

Welcome to our February Village Magazine, the first issue of 2022.

VILLAGE DIARY

February

- 1st** Parish Council / Planning Meeting in the Village Hall - 7.30 pm
- 6th** Footpaths Group Walk starting - 2pm at the Village Hall
- 11th** Footpaths Group Walk starting - 10am at the Village Hall -
- 16th** History Society meeting - 8pm at the Village Hall
- 20th** Wateringbury Community Market 12 - 2pm village car park

March

- 1st** Parish Council / Planning Meeting in the Village Hall - 7.30pm
- 18th** Alice in Wonderland panto 7.30pm -Village Hall
- 19th** Alice in Wonderland panto 2pm & 7.30 pm -Village Hall
- 23rd** History Society meeting 8 pm Village Hall

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We are pleased to introduce new advertisers this year: Redhill Farm Estate Winery and Vineyard, Konstruction Project Professionals (KPP), Purfect Paws and Family Law Café.

We wish all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2022.

Vacancy for Part Time Village Warden

The Parish Council is looking for a part time Village Warden (12 hrs per week). For details of the Warden's duties/responsibilities, please contact the Clerk, Susan Cockburn, at clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk or call 01622 817068.

Closing date for applications 31st March 2022.

WATERINGBURY VILLAGE SUMMER FETE

We can finally hold our long awaited summer fete this year and if we all pull together, we can make it happen!

It will be on Sunday 19th June from 12.30pm to 5pm in its usual location on the playing field. If anyone is interested in having a stall or would like to give a little back to their community and sponsor part of the event, donate raffle prizes or volunteer an hour or two of their time on the day please contact us on Wateringburyfetecommittee@gmail.com Thank you.
Nicola Plane - Wateringbury Fete Committee

VILLAGE PEOPLE

Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 February for our March magazine. Entries are free. Email www.rostrum2@hotmail.com or phone Editor of the month on 01622 812023

WATERINGBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Having enjoyed our regular Christmas W.I. meeting, sadly, we had to cancel other Christmas arrangements and the speaker booked for January. Our plans for February, including the speaker booked for February 10th, will be reviewed and members will be informed.

Margaret Malsher

VILLAGE HALL COVID UPDATE.

At the time of writing it is mandatory for face coverings to be worn in village halls. As a result of this we are not accepting party/social event bookings; we think that the risk of spreading Covid and the associated cleaning costs are too high. Of course, by the time you read this in the February Rostrum the requirement may have been removed.

On the other hand nearly all our regular classes/activities/meetings are running. This is primarily due to the social distancing and cleaning regimes being followed by those attending and those running them.

We are maintaining the hall as "Covid Secure", which means we are following the government guidelines. These include cleaning standards, cleaning materials, notices and hirers committing to a set of Covid Special Conditions.

Thanks to a number of government grants the hall finances are still healthy.

What the turmoil of the last two years has brought home to us is that we must bolster and rejuvenate the team running the hall; some of us are getting on a bit. So please give it some serious thought and if you, or someone you know, might like to get involved please get in touch. We are at the hall most Thursdays between 1 - 3 pm doing jobs, you might even get a cup of tea and a biscuit.

A final thought. This splendid village hall of ours is the product of a brilliant community project, built and opened sixteen years ago in 2006. However, for the long game of running and maintaining the hall we need an injection of people from the village to steer the project for the next sixteen years and beyond. It's a stimulating and fun activity to be involved with.

Mike Hoiles [Chairman] mikejhoiles@aol.com 07956396985

WATERINGBURY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our February meeting is on 16th February at 8pm when our speaker will be **John Dear** giving a talk entitled **From Waterloo to Wateringbury**. This year, as we recover from the national Covid lockdown, all talks are free to members and visitors - so if you enjoy a bit of history do come along.

Make a note in your diaries that our March meeting is being held on the 4th **Wednesday so will be on 23rd March at 8pm** when our speaker is William Ares who will talk to us on the **Anglo-Saxons**

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

We hold our AGM on 16th February, with a few changes in the committee. As I write this, the meeting has not taken place yet.

