

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Rostrum Team. Thank you to all our advertisers, contributors and distributors for your support in 2018. We will shortly be contacting existing advertisers and those on our waiting list about booking advertising space for 2019.

Christine, Trudy and Ted

VILLAGE DIARY

| DECEMBER | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Christmas Craft Fayre | School | 12-3pm |
| 2 | Footpath Group Walk | Village Car Park | 2pm |
| 4 | Parish Council Meeting then planning committee | Village Hall | 7.30pm |
| 7 | Carols at North Pole | North Pole Pub | 6.30pm |
| 8 | Cribs & Angels | Church | 10.30am-4pm |
| 13 | WI Members Christmas Lunch | Village Hall | 1.30pm |
| 19 | Mystery Artefacts - History Society | Village Hall | 7.40pm |
| 20 | Lessons and Carols by Candlelight | Church | 8pm |
| 21 | Coffee & Chat – Tom Tugendhat MP | Village Hall | 9.30-11.30am |
| 26 | Boxing Day 7 mile walk | Car Park | 10am |
| 31 | Kacy Wild – Singer and Entertainer | Wateringbury Club | 8.30pm |
| JANUARY | | | |
| 1 | Footpaths Walk | Village Car Park | 2pm |
| 8 | Parish Council Meeting then planning committee (2 nd Tuesday due to holidays) | Village Hall | 7.30pm |
| 10 | From Hops to Lavender WI talk | Village Hall | 2pm |
| 16 | Bayeux Tapestry History Society Talk | Village Hall | 7.40 for 8pm |
| 25 & 26 | Players Panto - Mother Goose | Village Hall | |
| Every Wednesday in January Coffee, Chat & Craft | | Church | 10.30-12.30 |

PROPOSED CROSSROADS ALTERATIONS

The meetings organised by KCC (two drop-in consultation events in Wateringbury Village Hall) have been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. When new dates are known these will be on the parish council website.

CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING - ALL WELCOME

Come and meet and chat to your **MP Tom Tugendhat** whilst enjoying coffee/tea, mince pies, a raffle and a festive catch-up!

Friday 21st December, 9.30–11.30am in the Village Hall.

NOVEMBER PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

New Councillor At the start of the meeting councillors elected to co-opt Jessica Roe on to the council and she took her place.

CCTV - following discussions councillors agreed to accept the quotation for the up-grading of the system at the playing fields sports pavillion. A maintenance contract will also be put in place. They deferred for further consultations the upgrading of the system at the Village Hall/Car Park area.

Crime Report - between 2nd October and 5th November there were 2 incidents of burglary and theft, 1 motor vehicle was stolen from outside an address, 3 thefts from motor vehicles, 1 assault on a male by 2 other males and 2 young boys were threatened by an older male in the playing fields. Incidents of Note were 2 traffic crashes and several disturbances reported in Bow Road.

KCC Councillor Matthew Balfour reported that plans for the cross roads will be the subject of public consultations on 12th and 20th December in the village hall. It was to be hoped that many residents would attend and contribute to this process.

The recent National Budget had brought some good news of extra funding for KCC. Most of this additional funding would be for the Social Care Budget with a little for roads. However there was still an enormous ongoing cost shortfall.

Social isolation and loneliness were a cause of great concern. Matthew felt that part of the solution could lie with having Community Wardens but it needed was a change of attitude within our communities so that we all look after our neighbours.

Matthew took questions from the public. The main concerns were the plans for the cross roads and the problem of so many motorists jumping red lights. Many present had witnessed this on a daily basis. One said she had contacted the police about the problem and been disappointed at their response. Matthew was dismayed to learn about problems with the Speed indicator on the A26 at Canon Lane which the Parish Council had been told was not repairable and that new regulations meant that such signs could no longer source their power from near-by lamp posts but had to have an independent source of power. Matthew offered to cover the expense of a moveable Speed Indicator Device for the village.

Playing Fields Councillors pondered what to do with the play tunnel which had been removed when the new surface was laid in the play area. At the public forum it was suggested that this be offered to the school.

