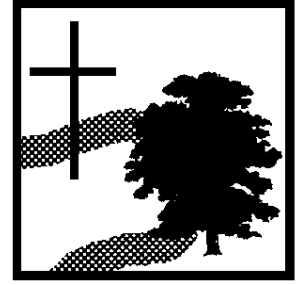


# PARISH NEWS



## *The Beane Valley Benefice*

[www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)

St Mary the Virgin Aston, St Andrew's Bramfield, St Mary the Virgin Stapleford,  
St Michael and All Angels Waterford, St Andrew and St Mary Watton at Stone

**April 2024**

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*Out of the ashes, the Phoenix arises....*

I was reminded of this image recently after seeing yet more images of devastation and destruction from conflict and war. 'Can there ever be peace and restoration after all this?' we ask.

It's interesting how memories come flooding back and remind us of past events. When I was at school a local church was rebuilt after a fire. Our school took part in the celebration event for its reopening. Out of the ashes, here was a new building and a new start. The phoenix arising formed the central theme of artwork and creativity for the re-opening. Pupils made a large colourful collage showing a phoenix arising from the dark ashes. Our year group performed a 'dance drama' signifying Persephone returning from the Underworld and we all took part in music for the occasion. The full significance and magnitude of all this was probably lost on some of us, yet it remains a strong illustration in my mind of hope out of darkness.

We can just imagine how majestic the sight of such a huge bird would be, rising from ashes and utter darkness and destruction. How amazing that from emptiness something strong and truly wonderful can arise.

How awesome and humbling to be reminded that strength can emerge from the bleakness of devastation.

As I thought about this, I was reminded of a film I saw years ago, of plant-life returning deep in the Canadian forest completely destroyed by wildfires. In the burned-out embers where it seemed impossible for growth to return, green shoots had emerged. Even after total destruction, it seems some things defy all the odds to rise again.

When all seems to be falling apart, it is hard to think forward to a time when things will move on in areas of conflict, and when peace, healing and hope will return. Yet life will eventually move on. There will be another day when things will change, and new growth can begin. For others far away or maybe in our own lives, new life can arise once again. Hope in emptiness, really is there. Hope that rises to replace the darkness.

We may realise we've heard this story before. At Easter something mighty happened that changed the world and continues to take us forward. In the emptiness of death and the darkness of the tomb, something 'of God' took place: unnatural, amazing, and true. In mighty power God brought new life where all seemed hopeless and dead. In resurrection, new life begins.

When Jesus arose from the tomb, evil and sin were conquered. Death is not the end, and it means life with God through Jesus is there for all. Jesus who says: *"Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest!"* Matt 11:28.

The hope revealed in the story of Easter is hope for us all, wherever we are or however we are affected by the dreadful images of war. We know the days ahead will be very tough, yet in spite of the violence, terrible bombardment and horrors of current conflicts, a new peace can emerge in troubled lands, an opportunity to rebuild and for peaceful life to be restored. We all realise it will take a great deal of time, effort and prayer behind the scenes for things to move on, yet we know restoration is possible.

We can all play a part by continuing to pray without ceasing, not giving up and also giving thanks for the good that goes on behind the scenes in the midst of disaster (that we don't often hear about). We can all encourage the 'dance of peace' where a future will emerge from the ashes in time to come.

I hope and pray we can all draw on Easter hope in Jesus, that things can and will eventually change. For me, that childhood memory and image of hope arising from the ashes, will stay with me to remind me.

Rev Angela

*Pray without ceasing ....*



Revd Canon Jenny Gray



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF  
ST ALBANS

## Beane Valley Benefice Services

### April 2024

**ALL are welcome**

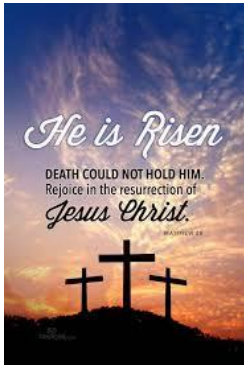
#### 7<sup>th</sup> April 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

**10am Watton 'Church in the Pub'** informal contemporary worship in George and Dragon  
Contact Sharon **07931 325288**

**11am Aston** Prayer and Praise

**11.15am Waterford** Holy Communion

**11.15am Stapleford** Prayer and Praise



#### 14<sup>th</sup> April 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

**9.30am Watton** Holy Communion

**11am Aston Family Service** – all welcome

**11.15am Bramfield** Prayer and Praise

**11.15am Stapleford** Holy Communion

#### 21<sup>st</sup> April 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**10am Watton 'Church in the Pub'** informal contemporary worship in George and Dragon  
Contact Sharon **07931 325288**