After the formal part of the meeting, we will have a speaker, a local plantswoman to talk about Latin and botanical plant names and how puzzling they are, especially when something you have known for years is renamed. It's totally confusing! At present the March meeting is still to be confirmed.

Jean Schofield

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The spring terms are often the busiest and most productive terms in the school year and 2022 is no different. Amid all the chaos that is happening elsewhere we are powering through and are so proud of the amazing learning in which our children have been engaging. There are some wonderful topics planned for this term where children will be exploring different types of transport, European countries, India, the Mayans, inheritance and survival and that's as well as all the usual maths, science and English learning. What a busy time the children are going to have!

Some of our pupils are off to the National Gallery to be inspired for their art this term and we have lots of other exciting trips planned. We are so lucky to be next to the station and to have so many wonderful opportunities on our doorstep.

We are always looking for people to join our school community. If you have some spare time or a particular skill or talent that you think could benefit our school please do contact us – we would love to chat with you. Following on from the pandemic, we are particularly looking for people to read with our pupils, especially those who maybe don't have people at home to read with them. If you think this is something that you would enjoy and can give some time to, please contact the office at the email below. We look forward to hearing from you.

If you are looking for a school place for your child, please contact the school office at office@wateringbury.kent.sch.uk.
Debbie Johnson – Headteacher

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

This term began by exploring the book 'Which food will you choose?' by Claire Potter and Ailie Busby. As well as introducing the days of the week, we will be exploring the colourful world of food and talking about which foods are good for us and which are not so good. Recommended by paediatric dieticians, this book is a fun and effective way to coax your child out of their comfort zone and encourage them to try the taste of something new.

We will be sorting foods into healthy and unhealthy groups, taking part in a taste challenge, looking at where foods come from around the World. We will also be making colourful pizzas with the children choosing from a huge range of toppings... prepare to get messy!

We look forward to celebrating Chinese New Year on Tuesday 1st February (year of the Tiger). With our hall decorated with our home-made lanterns, we will be trying some lovely Chinese food.

In our last week we will be focusing on oral health by asking the children: why we brush our teeth? How long do we brush them for? And playing the clean those teeth game!

During this term, our older children have been continuing with their phonics groups that we started in September and our younger children are exploring our clever finger activities to help with their pencil grip.

As part of our fundraising, we have a 'bags to school' collection on Wednesday 23rd February. To help us with this if you are having a clear out of clothes, handbags, belts, shoes, and towels, please bag them up and bring them along to Teston village hall on Monday 21st or Tuesday 22nd February for our collection. All monies raised will go towards craft material for our children.

If you would like your child to be a part of this amazing progressive pre-school, please contact *Tina Driver* on 07805 796353 or email on tandwngroup@gmail.com

GREETINGS FROM THE WATERINGBURY PLAYERS.

Please find details for our upcoming **Alice in Wonderland** show. We look forward to seeing you there. Tickets available at Wateringbury Village Hall 7.00pm -8.30pm on Sunday 6th February and then onwards from Sunday 20th February.

Show details: Friday 18th March 7.30pm. Tickets £10.00 (doors open at 7pm); Saturday 19th March 2pm. Tickets £10.00 (Children £6) (doors open at 1.30pm); Saturday 19th March 7.30pm. Tickets £12.00 (doors open at 7pm). Payment by cash or cheque only. The Players

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURYPRESCHOOL (NWPS) AND OUT OF SCHOOLS' CLUB

The children have returned from their holidays ready to play and learn! They were so happy to see their friends again.

This week, we have been talking about winter. We have based our activities around this topic. The children have been making snowmen puppets. We have been talking about what we all wear in the winter and the children have practised their scissor skills cutting out hats, scarfs, jackets, and boots. We have built a winter wonderland with the Happy Street toys. We have even talked and looked at books to see animals that live in cold countries. The children made a polar bear out of a paper plate, cotton wool and black paint! Each morning at our "Wake up, Shake up" time the children have been learning their signing, practising such words as "scarf", "coat", "freezing" and "snowball", and having fun throwing them at the teachers!