Speed watch - during October the team had carried out 28 hours of observations. During this time there were 786 observations of speeding vehicles. The police sent 163 letters to repeat offenders, 25 to high offenders (45+ mph) and 3 vehicle details have been passed to officers for active enforcement having been reported 6 times. Twelve vehicles were being driven without Road Tax and/or MOT.

The Speedwatch team would be willing to take responsibility for a removable speed indicator unit (SID) if the Parish Council decide to proceed with the unit which can be made available by KCC. Councillors decided to defer a decision to allow time for further consultations.

Public Question Time - the main topics of concern were again traffic related - the cross roads plans and speeding traffic. Other matters of concern were a broken manhole at the Cross Roads and the broken road sign on the A26 near the garage.

The next meetings of the council, to which residents are welcome, are on Tuesdays 4th December and 8th January (note second Tuesday in the month due to holidays) at 7.30pm in the Village Hall (upper meeting room).

Approved minutes of the meeting will appear on the Parish Council website www.wateringburypc.kentparishes.gov.uk in due course.

Tonbridge and Malling Electoral Services Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

T & M are required to make a compulsory review every 5 years. This review is now underway. If you wish to comment on any aspects of polling you can do so in writing to Electoral Services Office at T & M BC, Kings Hill or by email to voting@tmbc.gov.uk Full details of the review can be found on the Council website www.tmbc.gov.uk/PDR

CROSS ROADS PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS THIS MEETING HAS BEEN POSTPONED AND WILL NOT TAKE PLACE

KCC are holding a public consultation from the 5 December to 13 January on proposed improvements to Watringbury Crossroads. There are two options being put forward. Both improve capacity at the crossroads to allow traffic to flow more effectively while improving pedestrian crossing facilities. From 5 December plans for these options are available online at www.kent.gov.uk/watringburycrossroads

KCC are keen to get the views from the local community and a consultation document will be delivered to all properties in Watringbury in early December. This will give more details of the proposed options and outline how residents can have their say.

They are also holding two drop-in consultation events in Watringbury Village Hall. KCC Officers will be available to answer any questions on Wednesday 12 December 3.30pm – 8pm and Thursday 20 December 3.30pm – 7pm. Please come along to an event and complete a questionnaire giving your views on the proposed options.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE

Thank you to all who came to the Fayre on 17 November especially those who struggled with the bumper to bumper traffic caused by the closure of the M20 for bridge repairs The total raised towards the day to day running costs of our village church was £1220.

VILLAGE PEOPLE – TRIBUTES

Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 January for our February magazine.

MARK PEMBLE OWEN ENGLISH 22nd April 1924 – 06th November 2018

Mark Pemble Owen English of Manor Farm, Watringbury, died peacefully at dawn 06th November 2018. Beloved husband of Elizabeth, much-loved father of William, Alice and Katharine and adored grandfather of Eleanor, Alexandra, Frederick, Edward and Madeleine.

Mark English was born and raised at Manor Farm. He, like generations before him, was a Kentish farmer. He was educated in Rochester and St. Lawrence, Ramsgate. During World War II, he served with the 24th (Malling) Battalion, The Royal West Kent Regiment, (Home Guard), as a Reserved Occupation Soldier (farmer) in protection of Watringbury against the possibility of German invasion.

After the war he became a skilled farmer directing operations across 3 farms growing hops, top fruit, soft fruit, vegetables and livestock. He was involved in the creation of the Watringbury based Agricultural Maintenance Group (AMG), opposite the village stocks, a collaborative group which maintained and sold farm machinery. An innovative and modernising farmer, he was one of the first to move into on-farm refrigeration of fruit.

In his private life he excelled in shooting and sailing. Much of his shooting took place at Roydon where he was known for being a brilliant shot. He was made Commodore of the Medway Yacht Club in the early 1960s; he sailed his Dragon K200 class sailing boat. While at the Yacht Club he met his wife of 58 years, Elizabeth who at that time was a nursing sister on the tall mast sailing ship, Arethusa, moored in the Medway.