**11am Aston** Holy Communion

**11.15am Waterford** Morning Prayer

**11.15am Stapleford** Prayer and Praise

#### 28<sup>th</sup> April 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**9.30am Watton** Holy Communion

**11.15am Bramfield** Holy Communion

**11.15am Stapleford** Holy Communion

#### 5<sup>th</sup> May 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**10am Watton 'Church in the Pub'**

informal contemporary worship in George and Dragon  
Contact Sharon **07931 325288**

**11am Aston** Prayer and Praise

**11.15am Waterford** Holy Communion

**11.15am Stapleford** Prayer and Praise



**You are welcome to attend a service in ANY church on any Sunday**

Activity bags or activities are provided for children

#### **NIGHT PRAYER Alternate WEDNESDAYS on ZOOM**

**at 7.30pm 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April**

Please contact Rev Angela

[clergy.angela@gmail.com](mailto:clergy.angela@gmail.com) for link

#### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL 10am** Holy Communion 128

High St (Linda Tyler) followed by coffee and chat – please ring **Linda 01920 83046**

#### **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2.30pm**

**STAPLEFORD CHURCH TEA**

**AFTERNOON** all are welcome for tea, coffee, cake and chat.



#### **WEDNESDAYS 10am Morning Prayer Service in St Andrew's Bramfield**

short said service followed by coffee, chat and sometimes cake. Time to catch up with the Ministry team.

#### **MONDAYS 2pm ASTON Bible Study Fellowship**

3 Long Ridge Aston with tea and biscuits

(1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays) Contact Pauline

[pauline.manley1966@gmail.com](mailto:pauline.manley1966@gmail.com)

#### **Annual General Church Meetings APCMs 2024**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 12 noon **Aston** APCM in Church after service

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 7.45pm **Watton** APCM in the Memorial Hall

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2pm **Bramfield** APCM in Church

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 12 noon **Stapleford** APCM in Church after service

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 12 noon **Waterford** APCM in Church after service

#### **TUESDAYS Waterford Church and Churchyard**

Working parties – Contact Churchwarden Malcolm Wandrag to help [m.t.wandrag@gmail.com](mailto:m.t.wandrag@gmail.com)

**To help in Stapleford or Watton or Bramfield please contact the Churchwardens.**

**ASTON Church** open Sundays 12 noon to 4pm and Wednesdays 10am – 5pm. Church and Churchyard Working parties first Tuesday of month 10am to 12 noon. Contact Churchwarden Sara [wardenstmarys@gmail.com](mailto:wardenstmarys@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU to all our Volunteers.**



**Baptisms - we welcome Oliver Biloshmi** who was baptised in St Andrew and St Mary's Watton at Stone on 24<sup>th</sup> March



**RIP – we remember with love Mrs Margaret Spring** whose ashes were buried in St Andrew and St Mary's Watton at Stone on 24<sup>th</sup> March

**For bereavement support** contact the ministry team

You can access online help with grief at [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org) [thebereavementjourney.org](http://thebereavementjourney.org) [cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk) [teardropgrief.co.uk](http://teardropgrief.co.uk) [ataloss.org](http://ataloss.org)

*'Those whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before; they are wherever we are.'*

(St John Chrysostom)

**Need someone to talk to?**

**YOUR MINISTRY TEAM IS HERE FOR YOU...**

Rev Jenny Gray: 01920 830035 email [jennygrayrectory@gmail.com](mailto:jennygrayrectory@gmail.com)

Revd Angela Lynas 01992 877188 email [clergy.angela@gmail.com](mailto:clergy.angela@gmail.com)

**PRAY for PEACE in ISRAEL and GAZA, UKRAINE and all areas of conflict**



Lord God, though peace seems humanly impossible,

we continue to pray for an end to violence and bloodshed.

We pray your comfort for the fearful and broken – hearted.

Change the hearts of those set on revenge and destruction.

Give wisdom to world leaders as they respond to aggression.

Bless all who work for understanding, reconciliation and justice

which alone bring lasting peace. Amen.