The children have wrapped up warm and have been playing outside running around with hoops, balls and wheelie toys!

If you are interested in any of the services the setting offers, please do not hesitate to contact us. Childcare, Education and Out of School Clubs, including holiday club. 01622 813120, enquiries@nwps.org.uk, <https://nwpschool.org.uk/>

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP

In December and January we had four walks, taking us in all directions: north to Kings Hill; south to Hampstead Marina; east to Tutsham; and west to Pizien Well. Many thanks to Dave for volunteering to lead the walks in January. We had some good weather and found things of interest along the way, as well as having some great views.

In February we will be leaving the Village Hall on:
Sunday 6th February at 2pm and Friday 11th February at 10am

Everyone is very welcome to join us. Many people come occasionally, others are 'regulars' and often someone joins us for the first time. People also bring along friends or family who are staying with them. It is a great way to meet new people, to get to know your local area better and to have some exercise. If you want more information please contact me.

Lisa Dean 077 5953 9032

CALLING ALL SINGERS!

Rehearsals are underway for a 'Come and Sing' of Brahms Requiem by East Malling Singers. There will be a performance on Saturday 2nd April. Guest singers are very welcome to join us. More details are available from Robert Greenham, telephone 01622 750943 or email robert.greenham@gmail.com

FIRST WATERINGBURY GUIDES

We've been so successful with our recruitment that we now have a full unit with a waiting list. We take girls from Wateringbury and surrounding areas, including Kings Hill, as they don't have a guide unit yet. Our programme for 2021 was the best yet and included paddle boarding, canoeing, climbing, geocaching, fencing, baking etc.

Note that we are not a craft orientated unit and it's well known that I consider myself to be "craft dyslexic", so if there's anyone out there who'd be willing to come and show the girls a particular craft and encourage them to have a go, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We are planning a canal boat trip for the older girls in May on the Grand Union canal, a large regional activity camp for August and an indoor holiday weekend for October. All, of course, subject to Covid!

Covid has made it tricky to fit all the girls who attend the meetings, so we've reluctantly decided to carve the unit in half with each half meeting on alternate Fridays. We'll back that up with a wide range of outside activities for everyone during the half term, subject to the weather.

While we're now full, you can put your daughter's name on the waiting list via the Girlguiding website. Please contact me if you have any questions on 01622 815416 or email to sheenastewartx3@gmail.com.

Sheena Stewart and team

WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP

New Year - new adventures!

The leaders from all sections within the group have been busy planning a year packed with awesome activities

The Beavers are working towards their money badge by learning about different currencies, value and denominations. They have a sleepover planned to include movies and cake and later in the term they hope to visit a climbing wall to test their mettle.

The Cubs have a full-on term involving food in many cases! There's a chip shop hike which is hiking between takeaways, buying chips at each one and eating them! They will be cooking chocolate orange puddings around a campfire, tobogganing, enjoying pancakes on Pancake Day and having a pizza night. At the end of term they have a Lego Movie themed pack holiday planned at a local campsite.

Looking forward, the Scouts intend doing archery, cooking on open fires, going climbing, hiking, practising their survival skills, skiing and kayaking locally, plus lots and lots more. Their summer camp is one of several they have planned for the year.

Not to be outdone with camps, the Explorer Scouts are going a little further afield to Jersey and Guernsey and many of their members will be continuing or embarking on their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Our annual group family camp can at last go ahead this year, so many scouting families will be heading off in June for a long weekend away camping and having a great time together. Can't wait! *Nicola Plane - Cub Scout Leader*

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

I was listening to Monty Don last week as he explained that, although we may view the wide fluctuations in our weather this last month as unusual, it is actually, due to climate change, becoming the norm. For our wildlife, it must be even more confusing with some species emerging from hibernation during the warmer spells, only to find that Spring hasn't yet sprung! If this occurs, they will be looking for sustenance before resuming their long sleep. One of the ways that we can help with this is to endeavour to have something in our gardens in flower at all times. This will not only provide a food source for any bees or other insects that venture out but also brighten up our gardens on even the darkest days. One of my favourite shrubs is the 'Mahonia' which has been producing bright yellow flowers since before Christmas. Winter heathers are also in flower and, on warmer days, bees can be seen buzzing around the flowers.

