

JULY AND AUGUST 2021 VILLAGE DIARY

JULY

8th Dedication of WI Centenary Tree - Playing Fields - 2pm

18th Community Market – Village Hall Car Park - 12-2pm

AUGUST

15th Community Market – Village Hall Car Park - 12-2pm

NEW - OUTDOOR COMMUNITY MARKETS

Village Car Park

Sundays 18 July and 15 August - 12-2pm

Following the success of our Community Fridge a monthly market full of local producers selling local products **Teston Bakery, Fruit and Veg, Sheena & Gordon's Jams and Chutneys, Red Hill Estates Wine, Fruit Juices Cup Cakes, Fresh Flowers Roughway Farms and other lovely food** Let's support local and keep the food miles low.

WI

On July 8th at 2pm on the Wateringbury Playing Field there will be a meeting to dedicate the tree which was planted to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the Wateringbury W.I. There will be a Celebration Cake and we hope to welcome a representative from the county federation, our local councillor and members of the Parish Council and the local press.

On **August 12th at 2:00pm the Annual Meeting** will take place in the Village Hall.

On June 10th Wateringbury W.I. held their first meeting in many months. On a sunny afternoon we met in the lovely garden of our President Diana. We enjoyed tea, cake, a raffle and a well stocked bring and buy table. In addition of course there was lots of chat and catching up with news.

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP

Restrictions were relaxed in mid-May and the maximum number for a group walk increased to 30. So my life became simpler as I could send a group text to everyone who has given me their mobile number, letting them know when and where to meet for a walk.

In June we had two good walks following the same route, one on a Sunday afternoon and one on a Tuesday morning. I chose the days to enable more people to come. The route was to Bow Bridge, then straight up the footpath to Bowhill Oast and Hunt Street. It's a stiff climb, so we stopped a couple of times, admiring the views back to Wateringbury. The walk was then downhill all the way! We strolled along the quiet road to Tutsham and on to footpaths almost as far as the Tickled Trout, turning downhill just before we reached the pub. Walking through fields we came to a quiet lane leading to the busy and narrow road approaching Teston Bridge. Using a permissive path we were able to keep off the road all the way to the bridge itself. Once over the bridge, we took the footpath into the Country Park and followed the river bank back to Bow Bridge. Parts of this route were new to a few of us. To join future walks contact me *Lisa Dean 07759 539032*

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 August for our September magazine. Entries are free. Email rostrum2@hotmail.com or phone 01622 812566*

Rest in Peace

Nancy Hill - 26th Feb 1928 - 27th April 2021

Nancy lived in Red Hill for many years before a downsizing move to Teston although she retained strong links with Wateringbury. She was always cheerful and positive and spent her life helping others. When the Maidstone District Hospital was built in Hermitage Lane she was one of the founders of the Friends and was instrumental in developing the cafe and shop. She was also an enthusiastic supporter of the local Air Ambulance and raised thousands of pounds by selling cards and knitting cr me egg chicks and other novelty items which she sold at various events. Your many friends will miss you Nancy, thank you for all the love and care you showed to so many.

Esme Joyce Mercer - 18th Dec 1922 – 3rd May 2021

Esme came to Wateringbury from Yalding in September 2000 and soon became a member of the Wateringbury WI.

She had a very happy childhood, attending Yalding Primary School and then Pitman College in Maidstone. In 1942 whilst working in her second position at Plant Protection at Yalding, she was called up for war service and was told she would be working in Munitions but her friend had other ideas for her. She herself had just been recruited to work on a top-secret mission at Bletchley Park and asked that Esme might join her there. An interview at the Foreign Office followed asking why Esme felt she should be posted to Bletchley and luckily she must have satisfied them that she was suitable for the job because she too joined the many staff at Bletchley Park at the beginning of 1943

Her time at Bletchley was both tiring and busy but quite lonely at the same time. She worked in the decoding department in Block E, the main communications block (Hut No 9?) but was never allowed to tell her family or friends where she was working. Although she had been aware at the time that her work was important, it was not until many years later that she and others understood and appreciated its full significance. It is now said that the work carried out at Bletchley in decoding the German Enigma machine may have shortened the war by two years and saved many thousand lives.

At 98 years of age Esme still lived alone, with the help of her daughter and enjoyed relatively good health. She still read the newspaper and attempted to complete the crossword every day.