**CHURCHES OPEN as listed for quiet prayer and visits:**

**WATERFORD St Michael and all Angels open DAILY 10am – 4pm** for more information Contact Church Warden Malcolm 01992 552531

**WATTON at STONE St Andrew & St Mary open DAILY 10am – 3pm** for more information Contact Church Wardens Ian and Helen

**ASTON St Mary open Wednesday and Sundays.** For visits contact Church Wardens Tim 01438 880519 Sara 01438 880750

**BRAMFIELD St Andrew's Church** For visits contact Church Wardens Dorothy 01992 582132 or Peggy 01992 550467

**STAPLEFORD St Mary** For other visits contact Peter 07870 681542, John 07773 392991 or Lesley Atterwill 07773 392992

**A huge 'thank you' to the churchwardens of all our churches for all the work they do**

For all enquiries about baptism, funerals, blessings, visits, confirmation or offers to help, please contact Revd Jenny by phone or email. Please note *Mondays* are my usual day off.



**NOTE for wedding bookings and administrative enquiries:**

Pauline Manley

[Pauline.manley1966@gmail.com](mailto:Pauline.manley1966@gmail.com)



**KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST NEWS .....**

We are on Facebook

- St Andrew and St Mary Watton at Stone
- St Mary's Aston
- St Mary the Virgin Stapleford
- St Michael and all Angels Waterford

And you can also access an electronic version of the Parish News from any of the following websites:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7907/>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7898/>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7885/>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7903/>

[www.watton-pc.org.uk/news/](http://www.watton-pc.org.uk/news/)





## TAC Tea Room

Memorial Hall  
Watton at Stone

**Tuesdays 9am – 1pm**  
**Fridays 2pm - 5pm**  
**(CLOSED 29 March—16 April)**

A selection of homemade cakes, cookies, brownies, shortbread and scones to enjoy in our Tea Room or to take away.

We supply gift packs of shortbread and cream teas.

Cakes may also be ordered and delivered to your door.

If you are unable to pop into the Tea Room, please phone or text Sharon @ 07880 994321 to order any of our products for delivery.

**Card or cash are accepted.**

TAC Tea Room is enabling us to support the community. Please support us too!!



**WATTON BOOK WORMS** Usually third Friday of the month at 7pm to share supper and thoughts on our book of month. All are welcome contact [peterevernden@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:peterevernden@hotmail.co.uk)



**The Lord's Prayer Plaque** from the recently closed Watton Methodist Church has a new home by the font at the back of St Andrew and St Mary's Church – a reminder of their many years of faithful worship and service in this community.

### InTouch Age UK Hertfordshire

offer confidential, non-judgemental emotional and practical support on bereavement, physical & mental health issues, cancer, end of life, a partner with dementia or any other problem.

Call 01992 634964/630623 or email

[intouch@ageukherts.org.uk](mailto:intouch@ageukherts.org.uk) Web page [Age UK Hertfordshire | Our Services](http://Age UK Hertfordshire | Our Services)



## KIDS SPACE

### WATTON AT STONE

Friday afternoons  
**CLOSED 5th and 12th APRIL**  
Memorial Hall, High Street  
Parking available  
**Time: 3.30 - 5.30pm**  
**Age Range: Up to Year 6**  
Activities: Crafts, play, games, sewing, Bible story and singing.  
Cost: £3 per child, and £1 per sibling.  
Hot chocolate and fruit on arrival and finish with Pizza and Pasta.  
Homemade cakes and scones available to purchase from the Tea Room.  
Run by Take Away Church (TAC), in conjunction with the Parish church. Contact details: Sharon @ 07931 325288

## Play Space



### Watton at Stone

**Tuesday mornings (CLOSED 2nd and 9th April)**

Memorial Hall, High Street

Parking available.

**Time: 9.00am – 12pm**

**Age Range: Baby to 3 years**

**Cost: £3.00 per child, and £1.00 per sibling**

A lunch snack will be provided for the children.

Singing time at 11.30am

Home-made cakes and refreshments available to purchase from TAC Tea Room.

Run by Take Away Church (TAC), in conjunction with the Parish church. Contact details:

Sharon @ 07931 325288



Come along and play, draw, paint, read, create, build, listen, sing, ride, eat and have fun!!!

## Beane Valley Women's Fellowship and Mothers' Union

Miss Dorothy Abel Smith has very kindly agreed to talk to our branch of the Mothers' Union on 10<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30pm. The venue will be in Stapleford Church and the talk will be about Bramfield.

We do hope that you will join our group for an enjoyable afternoon. Refreshments will be served after the meeting

Elizabeth and Jean

### Concern for our World: APRIL



#### This month we pray for:

People who can, to give generously to areas of need

Good research and education in areas of poor rainfall or drought

Those who build up positive relationships and model peaceful living

### Discover Sailing Open Day

at

### Hertford County Yacht Club (HCYC)

**Saturday 11th May 10:30 - 15:30**

**Come and have a try at dinghy sailing for free!**

We have experienced helms to take you sailing and some little dinghies for kids to try under supervision.