Birds also need a constant supply of food and water throughout the winter. The data from the January RSPB's 'Big Garden Watch' will help to understand how our garden birds are faring.

January is the peak of the breeding season for foxes and their screams and screeches can be heard around Wateringbury most nights at the moment. Once they have paired up, the noise will die down as the couples hunt together and the vixen searches for a suitable place to give birth to her cubs, garden sheds being a popular choice!

Pauline Knutton

FROM TOM TUGENDHAT MP

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. This Christmas has been difficult for many. The challenges we've all got used to in recent years seem to be more constant, but at least this year was a step closer to normality. Families and friends have been able to reconnect and spend time together. That has been a blessing for me, and I hope for you too.

One way to do this is to make sure that you are fully vaccinated if you can. We have a wonderful team in our local area that are eager to help protect us. Anyone over the age of 18 and who has received their second dose of the vaccine at least three months ago is able to get a booster and many younger people can get their first dose now.

Any child aged over the age of 12 is able to get both doses of the vaccine. It is important that schools remain open and a safe place for our children to learn and by getting the vaccine is just one way to do this.

By looking out for one another we are able to continue doing the things we enjoy and seeing the people we love. I hope everybody has a very Happy New Year and remains safe over the coming months as we all learn to live with Coronavirus.

As we look forward to New Year, I am hoping that the path out is now clear. I know nothing can be certain but the amazing response of our medical teams and scientists has given me more hope than I have had for a long time.

While this is great news, and the evidence that Omicron is not as severe as the Delta variant is encouraging, we must remain cautious as the pandemic is not over. We must continue to take steps to keep one another protected and to make sure that the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

FROM SARAH HUDSON, OUR KCC COUNCILLOR

Let's talk about Kent Libraries

You may have noticed that the range of services Kent Libraries deliver has continued to change and expand over recent years to meet the needs of Kent's communities. The way many of these services are delivered has also changed to reflect the growth of technology and new ways of communicating. The pace of this change quickened during the pandemic. They had to adapt fast to ensure that they continued to still be able to deliver a library service. This meant:

- developing the digital services provided (ebooks, e-magazines and newspapers) and making it easier to join the library virtually,
- delivering events and activities online while still prioritising services to those most in need via befriending telephone calls, home library service and postal loan service,
- developing the *select and collect* book offer, which means books could be selected and picked up at the library or mobile library front door.

Kent has now reopened all its 99 libraries and mobile libraries with measures in place to ensure everyone is kept as safe as possible.

Library services provided are hugely valued by Watlingbury residents. If you would like to help to develop their services, whether you are a current library user or not, please go to <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/shapingkentlibraries>

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HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022

No doubt you will have seen that 6th February 2022 marks the 70th anniversary of HM Queen Elizabeth II's accession with the main celebrations being held over the extended bank holiday weekend of 2 - 4 June.

It has long been the custom to mark such occasions with the celebratory ringing of church bells and it would be lovely to do this at St John the Baptist, Watlingtonbury with a local band. We do however need additional ringers to undertake this and would love to hear from any lapsed bellringers or anyone interested in learning this ancient art and who would like to be part of the celebrations.

Please contact Sue on 07756 799372 to register your interest and for further information.

DECEMBER PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

At the start of the meeting Michael Wells announced he was standing down as chair of the Council. Councillor Gregson had put his name forward for the position and he was unanimously elected to the role. Councillor Wells agreed to serve as vice chair.

KCC and Borough Councillor's report – Sarah Hudson sent her apologies as she was attending another Council meeting. She submitted a written report. The village's second defibrillator, which is on the outside of the church porch, had been installed. She had financed the cost from her Councillor's budget and attended the training course on its use.

A report from the KCC's Drainage team was awaiting regarding the flooding on the A26 at its junction with The Orpines.

