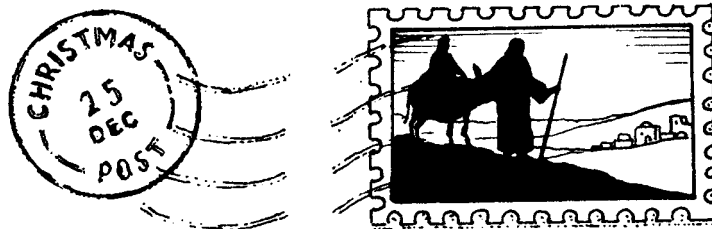

 GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS



The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends,

I am sitting here in the first half of November feeling a strong resistance to writing anything about Christmas. I know you will be reading this in the December issue of the magazine, but it is still early in the month (or even late in November) when the magazine is read by most people, in other words at the beginning of the season of Advent. The festival of the Nativity of our Lord, the Christ-mass, begins on the evening of December 24. I was saddened to see one major local business in full Christmas dress in the middle of October – and was also a bit indignant over their slogan: ‘A million reasons to *Believe* this Christmas.’ There is One *in Whom* to believe this Christmas (and always), and He is not much concerned with the sale of stuffed Father Christmasses and boxes of crackers (though it should be said He is surely concerned with the livelihoods of those who make their living from such things, and certainly enjoys feasting and merry-making.) Right, that’s my anti-Christmas-in-late-autumn grump over.

Another reason for not writing about Christmas now is that this year’s looks set to be a remarkable one for St Mary’s, as we help to host the annual lunch for people in this district who would otherwise be on their own on Christmas Day, and as we celebrate communion that morning with our brothers and sisters from the Baptist Church. I think we will have a lot to report on *after* Christmas this year. (If you know of anyone you think might like to be invited to the lunch, it is not too late – please contact Mary Jepp on 411734. We are not looking for more volunteers – wonderfully, we already have enough.)

So instead of writing something for Christmas, I am going to do a bit of shameless name-dropping, and talk about my time in September with the Archbishop of Canterbury in Japan. The Japanese Anglican Church (Nippon Sei Ko Kai) has been celebrating the 150th anniversary of mission this year, and the Archbishop went there to help them celebrate. I was touched and surprised to be invited to join in, at their expense, the two days of the Archbishop’s visit that were spent in Nagasaki, where I was priest of the local Anglican church for ten years, and where Anglican mission began in Japan in 1859.

Ostensibly I was there to act as interpreter and guide, but there were others in the entourage who could have done that job as well or better; so it was a huge privilege to be part of those events. For the Japanese Church, it was a big occasion, the first visit by a serving Archbishop of Canterbury and a great assurance to a small and often struggling church that they matter. However, for the Archbishop it looked like very hard work. In the course of a week, while coping with jet-lag, he visited four cities, delivered seven addresses, took part in eight acts of public worship, spoke to the press, met countless people, and was subjected to ordeal by banquet repeatedly. Everyone wanted a bit of his time (and of course a photo with him), and most of what was going on was being conducted in a language he does not speak. The schedule of visits to this memorial or that institution or the other group of people seemed relentless. If I have ever been tempted to think of this kind of visit as a bit of a jaunt, I do so no longer. The visits are deeply valued by those who receive them, but they come at a real cost to the Archbishop.

GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS

In the midst of this hectic scene, a few things stood out for me. One was the personally moving experience simply of seeing the Archbishop in the church where I used to serve (and where Yoko and I were married). In the final minutes of the Archbishop's time in Nagasaki, I was able to introduce him to Nobuo Nishimoto, the treasurer of Holy Trinity Nagasaki, and to interpret while Mr Nishimoto told the Archbishop of how he escaped being killed by the atomic bomb only because he disobeyed the foreman at the factory where he worked as a school-boy labourer and went home to rest. The factory was destroyed and everyone in it killed. His own brother was badly injured and died a few days later.

Here are some words from the Archbishop's address at the park in Nagasaki, which marks the centre of the atomic bombing.