Mark English's legacy continues today. He would be delighted to know that the family will continue to live and operate at Manor Farm, restoring the ancient buildings, resurrecting the farm's historical hop-growing legacy and creating a brewery, helping to rejuvenate Waterringbury's agricultural and industrial past. *William English*

DOREEN VINCENT 1926 – 2018

On 12 August, we said goodbye to our dear Mum. Her final months were spent at home and despite dreadful pain she still showed her humour and care for everyone else. It was this genuine desire to look after and care for others in need that shone through her entire life. As a nurse, wife, mother, granny, great granny, daughter, sister and friend, she put everyone else first and always tried to help.

Mum and Dad were married for 70 years and enjoyed so many happy times with family and friends. Mum loved parties, meeting people, nursing, going on holidays, seeing friends, singing in the choir, the Church, dancing, flowers, cooking, cats, horses, birds, dogs, well in fact just about everything. She loved life, she loved us and most of all she loved Dad.

She didn't like snakes and boats weren't her favourite either.

Mum was fiercely loyal and supported us on our journey through life with encouragement and enthusiasm. She worked hard and was a fighter. She lived a wonderful full life and made a difference to so many. We miss her every day but thank God she was our Mum. *Denise Harker*

MICHAEL JAMES EDWARD "MIKE" PURSEY

11 May 1933 – 10 September 2018

Mike was born in east Kent and educated at Dover Grammar School. Following 3 years National Service in the RAF he joined the Kent Police and saw service in villages and towns throughout the county Mike's final post was as a Superintendent at the Force H.Q. in Sutton Road Maidstone, where he headed-up a department responsible for the introduction of Computers to the Kent Police Service.

Mike married in 1954 and with his first wife Olive produced a family. Sadly she died in 1975, and for a while Mike was very lost. Fortunately he met Jan who had her own family, and they married in 1982. Jan and Mike moved to Waterringbury in 1990. In Waterringbury Mike rapidly became part of the local community, being appointed in 1995 first Company Secretary and then Chairman of Waterringbury Pear Orchards Ltd., formed by local residents to protect and preserve as a nature reserve, an important piece of land in the middle of the village. He was an active member of Maidstone Horticultural Society serving as Treasurer and Chairman. Mike also enjoyed membership of the Rochester Probus Club. More than this, he took up wood turning as a hobby and became very skilled. He was commissioned to turn the 'wooden candlesticks' which grace the candelabra and pulpit in our church.

Mike also took on many roles in the village church and after his Confirmation in 2002 served as a very hardworking Churchwarden. Mike has won his place in the afterworld, as well as the warmest thanks of all those who have benefited so much from his gentle care and concern. *EFB*

SEASONS GREETINGS

On behalf of the **Parish Council the Chairman Mike Wells and the Clerk Sue Cockburn** wish all residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. They thank residents who have attended council meetings this year.

Church Wardens Peter Bond and Liz Gummer thank everyone for their support of our village church in so many ways in 2018 and wish you all every blessing for Christmas and during 2019.

Benny and Rupal at The Handy Stores wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Over the holidays their revised opening times will be **Christmas Eve 7am - 6pm, Christmas Day Closed, Boxing Day 7am - 2pm, 27-29 Dec 6am - 8.30pm, Sunday 30th 7am-2pm, 31 Dec 7am-6pm and 1 Jan 7am - 2pm.**

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The month of November began with our Remembrance Service in St John's Church to coincide with the centenary of the Armistice and to enable the children and parents to view the beautiful 'Carpet of Poppies' down the centre aisle. In October, our children worked alongside the St John's Crafters to create the large outdoor poppies which have been hung around the village, near the homes and work places of the 256 boys and men who served.

We've been collecting quality toys for women's refuges to help families in crisis have something special at Christmas. Thank you to St John's Church for organising this and collecting the many basketfuls of beautiful gifts for children which were generously donated.

December will soon be upon us, a magical time in school but also the busiest! Our younger children will perform their Christmas nativities on 11th and 12th December. Our older children are doing something slightly different this year with a Carol Concert in St John's Church on 18th December, 2pm. We warmly welcome all!

