teston Road - approx. 3½ miles.

On **6 March** again meet at the village hall at 2 pm for the cancelled December walk to Livesey Street. As this weekend is the National Clean for the Queen anti-litter campaign walkers are invited to bring along a bag to pick up any litter we find on our route. Kevin Reynolds

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY NURSERY GROUP

Our theme for term 3 is 'Stay Fit and Healthy' where we will be making delicious fruit kebabs and flapjacks. The children will be getting messy with fruit and potato printing in one of our craft sessions. We shall also be planting cress and measuring how much the cress grows over the coming weeks. As well as measuring the cress the children will be measuring themselves and recording it on our height chart.

As you may be aware it is the Chinese New Year on 8 February (Year of the Monkey) and to celebrate this we will be making Chinese lanterns. The following day we will be celebrating Shrove Tuesday by making pancakes, (note to parents, no pretty dresses or best shirts on this day please!) During the term we will also be having a visit from the dentist who will be talking to the children about how to look after their teeth and gums.

If you are interested in joining our preschool please contact Tina Driver on 07805 796353 and come along for a taster session.

WAR NEWS, JANUARY 1916

January	
9	Final British and French withdrawal from Gallipoli
27	Military Service Act introduced conscription

"Ours is a volunteer force—a citizen army—and every true citizen will come to feel the call—the force must be, and will be, within him." So wrote the Wateringbury vicar, Greville Livett, in the May 1915 parish magazine. His reference to the "force" was not a Star Wars promotion, but part of his passionate and eloquent argument in favour of a volunteer army and against conscription. However, in January 1916 conscription (compulsory military service) was introduced in the U.K., initially for single men aged 18 to 41 with various exceptions. It was extended in May 1916 to include married men and in 1918 the upper age limit was increased to 51 years. Conscription was opposed by many people at a national level but the Wateringbury vicar's views had by early 1916 changed to support the government and the need for conscription.

On the 2nd January 1916 Wateringbury Church, along with all other churches nationally, observed "a day of Special Intercession in reference to the War." The following Sunday, 9th January, there was a Memorial Service with a large congregation at which the vicar tried to say "words of consolation to the mourners and of counsel to their sympathizers."

The first half of 1916, before the Somme offensive on 1st July, was to see few village deaths from the war, but some, like **Francis Bonser**, had close shaves. He had been in the navy since 1903 and on 6th January 1916 was on the pre-dreadnought battleship, H.M.S. King Edward VII as a gunroom steward, when she left Scapa Flow on the way to Belfast for a refit and hit a mine off

Cape Wrath. The ship sank but Francis and all 777 of the crew, with one exception, survived. After a short period on shore, Francis then served the rest of the war on the Royal Oak and the Royal Sovereign, leaving the navy in 1922.

The Parish Council, after a gap of 9 months, met on 11th January 1916 at the Church Rooms, the precursor of the current Village Hall. Present at the meeting were Messrs. Blest, English (both from families still in the village), Cheeseman, Tapply, Sharpe and the vicar. The cemetery was the sole item of business: the location of future burials and many other details were agreed; no application for post of grave-digger had been received following the death of Henry Hook, aged 69, in December 1915, so it was agreed to send a detailed job description to Henry Marlin of the Queen's Head asking him to do it at a salary of £12 p.a. (plus a fee for each burial).

The village seems to have been crime free during the first half of 1916 or, at least, no one was found out and prosecuted at Malling petty sessions.

Terry Bird 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.

**AN AFTERNOON WITH THE EAST PECKHAM SILVER BAND
at the Church on Sunday 13 March 2016 at 3pm.**

This friendly, thriving Silver Band formed in 1895 can boast the title of the oldest surviving village band in Kent. They will play toe tapping music for the entire family to enjoy.
Tickets, adults £10, children/students £3 to include programme. Available from Ros on 01622 813032 and the Post Office.

FRIENDS OF WATERINGBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOWPS would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. We ended 2015 on a high with a hugely successful Christmas Fayre on Saturday 28 November. This was kindly sponsored by Wateringbury's local builder - John Evans 07743 380458. We are now busy planning 2016 with events this term to include a school disco, a quiz, Mothers Day shop and Easter Egg hunt. The **Curry and Quiz Night** is always a fun, sell out evening and takes place on **Friday 26 February**. Tickets are £10 each for a quiz and a curry. Tables for 6-8 people. If you are interested in booking a table, please contact Louise on 07951 280991.

