

**Welcome to the March 2024 issue
of your village magazine**

VILLAGE DIARY

MARCH

- 3rd Footpaths Walk**– 2pm – Hall
5th Parish Council Meeting - 7.30pm – Hall
8th Coffee Morning (Free) – 10.30-11.30am –

Hall lower room

- 11th Footpaths Walk**– 2pm – Hall
13th Coffee Break– 10.30am-12.30pm – Church
17th Village Market – 11am-1pm – Hall and Car
park
20th. Wateringbury Flower Club – 7pm - East
Malling Institute
20th Biggin on the Bump talk by **Bob Ogley** – 8pm
- Hall
27th Coffee Break– 10.30am-12.30pm – Church
27th Kent Police Cyber Fraud Prevention –
7.30pm - Hall
30th Easter Fun with Faith – 9.30am-12.30pm -
Church

APRIL

- 2nd Parish Council Meeting** – 7.30pm – Hall
7th Footpaths Walk – 2.30pm - note Summer time
– Hall
10th Coffee Break – 10.30am-12.30pm – Church
17th The 1960s - History Soc talk – 7.30pm – Hall
20th Village Hall Quiz Evening– 7pm for 7.30pm -
Hall
21st Village Market – 11am-1pm – Hall and Car
park
24th Coffee Break – 10.30am-12.30pm – Church

Save the Dates - Village Events to enjoy

**June 6th Event to mark 80th Anniversary of D Day –
7.30pm**

June 9th Village Fete at Playing Fields – afternoon

VILLAGE HALL QUIZ EVENING

Our next quiz evening is to be held on

SATURDAY 20th APRIL

at WATERINGBURY VILLAGE HALL

Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start

Always a fun evening. All you need is a team of 6-8 people
(or come on your own, we will match you up with others.)

There will be a **raffle**...and prizes for the quiz winners.

Please **bring your own food and drinks**. Tea and coffee will be available.

BUT come prepared to take your own rubbish away with you.

The cost is £8 per person and proceeds will be used
to help maintain and equip our splendid Village Hall.

Please don't leave booking your table/place till the last minute.

If you cannot make it yourself,

please spread the message about the evening to others.

To book a table...or a place...please e-mail

Mike Hoiles mikejhoiles@aol.com or ring on **01622 813573**

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17th March for our April magazine. Entries are free.*
Email www.rostrum2@hotmail.com or phone 01622 812023

Diamond Wedding Congratulations Belated 60th Wedding Anniversary Congratulations to **Beryl and Mike Frankham** who were married at St Paulinus Church, Crayford on 8th February 1964.

Milestone Birthday Congratulations to Rosemary Skinner of Bijou Nursery who celebrates a special milestone birthday on 3rd March.
Belated Milestone Birthday Congratulations to Ray Sessions who celebrated on 21st February.

A Big Humphrey Thank You

On 29th December 2023 the funeral of my husband Jimmy took place at St John's in Wateringbury. The service was everything that we wanted it to be, an uplifting, personal celebration of a wonderful husband, dad, grandad, great grandad and friend, brilliantly led by Rev James Brown.

I look back at that day and wouldn't have changed a thing, I think as a family we "Did Jimmy proud". My only regret is that I wasn't able to thank everyone who attended personally before we left for a private service. So, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. We, as a family, were absolutely overwhelmed and comforted by your presence. To be honest, I don't think Jimmy would have believed the turnout, it was nearly as large as the crowd that used to turn out for one of his early Gillingham matches!

Wateringbury has always been such a special community, I know because we were part of it for 37 memorable years. I can't thank you enough for being there and supporting my family, I hope that you all know just how much it meant to us.

Take care of yourselves and one another. Lizzie xx

Thank You to Wateringbury Players for your 40th Anniversary Pantomime

Every year the panto seems to get better and better. This year's was a real tonic. At the start a screen projected photos of past productions – so a real trip down memory lane for many. Not only have the Players entertained us so magnificently they have also donated over £48,000 for local organisations and causes close to their hearts. This year's director, Tudor Price, recognised the strengths of each member of the cast and certainly enabled all to give great performances. Barry Fisher, who has been in 38 pantomimes, brought much laughter as the Special Effects man. The children too were a delight as was the dancing and singing. The back-stage crew certainly excelled themselves with the building of Cinderella's coach to take her to the ball, quite spectacular. So again very many thanks to all concerned, we look forward to next year's production. O Yes We Do!