Our popular **Christmas Craft Fayre will be held on Saturday, 1st December from 12-3pm.** From crafts and cakes to games and gaiety, there's much to enjoy for all ages. Children get another chance to enjoy making traditional crafts on 14th December from 3.30pm where they'll create Christmas decorations to take home before having tea with Santa's elves in the hall. This promises to be a wonderful event which may become a new tradition. And, as always, a longstanding and favourite tradition is our 'Stories Round the Christmas Tree' on 18th December at 6.45pm. Children return to school with pillows and blankets and settle around the tree for cocoa and Christmas stories by candlelight. Parents will enjoy mulled wine and conversation in a nearby classroom.

Term ends on Wednesday, 20th December following a busy morning of pantomime and Christmas lunch and the new spring term begins on Thursday, 3rd January 2019. The children, staff and governors of Wateringbury CE Primary School join me in wishing our community a happy and peaceful Christmas-time as we all reach out to others to spread a little joy.

Chasey Crawford Usher – Headteacher

KEEP FIT IN 2019

To help with those New Year Resolutions there are two **new classes starting in January in our Village Hall:**

Mondays 1-2:30pm a Iyengar yoga class contact

Wendy Newell T: 01732 840660 M: 07917 663383

Wednesday 2 -2.45pm for a Seated Class contact

Carol Welfare FABS Fitness Move it or Lose it M: 07941345001

"The Bible In 20 Minutes" - A short overview of the Bible now available at www.easybible.net

WATERINGBURY BABY & TODDLER GROUP

We have had a very busy term with our craft in which we did pumpkin pictures for harvest followed by firework pictures. Now we are well on our way with our Christmas decorations for our Christmas party, when we will be having an entertainer, Father Christmas followed by lunch for the children. we have lots of toys, we do craft and have a singing session. If you are interested in joining us we meet every Wednesday and Friday during term time from 10am to 12 noon, the cost is £2 for the first child and £1 for any other children this includes drinks and snacks for the children and tea/coffee for the adults. For further info contact Linda on 01732 522 437.

TESTON & WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL

As we continue with our term theme 'Autumn/Winter', we will be busy leaf printing, conker rolling, and making our very own Preschool Christmas cake as well as Christmas decorations to hang on our Preschool Christmas tree. The children will enjoy decorating the tree (unsupervised!!) so parents beware they may like to decorate yours at home!

We have started our phonics group this term for our older children to start preparing them for big school, while our younger children are enjoying the many clever finger activities we have put together to help develop their fine motor skills.

Our Christmas concert will be taking place on our last day of term which is Friday 14 December.

I must also mention a big thank you to Teston Farm Shop who kindly supports our preschool by donating fresh fruit for our children's café which runs throughout the morning playtime. Our children enjoy choosing from the fantastic range of seasonal fruits we receive every week.

If you are interested in joining our preschool please contact Tina Driver on 07805 796353 and come along for a taster session or visit our website at www.testonandwateringburypreschool.co.uk for more information.

A MARATHON CHALLENGE

Wateringbury resident John Collett, battled through to complete the Dublin Marathon after sustaining a knee injury just before the halfway point. John, despite suffering from type one diabetes, has been taking on increasingly punishing personal challenges, and is now thinking of taking on ultra-marathons. He ran the Dublin marathon to raise money for Demelza House, a hospice that provides care for seriously ill children. John is a busy family man but, as well as working on endurance training, he still makes time to coach the Wateringbury Under 13s football team, where his son Harry is a striker, and is also the leader of the Wateringbury Scouts Group. If you would like to support John with a charitable donation to Demelza House, please visit <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JohnCollett2>

VILLAGE THANKS

A big thank you to the Friends of Wateringbury for spending a wet morning cleaning and tidying the crossroads gardens. And a thank you to Bijou Nurseries and John Bennett Billiards for sponsoring the first container of plants to brighten

up the area. Any other local businesses who would be interested in sponsoring additional troughs and planters please contact Sarah Hudson on 07740 664843.