Light refreshments will be available at a small cost.

Spend some fun time with us and learn about our club.

Bring some spare clothes and old trainers.  
Buoyancy aids will be provided.

Discover more at  
[www.hcyc.co.uk](http://www.hcyc.co.uk)

Marsh Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire  
SG12 8HL

Enquiries to: [secretary@mg.hcyc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@mg.hcyc.co.uk)



## Rev Jen 10 for Easter 2024

Easter is hard to believe. Common sense tells us dead people don't rise. But why make up a story that seems incredible? which billions of people throughout the world continue to believe for 2,000 years? for which thousands of saints and martyrs have lost their lives?

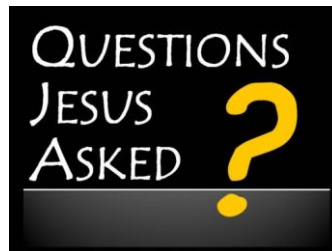


1. No-one was waiting for Jesus to rise from the dead – his resurrection wasn't part of the religious or cultural background of the time – it's new!
2. People weren't stupid in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD – they knew the difference between dreams, visions, hallucinations and reality just as we do.
3. No-one seriously doubts that Jesus dies on the cross - Roman soldiers were professional executioners! They know their job! And a huge crowd witness his death.
4. No-one's ever disputed the grave stone was rolled away and Jesus' tomb was empty.
5. If Jesus' enemies had taken his body why didn't they produce it to quash the story?
6. If Jesus' friends had taken his body why were they willing to die for a lie?
7. Details of the Easter story differ slightly in the four gospels suggesting greater authenticity and reliability than a uniform narrative – but they agree on all the basics!
8. The first people to see the risen Jesus are women - not (seen as) credible witnesses!
9. Many people meet the risen Jesus, not just his disciples – including 500 at one time who are alive when the gospels are written.
10. The gospels record people's doubts as well as recognition of the risen Jesus – doubts aren't airbrushed out!

Carbon exists as graphite and diamond, the one soft and flaky, the other hard and crystalline. H<sub>2</sub>O exists as water, ice and steam. Jesus' risen body is physical (he eats and can be touched) but also 'spiritual' (he appears and disappears).

*'If Christ has not been raised your faith is futile'*  
writes St Paul. No Easter, no Christianity!

**GOING DEEPER INTO GOD' in the BEANE VALLEY BENEFICE**  
**ZOOM BIBLE STUDY SPRING 2024**  
Questions Jesus asks... then and now  
**2pm TUESDAYS**



Tues 16<sup>th</sup> April *Do you understand what I have done for you?* (John 13:1-20)

Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> April *Do you love me?* (John 21:15-22)

Tues 30<sup>th</sup> April *Don't you know me, after all this time?* (John 14:6-14)

Tues 7<sup>th</sup> May *Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign?* (Mark 8:1-13)

Each session stands alone – why not try one. Click the link on Monday or Tuesday's Thought for the Day to join the 40 minute session.

Email Rev Jenny to receive this Weekly Newsletter and Thought for the Day [jennygrayrectory@gmail.com](mailto:jennygrayrectory@gmail.com)

You can unsubscribe at any time



**DATCHWORTH BOWLS CLUB**  
**2024 OPEN DAYS**

We will be holding FREE Open Mornings, with Coaching for Beginners, provided by Bowls England Qualified Coaches on:

**Saturday 27th April**  
and  
**Sunday 28th April**  
**From 10am to 1pm**

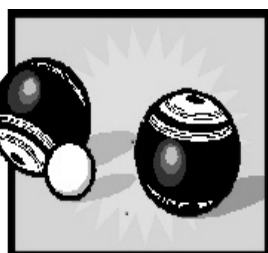
Tea and cake will be provided for those that just want to watch.

To be followed by 4 FREE 2 hour coaching sessions on the following Sunday mornings from 10am to 12 noon.

Anyone interested, regardless of age, gender or ability, please either just turn up or contact: -

Rob Hazeu, Secretary, on 01438 515562 or  
Steve Arnold, Captain, on 01438 812290

Flat soled shoes are required to be worn on the green. Woods will be provided.





# NEWS FROM THE VILLAGES

## BRAMFIELD

### WHAT'S ON IN BRAMFIELD

#### **Bramfield Carpet Bowls**

Meets Village Hall

Monday eve 7.30pm to 9.30pm

**COME AND TRY IT** Everyone Welcome

Enquiries Mike Jones

01992 550182



#### **Exercise Dance Class**

Monday 1.15pm to 2.15pm

£5.50 per person

Contact Sofie Porter

07761 768059

#### **Parish Council Meets Every other 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the Month**

Clerk Chris Underhill

07714 711253

#### **Village Hall Committee Meets**

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the Month 8pm

Contact Cheryl Jackson

01992 583958

#### **Bramfield Book Club**

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at the Village Hall.