WI – Inspiring Women

At our February meeting we welcomed Peter Batty to hear his talk on Amazing Women of World War II. His well illustrated talk described the brave and resourceful actions of several women ranging from a British school girl to famous Hollywood actresses. All these women played important roles in the Allied war effort.

The competition for female WW II items was won by Elizabeth and Sue. The next meeting on 14th March is the competition day for members only. The entries are for a favourite cake, a flower arrangement in a sugar bowl and a craft item which uses at least one recycled item. *Margaret Malsher*

WATERINGBURY HISTORY SOCIETY

Bob Ogley is the speaker at the meeting on **Wednesday**

20th March in Wateringbury Village Hall. His talk is entitled "Biggin on the Bump", and is **the story of RAF Biggin Hill**, probably one of the most famous air stations in the world. He will talk about the women and men who helped to make it

such a legendary place. Bob is a wonderful, engaging speaker; his talks are always informative and interspersed with great humour. Bob Ogley is a former editor of The Sevenoaks Chronicle and the author of more than 20 books. At the close of the evening there will probably be an opportunity to purchase a book or two which Bob will be happy to sign. The talk starts at 8pm with free tea or coffee available from 7.40pm. Members free, **visitors very welcome at £5.**

For our annual outing this year we are joining Claire's Days Out's trip on Wednesday 10th July to William Morris House, Epping Forest followed by a cream tea and river cruise from Broxbourne. The cost is £89. Members wishing to go should book, without delay, direct by emailing clairesdaysout@gmail.com or phone/text 07725 570547.

THE SWAN COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Swan on the Green has been part of West Peckham since 1685 and is a much loved asset to the community. Following the decision for the pub to be put up for sale, **West Peckham residents are now working hard on the proposal of turning the Swan on the Green into a community-owned pub.** So far the steering group has completed a round of pledges to give an indication on the funds we can raise and they hit an incredible £295,000.

Following this, the team have compiled an application for the Community Ownership Fund, a grant that if successful will add £250,000 to our fundraising. As part of the application, a business plan and share prospectus have been put together, which includes an outline for the financial and operational plans for the Swan, we plan to share this with the public.

On 18th April at 7.30pm in West Peckham Village Hall we will be holding an event where the team will lead a walk-through of these plans and answer all of your questions. This project is not restricted to residents only and for it to become a reality; we need as many people as possible to get involved. The next part of the project is the most important yet as we officially launch the fundraising phase to make all of this a reality so if you're interested in being involved in the project, email theswancommunityproject@gmail.com to book your place at the event. If you would like to be a part of the Swan Community you can pledge now to show your interest in buying shares when they are released in April, by following the link and pledging online theswancommunityproject.co.uk

Various Mobility Aids For Sale

Due to my father moving into a care home I have a number of mobility aids for sale including **a new fully adjustable (small double) Opera Solo Profiling Bed and Mattress, CareCo Titan Mobility Scooter** plus various shower seats, perching stools etc. Please contact Andrew Gunn on 07478 859859 for further details.

NEWS FROM SARAH HUDSON

Matt and I continue to attend meetings and meet residents on a regular basis to help with issues. Budgets at KCC and TMBC have been set for the forthcoming financial year.

The next **coffee morning at Watringbury village hall will be on Friday 8th March at 10.30am.** This will be in the small downstairs room. Last month's first coffee morning was really useful and those that attended were treated to some lovely home made cupcakes and learnt about various village activities such as the WI, the Footpaths Group, Coffee Break at the Church to name a few. Please do join us and get more involved in village life.

The **DDay80 celebrations** have now been finalised. The

event takes place on **Thursday 6th June from 7.30pm.**
Everyone is warmly invited to join us all down by the Pavillion to eat fish and chips and watch the lighting of the beacon at 9.15pm. If you don't want fish and chips, you are still welcome to join us. If you do want to have fish and chips then you will need to pre book this. Tickets will be on sale at both the Post Office and
The Handy Stores ahead of the event. This is to ensure we have catered for the right quantity of residents. Tickets will be £10 per person, including children.