The **5th Annual FOWPS Golf Day** is planned for **Friday 24 June 2016**. For further information or to book a place please contact either Andrew Riedl (andrew.riedl@btinternet.com) or Fraser Nicol (fraser_nicol@btinternet.com)
FOWPS Committee chairman@fowps.org.uk

WATERINGBURY CLUB

Following a successful festive period, the club now welcomes new members (men and women) for 2016. As the belated winter kicks in, and New Year's resolutions fail, what better way to spend an evening or afternoon than a drink in a friendly atmosphere. Maybe with a game of snooker, pool, darts, cards or just a good natter.

We have a range of beers and our real ale continues to be popular (for example beer from the St Austell brewery such as Tribute). All drinks are typically lower than pub prices. Annual membership rates are low (£12) and we offer a discount for senior citizens. Being a member offers a number of benefits and helps keep this important village facility thriving. Pop in and find out more! Our opening times are:

Monday 7-11pm; Tuesday closed; Wednesday and Thursday 4pm-11pm; Friday 1:30pm-11pm; Saturday 12pm- late; Sunday 12pm -7pm. If you can't find us we are at 201 Tonbridge Road and the telephone number is 01622 812167. Car access is via Red Hill, just past the lights on the left as you head up the hill.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FRIDAY 4 MARCH 10.30am in West Malling Parish Church Everyone is welcome to join with Christians World Wide in prayer and praise. This year the service has been prepared by the people of Cuba.

PADDOCK WOOD CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENT A BAROQUE SPECTACULAR Saturday 12 March 2016, 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Paddock Wood Tickets: £12.50 (under 19, £2.50). On line: www.paddockwood-choral.org.uk Box Office 01892 822448 or on the door.

WATERINGBURY WEATHER REVIEW 2015

It is not unlikely that you have the impression that 2015 was one of the wettest years on record; but my records show that the opposite is true. Since 1992 only 4 years have had more rainfall and only 3 months exceeded the monthly average. However the lack of sunshine during November and December increased our perception of dreary weather. Temperatures were well above the average during the winter months, but the cloud and wind during the summer kept the maximum down to about the average.

As for 2016 so far the Jet Stream which was bringing the air from the tropical regions at the end of last year has now reverted to a more normal pattern of west to east and if this is maintained we may expect more normal temperatures for the rest of the winter WWW.

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Happy New Year to all! 2016 has started well at school with the buzz of learning in the air.

December closed with many successes including the Christmas Fayre which raised over £3,000; our evening Carol Service which was well attended by families; our annual tradition of Stories Round the Christmas Tree with children gathering in their pyjamas for hot chocolate and Christmas stories; and Advent and Posada worship with parents and church members participating. A busy month indeed!

We are delighted with our Year 6 academic results which place us amongst the top 10 Maidstone schools. This term we continue our curriculum events with a maths forum for parents where they will work alongside their children to learn how we teach calculations. We are also trialling a parent-child weekly after-school homework club. Our drama club is preparing to present its pantomime, Sleeping Beauty, to parents and children and our Senior Choir will be singing in church and at the O2 as part of the Young Voices concert.

Safer Internet Day on 9 February will be marked with class activities and an assembly for parents. Term 3 ends on 12 February and we return on 23 February.

Chasey Crawford Usher - Headteacher

LOOKING TO LOSE WEIGHT AND GET FIT? You should consider joining the inactive Weight Management Programme at Larkfield Leisure Centre. If you have a BMI of 28 or more you qualify to take part in a great 12 week programme. It combines both exercise and nutritional advice to help you get to a healthy weight and to stay there. You'll get the opportunity to take part in qualified instructor-led exercise classes, use the gym and the swimming pool as well as trying out any other exercise classes running in the Sports Hall during the 12 weeks of the course. Then there are follow-up progress advice sessions after 6 months and one year. All this for £40. Sessions on Tuesday evenings or Wednesdays noon to 1pm there is also a daytime creche. Don't delay next course starts mid February call James Davis on 01622 713224 for more details

VILLAGE HALL QUIZ EVENING - 20 FEBRUARY

OK! must be 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 busy assembling the questions to test you. Our annual **QUIZ EVENING** is to be held on **SATURDAY 20 February at WATERINGBURY VILLAGE HALL. Doors Open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start.** You need a team of 6-8 people (or 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 £8 per person and proceeds will be used to help maintain and equip our splendid Village Hall. Even if you cannot make it please spread the message about the evening. After all we should be kind to those who don't live in Wateringbury. **To book a place...or a table...please ring Phil Rex on 01622 814483** or e-mail annerex@btinternet.com