Contact Louise

01992 583173

[Gibbslouise83@gmail.com](mailto:Gibbslouise83@gmail.com)

[LOOK US UP ON FACEBOOK And BRAMFIELD VILLAGE HALL WEBSITE](#)

## WATERFORD

### **Waterford 200 Club Winning Prizes**

	<b>March</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> prize	£80.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> prize	£40.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> prize	£30.00
4 <sup>th</sup> prize	£20.00
5 <sup>th</sup> prize	£16.50
6 <sup>th</sup> prize	£16.50

February can be a tough month; the weather can be challenging, with lots of rain, high winds and floods and it can be tough to stay positive.

But here in Waterford, we have the solution to these winter blues – a community get-together. And that's just what we did on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, when we gave villagers the opportunity to come together for a Waterford Coffee & Chat Morning; to

have a cuppa, a delicious cake, choose a book from our bookshop and have a chat with friends old and new. And come they did! It was one of those occasions when the simple act of coming together created something wonderful and there was certainly a buzz of chatter and laughter in the village hall which lifted all our spirits. So we've agreed we need to do it again! Watch this space!

Looking ahead, our biggest event, the **Village Fete**, is coming up, on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September**. We are hoping to repeat the great success of last year and we'll let you know nearer the time how you can help.

An American psychologist at Yale University, Paul Bloom wrote, "**The key to a happy life...is a life with sustained relationships, and connections to community.**" Here in Waterford, we think he's right!

## WATTON AT STONE



This year's **fete** will be held on Bank Holiday **Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> May** on the Church Field. Gates will open at

12.30pm and entrance will be £1.50 with under 12s free.

We've got a lot of new attractions planned for this year including a **Beer and Pimms Tent**, **craft area** and **new games** for children. We're hoping the **Fire Engine** will be able to attend as long as it is not called out to any incidents. This is a popular favourite with children.

We're inviting any crafters out there who would like to rent a stall to sell their goods to contact either Helen McCash

[mccashandhay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mccashandhay@yahoo.co.uk) or Ian Knight [iancknight31@gmail.com](mailto:iancknight31@gmail.com) 07778 401799 for further information and to book a space.

We've already held two collection events and thank you so much to everyone who has kindly given good quality items for us to sell. We will be holding final collection events on **25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May from 10am to 2pm** in the **Memorial Hall** in the village. Please donate any **good quality** items that we can sell. Unfortunately, we can't take any electrical items.

As usual, there will be a bottle tombola and we would be very grateful for any donations of drinks for that stall.

Our popular cake stall will be there. We usually sell out of cakes quite quickly so, if you are able to bake a cake for us, please deliver it to the cake

stall on fete day. **PLEASE** ensure that you stick a label to the bottom of your cake container detailing the ingredients to avoid any allergy problems.

The first prize in our Grand Draw this year is a **voucher for £500** towards a new bike kindly donated by **Highway Cycles**. Make sure you get your Draw tickets which will be available at the fete.

Most of all, come and join us for what promises to be a really fun event. All proceeds will go to the upkeep and maintenance of our beautiful historic church.



Don't forget the **Quiz Night** which will be held on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April** at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

Tickets are priced at £15 which will include a light supper. Please bring your own drinks. Tables will be set up for teams of 8 or 10 but if you are not able to form a team of your own, we will find a team for you to join. Tickets are available from Helen McCash [mccashandhay@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mccashandhay@yahoo.co.uk). This is a really fun evening and all proceeds will go to the upkeep and maintenance of the church.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2024

Saturday 27 April	Quiz Night
Monday 27 May	Village Fete
Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 July	Flower Festival
Sunday 7 July	Strawberry Teas at the Church
Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> October	Quiz Night

### QUIZ NIGHT FOR BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH

Thanks to Mel, Lyn H. and all who came to the quiz night and to those who donated raffle prizes and the George & Dragon. With your help we raised £700 for which Michael, his fellow climbers and myself are extremely grateful.

Thank you for your support. *Lyn & Michael Oakman*



**1st Watton at Stone Guides** have completed their Love Life challenge, they have had a glass cutting workshop with the Scouts, did a chip shop walk in Hertford and collected items for our local food bank. A great start to the year.