Fighting Cyber Fraud Presentation Evening **Wateringbury Village Hall**

27th March 7.30pm

Wateringbury Parish Council welcome
Kent Cyber and Fraud Police Officers
to inform us on

How to protect against Cyber Scams
How to stop criminals stealing your money
online

JUMBLE SALE - SATURDAY 2nd MARCH - 2-4PM
TESTON VILLAGE HALL

WATERINGBURY PLAYERS

We have packed away the lights, stored the costumes and stashed the make-up and The Wateringbury Players are taking a well earned rest!! At the beginning of February we performed Cinderella for our 40th Anniversary show, traditionally performed every 10 years and WOW what a show it was! We had so much fun performing this show and threw everything in to it!! The cast and crew spanned several generations and consisted of new members, regulars and the original members who started The Wateringbury Players, all those years ago. The Wateringbury Players was originally started to help raise funds for St John the Baptist Church in Wateringbury. Over the years we have donated in excess of £48,000 to various nominated charities including the church.

It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to put these shows on and we couldn't do it without all the people that help, so a big thank you to them. We would also like to thank our wonderful audiences who support us every year and add to the fun. We look forward to seeing you all at our next Panto production in 2025.

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

Our AGM went off without a hitch. And our small workshop afterwards led by Gill Smaggasgale on how to make paper roses, was most ingenious and a most enjoyable past-time. Most members made at least 6 each and produced a little posy for the table.

March will be an interesting demonstration with the fabulous Mig Kimpton a Chelsea Gold Medalist - Buds, Branches and Bulbs. Mig an ever popular demonstrator and much loved teacher at his school near Dover. Do come along to East Malling Institute Hall on Wednesday 20th March and join us for a super evening visitors £7 raffle for flowers and refreshments.

Jean Schofield WFC

FIRST WATERINGBURY RAINBOWS

Rainbows are the youngest member of the Girlguiding family for girls aged 4 to 7. Wateringbury Rainbows meet at the Guide and Scout HQ in Glebe Meadow, Wateringbury on alternate Saturday mornings from 10am to midday during term time. The girls play, learn and have tons of fun in a creative safe space while participating in activities based on the Rainbow programme.

Last term we played games, sang camp fire songs and toasted marshmallows round a fake campfire. We had a hedgehog themed session when we made hedgehog cakes and walking hedgehogs, talked about why hedgehogs are good for the garden and what we can do to help them. For Halloween we made mobiles and did apple bobbing. We also had a Christmas party.

We like to get out and about in the warmer weather. We've been on woodland walks, visited a Goat Sanctuary, been to Kent Life and joined other Girlguiding members on an activity day where the girls tried wall climbing and abseiling, amongst other activities.

We are looking for both leaders and girls to join us. If you are interested please go to the Girlguiding website and register your interest either to help or if your daughter would like to join us. You can email Lesley Barker at lesleybarker23@outlook.com for more information.

NEW FROM TOM TUGENDHAT MP ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS

Last month we celebrated National Apprenticeship Week. This month I will be hosting the annual **Apprenticeship Fair in Maidstone**, alongside six other MPs. This is an event that I have been involved in organising for a number of years now and it is fantastic to see the number of school children who get so much out of it. At the Apprenticeship Fair we will welcome a wide range of business and organisations, from the Armed Forces to construction. We're expecting over one thousand students attending and over seventy exhibits for them to look at. I hope to see lots of children from Wateringbury at **Maidstone Leisure Centre on Friday 8th March.**

In recent years we have seen the apprenticeship market transform. There are greater options and opportunities for everybody, no matter your age. It is important that as we look to develop as a nation, everybody has equal opportunity to succeed and to contribute. Apprenticeships are now a viable alternative to university, or they can be a fantastic opportunity for somebody looking to get back into work. They offer the chance to learn new skills while earning money while also allowing business and companies to train up staff and invest in their future. If anybody is considering an Apprenticeship or may know somebody who is, you can always take a look at the Government website here:

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship. I am sure the Apprenticeship Fair will be a huge success as it has been many times before, and I'm looking forward to seeing some of the schools from across Tonbridge and Malling who have signed up to go.

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL

As spring creeps up on us with the help of our children we have started clearing out our outdoor area. The children have been using wheel barrows and spades to collect up all the old leaves getting ready to plant some new seeds. Together we have been observing the changes slowly happening around us and sharing why they are happening. We have started looking at life cycles and in Term 5 the children should have some lovely little caterpillars to look after and observe them as they move into each stage of their cycle.