THE WATERINGBURY PLAYERS SUMMER SHOW - GODSPELL

We are delighted to announce that we will be performing the musical **GODSPELL** in St John the Baptist Church, Wateringbury on **Thursday 7th, Friday 8th and Saturday 9th July, 2016.** If you would like to take part could you please contact Celia, Jonathan or Barry at The Players at the email address given below. There are ten main acting/singing parts and we would also welcome people who would like to sing in the choir/chorus. This show is open to youth members (secondary school age) and adult members of The Players. To join there is a small fee to cover insurance and a costume fee. We will also be joined in the production by children from Wateringbury Primary School. The first meeting will take place at Wateringbury Church on Sunday 28th February at 19:30 and rehearsals will follow on Sunday evenings.

CELIA POCOCK, BARRY FISHER, JONATHAN OVERELL

email contact: wateringburyplayers@hotmail.co.uk

WATERINGBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE The WI - Inspiring Women

Our January Club made an excellent start to 2016. Our speakers from "Wild at Heart" were truly inspirational. Two lifelong friends who had been high-flyers in other careers, they came together to set up an enterprise based on foraged foods. We enjoyed their story, the challenges of their early business (including filling over 2,800 jars with the proceeds of their foraging), their account of how they had publicised their products, including a link with "Cook!" products, and culminating in being invited to write a cookery book. Copies and samplings were available and questions flowed. We learned that Wild Garlic Pesto is their best-selling line, now awaiting the new season in March for fresh supplies. Meanwhile those members who bought the book are busy trying out new recipes.

Our next meeting, on **11 February at 2pm** also promises to be exciting. Jackie Simmons, a former Tiller girl will tell us of her glamorous life and of the hard work involved behind the scenes in dancing with probably the most famous dance troupe in the world. We are a friendly group who meet at 2pm on the second Thursday of each month at Wateringbury Village Hall. If you would like find out more, please come along to a Club meeting or call Elizabeth on 01622 812018.

JANUARY 2016 PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Co-option of Councillor At the start of the meeting **John Evans** was co-opted on to the council.

Allotments the minor repairs to the gate have been done.

Budget for 2016/17 Councillors unanimously voted to set the precept figure at £109,516.32 which includes the £40,000 'one off' requirement for a new wet pour surface at the play area.

Community Assets list The chairman announced that the Mill Pond has been placed on the list held by T & M.

Crime Report No crime statistics report had been received from the Police.

Planning Councillors had no objections to the following applications:

TM/15/03600/FL rear single storey extension at South View House, 226 Tonbridge Road

TM/15/03934/FL removal of mobile home and domestic outbuildings and erection of new annex at 5 Phoenix Yard Cottages

Play Equipment negotiations are still progressing with Playdale about the replacement of some wooden supports. Councillors agreed to replace the existing surface with wet pour once these had been replaced.

Sports and Recreation Association Mike Witts reported that the wetness of the ground had delayed the work to refurbish part of the playing fields. Councillor Dennis Stones agreed to represent the Parish Council on the Association's management committee.

Village Warden Report John Ibbs reported that the only problem at the moment is dog fouling. Dog owners are asked to 'pick-up' after their pets.

Public discussion The following topics were raised:

Councillors' meetings with Siemans re use of Drayhorse Meadow car park for work to be carried out to install a temporary switchgear module; village plans for the national Clean for the Queen; Croudace plans for housing at a site in the village.

Next meeting The public are very welcome to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council at **7.30pm in the village hall on Tuesday 2 February.**

DECEMBER 2015 PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Co-option of Councillor At the start of the meeting **Dennis Stones** was co-opted to serve on the council.

KCC Councillor Matthew Balfour reported on various matters of local interest. The full implications of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent budget were not yet clear. The cost to KCC of paying the living wage to all its employees is likely to be £30 million. In answer to a question on why the dual carriageway Kings Hill by-pass had a 50 mph speed limit but Tonbridge Road did not, Matthew explained that in order to attract funding this road was classed as an Urban Dual Carriageway.

The chairman thanked Matthew for his contributions from his KCC Members' Fund towards the costs of refurbishing the Village War Memorial and the finger sign post at the cross roads.

T&M Borough Councillor Simon Jessel reported that the Abbeyfield Planning Application for 55 assisted living flats to replace the recently closed Greensted Care Home was likely to be amended in the light of several meetings with planning officials and the local opposition to the scheme which had generated over 150 letters from the public.