WAR NEWS THANKS

Rostrum thanks local historian Terry Bird for his monthly articles over the last four years about Wateringbury 1914-1918. These have now been developed and expanded into a book "*We Will Remember Them*" which is on sale at £5 from Terry 01622 812566.

Dail Whiting's booklets of short biographies of those on the village and school memorials are also available at £3 each. All make easy to send Christmas gifts to those with village connections.

WATERINGBURY CLUB (Entrance on Tonbridge Road) Invites you to NEW YEAR'S EVE ENTERTAINMENT with Kacy Wild from 8.30pm Non members very welcome

The club has excellent facilities – Full Size Snooker Table – Pool Table Darts and Darts Team – Golf Society - Sky TV with Sky and BT Sport to enjoy and, of course, reasonably priced liquid refreshment ☎ 812167

THE WATERINGBURY PLAYERS PANTO

Our pantomime for this year is **Mother Goose**. The story of Mother Goose is possibly the oldest story to be turned into a pantomime. It dates back to an ancient Greek legend about a goose that laid golden eggs. It is also one of the earliest pantomimes seen in Great Britain, nearly two hundred years ago.

The Demon King tricks old Mother Goose into handing over her golden egg laying goose Priscilla, in return for eternal beauty. The Demon, not content with his new-found wealth also takes Jill, the Squire's daughter and Jack's true love as his new bride. Vanity leads to guilt and remorse as Mother Goose see the error of her ways and sets out on a quest with Jack, Silly Billy, Sally and the Squire to rescue Jill and Priscilla. Will they succeed? Will good triumph over evil? Come along and find out.

Performances take place on **Friday 25 and Saturday 26 January 2019** at Wateringbury Village Hall. All tickets are priced at £10, with a child concession of £5 on the Saturday Matinee only. **TICKETS go on sale on Saturday 15 December at both the Post Office and the Handy Stores.** email: wateringburyplayers@hotmail.co.uk

Tudor Price

CENTENARY OF ARMISTICE NOVEMBER 2018

Our carpet of hand-made poppies event was held on the first weekend in November. The church was buzzing on all three days and visitors came from near and far. So thank you Gillian Sessions, Cathy Miller, Gwyneth Sutton and David Merry for creating the carpet and the Wednesday crafters for their 4 years of poppy making. *The variety and shades of the poppies reflected our community - diverse yet when blending together made an impressive whole.*

All our visitors were moved by the amazing central aisle, Rosemary Skinner's Font and the poppies on our war memorial altar. Thanks are also due to Ros Diment and her many helpers who provided delicious refreshments and to local historians Terry Bird and Dail Whiting for sharing their knowledge gained by hours and hours of research and for the WWI items displayed.

Thank you to the children of our school who, with guidance from crafters, made 250 poppies to help us remember all the men from the village school who fought in the Great War. Many people wandered the village looking at the poppies which helped us all realise the impact of the War on the whole village. The village and church wall poppies would not have been possible without Rosemary's hard work and design skills. Rostrum was honoured to be able to sponsor the village poppies, the cost of which was co-incidentally £100.

Sunday 11th November - Remembrance Day itself began at 6am when local piper Jenny Barrow played the lament *The Battle's o'er* at our war memorial. What a memorable Remembrance Service. We did remember them with such pride. Thank you to all who took part in the service:

- our Readers Barry Fisher and Alastair Byron who led the Service
- the three young people from the Scouts and Guides who read the Rolls of Honour with clarity and reverence and Ted Bates for the Immortal Words
- the readers of the bible passages Sheena Stewart for the Guides and Tudor Price for the Scouts
- David Cope for his moving reading of 'In Flanders Fields'
- Hilary Fisher and the Choir for sharing their musical talents
- John Collett for telling us about the Scouts Summer Expedition to the WWI Battlefields to pay tribute to the 5 Watlington Scouts who lost their lives
- the uniformed organisations whose leaders should be so proud of themselves for superb leadership and their young people who were so smartly dressed and who participated so immaculately
- all who worked behind the scenes to allow for the smooth running of the service and the smartness of the church and churchyard. Nepicar Landscapes gave their services to give the churchyard grass a special cut
- and of course the congregation of over 400 (253 adults and 157 children) plus those who attended the Laying of Wreaths and 2 Minutes silence at the war memorial. All reflected the strength of remembrance within the village

After the Service when the uniformed organisations had group photos: it made many of us so proud to belong to Watlington – such promise for the future.