The proposal to reduce the speed to 40mph on the A26 at the Western boundary of the village is due to go before the KCC Joint Transportation Board on 7th March. Sarah is a member of this committee.

The work on the traffic calming measures on the western end of the A26 was progressing and is due to be handed to the contractor on 15th February, although it was not known when the work would be done.

November Crimes – An apple watch was stolen from Bow Road between 1st and 17th November. Both number plates were stolen from a Peugeot 201 parked on the road. PCSO Vincent agreed to carry out speed checks.

Cemetery Car Park – councillors agreed to the land owners' request to pay their legal costs regarding the finalising of the purchase by the council with the condition that the amount would not exceed £1,200.

Fields Overflow Car Park – concern was expressed that the use of the car park is severely restricted as it is being used for unauthorised storage. It was agreed to ask for this to be removed.

Communications Policy – It was agreed the efficiency of the council would be improved if the Council had a formal policy.

Play Equipment – Councillors agreed to the replacement of decaying timbers and replacement of swing seats.

Village Warden – John Ibbs had tendered his resignation as, due to work commitments he could no longer commit to the 12 hours per week needed for the role. He agreed to carry on in post until a replacement was found.

Speed Watch – During the year volunteers had carried out 178 hours of observations. 40,927 vehicles had passed the observation points and 4,481 (10.95%) of these were breaking traffic laws.

Public Open Forum – Two street lights were reported as not working. Disappointment was expressed that the council did not feel it was financially prudent to replace the general noticeboards at the cross roads. Councillors were thanked for their work on behalf of the village during the year.

JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Crime report – was not presented. PCSO John Vincent had carried out two speed checks in the village on the 23rd and 24th December

Village Traffic Plan - discussions took place about the preparation of this report and the report the council had commissioned from specialist traffic consultants. It was agreed that the Highways Committee would meet on 18th January to finalise the Highway Improvement Plan which would then be presented to the February Council meeting to be finalised and agreed.

Queen's 70th (Platinum) Jubilee 2nd to 5th June It was understood that the village fete will not be held over this weekend as the uniformed organisations (who lend their marquees, etc) will be using them while away camping. **The village fete will be held on Sunday 19th June on the Playing Fields.** Buckingham Palace has announced the National celebrations and it is hoped that street parties will be held at lunch time on Sunday 5th. At the present time the council has no other plans for village celebrations.

Budget for 2022/23 – Councillors approved the budget for the coming financial year. The precept was set at £105,321.05

Planning – Listed Building Application for internal refurbishments, renewing kitchen and bathroom and rearranging internal partitions. No change of use is intended (it will remain a single dwelling) and no alterations to the external fabric of the building is envisaged at **Flat 4, 1 Red Hill**. Councillors had no objection to the application provided the Listed Building Officer had no concerns.

Public Open Forum – A resident was very concerned about the work which had been started on the grass verge near the junction of the A26 with Bow Road in the Conservation Area. It was understood that a phone mast was to be erected. He wondered why those living locally had not been notified. The chairman said the Parish Council had not been notified of the work and KCC and Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson said she had no knowledge of the work either. Councillor Marks explained that national government had changed the planning rules and, unless the mast was being erected in an area of

outstanding natural beauty, no planning application was necessary. All agreed it was to be regretted that KCC, who own the grass verge, had not had to courtesy to inform its own KCC councillor or the Parish Council of the proposed work.

The next meeting of the parish council will be in the village hall at **7.30pm on Tuesday 1st February** to which residents are welcome to attend.

Full minutes of the meetings can be viewed on the Parish Council website once they have been agreed

REV GARY WRITES

The Rectory, 72 The Street, Mereworth ME18 5NA

gary.rev@outlook.com

☎ 01622 813178

FORCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL



If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering. No-one is fierce enough to rouse him. Job 41: 8 – 10

The above quote and the picture of the little dog used to be pinned up on the wall in our house. The dog is ours and for the purposes of this article let's call him 'Mordax' (look it up in a Latin dictionary and you'll see why). We got 'Mordax' from a rescue home a few years ago. We knew he had a leg missing but neither we, nor the rescue centre, knew at the time that he was deaf. His past experiences and deafness have left him with some 'behaviour issues'. I think he feels vulnerable when he's on a lead and he can be pretty fierce with other dogs and even people when we are out and about (we never let him loose!). Once or twice he's bitten family members but, much to our dread and embarrassment, he is at his fiercest at the vets!