To work for a world free from nuclear arms is to work for the sake of...moral and human dignity. It is tempting to think that the task is too difficult. [The Archbishop then talks about a book, 'The Bells of Nagasaki', written by Takashi Nagai, 'that great sage and saint of Nagasaki,' who was a Christian doctor whose wife was killed in the atomic blast. Despite his own injuries, he organised the first medical relief teams in the city. Later, he became ill with radiation poisoning and spent many years bed-ridden writing a series of books about Nagasaki, peace and faith before dying in 1951.]

His book ends, unforgettably, with the sound of the cathedral bells ringing for the Angelus – the call to prayer that is heard three times each day in the bells of Catholic (and some Anglican) churches. It commemorates the moment when the angel tells the Virgin Mary that she is chosen to be the mother of the Saviour. And it commemorates Mary's response – her choice to accept that calling.

Human freedom can start a process that transfigures the whole world. Mary's acceptance is the beginning of God's action in renewing the creation through Jesus. You could almost say that it sets up a 'chain reaction' through the human race. And even now our free actions of turning to God and doing his will have effects greater than we can see or understand – though we see a little of how such processes work when we look at the lives of Christian men and women who say yes to God's call in the most terrible and demanding situations – just as Takashi Nagai said yes, and helped to bring hope and meaning back to so many lives.

Freedom matters... Our prayer must be that this creative impetus will break through the chains we have fastened on ourselves, so that we can live in the certainty that there will never be a repetition of the terrible fate visited on this city, and that we shall discover by God's grace and guidance how to live together without the threat of mass killing.

'Choose life', says God to his people in the Bible. May his own free love set us free to make that choice.

May we all choose life, this Christmas and always – or perhaps simply come to see that the Lord of Life has in great humility and love already chosen us.

With love,

David

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

This month's cover

December's picture is one of four images we are using on the cover of the 2009 Christmas cards. These sell in packs of eight for £4, and went on sale at the November Christmas Bazaar. They will also be available in the south porch after the 9.45 Sung Eucharist on Sundays during December. The photographer is Grace Vane Percy, who also provided the images for the postcards on the spinner at the back of the church. Thank you, Grace, for the generous amounts of your time, and for giving us all an opportunity to send Christmas cards with a difference. Recipients who know Godmanchester will be thrilled to receive them.

Mothers' Union

At our November meeting Joan Walton gave a slide show entitled 'Angels from the Realms of Glory'. Joan is a prolific photographer and she entertains us every year with a variety of pictures from both local churches, churches in other parts of the country and churches abroad. We always look forward to her presentations and we were not disappointed this time. Her theme was medieval angels and many of these were brightly painted. They gazed from above nave aisles in serried ranks, their blue and gold making a wonderful display. We saw many other angels and some of them had three pairs of wings one pair covering the feet, one pair covering the face and the other pair being used to fly as in the book of the prophet Isaiah. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute and as always went away with a song in our hearts. At our next meeting we will be entertaining members of other branches in the deanery with stories and poems on the theme of Advent and we will all enjoy refreshments together.

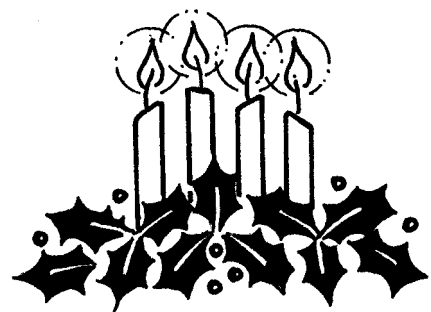
Jean Morgan
Wives' Group

Our November meeting was entitled 'Advent Surprises' and we arrived wondering what was in store! After notices and prayer, Sheila Hartwell and Olwyn Hurd demonstrated easy sweets and coconut ice, coffee walnut creams, peppermint creams and Mars Bars crispies were demonstrated and circulated for us to try. The display on a side table looked very festive and they tasted delicious. A reading by Barbara Thirlwell followed. It was an extract from a Gervaise Phinn book, which was extremely entertaining. Claire Hurd then demonstrated different ways of card making and her Iris folding cards were found to be the favourite. Ann Mair then read from another of Gervaise Phinn's books; this was entitled '*A Wayne in a Manger*' with stories about children's Christmas productions. If you haven't read any of Gervaise Phinn's books I can recommend them. Barbara Thirlwell thanked all the participants.