Also this term for World Book day the children will be able to come in dressed in their favourite book character. The children will also help to set up a little book shop for the week during world book day for their friends.

Using our Curiosity Approach journey the setting continues to see changes made throughout with kind donations from parents and staff so we can carry on building that home from home feeling for our children and remove the structured classroom feel/look. Through the journey we are promoting the children to be independent through every

day daily tasks, providing them with an environment that allows them to be curious to become pilots of their own play!

T&M Ramblers walk on Wednesday 6th March A circular meander through Mereworth Woods to Gover Hill returning via Herne Pound A moderate difficulty walk of 5.5 miles for further details visit www.tonbridgeandmallingramblers.org.uk

Gravesham Choral Society, orchestra and soloists conducted by Alan Vincent present **A Light in the Darkness** A concert of beautiful sacred music on **Saturday 23rd March 2024 at 7.30pm at St George's Church, Gravesend**
Come and be moved by Mozart's uplifting Litaniae Lauretanae in D and Haydn's inspirational Stabat Mater. Tickets are available via www.gravesham.co.uk/events at £15 for adults and £5 for under 18's and students, and on the door.

WATERINGBURY TODDLER GROUP

We are a friendly group that welcomes all parents, carers, grandparents, childminders etc with children from 0 - 5. We run **every Wednesday 10.00-12.00 during school term time**. The cost is £3.50 for the first child and adult and then £1 for every additional child 8+ months. The large hall is set up with lots of toys for free play, a craft session is included and then snack and drink for the children. We finish with a music session and lots of footballs. Adult's drinks and biscuits are also included. We also have a baby area for younger children.

Like our Facebook Page (Wateringbury Toddler Group) for any important information/messages. Email: wateringburytoddlergroup@gmail.com

WATERINGBURY GUIDES

Following a visit by the older brownies to see what guides is like just before Christmas, we are delighted that they all joined us at the beginning of this year and so we are now full again. We have a busy and varied programme and have already welcomed River's Rodents who came with his delightful tortoise, blue tongued skink and corn snake. Even the leaders, who were hesitant to start with, touched or stroked all the animals and it was a great evening. We had an evening of activities to help us think about those less able than most of us, and found that the wheelchair was quite difficult to manoeuvre and get into some spaces. Counting money also proved very challenging when you couldn't tell a five-pound note from a ten-pound note if you can't see. We helped with the raffle and programmes at all the pantomime shows and 18 of us had a sleepover on Friday night sleeping on the stage. We've finished this part of the term with wide games in the Wateringbury orchard. Lots of fun and an opportunity to let off steam before returning to school.

We are now full again but if your daughter would like to join our fun, you can contact me on 01622 815416 or email to wateringburyguides@hotmail.com
Sheena Stewart and team.1st Wateringbury Guides

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL

Our first term has gone by so quickly. We have had a very active term where we have learnt about food, what foods are good for us and how they can help to keep us healthy. What foods we should eat lots of and what foods we should eat as a treat. We have brought in our favourite food to share with our friends at our snack time. We have talked about allergies and the importance of cleaning our teeth. Our home corner has been turned into a family kitchen, with our 'cooker', pots and pans, where children have made 'meals' for their friends.

We have made collages of our favourite fruits to display in our setting. In our mark making area we have used stencils and colouring sheets with a food theme. Our book corner has also held titles around food and during our story time sessions.

We love to sing at our preschool and have learnt some new foodie songs along with our favourites too. The children have also enjoyed making music with our instruments during these sessions. We have talked about Chinese New Year and have used our cutting skills to make Chinese lanterns to hang in our home corner.

We have had lots of fun in our preschool garden using bikes, scooters and mini cars, we have been balancing on our balance beams and stepping stones; this helps to keep us healthy and fit. If you would like your child to be part of our amazing preschool 'family' please contact us to book a visit.

testonpreschooladmissions@gmail.com tandwgroup@gmail.com

Tina Driver Tel: 07805 796353 See us on Facebook too.

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

The extraordinarily warm days that we experienced in February have kick started many species to emerge from hibernation. Amphibians (frogs, toads and newts) are already returning to their breeding ponds and birds are on the lookout for nesting materials and suitable sites. Robins are generally the first birds to build their nests, starting this month so it's best to avoid pruning hedges and trees until the end of the Summer, to avoid disturbing them.