It was in preparation for a sermon from the Old Testament book of Job (pronounced Jowb) that I came upon the above quote and I thought, "That's him! It's Mordax!" The quote refers to the monstrous and untameable Leviathan and it amused me to relate it to the behaviour of our little dog at the vets. I had to share my amusement with the rest of the family. So, I made the poster with the picture and the quote and put it up on the wall. The whole household got the joke!

Being serious now, the description of the truly terrifying and untameable Leviathan in Job 41 serves as a picture and reminder to us that despite all our power over nature we are still subject to forces beyond our control. Whether it be fire, wind, water, earthquake, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions or meteors from outer space we know we are subject to powers that can destroy us. And the Coronavirus pandemic has shown that even with our wonderful technological advancements in the field of virology we struggle to keep up with this rapidly mutating organism that has done immeasurable harm to the human race.

I think part of the message of the Book of Job is that the truly wise person is someone who humbles himself before the God and creator of these forces. How foolish we are not to submit to the ultimate power over all things!

I wish 'Mordax' would wise-up and learn not to bite the hand that feeds him or, in the case of the poor vet, that heals him. I wonder if God wishes that of us too?

Rev Gary Townsend

WATERINGBURY CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

SJB Church web site: www.wateringburychurch.org.uk
Church Face Book Page: fb.me/wateringburychurch
Friends of SJB Church web site www.fowc.org.uk

5th February - 3-5pm - Messy Church (for young families) Bible Story, Action Songs, Prayer time, lots of crafts and ending with afternoon tea. All welcome

6th February - 10am - Morning Praise led by Barry Fisher and Pauline Welch

13th February - 10am - Holy Communion with Rev Gary

20th February - 10am - All Age Worship

27th February - 10am - Communion with Rev Gary

6th March - 10am - Matins with Barry Fisher and Pauline Welch

There is a said communion service each Sunday at 8am in St Lawrence, Mereworth

20th and 27th February - Benefice Youth Service in Mereworth Church at 5pm. Not just for youth but for those who enjoy informal worship. If you play a musical instrument please take it along if you can.

SUNDAYS COOL RETURNS

We are pleased to let you know that the Sunday School has re-started and will initially be on the second Sunday of the month in the church vestry at 10am. For more details please contact Ruth on 01622 812342

WEEKLY ZOOM BENEFICE BIBLE STUDY GROUP Thursdays at 7.30pm for about an hour

Rev Gary Townsend invites you to join him for bible study. To join please email gary.rev@outlook.com for the link to the meeting.

A MID-WEEK BENEFICE COMMUNION SERVICE is held on **Wednesdays at 10am in St Lawrence Church, Mereworth** followed by coffee. However on the last Wednesday in the month there is no service as it is the Mereworth Village Coffee Morning which is still in the church starting at 10.30am.

CHURCH THANKS

Community Defibrillator

Mark King, founder of the Oliver King Foundation, presented the equipment to Sarah Hudson and Rev Gary Townsend at the Church on Monday 6th December. After the presentation Mark led a training session and presented certificates to: Ela Bird, Terry Bird, Peter Bond, Alan Chitty, Ros Diment, Trevor Hambly, Cathie Mahoney, Dave Michelmores, Linda Nelson, Gillian Sessions, Rev Gary Townsend and Sarah Tucker.

The machine was installed on Friday 10th on the outside of the porch for easy access at all times. We are indebted to our KCC and Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson who provided the funds from her Councillor's community allowance for the second village defibrillator.