Our Christmas Party is on Tuesday 8 December at 7.30 pm – please note the earlier time. Please bring a plate of sweet or savoury food together with a gift to the value of £4 - £5 for the bran tub. As we are giving a cheque to our charity, East Anglian Air Ambulance, our normal £2 subs will apply.

Everyone is very welcome; if you haven't been to Wives' Group for a while – or never before – please come and try us! If you have any questions don't hesitate to ring Barbara Thirlwall (457018) or Olwyn Hurd (458700).

Olwyn Hurd



G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Men's Social Club/ Friends of St Mary's

There was a full house to hear James Blatch talk about the work of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) at a recent meeting organised by the two groups. James, who has considerable experience of working in the media, was a reporter with the BBC *Look East* programme before joining the BBFC as an examiner. The BBFC is an independent and non-governmental body funded through the fees it charges for classifying films and videos. Video, in this context, includes video games and films and programmes released on DVD or Blu-ray. In 2008 the BBFC reviewed 639 films, 11,439 videos, 242 video games and 2231 trailers.

The BBFC was established in 1912 with a comprehensive set of guidelines, '43 Grounds for Deletion' being adopted in 1916. These guidelines are very relevant today and form the basis of the latest 'Guidelines' published in June 2009. Besides their own guidelines the BBFC have also to take account of a number of Acts of Parliament including The Human Rights Act 1998, The Obscene Publications Acts 1959 and 1964, The Protection of Children Act 1978, The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002.

There are sixteen full or part-time examiners who view all the submitted material in teams of two. After viewing a particular piece of work the examiners will hopefully agree on a suitable classification, which is then put forward to the Board for approval. Sometimes it is necessary to ask for certain scenes to be cut out of the film or video if it is to qualify for a particular classification. In a very few extreme cases a work may be refused any classification and be rejected altogether. There are basically six classifications relevant to film and video ranging from 'U Universal', which is suitable for all ages, to 'R 18 Restricted', which applies to films which can only be shown in specially licensed cinemas. Under the Licensing Act 2003 it is the local authorities which licence cinemas and

which have the power to prevent a particular film being shown in public. However, the main purpose of the Act is to ensure that the admission of children (under 18) to any film is restricted in accordance with the BBFC classification for the particular film.

James illustrated some of the difficulties that the examiners face in classifying a film or video by means of a number of clips from films and advertisements. The examiner always tries to take account of the context of the material when deciding whether something is acceptable or not. They also have to be aware of changes in the public's tastes when reviewing older material which is to be re-issued. Thank you, James, for giving your audience such a lurid and informative account of the work of the BBFC, which is obviously doing a good job judging by the relatively few complaints it receives about its work. Some of us might wish, though, that TV adverts could be rejected on grounds of annoyance; it would be nice to see the back of the rather smug Churchill dog (Oh, yes!) and the irritating meerkats (Dot.com.)

Peter Dawe

It's Mary's condition, but not as she knew it.... **

Christmas is the time when one particular pregnant teenage girl is on all our minds.... but Mary would probably not agree with the views of more than half of modern teenage girls.

It seems that more than half of them believe that it doesn't matter if marriage comes before or after parenthood. Many seem to see early pregnancy (unmarried, before 21) not as a mistake, but as a pattern they are expecting to follow.

Following a recent survey of girls under 21, Girlguiding UK concluded that 'we need to work with these youngsters to give them different horizons.'

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Who's who in the parish

Joan Jackson



I was born in Cambridge. At the age of eleven I went to the Central School for Girls in Parkside, Cambridge, now known as The Parkside Federation. There was a boys' school on the same site, but in our day the strict rule was that never the twain should meet!