She leaves a daughter and son, 6 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren all of whom she was very proud. She will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

VILLAGE PEOPLE - THANK YOU

Good Samaritans On 14th May I tripped up a kerb in Bow Road and fell and broke my shoulder. As you can imagine I was badly shaken. Two ladies stopped in a car and offered to drive me home (I regret I didn't get their names) and a third lady, Tricia Ward, from Pizien Well, walked me home and got my neighbour to help, after which my daughter took me to Maidstone hospital. Through the pages of Rostrum I wish to thank my helpers and my neighbours for their much valued support. *Barbara White*

The Newick family are delighted to announce that their recent mini bazaar market in the Guide and Scout car park **raised £325 for Dementia UK**. They send a

massive thank you to everyone who donated and helped them achieve this amazing total.

WATERINGBURY CUB SCOUTS

Cubs is FUN! But don't take my word for it, here's a selection of comments from Cub parents:

"Last night was such fun! Thank you all for a fantastic term of activities, you guys have been incredible"

"Thank you for another great fun session!" "Ice cream's delicious!"

"Thank you so much to you and your amazing team for all you have done with [Name]. His enthusiasm for Cubs has been so exciting to see. Weekly Cubs sessions were one of the very best bits of lockdown for him, especially if it involved edibles or running around the house looking for things!"

"You're all having fun at cubs, aren't you! What a lovely team!"

"[Name] really enjoyed himself last night."

"You guys have been utterly amazing. Cubs via zoom has been a godsend and a real lifeline..."

"Please pass on my sincere thanks to all the leaders and young leaders for this year for their dedication, creativity and so much fun and positivity."

Thank you for all your kind comments and thank you to all the parents and adults for providing support to their Cubs to enable a fulfilling experience, we really couldn't do it without you. #TeamWork. If your son or daughter wishes to join our happy pack check out https://wateringbury-scouts.org.uk/page-join_us_.html or contact our Group Scout Leader (contact details on the back cover).

Nicola Plane - Cub Scout Leader

NEWS FROM OUR KCC & T&M COUNCILLOR SARAH HUDSON

Dear Residents

It is a huge privilege and honour to be elected to represent you at County Hall, and I have already started in earnest.

I have been chasing Kent Highways officers with progress of the Parish Highways Improvement Plan, and hope to arrange a TEAMS meeting soon, to push for action, and try and get as many projects completed as possible this financial year. I have been in constant discussions with officers regarding the traffic calming measures for the western end of the village. Due to disagreements over the speed limit on the A26 from Pizien Well Road to the village edge, these have been put back until Spring 2022. This is in part due to resurfacing work along the A26 from Pizien Well Road to Canon Lane due to start on 14th July, and Danns Lane to Pizien Well Road on 16th July. The new soakaway at the junction of the Orpines and Tonbridge Road is also progressing.

KCC is planning to keep the booking system for household waste recycling, rather than lift restrictions. The system will become more flexible, with same-day bookings available in half hour slots, as well as longer

opening hours. This is due to change at the end of June.

I have been appointed to three committees, Scrutiny, Regulation and Environment & Transport, as well as to the Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority, so should be kept fairly busy!

I attended the recent Street Scene & Environment Advisory Board at TMBC, and argued alongside my colleagues for the re-instatement of the Saturday Bulky Freighter service. This should be happening later this Summer, once a short review is undertaken. I have also voiced my concerns about the poor service we receive from Urbaser.

My email address is sarah.hudson@kent.gov.uk for KCC matters, and sarah.hudson@tmbc.gov.uk for Borough Council matters. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you need my help. *Best Wishes, Sarah*

KINGS HILL EVENING WI

Our WI is a friendly group of women of all ages. We have various events and activities throughout the year. These include trips to the cinema, lunches and walks. We are always keen to welcome new members. The meeting is on the fourth Wednesday of every month in Kings Hill Community Centre. For further information please contact Jan Denton on 01732 384153

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Summer is finally here and the warm weather has resulted in an explosion of life in our gardens. The first baby birds are fledging and a gaggle of noisy young starlings have just emerged from my neighbour's roof space and demolished all the food on my bird table! Do try to keep feeders and, more importantly, bird baths topped up so that parent birds know where to find a consistent supply.