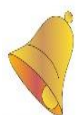
### Watton at Stone Garden and Allotment Association A.G.M.

The Association will be holding its AGM on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April** in The Nigel Poulton Community Hall. All are very welcome to attend, you do not need to have an allotment, just an interest in gardening. After the business of the meeting there will be refreshments and a quiz.

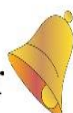


### WATTON-AT-STONE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

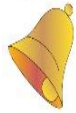
Open every Tuesday 10:00 – 12:00 in the Nigel Poulton Community Hall. Loads of books to choose from including Children's books, plus various jigsaw puzzles. No charges or fees involved or borrowing time constraints. Come along and have a browse



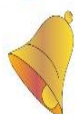
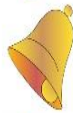
Are you interested in Bell Ringing or  
Just curious?



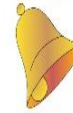
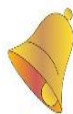
We ring at Watton and Little Munden on  
alternating Mondays from 7pm



All ages and abilities are always welcome  
email for more information and to join a  
practice session.



[bellringing111@gmail.com](mailto:bellringing111@gmail.com)





# Waterford Nature Notes

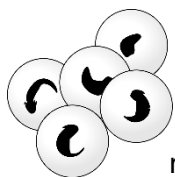
On one of those very mild, February days that we had, when the temperature was 15°, two male Brimstone butterflies were on the wing around mid-day. In a similar way to some other species, overwintering Brimstones can return to their dormant state after a day of flying.



In the morning twilight of 1st March, I heard my first Blackbird of the year. Generally, Blackbirds stop singing in early to mid-Summer and begin again in February or March. Some do start again in January, particularly city birds, but this would not usually be the full song as this is associated with territory and mating. It is only the male that sings but both sexes utter the alarm call - a constant tchuk tchuk tchuk, which can continue for several minutes as long as there is a threat, such as a cat, nearby. The female builds the nest and incubates the eggs alone but the male does help with feeding the young.

Regarding twilight, I love this time of year when the days lengthen quite quickly and all around us new life is beginning. I keep an eye on times of sunrise, sunset, twilight, dawn, etc., at this time we gain between 1 and 3 minutes of daylight at each end of the day, for example in the week between 1st and 7th March the day lengthened by 23 minutes.

In March last year, I commented upon the sources of plants and trees and importing diseases and neocotinoids. In last month's Parish News, I then read the article by Mike Treffry, the new Director of Operations, Woodhall Estate, telling how they have their own nursery to avoid just that problem. Admiral Lord Collingwood, who took command at Trafalgar after Lord Nelson was killed, would have approved. Collingwood would take a pocketful of acorns with him when he walked about the countryside and scatter them in order to provide Oak trees for future generations of shipbuilders (I wonder whether his descendant, Paul, the Durham and England cricketer, scatters Cricket Bat Willow seeds to provide for the future of cricket bats). It wasn't only the strength of the timber that made Oaks good for ships but also the naturally formed 'knees' (where a branch bends sharply) that provided strong timbers for the frame of the hull because the wood did not have to be cut or shaped so the natural grain stayed intact. I was amazed to learn many years ago that developers were importing Oak trees from Europe - why on earth was that a good idea? Oak could be considered our 'National Tree', acorns germinate readily and require little or no intervention to grow to maturity. It is believed that the trade resulted in introducing the Oak Processionary Moth, which can lead to trees dying, as did the trade in imported Ashes (Ash Dieback Disease); Horse Chestnuts (Bleeding Canker); Box (Box Tree Moth) and others.



As I expected, the female frog that was on the bottom of our pond died after about ten days. A male visited briefly but didn't stay longer than 2 or 3 days. The first spawn arrived overnight on 3rd/4th March but had disappeared by the next day. As I reported last year, after similar events in the pond, there are many predators, including dragonfly nymphs, larvae of other water insects, newts, Grass Snakes, Hedgehogs, birds, especially Herons, toads and other frogs, even rats. We can rule out insect larvae because the volume was beyond what could have been consumed by even a fairly large population in one day, we can rule out newts, for a similar reason, we can rule out Hedgehogs and birds because the spawn was in a place that they couldn't have reached, that leaves us with other frogs, toads, Grass Snakes or rats. Two days after the spawn had disappeared, another clump appeared, much as I try to not interfere with Nature, I considered that the fourth year in succession of the failure of any spawn hatching (see Nature Notes May 2023) warranted action, I transferred some of the spawn to a bucket, leaving the rest for whatever needs it as food, any tadpoles that hatch will be released into the pond to take their chances.

