

Dear Friends

I have a confession to make. (you don't expect to hear the vicar confessing their own sins do you?). I am writing this letter way past the official deadline for entries in the magazine. In my defence however, I do have a good reason – the marriage of our daughter Beth to her long standing boyfriend/fiancé Alex which took place yesterday.

To be honest things got a little fraught last week as final preparations were being made – Beth & Alex themselves being very laid back and wanting to do things in their own time and at their own pace, while Graham (my husband) who is very organised, wanting to sort things out and “get things done”. However, on Friday afternoon everything suddenly fell into place so that when we set off for the rehearsal we were all confident that everything was exactly as Beth & Alex wanted it to be.

As you can imagine, we were all up very early yesterday morning, the vicarage buzzing with excited expectation, hair to be done, make up applied (yes even to this mother of the bride), smart new outfits to be put on, then, before we knew it, it was time to leave for the church. The whole day was absolutely wonderful, starting with the touching and meaningful marriage service conducted at the beautiful East Sutton Church by Canon David Trustram before moving on to the relaxed and fun reception that took place just around the corner afterwards.

However the thing that made it so wonderful was the fact that yesterday was a day that truly centred on “family”. The fact that it wasn't just Beth & Alex who were becoming one in their marriage, but also their families – their whole families, parents, grandparent, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins were all gathered together to witness and celebrate this union as well as to offer them their genuine support and good wishes. I have to say that it was wonderful to get everyone together for such a happy occasion.

However, it wasn't just my biological family that made yesterday such a memorable and amazing one – it was also my Church family who did such a lot to make the day extra special. The people who cut the grass and tidied the churchyard during the week as well as those who cleaned and tidied the church itself. The ladies whose amazing floral arrangements filled the church and especially Gilly Gray who masterminded them all, the bell ringers who welcomed us on our arrival and then announced Beth & Alex's marriage to the world as we left, the choir – made up of representatives of both Headcorn & East Sutton ladies choirs – you all sang beautifully, Gover James who played the organ to his usual very high standard and of course David Trustram who prepared Beth & Alex for their marriage and then conducted such a beautiful service (despite the pressure of knowing that the grooms father was a Baptist minister and the bride's mother was the vicar). You have no idea how grateful I am to you all and how proud I was to show you off to all our guests. There have been so many very positive comments about you all.

So, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and everyone else who has offered their prayers and support as we prepared for this wonderful day. I think it just goes to show what being part of a family is all about.

With very best wishes for the coming month.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hana', with a simple horizontal line above it.