My garden is buzzing with a variety of hover flies, bumble, honey and solitary bees. These insects and others play a vital role in supporting our eco-system and we can all play our part in supporting them. Flowering herbs are very popular with bees, as are garden geraniums (not the ones you buy from garden centres) and most open single petalled flowers. The favourite in my garden is the purple flowered Solanum which is a member of the potato family. If you can install a bee house or two, preferably in full sun, you may well be rewarded by a variety of solitary bees moving in. My favourites are the leaf cutter bees which usually cut out perfect ovals from rose leaves (although in my garden they seem to prefer hypericum!), roll them up and insert them into a suitably sized hole. They then lay their eggs inside them and block the hole up to keep predators out until the grubs can hatch and eat their way out. Fascinating!

If you can include some pale and night scented flowers in your garden such as honeysuckle, evening primroses, nicotiana and philadelphus, you should attract night flying insects which in turn attract bats. I am lucky enough to see them in my garden on most warm nights. *Pauline Knutton*

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL (NWPS) AND OUT OF SCHOOLS CLUB

We've had some super weather and been able to have some lovely outdoor activities over the past few weeks. We visited our local park, and all the children had a go at using the zip line; some enjoyed it more than others! We decided to have a BBQ, with sausages in rolls and cooked bananas with chocolate buttons for our morning snack. Parents brought in BBQ's so the children were able to take part in BBQ role play.

We were lucky enough to be given some new toys recently, which included two sit and ride on diggers; the children love them. Parents and the local community frequently donate toys to the preschool, for which we are very grateful.

In June, we decided to promote all learning through outdoor activities, each morning, using everything nature and the local environment had to offer; it was brilliant. Now we are looking forward to our 'International Mud Day' when all learning will involve 'MUD'- look out for our next article.

01622 813120, enquiries@nwps.org.uk,
<https://nwpreschool.org.uk/>

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

We continue this term learning about mini beasts and enjoyed watching our tiny caterpillars change into beautiful butterflies which we happily released into our garden

It is near the end of our school year, and we are all incredibly sad to have to say goodbye to our 17 children who leave us to go to big school. We care and nurture these children for the time they are with us. We wish them all the very best for their future education.

To help with our fundraising, **we have a 'bags to school' collection from Teston village hall at 09.00am on Wednesday 7th July 2021. If you are having a clear out of clothes, handbags, shoes, belts bed linen and towels please bag them up and bring them along to Teston village hall on the Monday or Tuesday that week.** All monies raised will go towards craft material for the children.

As we are near the end of our school year, we must offer our thanks to Chris Douglass and the village hall committee for all their support in this difficult year. Thank you too to Teston Farm shop for supplying the very best locally produced fresh fruit for our children's snack time. And finally, we would like to say goodbye to a colleague and friend, **Louise Williams** will be retiring this month after being with us for 27 years! We wish you a long and happy retirement.
*Tina, Jo, Louise, Gill, Sara, Wendy, Anna, Molly,
Kim and Caroline*

FIRST WATERINGBURY GUIDES

Our fire lighting and outdoor cooking went remarkably smoothly given we nearly cancelled it more than once due to the rain and high winds in the previous 48 hours. We made homemade burgers cooked in a cabbage leaf (it stops them going up in flames!) with noodles and to follow chocolate oranges or bananas. If you want to try them, take the top third off an orange, scoop out the contents and then half fill with chocolate cake mix. Replace the top and wrap thoroughly with tin foil and place in your BBQ embers for around 15-20 minutes.

We have been to Mote Park Water Sports centre to do paddle boarding and to go on the swan pedaloos. As anticipated, quite a few fell in, some more than once, but that

just added to the fun. We restarted after half term by going to Capstone Ski Centre and had some toboggan rides followed by fun on the snow tubes. We also have planned canoeing and kayaking on the Medway. We finish the term with another wide game, go karts and climbing, mini Olympics and DynoGolf. We have girls on the waiting list visiting us before we break up for summer and we hope to get as many as possible into the unit come September. We will however be full and with Emily going on maternity leave I would really appreciate some help be it on a temporary basis or longer term. Do please contact me at sheenastewartx3@gmail.com. Where else can you have this much fun?!

Sheena, Emily and Hayleigh

NEWS FROM OUR MP TOM TUGENDHATT

The amazing advances in tech have transformed our lives. Following Eurovision on Twitter is one delight I never dreamt of when growing up and the change has, well, entertained me. But not all innovation has kept pace. The rail networks that were our first social connections to the outside world have struggled to keep up and though we have much to thank our Victorian ancestors for, we shouldn't still be relying on their efforts alone.

