

Rostrum May 2020 E issue only

Welcome you are a history maker!

This is the first time in over 100 years that Rostrum, Wateringbury Village Magazine, and its predecessor The Wateringbury Parish Magazine has not been published in paper format.

As we notified in our April issue the decision was taken not to print the magazine in hard format while we are all in lock-down due to the coronavirus restrictions. Many organisations have closed and hope to return to "normal" in September (as does Rostrum).

Village Diary

Tuesday and Friday mornings in the village hall – Community Fridge (take what you need – give what you can). Slots are timed, and only one person is allowed into the hall at a time to maintain safe distancing. One bag per person, minimum donation £5. A delivery service is also available for those self isolating. Very well done to Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson and her volunteers for setting up this valuable community asset.

New Rostrum Distributor wanted for Glebe Meadow

When we return to "normal" and print our magazines we are looking for a new distributor to deliver to Glebe Meadow. If you live in, or near, Glebe Meadow and have half an hour to spare 10 times a year please get in touch rostrum2@hotmail.com Our sincere thanks go to Lana Newick who is "retiring" having delivered the magazines in her road for 25 years.

How to Celebrate 75th Anniversary of VE (the end of WW2 in Europe)

Look out your Red White and Blue.

Get together with your neighbours and plan a

Stay Safe Front Garden Picnic Street Party with your neighbours on

VE 75 Bank Holiday Friday 8th May

English Heritage have some suggestions including A Spotify music playlist

<https://ve-vjday75.gov.uk/plan-your-ve-day-party/>



Further on in this issue are articles about the village's original celebrations in 1945 and the 50th Anniversary in 1995.

If your street celebrates please send photos to rostrum2@hotmail.com so we can compile a photo album of village events.

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 May for our June e-magazine.*

The village has lost several residents in recent weeks. Rostrum sends its sincere condolences to their families and friends. To conform to Covid-19 lock-down regulations only very close family were able to attend their funerals. Many hope to have Thanksgiving Services for families and friends to attend once the restrictions are lifted.

REV ALAN SEARLE 28.3.47 – 10.3.20

Alan Mansfield Searle died suddenly while in the care of the Emily Jackson home in Sevenoaks. Alan and Joy and their family came to live in Watlington in the early 1980s. Alan served as church warden for many years and in the time of Rev Denys Gower felt God was calling him into the priesthood. While working full-time for the NHS in IT, which necessitated wrestling with the traffic on the M25 on a daily basis, and coping with a blood disorder, Alan completed the necessary studies. Following ordination Alan served Watlington church faithfully on a non-stipendiary basis and ministered in the Benefice and further afield. Sadly in the last few years Alan became increasingly disabled by vascular dementia and was lovingly and devotedly cared for by Joy for as long as this was possible.

We would like to thank everyone for the many cards, letters and gifts we have received since Alan died. Each and everyone has been much appreciated, the kind words, thoughts and memories of Alan have been a great comfort at this time of isolation. Revd Jim Brown conducted a very special service at the graveside in the most beautiful weather, Alan is now at peace in God's loving arms. We hope to hold a thanksgiving service for his life some time in the future, in the mean time thank you to everyone for such care, love and support shown to us in the past few weeks. Joy & family.

Richard Dunn

We were all shocked and stunned to learn of Richard's death in hospital in the early hours of Tuesday 24th March. Richard and Ruth's Caribbean cruise ship, MV Braemar, experienced an outbreak of the coronavirus and so the ship had difficulty in finding a country which would let passengers disembark. Cuba showed compassion so eventually they arrived home late on Thursday evening (19th) and went into isolation. Richard was poorly and on Monday he was taken into hospital and later placed in intensive care. Within a few hours he had lost his battle against the virus. Richard had spent his life helping others. His working life was in teaching; many years spent at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School within the senior management team. Approaching retirement Richard and Ruth moved into the village to be nearer to their

grandson. Richard answered the plea for a Church Treasurer, a demanding role which he did with typical precision and an eye to careful management of our funds. He was in a holy dusters team to clean the church and set up second-hand book sales. At any function Richard quietly was there to lend a hand, usually one of the first to arrive and the last to leave. He also shared his expertise with our village school as a Foundation governor and volunteered in the book section of the Cancer Research shop in Maidstone.