Walking one early afternoon I heard a constant chattering of birds in the Sycamores of Waterford Plantation, at first I thought it was Starlings but I haven't seen more than occasional Starlings in this part of the village for some years, it was a flock of Redwing. The following day, in a field nearby, I counted a mixed flock of 40-50 Redwing and Fieldfare all feeding in the same direction.

As I write this, two Buzzards perform their courtship display overhead, circling, swooping, soaring; although I didn't see it on this occasion, they even turn upside down and present their talons to one another. Red Kites and other birds of prey perform in a similar manner, even giving and receiving prey in the air but I always think that Buzzards are better aerobats than Red Kites.

Malcolm



## News from Watton at Stone Primary and Nursery School

*A successful, highly praised, well-resourced school in the heart of the village with One Form Entry (one class per year group) for Pre-school, Nursery, Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6*

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Despite the fact that second half of the spring term was incredibly short (slightly less than 5 weeks in total), the school has managed to squeeze in an awful lot! The children were welcomed back to school with a leap year assembly where they learnt about what leap years are and why they occur. They were shown the Leap Year Vault which has now been locked and not opened again until 29<sup>th</sup> February 2028.

On 4<sup>th</sup> March we hosted the Saltmine Theatre Company who delivered a fantastic performance of the ‘Rhyiming Bible’. Following the performance, children in years 5 & 6 were given the opportunity to ask some very thought-provoking questions about Christianity.

The 7<sup>th</sup> March was World Book Day and lots of children came to school dressed as their favourite character, or in pyjamas, ready for a story. We also welcomed Christian Darkin, a published author, to the school. Following a whole school assembly, he visited all of the classes during the day to lead sessions where the children created characters and story plots of their own.

To round off an exciting week, the Friends of Watton held their annual “Mothers and Others” stall ahead of Mothering Sunday. The children were all very excited to choose something for their mother, or any other significant person in their life who they felt deserved a beautiful gift. This event was extended to allow older siblings, or indeed anyone in the village to participate by opening in The Bull on the Saturday before Mothers’ Day. This will be an annual event, so next year if you find yourself caught short, or want to find something really special, you now know where to come!

On the same day as the Mothers and Others stall, year 5 went on a trip to Morgan’s school to visit a planetarium and enjoyed learning all about the solar system and the constellations.

This term Year 4 have been working on a DT project to create their own biscuits. They baked their own biscuits and adapted the recipe to incorporate their favourite flavours. They designed their own packaging and chose a name for their biscuit.

The following week was no less busy with a rock & pop assembly on Wednesday morning, led by iRock and Red Nose Day on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> where children came in non-uniform and were encouraged to wear an item of red clothing. We raised an incredible £206 for Comic Relief.

On 26<sup>th</sup> March the children partook in the annual sponsored bounce and raised lots of money while having a great time!

We wish everyone a very happy and restful Easter Break!

*Watton at Stone school recently retained its Ofsted status as a “Good School” and is a friendly, supportive local school. We have a very active PTA, “Friends of Watton” who organize some excellent events that are fun for adults and kids alike and raise valuable funds to enable additional activities and resources to be purchased by the school.*

*If you’re considering whether Watton at Stone could be the right school for your child, please contact the school office on 01920 830233, or email [admin@wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk)*



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# Watton-at-Stone

## Sports Clubs Newsletter

Issue

227

Apr 2024

### WATTON TENNIS CLUB

The new season started on March the 1st.

The Annual Newsletter and instructions for registering online for the 2024 Season were sent out to all current members in January/February. If you haven't received it or anyone else would like a copy, please contact [wattontennisclub@outlook.com](mailto:wattontennisclub@outlook.com)

New players are always welcome.

Club Sessions will continue to run throughout April weather permitting. Adult sessions are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings plus Saturday afternoons, and Junior Coaching is on Thursday afternoons.

The team playing in the East Herts Mixed Doubles Winter League has had a good season finishing 3rd in their division and the Mens Vets have made a good start to their competition. The popular Datchworth Spring League starts on Monday 22 April, and we hope to field 5 teams.

The Club Sessions on Monday and Thursday evenings and on Saturday afternoons are organised via WhatsApp groups. If you are a member who would like to join one of these groups, please contact the club on the email below.

Adult Coaching runs on a Wednesday evening with Mark Roskilly coaching. The sessions are 7.30–9pm after Easter. There is a WhatsApp group for information. Club members please contact the club on the email below to be added to the group. New comers are always welcome, please contact [wattontennisclub@outlook.com](mailto:wattontennisclub@outlook.com) for details.