On the Uckfield Line and Marshlink Line in East Kent diesel services keep the railway moving. We need to see the transformation online echoed on lines across our county. That's going to take investment and imagination. I'm glad to say that we've finally seen some progress. The flexible ticketing system I've long argued for will be happening soon and that's going to make travel cheaper for many. The new carnet system will allow 8 days travel in any 28 day period, and if you need more, just buy another carnet. It's a great example of the government listening to us in Kent and responding to the demand and adapting as our lives change, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Returning to the office every day and commuting will be tough for many to go back to, for others the escape from small children who interrupt interviews and phone calls will be a joy. Whichever side you're on, the government's rail review is designed to bring the changes our railways need to serve us better. And with wi-fi throughout, you don't even need to miss Graham Norton's insights along the way.

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

As I write this the club are visiting a garden in Tudely near Tonbridge, as part of the National Gardens scheme. The club have found these visits really good as we are still unable to meet together in our hall for live demonstrations. Next month we are hoping to be able to hold a meeting. Unless the rules change again after I write this, we will continue to meet by zoom or by another garden visit. *Jean Schofield*

ROAD CLOSURES A26 14th and 16th July – 1 day closures

The road will be closed for resurfacing from Danns Lane to Canon Lane (14th) and Danns Lane to Pizien Well Road (16th), alternative route via B2015 Maidstone Road A228 Seven Mile Lane. It will be necessary to temporarily suspend the 7.5T weight restriction on B2015 Bow Road Maidstone Road to allow for diverted traffic.

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

I can't quite believe that we are in Term 6! The pupils came back to school well and were settled straight back into their learning. It was wonderful to wander around the school and see their enthusiasm to be back with friends.

We have started using the school hall again for lunches. After a careful risk assessment and plenty of conversations to check it all worked, the pupils are eating lunch in the hall. It's been great to see all the pupils again and another bit of normality.

On Wednesday 9th June, Year 6 took part in the Great British Spring Clean. We went out in two groups around the station car park, local roads and the park to pick up litter. It was astounding just quite how much we found. Clarion Homes and United Living instigated the project and have provided the school with some new hi-vis jackets as well as the litter pickers. Every pupil who took part earned a certificate and a canvas bag. We were really proud of how the children behaved outside of school and we loved how enthusiastic they were. They were eager to be the group who found the most rubbish and surprisingly, most were reluctant to stop!

Although it has been a bit of a strange year, we are still saying our usual farewell to the Year 6 pupils with a class production and awards ceremony. It is always so wonderful to celebrate the successes over their school careers. Mrs Jones and Mrs Sealy, their class teachers, have also got an action-packed activity week for them too. We all wish them farewell and good luck in their secondary adventures! We finish school on Tuesday 20th July which will be here before we know it.
Mrs Anneka Osborne - Interim Head of School

AYLESFORD HANDBELLS

Would you like to do something different on Monday evenings? We are a small and friendly group who meet on Mondays in the Brassey Centre Aylesford to ring handbells. Most of us started with no experience. We ring tunes of all sorts from folk songs, carols, and specially arranged classical pieces. We are looking for new members to expand the band to allow a wider repertoire. No experience is necessary nor is it essential to be able to read music (we have a cunning plan!). If you are willing to have a go and think you would enjoy being part of our group, please contact Gordon Hunt on 01622 769634 or Ann Butterworth on 01622 710756 to arrange a time to visit us to see what it is all about.

WATERINGBURY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Although no formal meeting was held in June and there is uncertainty about July's meeting Councillors have been carrying out their duties via email.

The damaged scales play equipment at the playing fields is being replaced with a similar piece at a cost of £7,557. It will take around 8 weeks to complete the work. A new waste bin is also on order to replace the old, damaged one. Residents are asked to please take their litter home with them if the bins are full.

Confirmation is awaited on the plan to upgrade with LED lanterns the street lights owned by the Parish Council. Once the work is completed it will reduce the amount of electricity used and therefore have the double bonus of much lower electricity bills and therefore an environmental gain.

KCC rely on reports from residents about potholes in roads, uneven pavements and overgrown vegetation to generate the necessary repair action. Please report to KCC on 03000 418181 or on the KCC website

Future Meetings As Rostrum goes to press no final decisions have been made about public meetings of the Parish Council please contact the Clerk for up to date information [email clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk)

KENT RECYCLES – DO YOU?