On any warmer days, large queen bumblebees may emerge from their winter hibernation site in the soil and can be seen building up their energy reserves by feeding on nectar and pollen rich flowers. I've seen up to six at a time recently, feasting on the heather in my garden but they will also be drawn to crocuses, lungwort, mahonia and pussy willow. Should you spot a stranded or sleepy looking bumblebee, you might be able to help it by offering a solution of sugar water from a small container or sponge. Once recovered, she will join the others to search for a suitable nest site.

Apparently, bumblebees have smelly feet! This is a useful attribute as it helps other bumblebees to identify a flower that has already been visited, thus avoiding wasting their energy. These fascinating insects, along with all types of bees, play a vital part in pollinating crops and wildflowers so it's important, as Gardeners, to do what we can to support them.

As Spring bulbs, such as: winter aconites, snowdrops, snowflakes, anemones and bluebells, finish flowering, you can increase your stocks by dividing them and planting them 'in the green' in other parts of your garden. This will provide an improved display and more nectar and pollen for insects next Spring.

Pauline Knutton

FOOTPATHS GROUP

Last month there was a large turnout for both our walks. The first was on the usual first Sunday in the month and it was followed by a midweek morning repeat a week or so later. There was lots of chat and some new faces joined us for the first time, they were very welcome. Our route took us along Old Road to Pizien Well where we turned right on the footpath past the Old Dukes Head, crossed the Tonbridge Road and continued uphill beside Wisteria Villa, skirting Kings Hill Golf Course. At Canon Lane we went more or less straight over and walked through the vineyards, with lovely open views southwards. Where two footpaths cross by some trees, we turned right and headed downhill, coming out on the Tonbridge Road again. The walkers then split up as people took their preferred routes home. Our next walks will be leaving the village hall at: 2pm on Sunday 3rd March

10am on Monday 11th March **2.30pm** on Sunday 7th April (note the later start as the clocks will have changed).

Everyone is always welcome! Please contact me if you want any more information. *Lisa Dean 077 5953 9032*

EAST MALLING SINGERS CONCERT - Saturday 23rd March – 7.30pm

East Malling Singers' next concert is **Beethoven's Mass in C** and will take place on Saturday 23rd March at St James the Great Church, East Malling. The choir will be accompanied by the organ and four professional soloists. Tickets are available from boxoffice@eastmallingsingers.co.uk or telephone 01622 750 943, they cost £12 each but schoolchildren are free.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF – WELLBEING HINTS AND TIPS

If low, hit the power up button

The beginning of March means the Paddock Wood half marathon - one of the biggest in the south of England attracting a huge number of participants of all abilities. It is very well supported and organised by our local Paddock Wood Athletics Club, with cheerful crowds who come out to cheer the finishers, especially through the final mile in the town.

Now at about a mile to go I have seen, on at least two occasions, a young lad holding a large piece of cardboard with a painted red circle and the words "power up button". Runners pass by and tap the cardboard; and they get a power up. Just believing or even just hitting that button and you get a power up. I have felt this. Around 30-35% of the benefit of any medicine is a placebo effect - an effect that is caused by our brain not the chemical in the pill. Even more strange is that there is a placebo effect even among people who, in a trial, know they are not taking some medicine but only a dummy pill. So you can take a dummy pill, with no active ingredients, know it is a dummy pill, and still get an associated positive effect. The brain is, well, a very funny thing.

Now you can't grow a missing limb by believing it into existence, but scientists have learnt to monitor communication happening between the brain and other parts of the body at a cellular level through the chemistry of the body. I was recently running a long race and was quite exhausted. My running mate Steve said - "OK Bob, let's keep the finish nice and steady. No silly sprints." And that did it. Those words unlocked in me a package of energy I thought long gone and I ran off ahead. Without doubt, the brain is a funny thing.

So if things are low for you find yourself a power up button, and press it. Take a sweet and tell yourself "This is my feel better pill." And if you need to, find a spot where you can yell at the world and really get it all out, like Andy Murray does when the match goes wrong. And don't worry if you don't believe any of this will do anything. You don't need to. Your brain is stranger than you know.