At 4pm our ringers were joined by others and rang a special peal to commemorate the Centenary of the Armistice.

Even the sun shone for us. What a privilege to belong to such a caring village community. *Christine Byron*

PS The poppy weekend raised £943 - £300 will be donated to British Legion Industries which helps people with disabilities to return to the workplace, £300 to the Crafters for the various charities the group supports and £343 for church funds. The Remembrance Service Collection was donated to the British Legion Poppy Appeal and amounted to a staggering record of £1051.54 plus Gift Aid.

CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

[SJB Church web site: www.watlingtonchurch.org.uk](http://www.watlingtonchurch.org.uk)

[Church Face Book Page: fb.me/watlingtonchurch](https://fb.me/watlingtonchurch)

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

Saturdays 1 December - 3-5 pm Messy Church

There will be craft activities, a short bible story and prayer times and we always end with afternoon tea.

Sunday 2 December - 10am - Holy Communion

Sunday 9 December – 10am - Morning Praise

Sunday 16 December

8.30am - Prayer Book Said Communion

10 am - All Age Worship including Nativity Play

An informal service for all ages with an enactment of the Nativity by children from Messy Church and Sundays Cool.

Tuesday 18 December - 2pm – School Carol Service

Our school celebrates Christmas with a sung performance by Years 3-6, as well as traditional carols and music.

Thursday 20 December - 8pm Nine Lessons and Carols

A candlelit service of lessons and carols

Sunday 23 December - 10am - Holy Communion

Monday 24 December, Christmas Eve

5pm - Crib Service

A popular service for all ages where young children can join in helping to fill our Stable with the traditional visitors. Well-known carols for all to sing.

11pm - Midnight Communion

An atmospheric service that brings us into Christmas Day. Blessings and Communion are offered for everyone.

Christmas Day, 10am - Family Communion

A less formal service with Communion and Blessings.

Sunday 30 December Benefice Communion Service 10am in Teston Church

Saturday 5 January – 3-5pm – Messy Church

Sunday 6 January – 10am – Holy Communion

Sunday 13 January – 10am - Prayer Book Matins

Sunday 20 January

8.30am - Prayer Book Said Communion

10am - Christingle Service

*Come and share in our Family Christingle Service - a celebration of light at a dark time of year with the candles
in the Christingle oranges*

Sunday 27 January – 10am – Holy Communion

We hope you will be able to join us. Refreshments are served after most of our 10am services so do stay if you can.

A VIEW FROM THE PEWS

My dad doesn't like Christmas. As it approaches, he deploys a well-used saying of his own making. "Christmas? Not again. Didn't we do that last year?" My mum usually berates him at this point, but before long she launches into a tirade against the materialistic side of Christmas - "It's the spiritual meaning that matters!" she will say.

It's quite easy to get cynical about this time. There is a long list to moan about: Shop muzak; cheezy adverts designed to warm your heart and empty your wallet; planning and enduring tense family get-togethers; overeating; overspending; forced feel-good

expectations; dodgy office parties. Or how about the morality of Turkeys; the sustainability of tree cutting; bad plastic trees; garish lights covering houses; lengthy pretentious round-up letters; odd films you would never usually watch; overexcited children; dubious moral parenting tricks (Santa won't visit if you've not been good!).

More positive minded folk might go for: catching up with old friends and family; roasted chestnuts and other food treats; fun and games; singing around the tree; unpacking old decorations with treasured memories; cards with news; wrapping and unwrapping presents; the satisfaction of a well-eaten meal; a toasty fire.

It's all about mindset really, well maybe not 'all'. This time of year also brings memories of those dearly departed. We trip down memory lane, and a tear comes to our eye. For recent deaths, the pain is sharper. When we are stuck into the festivities, we can forget those deeper things, and suddenly they will spring up when we least expect it. Under the performance pressure of it all, relationships can stumble, sharp remarks get exchanged, and joyful celebration turns into trouble, especially when there's one poor soul left to keep the show on the road.