Mandy Mitchelmore October 1960- March 2020

Mandy was a local lass attending primary schools in East Malling and then Invicta in Maidstone. She did her nurse training at Guys Hospital in London and later worked in Queen Elizabeth hospital in Woolwich as assistant director of nursing. In May 1991 she married Dave in East Malling Church. While their daughter Shona was young she studied for her second Masters Degree. In 2004 she started work at the University of Greenwich and her final post with them was as Principal Lecturer and Programme Leader in Adult Nursing and Paramedic Sciences. She was fiercely positive and selfless in her service for others; even in her own difficult times she was full of love and hope. Her greatest joy was her family Dave, Shona and Tina.

Ted Vincent (7/01/26- 10/04/20)

Ted died at home in the early hours of Good Friday. He was a man of many talents, a skilled mechanic, wood turner and gardener, who could turn his hand successfully to most things. (He refurbished the chandelier which hangs over the font in the church). He had a life-long interest in aircraft which stemmed from his National Service in the RAF. Yet for all his talents he was a modest man, interested in others, and justly proud of his children Denise and David, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He maintained his cheerful disposition and positive outlook on life to the end. We will miss seeing Ted out and about on his mobility scooter.

Josephine (Jo) Williams (nee Wells)

Jo spent most of her life in Wateringbury.. She was born in Old Road and lived there until her family moved during World War II to Wateringbury Villa on the Tonbridge Road. She married Aubrey in Wateringbury Church in March 1956 and after living in Mereworth for some years they returned to Wateringbury until ill health meant she needed specialist nursing care. She died on Palm Sunday. Jo's father Charles was vergar at the church for many years and Jo enjoyed being a bellringer. Like many of her generation she worked at the Phoenix Brewery before the arrival of her son Huw. In later years she assisted at the village post office in the days when Mike Barnes was postmaster and her cheerful smile and friendly hello welcomed customers.

Borough Councillor's Report – May 2020

Living Wall

The living wall adjacent to the village hall is now fully operational and the irrigation system is connected up to the water supply. The plants are growing, and will soon fill the area, hiding the black nylon compartments. The bed next to the road is also looking colourful – full of plants that help clean the air. I was successful in my application to the National Lottery and we have been awarded £4,100 to do the same thing to the other side around the finger post and other signs. Hopefully, we can get started soon, as soon as the lockdown has been lifted.

Wateringbury Community Fridge

The Wateringbury Community Fridge is very well attended, and we are helping over 80 families every week! This is open on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 11am and 1pm, at the village hall. Community Fridges redistribute good food to communities, allowing them to access nutritious food, whilst saving money and reducing waste. The motto is 'Take what you need, pay what you can'. Anyone can come along - just bring a bag for life, so you can fill it up with fresh fruit and veg, meat and all sorts of food cupboard staples. We ask for a minimum

donation of £5. If you would like to come along, you will need a time-slot, to comply with social distancing, so please email me on sarahhudson500@gmail.com. We can also deliver to you, if you are self-isolating.

Community Day – Friday 8th May

Because of Covid-19, this has sadly been cancelled.

Garden Waste collections

Due to staff shortages, and to ensure that all the other waste is collected promptly and safely, the brown bin collections have been suspended during the pandemic. Please visit the TMBC website to check when it is reinstated.

Bonfires

Please could I ask you all to refrain from having bonfires, if you can help it. There are vulnerable people in the village with breathing problems who have been advised to stay indoors for 15 weeks due to the pandemic. During the warm weather, their windows are open, so they can benefit from some fresh air. They can't do this if you have a bonfire! Please be considerate to others.