T & M were having to cut a further £1.5 million from its budgets following additional reductions in funding from Central Government.

The provision of Superfast Broadband within the village was likely to happen in the next 3 or 4 months.

Crime Report none had been received from the police.

Volunteer Support Wardens Wateringbury has been chosen as one of the villages to pilot the scheme. An advert for the volunteers appeared in November's Rostrum magazine. Dawn Riach-Brown, Maidstone Community Support Warden, gave a presentation to the meeting about the many and varied support services full-time wardens like herself could give to the public and the support she could give to volunteer support wardens.

Children's Area at the playing fields After a protracted discussion about the safety of the area it was felt that there was no need to stop all equipment being used. The council is actively engaged in improving the area.

Following lengthy exchanges of views Councillors agreed to meet with a representative of Siemens a contractor who wished to access railway land to install new equipment via the Drayhorse Meadow car park. Under 'Call for Sites' it was agreed to ask Croudace Homes for sight of their plans for the corner of Fields Lane with a view to a possible meeting with them to discuss further.

Planning Councillors had no objections to the proposed second storey extension at The Carriage House, 205 Tonbridge Road.

LENT GROUPS

There will be two opportunities each week in Lent to join our informal discussion groups so come along at the time which suits you best. We will meet in the Church Vestry on Monday evenings 15, 22 and 29 February and 7 and 14 March 7.45 for 8pm and on Wednesday lunchtimes from 1-2pm on 17 and 24 February and 2, 9 and 16 March.

SIMPLY SOUP LUNCHES IN LENT

WEDNESDAYS 17 and 24 February,

2, 9 and 16 March

From 12.15 to 1.30 in the Church

Do join us for a simple home-made soup lunch. There is no charge but each week there will be an opportunity to donate to a different charity.



TWELTH NIGHT QUIZ

The winner of the quiz with 48 points was Clara Wilson-Green, the Scarlin family were runners up with 47 points. Thanks to all who took part; £110 was raised for church funds. The answers are available on the church web-site www.wateringburychurch.org.uk. If you would like to see a hard copy of the answers there is one on the church noticeboard.

Come and join us for Regular Coffee Mornings in 2016



Saturday 13 February in the Church - 10:30 am–12 noon

This month the Special Stall will be inexpensive cards and gifts for Valentines Day and Mothering Sunday



EASTER FUN WITH FAITH



SATURDAY 26 MARCH

9.30am-12.30pm

Calling all Primary school aged children in Wateringbury - join us in celebrating the Easter Story. A morning filled with fun, songs and craft activities. £2 per child in our own Village Church. Parent and/or older sibling helpers always welcome. Booking is essential because of numbers, see www.wateringburychurch.org.uk for form

or contact Debbie on 01622 814793.

Derek writes

parishofficeemwt@gmail.com

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

I had the delight recently of leading a Marriage Preparation day for those couples from our benefice who are being married this year, including some couples from Wateringbury. It was a privilege to be able to be with them at the beginning of their journey – and perhaps to officiate at the weddings if they occur before the arrival of a new Incumbent.

They varied in age from their mid-20s to a couple in their 50s – and I reflected on the changes which there have been in the years that I have been ordained. It was not unusual, in the '60s, to be officiating at the weddings of youngsters in their late teens: that is practically unheard of now. The average age of men being married today is 32, and for women 29. I would, in my early years of ministry, have a couple standing before me whose hair was of the same length, so that I would be inclined to say "Who takes who to be what?!"

But the nature and purpose of marriage has also changed. In the Book of Common Prayer Service in those days (and there was no other) the reasons for marriage, in order of priority, were given as being 'for the increase of mankind, and that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord', sexual fulfilment ('a remedy for sin' said the BCP) and 'for the mutual

society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other' – i.e. companionship and support. In the Service that is used now, reflecting the church's thinking, those priorities have been completely reversed: the order now is companionship, sexual fulfilment, and then the gift of children. That is surely right. Not all marriages are blessed with children, and even when they are children come and go and leave the couple on their own into their ageing years.

What matters most about marriage, as very many of us have realised and experienced, is that the couple remain true and trusty friends, and this 'companionship' is surely the prime reason for two people agreeing to share their lives together.

The fear of being alone is perhaps one of the most haunting dreads that can assail us, but with those whom we love near us and around us we can often survive the worst that can be hurled at us. The child who can resign himself to sit in the dentist's chair so long as he continues to hold his mother's hand illustrates a universal truth about human nature. While there is a warm and reassuring hand, life has meaning and hope. What some dread about death is that it is the one journey that we take without human companionship. Those who have been widowed often tell me that their moments of deepest pain are when they yearn in vain for the touch of a hand which is no longer there, or when they hear again, in their imagination, a voice which is forever still.