So make an early December promise, that whatever goes right or wrong, its love and friendship that matters most, not the stuff you have to pay for. If you tend to have a row when you have a few to drink, well maybe have a few less this year. There's nothing wrong with an average Christmas. Try not to rerun old arguments and let misremembered tales pass. We are story creatures, so elaborations come naturally. Help out where the work is needed and if the power fails, and Turkey gets burnt, have a good laugh about it. And if ever you find yourself staring glumly at the bottom of the glass and wondering what it's all about, remember that silly old story. The idea that a baby born this day might change the world for better forever. It's not such a bad story to tell, and maybe it brings a new message for you.

You'll be most welcome up at St John the Baptist this Christmas, whoever you are. Our choir-led Nine Lessons and Carols service (usually with candles) captures a traditional feel —Thursday 20th at 8pm. The Christmas Eve services are increasingly popular for parents with busy days to manage; at 5pm its the Crib service which will be filled with multitudes of younger attendees dressed in all manner of Christmassy outfits. The usual late 'first' communion service of Christmas follows at 11pm with Rev Nick. For those seeking a morning service on Christmas day, there is Family Communion at 10am with Canon Alan Vousden. **Whatever your spiritual practice this season, from the pews of St John the Baptist Church, we wish for you peace, joy, love and hope, now and in the days ahead.**

Bob Bowie

Switch on of the North Pole pub Christmas Lights

At 6.30pm on Friday 7 December

Join our church choir who will be leading the singing of carols. They will be collecting for

Prostate Cancer Research.

COFFEE BREAK - CRAFT AND CHAT

Wednesdays 12 December, 9, 16, 23 and 30 January

10.30-12.30

Due to our Christmas break there is only one meeting in December; however since many find January a dull month we will be meeting every week in January. Crafts are optional, many just come along for the company. We have a really pleasant morning meeting in the social area at the church, so do come along, it would be good to see you. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Pauline and Gillian

Church Changes

The Malling Deanery Mission and Ministry Plan has been prepared to respond to areas of population growth and to the key factors set by the Rochester Diocese for the deployment of clergy namely the parish population size; level of regular Sunday attendance and financial viability. These factors together with the creation of the new Kings Hill St Gabriel's parish with a full time incumbent have led to a proposed new Benefice from the parishes of Mereworth and West Peckham and Wateringbury

The Parochial Church Councils are meeting jointly to get to know each other and agree the name of the new Benefice and how they will work together. Informal contacts have also been made e.g the Wateringbury church choir sang at the recent Deanery Confirmation service at Mereworth as they do not have an adult choir.

Needless to say this being the C of E there's a formidably lengthy process to be gone through to achieve the outcome which will unfold well into 2019. It culminates in a decision by the Church Commissioners and if approved the Rev Pat Dickin the current incumbent at Mereworth and West Peckham will become the full-time incumbent of the new benefice.

What we would stress is that there's nothing to fear in this process of change. St John the Baptist will still be the same working parish it is. We can continue relationships with friends and colleagues in Teston and East Malling eg the Mothers Union. We need to hold in our prayers those taking forward the process both here and in similar discussions between the parishes of East Malling and Larkfield and Teston and Barming respectively.

Barry Fisher Lay Co Chairman Malling Deanery Synod & Vice Chairman St John the Baptist PCC; Peter Bond & Liz Gummer - Church Wardens; Sheena Self PCC & Deanery Secretary; Richard Dunn PCC Treasurer.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

On 21 October Rupert John Max Davis was baptised by Rev Nick Williams

GUIDES

Wateringbury guides have finished 2018 with a wide variety of activities. We had a Mexican evening marking the Day of the Dead, with a piñata full of sweets, and authentic tapas to try. We attended Remembrance Sunday with the rest of the uniformed groups, we had a Scottish evening with dancing and flapjack, we have made sweets (and eaten many) for Christmas and the last week of the term we went to Capstone Park to ride the toboggans and the snow tubes which was brilliant fun. We were also lucky enough to be invited to go to the church to have a go at bell ringing. It was a great fun evening.