ON-LINE CHURCH SERVICES

Wateringbury church have been gradually developing their Sunday Online audio worship and can now offer an introduction by our Reader Barry, a short bible reading, an address and prayers. Just click on the link to listen <http://tiny.cc/krymmz>

Those scheduled to give the address are:

3rd May – Canon Liz Walker

10th May – Barry Fisher

17th May - Kate Millar and Sunday's Cool Team

24th May - Rev Jim Brown

31st May Pentecost (Whit Sunday) - Bishop Simon (who lives in Kings Hill)

Further Online worship is offered from our cluster.

St Mary's, West Malling

<http://www.stmaryswestmall.org.uk/?cat=102>

St Gabriel's, Kings Hill

<http://www.kingshillchurch.org.uk/worship-at-home/>

All can be viewed on-line at any time.

SCRATCH NOTES FROM A TEMPORARILY EMPTY PEW

The Church is currently closed.

However it is supporting a YouTube Channel which you can visit here <http://tiny.cc/bg27mz> . You will find a few reflections from folk known to the village each week.

Sunday 12th April, Easter Day:

We took our daily exercise early, just before dawn and walked through the village and up to the Church, which has remained locked since the shutdown. Our Church has been the site of an Easter Service every Easter Sunday for centuries so it seemed right to stop and pray briefly. Having checked the site was secure and intact, we pitched up at the eastern end of the Churchyard, lit a candle on an old tombstone and waited as the light grew in the East. We said a few words, read the account of the empty tomb and then departed home for breakfast, as the beams of sunlight caught the tallest treetops. It felt good to do although we were groggy for the rest of Easter Day.

Wednesday 15th April: Daily Exercise

Today the daily exercise is in search of wild garlic so we ventured up to Old Road and then off along the footpath over the little bridge and into the woods where there is usually a good patch, and indeed there was this time. There is also a little den someone has built, I think by children, although you can never tell in these times. There are wanderers who occasionally pitch up in a field or the woods before moving on. There were a couple of those "awkward socially distanced passing-by occasions" as I realise the gap is a little too narrow for safe distance and so have to "pull into a siding" to allow the other exercisers to pass by.

Virtual Pub

Later that evening I head to the virtual pub (in my study) to see a few friends online and we catch up on news: a returned child from the other side of the

world – a great relief to the family; talk from a friend whose company helped make the London Nightingale Hospital possible; reports from a fellow involved in food supply who does solitary work, mostly out in the fields; anxious chat about the prospects for businesses surviving this lockdown. Unrepeatable jokes are exchanged. We meet more now than we did before. I guess it is an attempt at normality.

Thursday 16th April

Our garden offers a great view of sunset. I had wandered outside to look at another glorious red glowing with lit undersides of clouds. I realised it was Thursday and 8pm and the crescendo began of clattering, clapping, horns and pans being banged like drums. The strange quiet world which has enveloped our village was momentarily interrupted by the voices and noises of people. The crowd is still out there, even if it is temporarily silenced. At that moment we are united as a people in an act of hope and thankfulness for those on the front line of our new situation.

Bob Bowie

RICHARD DUNN – A tribute from Watlington CE Primary School

The reality of the current coronavirus crisis was brought home to our school community in the starkest way possible when we learned of the sudden and unexpected death of our school governor Richard Dunn.

Richard had been a voluntary foundation governor at Watlington since 2013, shortly after moving to the village. He had retired from a career in teaching in 2005, having been Deputy Headteacher at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells for 16 years, where his responsibilities included Estates Management and Finance, as well as teaching A-level chemistry. He subsequently worked in the same school as Assistant Bursar for a further 10 years, before finally retiring in 2015. His educational expertise and senior leadership experience made him a highly valued member of our governing body.

He cared deeply about our local school and was dedicated to ensuring pupils at Watringbury received the very best educational experience possible, by supporting and helping to shape our school's improvement over the last seven years. Richard was also a former chair of our Finance Committee (now our Resources Committee), a former vice-chair of the governing body and, more recently, our Lead Governor for History. He was in school undertaking a monitoring visit in this role just a few weeks before his untimely death.