Are you confused about what plastics to recycle in Wateringbury? Pledge2Recycle Plastics are working with all Kent Councils to help reduce that confusion. According to the charity, you can recycle ALL bottles from both the bathroom and kitchen as well as plastics that are in the form of a pot, tub or tray. All bottles should be empty and have the tops back on. Pots, tubs and trays should have the absorbent layer and film lid removed as these need to go into general waste. All these plastics can go into your **GREEN-LIDDED BIN**. DO NOT PUT toothpaste tubes, pill packs, nappies, textiles, batteries and food into recycling.

- You should use your **GREEN BOX** for paper and cardboard
- **BLACK CADDY WITH ORANGE LID** for weekly food waste collection
- Household batteries can be placed in a **CLEAR SACK** and put **ON TOP** of your green-lidded bin (**NOT INSIDE**) Small electrical items or a small amount of textiles can be placed into a carrier bag and put **ON YOUR BLACK BIN – NOT INSIDE THE BIN BUT OUTSIDE**.

There is a dedicated web site at www.pledge2recycle.co.uk/kent where you can get further information on plastics.

REV GARY WRITES
gary.rev@outlook.com

*The Rectory, 72 The Street
Mereworth ME18 5NA
☎ 01622 813178*

Counting our blessings.

As we edge our way forward on the slow and frustrating path out of lockdown, I think we have all been

heartened by the wonderful success of the vaccination program and by the lovely weather that we have been enjoying (lovely at the time of writing anyway!).

As a vicar I often get requests for weather! What I mean is that people ask me to pray for good weather. Disappointed with the result people jokingly say, "God's not listening vicar!" and I always reply, "Yes He is, and He said 'No! 'But seriously, when the weather is what people want, they say things like: "We've been lucky with the weather, haven't we" or "The weather's been good to us." It is very rare, in my experience, to hear people giving God the credit.

Now, I do not believe that God is really after credit in the way we so often are. I think what He is after is for us to find the deep and lasting joy of getting to know Him who is the source of all that is good. The real gift is not the good gift itself, but the good giver who gives it.

Jesus taught that His Father in heaven is an indiscriminately good giver causing the rain and sun to bless both the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:45). And one of Jesus' Apostles, St Paul, preached to the Greeks in Lystra that: '*God did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness*' (Acts 14:17).

I do think that even amidst a pandemic with all the misery it has caused we can still count our blessings and surely those of us who are coming through it should be thankful that we are. I think there are a good many of us at the moment who are thankful for one blessing or another despite, or perhaps even because of, the pandemic.

I do hope that as you enjoy the summer with the many blessings that come with the holiday season you will have cause to reflect on the goodness of God. Why not come along to one of the many churches in our area, to a Sunday service, as a way of showing gratitude to God? That may even result in you coming to appreciate even more His interest in you, His care for you and His love for you. It would be wonderful to move out of the storms of this horrible pandemic and into the sunshine of a newfound life with God.

Revd Gary Townsend. Priest-in-Charge of Mereworth, Wateringbury and West Peckham.

WATERINGBURY CHURCH - SERVICES IN JULY AND AUGUST

SJB Church web site: www.wateringburychurch.org.uk

Church Face Book Page: fb.me/wateringburychurch

Friends of SJB Church [web site www.fowc.org.uk](http://www.fowc.org.uk)

Services in Church at 10am each Sunday Week by week services at St John the Baptist church are as below:

4th July Matins with Barry Fisher

11th July Holy Communion led by Rev Jim Brown

18th July All Age Worship led by All Age Team with reflection by Rev Gary Townsend

25th July Holy Communion led by Rev Gary
1st August Morning Praise with Barry Fisher
8th August Holy Communion led by Rev Jim Brown
15th August All Age Worship led by All Age Team
22nd August Holy Communion led by Rev Gary
29th August Benefice Service As this is the 5th Sunday in the month our three churches take the opportunity to worship together so there will not be a service in Wateringbury. **This month the service of Holy Communion is at 10am in Mereworth Church** led by Rev Gary Townsend

To comply with Covid regulations it is important that those hoping to attend a service notify their wish by emailing before 2pm on the prior Saturday to office@wateringburychurch.org.uk / 01622 813852.