Church Advent Fair - due to Covid social distancing the 2021 fair was a smaller event than usual with socially distanced stalls distributed around the church. An amazing total of **£835** was raised which will be of great help with the winter running costs of the church, particularly in the light of rapidly rising electricity and other running costs. Thank you to everyone who helped or who came along to browse the stalls.

COFFEE, CHAT AND CRAFTS
Wednesdays 9th and 23rd February 10.30-12.30

We are a friendly group who meet fortnightly in the church and enjoy home-made cake, tea or coffee. Some who come along knit or make other items for various charities. So if you would like a change of scenery and a chat don't be shy, give us a try. Pauline 814673 and Gillian 813076

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT - 21st February to 6th March

For two weeks each year at the end of February and start of March, when shopping we are asked to think of the people who grow our food and drinks, who grow the cotton in our clothes and even mine the gold in our jewellery. Many of these essential people are often exploited and underpaid. The Fairtrade mark on any of our purchases tells us that the items are produced to fair standards supporting the producers and their communities. So in Fair Trade Fortnight please look for the Fairtrade mark and buy as many items displaying this mark as you can.

Choosing Fairtrade fights for improvements in producers' livelihoods with collective strength through co-ops and their bargaining power, the protection of a Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premiums. Fairtrade is about social, economic and environmental justice. These are built into the Fairtrade organisation's standards and drive everything they do. A root cause of the inability to adapt to and mitigate climate change is poverty. More money in the hands of farmers is needed if they are to adapt and survive the climate crisis caused by global warming. You can learn more on-line at the Choose the World you Want Festival.

DELIGHTS RECALLED ON A WET, MISTY JANUARY DAY

Over Christmas and New Year we played games - trivial pursuit, drawing games, table tennis, board games. One which I liked was having to describe a happy day in 2021. Some chose the turning on of the Christmas lights in Oxford Street, crossing the Aysgarth falls, high tide at Ballymacormick point. My daughter and I had a lovely day out in Cambridge on 5 July 2021 - a still, warm and sunny day. I had volunteered to give a talk on Zoom for our U3A on poets who have been inspired by Cambridge and its college gardens.

For my birthday in May I had been given a wonderfully illustrated book on the gardens of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges – almost 90 in total. I wanted to see them for myself and survey where Gray, Ted Hughes, Wordsworth, Milton and Coleridge had their youthful poetic walks along the Cam. 5 July

was a glorious day so bringing our granddaughter in her push chair we set off. We parked in the Hilton Cambridge Centre opposite Emmanuel College, had a snack, watched a Wimbledon match and then sallied forth. Outside the hotel was a life-size ceramic cow called 'MOORE Gin Please'. It was coloured blue and had a pattern of the botanical elements that go into gin making – lemon, dandelion, thyme, juniper etc. We had come to Cambridge during the first week of the 'Cows about Cambridge' Open Air exhibition. 'Vacca' is the Latin for cow and it may have been a celebration of the vaccination roll out. We were diverted in more ways than one. There were 50 cows dotted about the city and we tried to see all the ones closest to the centre. One was 'Hey, Diddle, Diddle' with the picture of a night sky with the cat and the fiddle and a cow clearing the moon. 'May-Belle' was King's College Chapel and punting at a May Ball. Kings Parade was closed to traffic and we sat outside a little cafe on the pavement watching people go by and the golden orb clock glinting in the sun. We moved on to 'Udders and Rudders' which was completely covered in rowing blades of many different hues. Our favourite was 'Sir Isaac Mooton' near the Round Church. It had the great man's head and flowing, a cat, the Royal Mint and an apple falling on him. We followed the cattle trail through the city neglecting the gardens apart from Queens' and St Catharine's. The latter has a magnificent profuse wild garden and is the home of the buddleia named after Rev'd Buddle sometime chaplain there.

In September the cows were auctioned for local charities, raising over £250,000. I had hoped to bid for the cow called 'Buttercup' which was a merry mixture of green and yellow but did not remember in time. It would have made a tribute to the many buttercups that love our garden.

The lowing herd has wound slowly o'er the lea but they have left the Cambridge gardens immaculate and ourselves fully VACCinated.

Brian Stevenson