Richard gave his time freely and generously and we all benefitted from his wealth of educational experience and knowledge. Although Richard exemplified the role of a governor, he was so much more than that. Richard had a deep sense of social responsibility and was also actively involved in the life of our local church as well as our school. He was never too busy to give his time, never scared to speak his mind or ask challenging questions in the best interests of our pupils, yet always determined to make a difference. Richard was our wise owl who will be remembered for his cheery nature and for his genuine commitment to do whatever he could for the community in which he lived. He wanted our school to flourish and he was excited about our plans to expand two of our smaller classrooms this summer. We owe it to Richard to make sure we follow through on this ambition, despite our fundraising campaign currently being curtailed due to the coronavirus lockdown.

All those who knew Richard will feel a huge sense of loss and an enormous debt of gratitude for all that he contributed and achieved. He will be sorely missed by us all and our thoughts and prayers are with Ruth and his family at this very sad and difficult time.

Stay safe everyone and please remember that the single most important action we can all take in fighting coronavirus is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

Taken from '*The Rainbow Children*' by Gemma Peacock

The history books will talk of them,
Now adults, fully grown.
Those little boys and girls back then,
The ones who stayed at home.
They'll tell you that they fixed this world,
Of all they would fulfil.
The RAINBOW children building dreams,
They'd dreamed whilst time stood still.

Gail Isted and Mark Warren –
Co-chairs, Governing Body
Chasey Crawford Usher – Headteacher
www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk

Many of you will have known Richard Dunn, one of our school governors, who passed away due to Covid-19 recently. Richard contributed massively to our local community, volunteering as Treasurer of St John the Baptist Church and as a Governor at Wateringbury CE Primary School. Richard's widow and family have very kindly set up a JustGiving page to raise money in his memory for 2 projects that were very dear to Richard's heart, at the church and at our school. The completion of these projects would be a fitting memory to Richard who contributed so much to our school, our church and our local community. Thank you for any donation you feel able to give. Please also feel free to share with those who knew Richard or who have an interest in our local community. Thank you.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdf.../in-memory-of-richard-dunn>



During this coronavirus outbreak our first concerns are for the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the village and those connected to the pre-school. On government advice we have temporarily closed our doors until further notice.

I know it has been a very difficult time for everybody, especially for little ones who do not fully understand why they have to stay at home and are unable to see and play with their friends and see their teachers.

From the start of the lockdown all our staff have been sending group messages, reading stories, singing songs and nursery rhymes for the children to enjoy at home. In return the children have been sending us some wonderful photos and videos of what they have been up to with their family. It has been great to see all the rainbow pictures and posters thanking our wonderful NHS staff and keyworkers during these troubled times.

As soon as it is safe to do so we look forward to welcoming our children and families back to our pre-school. Stay safe xx

Tina, Jo, Louise, Gill, Sara, Wendy, Anna and Caroline

SHOPPING HINTS FOR THOSE IN SELF ISOLATION

If you have a medical condition which makes you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19), register with the government and say whether or not you need support at

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>. There is also a telephone number: 0800 028 8327

Garden seeds, plants and compost are available from Bijou Nursery, Tonbridge Road– contact Jo on 07960 725701 or email info@bijounurseries.co.uk to order and arrange for a contactless pick-up at the nursery gate. More details at www.bijounurseries.co.uk

The Handy Stores, Bow Road is still well stocked and easy to get to, no queuing or lines on the floor. **Groceries, Off-Licence, Newspapers and much more. They are willing to make up an order for you to collect or will deliver locally** 01622 812757 or email vyasbenny@yahoo.co.uk. So thank you Benny and Rupal for being there, being open and being so willing and cheerful.

The Post Office and the Shell garage are still opening as normal and have a variety of useful items. English Reserve Wines have a good selection of wines, beers, ciders and spirits and offer a free delivery service in the ME18 area. www.englishreserve.co.uk or buy from Flanagans at the Post Office.