And so, in today's Service, that lasting friendship, companionship (literally 'sharing bread with'), call it what you will, is given as the main reason for marriage: 'it is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind'. I hope that most of us who are married would say 'Amen' to that.

COFFEE BREAK - Wednesdays 3 and 17 February - 10.30-12.30

After the Family Service on 20 December the Coffee Breakers displayed all their gifts which were taken to Maidstone just before Christmas to help local homeless people in the winter months. The table was piled high, lots of sleeping bags, socks, underwear (bought from the money donated for coffees and cake) and an amazing assortment of hand knitted hats and gloves in a rainbow of colours which had been knitted by some of the Coffee Breakers. Also to be taken were the gifts from the congregation of canned and packet foods. The group meet on alternate Wednesday mornings in the church for tea, coffee, cake and fellowship. Everyone is most welcome. Pauline and Gillian

THE WATCH CLUB Sundays 14 and 28 February

The Club is for young people aged 10 and over and meets in the Village Hall from 5-7pm. For more details phone Lisa 07950 852899

FAREWELLS At the service on 13 December the congregation made presentations to our Hon Curate Rev Alan Searle and his wife Joy and church warden Joanna Fyson to thank them for their service to the church and parish. Alan retired on 31 December, following medical advice. Happily for us Alan and Joy will still be living in the village and worshipping in the congregation. Joanna's job has taken her to Coventry to live and work.

WELL DONE CHOIR Our choir and organist Hilary (playing a keyboard) sang carols to aid the festivities at the switching-on of the lights at the North Pole pub on Friday 5 December. Thanks to the generosity of the revellers they collected £120 for The Martha Trust which helps the profoundly disabled.

ANGELS AND CRIBS The Pastoral Team thank all who supported our first Angels and Cribs weekend in so many ways. Special thanks to Yvonne Marks for her fabulous Angels pedestal and to Margaret Robinson for knitting the Nativity set for the raffle which raised £61. The figures are now being enjoyed by the Wright family. We raised £225 in total, but more importantly

gave all who came the opportunity to quietly reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. PS There are still copies of our Little Book of Angels for sale at the back of the church, excellent value at £1.

KENT CHAMBER CHOIR Our warmest thanks to the Choir for their very professional performance of Music for Advent and Christmas which was much enjoyed by the audience. Our thanks also to those who helped, donated raffle prizes and supported this event which raised £603 after expenses for church funds.

IN OUR JOYS - FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Baptism - We welcomed into the family of the Church on 20 December

Henri Waynes Bignell

BENEFACTIVE SERVICES

Visit our website www.wateringburychurch.org.uk

Sunday 7 February 8am Communion - East Malling 9.45am Family Service – East Malling 9.45am Family Service – Teston 10am Morning Praise – Wateringbury	Sunday 14 February - 1st in Lent 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10am Holy Communion - Wateringbury 6.30pm Evensong - Teston
Sunday 21 February - 2nd in Lent 8am Communion – Wateringbury 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10 am Family .Service – Wateringbury 6.30pm Eucharist - Teston	Sunday 28 February - 3rd in Lent 9.45am Eucharist – East Malling 10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury 6.30pm Eucharist - Teston

Every Monday – 2-3pm – Scout & Guide HQ, Glebe Meadow – Toddler Praise
Every Thursday - 9am in East Malling Church – Holy Communion
Pilsdon Community, 27 Water Lane, West Malling - Rev Viv Ashworth invites you to the Barn Chapel to join members of the community for a Eucharist Service every Wednesday at noon and 6pm on Sundays
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

Special Services in February and March in Wateringbury *unless shown*

W.O.W! inspired Six-Five Special....planned for **Tuesday 2 February** in **Teston Church**. Live band; activities and Worship Our Way. What time? **6.05pm** of course! It's for anyone in year 6 and above.

Ash Wednesday 10 February - 7.30pm Service of Ashing and Communion

Tuesday 23 February - 7.30pm Evensong with the Choir

Mothering Sunday 6 March - 10am A day to remember and give thanks for our Mothers and all the love they gave us. As is our tradition the ladies in the congregation will be given small posies to mark the day.

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! Details from 01622 812922.

Service of Healing and Wholeness. The next service will be a Communion in Wateringbury Church at 8pm on **Tuesday 2 February**.