Bob Bowie

JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

First public open session

WSRA - Lengthy discussions took place about the running of the Watlington Sports and Recreation Association, which is a registered charity, and the two leases between the Association and the Parish Council, one from 1980 and the other from 2000. It was hoped that by the end of February the Association would be in a position to elect the necessary officers to run the Association for the coming year.

Plans for Sports Pavilion Extension two members of the public (one from Switch Charity in

Maidstone) asked the Council to re-activate the initial plans put forward about 5-6 years ago to extend the Sports Pavilion. The Switch representative said the charity worked with young people from 11-21 and there was a great need to have more facilities for young people to 'drop-in'. Councillors were receptive to the idea of costing the plans and looking to see what grants would be available. It was felt that in addition to use for sporting activities an extended pavilion could be used as a village hub for youth and retired members of the community to use.

Cemetery Councillors accepted a quote for the removal of spoil from the cemetery. Once the spoil heap has been removed tree work could be carried out.

Overspill car park for Playing Fields Councillors agreed that the detailed specialist survey report could be given to companies to obtain quotes for the up-grading of this facility.

Planning Applications

Councillors had no objections to the following applications:

8 The Orpines Removal of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey side extension and associated external alterations.

Annex at 229 Canon Lane Remove fig tree to allow repair of wall adjacent to Canon Lane which has been damaged by fig tree.

Councillors will leave decisions to Tree Officer in the following:

Annex at 229 Canon Lane Laurel bush – remove as too close to house and damaging paving/brick retaining walls.

Collection of conifers – remove to make safe.

Cedar – remove as close to annex. Tree in poor condition and is a risk to buildings. Tree showing excessive die back.

Rose Cottage 210 Canon Lane remove 1 Cypress tree.

Reports from Borough and County Councillors

Matt Boughton (T&M) reported that the Borough Council still needed to find £500,000 in savings to balance the budget. Council tax would be increased by 4.99% which was an increase of £6.93 for a band D property. T & M, along with many other councils, had received refunds on VAT paid some years ago which, on appeal, was found to have been collected in error. T & M's refund was £1.9m

At the second public open forum the need for additional litter bins was identified. Councillor Boughton agreed to action the provision of a larger bin outside the Handy Stores and for the provision of a litter bin at the Bow Road bus stop.

Sarah Hudson (KCC) reported that KCC was still struggling to find areas where savings can be made to balance the budget.

Traffic matters

20 mph speed limit near school Councillors unanimously agreed to fund the cost (£7,950) to create a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school

entrances when children were arriving and leaving school. The lights would be operated from the school.

Speedwatch During January the speedwatch teams carried out 6 one hour sessions. During this time in the hour monitoring downhill traffic in Red Hill 182 vehicles passed and 16 were breaking the speed limit. In Red Hill in the hour 131 vehicles travelled up hill of which 9 were speeding. The remaining sessions were on the A26 observing at Lodge Close. Travelling west 1744 vehicles were observed of which 83 were speeding. Travelling east 1769 vehicles were observed of which 72 were speeding. All offenders were recorded on the Kent Police Speed Watch website. During January the police speedwatch van made two visits and was located in the church layby.

Village Maintenance

Trees – following the survey of trees on parish owned land it was agreed to obtain quotes for the necessary work on those identified as high and medium risk.

Village Hall Wall - the cost of repairs would be paid by the vehicle's insurers and it was agreed to accept a quote and proceed with the work.

Next Meeting will be on **Tuesday 5th March at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall Upper Room. *Approved minutes of council meetings will appear on the Parish Council website www.wateringbury.pc.org.uk in due course*

REV GARY WRITES

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gary.rev@outlook.com

☎ 01622 813178

I can't get no satisfaction.

Our Lent course which I spoke about in the February edition of *Rostrum* is going well. We have three sessions left. The first is called, *Living with the unexplained* and it's an exploration of the subject of suffering. The next is *Living with what we've been given* and it's about facing the hard facts of our existence and the peace that comes with accepting God's will for us. The last session is called *Living with absence* and its focus is on how the disappointments we experience can lead us to question the presence and love of God. I admit these are not subjects that everyone would find interesting but I think you'd admit the middle one, '*Living with what we've been given*', deals with an issue that is perennial and highly topical: dissatisfaction. How we look, how we feel, the relationships we're in, the job we're stuck with, the regrets and failures we live with, to list but a few, are things that many people face. And you may have picked up that society is increasingly at a loss to know how to respond to the ever-growing number of rights that individual people are claiming they have and that must be recognised by everyone else. Whilst passing no judgement on the legitimacy and justification of such claims I nonetheless would suggest that dissatisfaction lies at the root of it all. A great hero of mine, the Victorian author and Christian teacher George MacDonald wrote:

'I presume there is scarce a human being who, resolved to speak openly, would not confess to having something that plagued him, something from which he would gladly be free, something rendering it impossible for him, at the moment, to regard life as an altogether good thing. Most men, I presume, imagine that, free from such and such things antagonistic, life would be an unmingled satisfaction, worthy of being prolonged indefinitely.'