Spadework, the charity which helps to train those with special needs, has a farm shop in Teston Road, Offham, offering assorted **fruit and veg boxes to which items can be added** Phone 01732 879088 for details. It is a contactless pick-up, goods are paid for on line then when you arrive at their garden centre just phone them or toot your car horn and they will come and put the box in your car boot. The charity has lost a chunk of its income as the trainees cannot attend at present so your support would be valued.

A local bakery is also offering a delivery service for details look on their website
[Sonya's Barn Bakery Home Deliveries | little-fant-farm](#)



Nettlestead and Wateringbury

Preschool (NWPS) and Out of Schools' Club
Graded as Outstanding by Ofsted

As with many educational settings, we are now closed due to the coronavirus; all our children are being cared for at home at this time. We are however still responding to email enquiries



during this period, so do please contact the setting if you are looking for a childcare place once we re-open or for September 2020.

We are remaining in contact with our parents and children via email and our Parents' Facebook page. Staff have been 'posting' activity ideas to support children's learning and development and photographs of activities they have been doing with their children. We have also 'posted' some interactive sessions, where children can listen to a staff member reading a story, join in with a 'shape sorting' activity or take part in our 'wake up, shake up' sessions.

Parents have been posting photographs and recordings of their children undertaking various activities, which we have all loved seeing. This gives children the opportunity to see their friends that they would otherwise not see at the moment. Some of our children made a 'friend' out of boxes for their granny, so she wouldn't be so lonely – what a lovely idea.

Childcare, Education and Out of School Clubs,
including holiday club
01622 813120, enquiries@nwps.uk ,
<https://nwpreschool.org.uk/>

HOW THE VILLAGE CELEBRATED VE 1945

VICTORY IN EUROPE – 9th MAY 1945 (VE DAY)

When the war in Europe ended the Parish Council decided not to celebrate since the war in the East was still continuing. However for the children their war was over. Several ladies Mrs Bolt, Mrs Butler, Mrs Alice Cole, Mrs Phyllis Skinner and Mrs Grace Wells decided that the children should celebrate. Mr Roshier (Richmond House Stores) donated a big tin of mixed biscuits, and orange squash and tea were obtained by pooling rations. Mrs Dolly Bills of the Queens Head, Tonbridge Road agreed to the use of the hall at the rear of the premises. Word quickly spread that the VE party was to be held after school. The children had tea, sang songs, played games and enjoyed themselves.

Later a grand village celebration was held. A report of the event appeared in the September 1945 issue of the: Forerunner Youth Club Magazine.

"On Saturday 4th August, Watlington held its grand V celebrations in the grounds of Watlington Place. The weather was rather showery but spirits were certainly not damped. The first event was a Fancy Dress Parade, and most children had managed to contrive praiseworthy fancy dresses in spite of war-time restrictions. The wearers of the best six costumes received prizes, and it must have been difficult to award them. After this, children's sports were run in age groups, three winners in each race receiving money prizes. This filled up the afternoon until 4 o'clock when a very satisfying and scrumptious tea was provided in the large marquee. The ceremony over, everyone waited expectantly for the Rodeo. This took the form of a very accurate shooting display and trick riding. At times we held our breath in suspense as the cowboy thundered past, hanging upside down from his horse or lying parallel with it against its side.

Before the Rodeo came the ceremony of unfurling the Union Jack which was hoisted inside the gate. The vicar gave a short talk and then, accompanied by the Brass Band, everyone sang the National Anthem while the flag was unfurled, with two Scouts standing as escorts.

The last event was the crowning glory, for many children had never seen fireworks before and others had not seen them for so long that they had forgotten what they were like. By the time the first rocket was sent up it was quite dark, and so we really had a brilliant display. I thought at the time that I would rather see these rockets go up than hear another type come down. Many children were frightened by the loud bangs, and showers of falling stars. I confess that I had a shiver run up and down my spine, but I think I would rather put it down to excitement. By the time the firework display was finished it was very dark and real stars were twinkling overhead, so, tired but happy, we all went home."

