



# Reflections on the Festival of Flowers and Music in Celebration of Marriage

## St Mary's Church, Little Baddow

During the week leading to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September, St Mary's was buzzing with activity as a small group of creative people, led brilliantly by Carol Geer, worked to create a church full of stunning flower arrangements for our Celebration of Marriage.

What emerged was a walk, in beautiful flowers, through the different stages of a marriage, from the engagement, passing the bride getting ready on her wedding day, to the wedding itself with bride and groom at the altar. Other arrangements celebrated different wedding anniversaries, reminded us of the place of wedding bells in the ceremony and reflected on the joy children



can bring, with flowers for a christening and a teddy bears' tea party complete with a tablecloth made of flowers!



As the weekend began on Friday evening, visitors



Arriving at the gate were met by a flower-decked bicycle.

Over the champagne and delicious canapés, people chatted, listened to lovely flute music by the 'Flautista' trio, admired the arrangements and pondered over the display of 'then and now' wedding photographs. Some were reminiscing about their own wedding in the church which for one of the happy couples there had taken place in 1959.

Saturday began with a joyful Quarter Peal of bells by the Church bellringing team. Many more visitors arrived (one couple, for example, returning from Crawley after their wedding 29 years ago and another



bringing their children to see where Mum and Dad had been married 10 years ago). Again Flautista entertained, joined this time by David Bayley who gave an organ recital of wedding music. Bell ringing demonstrations, with a chance to have a go, proved very popular, as did a handbell ringing session in the marquee outside. Needless to say, the church bakers had been busy too and the refreshment tent kept us all going with tea and cakes all day.

The Celebration Service on Sunday, including a chance for couples to renew their wedding vows, was really special, encouraging us to reflect on marriage through Bible readings on the nature of Christian love and through the story of the wedding at Cana. Needless to say, the service finished with celebratory wedding cake and champagne.



But things didn't finish there – the church remained open all afternoon on Sunday and again on Monday for more visitors to experience the peace and tranquillity of a quieter church, enhanced by the wonderful displays.

We were delighted by the number of visitors who came to celebrate with the usual church congregation and the response of everyone to the beautifully adorned church. Thank you so much to all of you who came, for your willingness to share your thoughts and memories with us and also for your amazing generosity in the donations you left towards costs.

Thank you too of course to the flower arrangers, the musicians, the bakers, the tea makers and all who worked their socks off to make the weekend such a special one.



If you were there and would like to be reminded of the weekend or if you couldn't be there but would like to get an idea of what you missed, do visit [www.littlebaddowchurches.org.uk](http://www.littlebaddowchurches.org.uk) where we hope to have some photographs on display soon.