George MacDonald,

The Hope of the Gospel, chapter 1.

I think that's as true today as it was back in Victorian times. So perhaps this or one of the other remaining topics in my Lent Course would be of use to you? The course is free, open to all and run at St John the Baptist Church, Wateringbury (19:00 – 21:00) on the 6th, 13th and 20th of March. You don't need to come to all of them, just the one that appeals to you. I can't guarantee you'll be satisfied but you'll certainly be given a warm and friendly welcome and the subject for the evening will be approached in an honest and sensitive way.

Rev Gary Townsend
Rector of Mereworth, Wateringbury and West Peckham

WATERINGBURY CHURCH - SERVICES IN MARCH

[Benefice website](#) www.mwwwpchurches.org

Saturday 2nd March – 3-5pm - Messy Church

Bible Story, Action Songs, Prayer time, lots of crafts and ending with afternoon tea. For young children and their carers

Sunday 3rd March - 10am – Matins led by Barry Fisher

Mothering Sunday 10th March – 10am Communion Service led by Rev Gary Townsend. As is our custom all ladies in the congregation will be given a little posy of flowers to help us give thanks for the love of our Mothers.

Messy Church on Sunday meets in the vestry at this service

Sunday 17th March - 10am - All Age Worship with address by Kate Millar

Palm Sunday 24th March

10am – Communion Service with

Rev Gary Townsend All attending will be given a Palm Cross a reminder of Jesus triumphant ride into Jerusalem on a donkey

5pm in Mereworth Church - Seder (Christian Passover Meal) At the Refresh Service Tickets £5 please book in advance at office.mwwwp@gmail.com to help with catering

Maundy Thursday 28th March – 8pm in Mereworth Church –

Holy Communion with foot washing and stripping of the altar and 1 hour vigil

Good Friday 29th March – 2pm - At the Foot of the Cross

A quiet, reflective service

Saturday 30th March - 9.30am-12.30pm - Fun with Faith

Easter crafts and activities for Primary school age children

Easter Sunday 31st March – 10am - Holy Communion led by Canon Alan Vousden

Sundays 3rd, 10th and 17th March at 5pm in Mereworth Church - Benefice Refresh Services for those who enjoy less formal worship.

World Day of Prayer

Friday 1st March – 10.30am

at Larkfield Methodist Church (opposite Morrisons)

This year's service has been prepared by the Christian Women of Palestine.

Refreshments available after the Service

Easter Fun with Faith

Calling all primary school aged children in Wateringbury village

Join us to help celebrate and hear the Easter story

A morning filled with fun, songs, and craft activities

Saturday 30th March @ 9.30am until 12.30pm

at St John the Baptist Church; free to attend.

Booking is essential because of numbers,

see www.mwwpchurches.org for form or

email office.mwwp@gmail.com

Look forward to hearing from you. Debbie Bond

Saturday 23rd March - 9.30am to Noon – Annual Church and Churchyard Spring Clean in preparation for Easter.

Do come along if you can spare an hour or so to reach the parts of the church the Holy Dusters cannot do in their fortnightly cleans of the church. David does a great job tidying the churchyard but he cannot do it all so, again, please come along and help for an hour or

so. Please bring along the necessary tools for your chosen tasks.

**COFFEE BREAK 13th and 27th March,
10th and 24th April**

Do go along to the social area of Wateringbury Church between 10.30am and 12.30pm on any of the above dates to meet new people or catch up with your neighbours while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee and home-made cake. This is a friendly, informal group which welcomes new faces. Suggested donation £1

**Spring Craft Fair
Mereworth Church - Saturday 16th
March 11.30am-2pm**

Lots of craft stalls, cake stall, raffle
plus delicious refreshments