Our short on-line worship will still be available every week for you to enjoy at **<http://tiny.cc/krymmz>**
It is available at any time.

WEEKLY ZOOM BENEFICE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Thursdays in July at 7.30pm for about an hour
Rev Gary Townsend invites you to join him for bible study. To join please email gary.rev@outlook.com for the link to the meeting. The group will be taking a break in August and resume on 2nd September.

PLANT SALE THANKS

A big thank you for all who contributed in any way to the Church Plant Sale on 29th May. An amazing **£620** was raised to help with the day to day running of our lovely village church. Special thanks to Bijou Nursery for their generous donation of plants, to all 'home growers' for providing a good selection of plants, all who worked so hard on the day and of course to all customers.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

As Rostrum goes to press we are still awaiting the Government's final decision regarding further relaxing of Covid restrictions. Hopefully it will not be long before we can start singing in church, enjoy after service refreshments and relax social distancing and mask wearing. However it is important that we all feel and keep safe. In the meantime we will be continuing our on-line worship each week and the need to notify a wish to attend services so that we can organise seating for social distancing. *Peter Bond and Liz Gummer (Churchwardens)*

TO ALL OUR MESSY CHURCH FAMILIES

We look forward to seeing you soon as we have really missed you! Watch out for an email from us.

Ruth

CRAFTERS COFFEE MORNINGS

The recent Government announcement that the Covid restrictions will continue until 19th July is a disappointment as we had hoped to be able to resume our fortnightly Wednesday morning meetings. We trust we will be able to restart safely in September.

We will all miss our friend Nancy (whose tribute is in the village people section of the magazine). She was an inspiration to us all - always quietly cheerful and knitting novelty items to sell for the Air Ambulance funds.

Best wishes to everyone - hope you can all enjoy the summer.

Pauline 01622 814673 and Gillian 01622 81076

MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Now that the lockdown is easing I have been asked to take services at various churches in our area. Numbers are down because of two factors - space requirements and no singing. The latter means no choirs and so less people. So no RSCM medals either - when I visit a church with a choir I view their medals and am pleased that Wateringbury church choir has plenty. Sadly I have none; not because I failed but the choirmaster would not enter us for the exam. By accident I have been present at a few musical examinations recently

Two years ago I had to attend a Gaudy at Oxford and went up a day early to view the sights. It was also Open Days at the colleges for prospective students and many of them were flying wonderful flags at their entrances. I went into Balliol College chapel to view the newly restored East Window of 1529 and as I was wearing a clerical collar found myself explaining it to groups of young aspirants and their parents: I said the music was fine too. I also recommended the Balliol buttery. I hope the number of applicants to Balliol increased that year. After lunch I went across to Exeter College. In the Chapel the director of music was auditioning young men and women who wished to be choral scholars and also a few who wanted to be organ scholars. A number of parents and siblings were there to listen in and give encouragement. I was persuaded to stay and swell the throng. It was delightful though we were not allowed to show any preference.

But the Director of Music was pleased with our quiet attentiveness and invited us to take tea in the college hall and then return for sung evensong with all the candidates. I was so impressed with Exeter and its music that I have zoomed their Sunday choral evensongs on many occasions during the lockdown. The music and the voice projection is first class without echo or boom. They chose well at that audition. Visiting our son at Royal Holloway we went into the large Art Gallery to view the David Roberts drawings of the Holy Land and Levant which he completed

in his tour in the 1840s. They are amazing but that day in the gallery was the performance part of music finals and we were told that it would be beneficial to the candidates if we would stay and listen. We did and also had good seats for viewing the pictures. Later that year we were invited back to the St Cecilia's Day Concert in the Banqueting Hall. Royal Holloway are now good enough to sing Choral Evensong on Radio 3.

In mid-May I did vote in a musical exam/competition - the Eurovision Song Contest. I was one of eight million in the UK who watched the 39 entries in Rotterdam. The UK entry scored nil points in all sections, finishing last. I voted for the pretty French singer's 'Voila' who came second. The winners were a powerful Italian Rock Group who sang 'Zitti e buoni' which means - shut up and behave yourself. The UK gave douze points to the yellow clad Lithuania group who did strange gymnastics as they sang. I wonder if our junior choir in West Peckham could do those moves as they sing 'You shall go out with Joy' - if so, they deserve a medal.

Canon Brian Stevenson