We are starting 2019 with lots of exciting activities planned. We have booked a canal boat trip along the Grand Union Canal for June following our very successful trip in the summer of 2017. We have sleepovers planned, we hope to arrange a taster session of fencing, and we will have a visit by a medical detection dog, lots of cooking both indoors, and outdoors on fires, and challenge evenings that just may include a go at car maintenance, DIY, first aid, and in fact anything that we as leaders can dream up! If you live in the village and have a skill that you would be willing to show guides, we would love to hear from you – the more obscure or challenging the better.

If you have a daughter who is aged between 10 and 14 and would like to join us, or perhaps re-join us then do please let us know. We have a new programme this year and we have new leaders and we want the girls in and around the village to enjoy guides the way we used to so do come and give us a try. You can contact us at wateringburyguides@hotmail.com or ring Sheena on 01622 815416. *Emily and Hayleigh Deadman Sheena Stewart*

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

Graded As Outstanding By Ofsted

Whilst the weather has turned a little more chillier and damp, our spirits certainly haven't. Our After Schools Club enjoyed a BBQ, bonfire, sparklers and 'guy making' evening outside. Finishing off with ghost stories and roasted marshmallows. Our pre-schoolers have enjoyed pumpkin activities, taking part in Halloween games and craft activities. The damp weather has given children opportunities to play in the mud, making mud pies, cakes and soup. Our preschool children made a 'Poppy Wreath' for the remembrance day service at St Mary the Virgin Church in Nettlestead.

NWPS Toddler Group

Our toddler group has also started up again in the Nettlestead Village Hall, Thursday morning 9.30-11.30 (term time); come for a coffee and natter whilst the littlies play with the lovely toys and socialise with other children.

For Childcare, Education and Out of School Club, including holiday club, enquiries: 01622 813120, enquiries@nwps.uk

FOOTPATH GROUP

2 December meet at the village hall at 2pm for local walk

26 December Boxing Day meet village hall at 10:00 for a 6 to 7 mile walk to East Peckham old Church. Bring packed lunch.

1 January meet village hall at 2pm for our annual New Year's Day walk to walk off the festive excess.

Our November walk was up to Flite Woods. Leaving the start, we went along the Gransden Path then turning towards Canon Farm we crossed the lane and joined the path alongside the Kings Hill golf course. We traversed the permissive path that skirts the perimeter through Flite Wood, inspecting the WWII gun port on the way. Then following the

path round, with the golf course on our left we crossed Danns Lane. Due to a fallen tree a diversion was taken passing the new solar farm to Wistaria Cottage then along Old Road back to the start via the Mill Pond.

Kevin Reynolds 07713740375

ROSTRUM WEBSITE

Due to changes made by our provider our website had to be completely redesigned and so was out of use for a few weeks. Our apologies for the inconvenience this has caused to our on-line readers. Sincere thanks to Tudor Price for donating many hours rebuilding our site for us.

HISTORY SOCIETY

On **19 December 2018** Martin Crowther will bring along mystery artefacts for us to guess what they are. As this is our Christmas meeting wine and mince pies will be available. Our first meeting of 2019 will be on **16 January entitled "The Bayeux Tapestry"** by Imogen Corrigan. Our meetings in the village hall are at 7.40pm when tea and coffee is available with the speakers beginning at 8pm. Subscriptions are £10 for the year with visitors at £3. We wish you a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year and look forward to welcoming you.

WATERINGBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On 13 December we will be holding our Christmas Lunch which is for members only. Our first talk in the New Year, on **10 January**, will be a speaker from Castle Farm, at Shoreham, who is coming along to tell us about the farm and how it changed from "**Hops to Lavender**". The competition is a 'Lavender Bag'.

Derek Marsh our November speaker told us that from a young boy he had been fascinated by trees and now owned several acres of woodland holding protected trees and his beehives; from the honey collected he makes polish and candles. During an active question time members were able to get help with regard to the care of their own furniture.

Janet Talbert