Junior Lessons are on Thursdays from 3.30 – 6.30pm. New juniors are always welcome. Please contact the Club Coach, Ian Vosper, with any coaching enquiries: [vosperlorri@aol.com](mailto:vosperlorri@aol.com) or [07960 519373](tel:07960519373)

If you would like a copy of the Club's Annual Newsletter or information about joining the club please contact the Membership Secretary at: [wattontennisclub@outlook.com](mailto:wattontennisclub@outlook.com) or [07984690727](tel:07984690727).

New Players, adults and juniors are always welcome at the club.

### Dates for your Diary:

The Club Tournament will be on Saturday 29th June 2024.

The Christmas Party and presentations will be on Saturday 7th December 2024.

The AGM will be on Tuesday 7th January 2025

### WATTON RAMBLERS

#### Walk Programme – April/ May

#### Tuesdays in April / May

Short 1-hour slow morning walks for all starting at the Watton Community Hall at 10.00am. These walks are available for allcomers and worth a try if you are recovering from something or need a little gentle exercise. (Further details from Maurice Gordon 01920 426344)

#### Friday 12 April ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 8pm Watton Community Hall

Meeting is open to all residents to discuss the Walk Programme for the year ahead. Refreshments will be available. Further details from Maurice Gordon 01920 426344.

#### Thursday 25 April Morning Walk

Meet at 9.30am at the Nigel Poulton Community Hall Watton for an approx **5 mile** Morning Walk utilising part of the STOOP (Stevenage Outer Orbital Path) circuit around Stevenage. Lifts will be available, and lunch organized for those requiring it.

### TABLE TENNIS

Table Tennis sessions are held in the Community Hall on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30 –3.00pm. The cost is £4 per session, but the first taster session is free. All abilities are welcome.

Three tables are available, and a mixture of doubles and singles are played depending on numbers present.

For further details contact Steve Block on 07870 779949

Contact	PILATES	CYCLING	WATTON VETS FOOTBALL	YOUTH FOOTBALL	LADIES FOOTBALL	SATURDAY FOOTBALL
Points	Laura Jeffs 07710 408974	Alan Headland 01920 830351	Steve Betts 07970 698139	Derek Hill 01438 813684	Steve Betts 07970 698139	Paul Reynolds 07794 791978
Contact	ARCHERY	CRICKET	SHOTOKAN KARATE	TENNIS	RAMBLING	TABLE TENNIS
Points	John Meischke 07970 083256	Brad Williams 07801 790915	Peter Khera 07866 374674	Ian Knight 0777 840 1799	Maurice Gordon 01920 426344	Steve Block 07870 779949

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 Please send any items for the next edition  
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 To the Parish Reps or the Editor:

**Bramfield**

Jenny Clayton  
 3 Bury Lane, Bramfield  
 (01992 538712)  
[jenny@jmsprojects.co.uk](mailto:jenny@jmsprojects.co.uk)

**Stapleford**

Carol Eccleston  
 1 Clusterbolts, Stapleford.  
 (01992 536405)  
[caroleccleston@btinternet.com](mailto:caroleccleston@btinternet.com)

**Waterford**

Ray Cole  
 3 Bramfield Lane, Waterford  
 (01992 584040)  
[rayjcole1@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:rayjcole1@tiscali.co.uk)

**Watton at Stone**

Denise Hodgson  
 33 Lammas Road, Watton  
 (07446 161125)

**General enquiries**

Denise Hodgson  
[parish.news.beane@gmail.com](mailto:parish.news.beane@gmail.com)

**ADVERTISEMENTS**

Ian Knight (07778 401799)  
[iancknight31@gmail.com](mailto:iancknight31@gmail.com)

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**BENEFICE DETAILS**

**Rector**

Revd Canon Jenny Gray  
[jennygrayrectory@gmail.com](mailto:jennygrayrectory@gmail.com)  
 (01920 830035)  
 The Rectory, Church Lane, Watton at Stone. SG14 3RD

**Associate Priest**

Revd Angela Lynas [clergy.angela@gmail.com](mailto:clergy.angela@gmail.com)

**Churchwardens**

**Aston:** Sara Hudson (01438 880750)  
 Tim Alexander (01438 880519)  
**Bramfield:** Peggy Wareham (01992 550467)  
 Dorothy Abel Smith (01992 582132)  
**Stapleford:** Nicola Page (Church rep) (01992 302501)  
**Waterford:** Malcolm Wandrag (01992 552531)  
**Watton:** Ian Knight (07778 401799)  
 Helen McCash (01920 830665)