The village VE celebrations were greatly enjoyed by the village although the fireworks did cause the Skinner family, who owned the butcher's shop on Tonbridge Road some alarm when one of the rockets misfired and shot into the crowd. Little David Skinner, founder of Bijou Fuchsia Nursery, was sitting in his pushchair, wearing his new winter coat which had been purchased in Maidstone the day before with many treasured clothing coupons. The rocket set fire to the pushchair pillow. Luckily the scouts were nearby and they quickly removed the pillow and stamped out the flames. David suffered a burn to his back and the coat was damaged.

HOW THE VILLAGE CELEBRATED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE MAY 1995

The Government declared an additional National Bank Holiday on 8th May. (This year the Bank Holiday has just been moved from Monday 4th to Friday 8th May).

A variety of events were organised. Many people with Watlington connections and memories returned to join the events. Local television visited and our preparations were featured in the local Meridian news.

The village youth organisations paraded from the village car park to the church for a Commemoration Service on Sunday 7th May at 11am. Unexpectedly, and to the delight of those in the parade, many people lined the road to cheer the parade which was led by a 1943 jeep. A few local veterans also marched proudly wearing their campaign medals. (Sadly this year the planned church parade to a Commemoration Service on Sunday 10th May has had to be cancelled due to the lock-down).



On Monday 8th May a special quarter peal of bells was rung at 9.30am to mark the Bank Holiday celebrations. In the afternoon families in The Brucks organised a street party. There was also a mini fete in the churchyard and cream teas in church. A good time was had by all.

On Friday 5th May at 8pm a Victor Concert Party was held in the church (tickets £2). There was a variety of entertainments including Jack Cronk (of Cromar, North Pole) who reminisced

"My contribution to our commemoration is one of thankfulness that I stayed free, and able to see out the 6 years I was on active service, with little more than a few scratches, or other physical injury. So, for a few moments remember with me my fellow members of the Kent Yeomanry who lost their lives, or their freedom as prisoners of war. Not for them the glory and the medals given to we survivors, when we started to trickle home in August 1945. Not for them the love of a girl friend, or wife and children; nor a lifetime spent in enjoyable employment; and, when nearing life's natural ending, the great pleasure in grand-children, with leisurely days of doing what you will.

My medals, which I wear with pride, are not for gallantry, that medal ought to go to my dear wife. May I digress for a moment on something which was a great event in our life. There were crises in 1938 and 1939 and at the instigation of my employer's brother, General Sir Philip Neame VC, I was persuaded that I

ought to "do something" for my country. So I took the King's Shilling and joined the Territorial Army. On 30th August 1939, 4 days before war was declared, I reported to the HQ of the Kent Yeomanry and we became part of the 97th Field Regiment RA of Canterbury. There we continued to practice our gun drill, and among other things I was posted to the top of the Westgate Tower with a World War I Lewis machine gun and 2 pans of ammunition with orders to shoot down enemy planes, or any fifth columnists I saw.

Then, my employer asked me to call on him when I was off duty. He told me I was in a reserved occupation (agriculture) and he could apply to have me released from my obligations to the TA but go home and talk it over with my wife – "the crisis would probably be over by Christmas". My wife and I talked the problem over far into the night. We decided she and my baby daughter were worth fighting for! After the fall of France, when I was evacuated along with the British Army from the beaches and during the Battle of Britain, I was safe in a remote corner of Wales, being re-clothed, re-kitted, and re-trained on new guns, while my wife looked after my two babies in East Kent (bomb alley!) doing her share of "fire watching" during the blitz and afterwards.

Five years later, when I finally came home for good in August 1945, she presented me with 2 well-cared for school age girls who at once knew me and accepted me as "Daddy", while her body-weight alone told me what 6 years of caring for our children was like in a war. So then, after, France, Wales, Iraq, Palestine, Cyprus, Egypt, Libya, Italy and Yugoslavia, when "home" was anything from a piece of earth under an open sky, a slit-trench, gun-pit, tomb in a churchyard, barn, tent, even a hammock on a ship, we fortunate ones were home at last."



Jack Cronk leading the Church Parade in 1995.