If you passed the scholarship to the Central, the rule was that you stayed at school until the July after your 15th birthday, although the school leaving age for the great majority of children was 14. However, the war changed many things, and it was just after my 15th birthday that I went for an interview and found myself part of the staff of Messrs. Francis & Co, Solicitors. I remember that the post for which I had applied was described as a junior clerk, a euphemism for office girl! Part of my duty was to make coffee (Camp!) in the mornings and tea in the afternoons and take it round to everyone in the office. I also had to answer the telephone – our switchboard was antiquated (even for those days); I must have answered it so many times that I can still remember the number!

Entering into those offices was like entering into a different world: there was no central heating, but each of the twelve rooms was heated by a blazing coal fire – the caretaker and his wife coming in at 5.00 am each morning to ensure that we were warm and all was spick and span

before our arrival. Francis & Co were always considered to be one of the most important firms of solicitors in Cambridge, for they acted for a very large number of the colleges as well as for the university itself, which is an entirely separate entity. Not for them the rough and tumble of litigation, but a huge number of conveyancing documents and farm leases. The college documents (and many others as well) had to be hand written on parchment, and we had two elderly gentlemen who were the engrossers, (as they were called) who did nothing but write (or engross) documents all day and every day. Each college had a Register, a very thick, leather covered tome, into which all documents which had been sealed by the college, had to be copied by hand yet again. I wonder what happens now – surely with the advent of computers this must have changed.

I was eventually promoted to secretary and will never forget the first time the junior partner dictated to me: he walked up and down the room, smoking a pipe, and I sat there writing down in shorthand as much as I could and putting in a few squiggly lines when I got behind. I didn't dare to stop him! When we got to know each other better we often laughed to remember my quandary. One thing I will always remember from those war-time years was 'fire watching'. We all had to take our turn at this, two at a time, when we had to stay overnight in the office, supposedly sleeping on a couple of camp beds. It was a very scary experience. Although the air raid siren went off a few times whilst I was on duty, no bombs were ever dropped near us. We often wondered how we'd cope with a stirrup pump and a couple of buckets of sand!

My church at this time was St Matthews in Cambridge and it was here, when we were both 17, that I met Bob at the church youth club. We were very young, of course, but we knew quite quickly that we were meant for each other, although it was not until we were 23 that we were married. Finding somewhere to live was almost impossible in Cambridge after the war, but at long last we found a house for sale off

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Mill Road – it was £800, which was a great deal of money in those days. There was no electric light in the house at all and only gas lighting downstairs. And no bathroom! These houses now sell readily for just under £300,000!

When we married, Bob had just finished his apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner, but I knew that it was his ambition to join the police, and after a few months he was accepted into the Cambridge Borough Police Force. I went back to work full time for the three months while he was away at Oxford training; we could now afford to have a back boiler put into the fireplace in our living room, and turn the third bedroom into a bathroom. And joy of joys I had hot water in the kitchen – the height of modernity!

In 1952 Catheryn was born, followed by the arrival of Andrew in 1955. We moved to a larger house, which was a long way from St Matthews, so started going to the Round Church – on our bikes with the children on seats at the front! It was quite a strange experience to become part of The Round, since, in term time, if you were not there early you wouldn't get a seat! In 1961 Elizabeth arrived and the Round Church is where she was baptised.

After moving to the larger house I was extremely lucky to be able to find a part-time job as a private secretary to a Professor Jackson (no relation) who was a law don at St John's College. I earned the princely salary of 4/6d an hour! I enjoyed the work so much I could have stayed there forever.

In 1970 we left Cambridge as Bob's promotion brought him to Godmanchester. We soon fell in love with the place, the people and the church. However, we couldn't find a modern four bedroomed house in Godmanchester at that time, so, after a year in police accommodation in Saxon Close, we moved to High Street, Brampton.

When Professor Jackson retired I trained to become a teacher at Bedford College. I loved it, both the academic and the social side, and made

some very good friends. I actually trained to teach infants, but ended up with 11-16 year olds at Sawtry Village College, where I spent eight happy years.

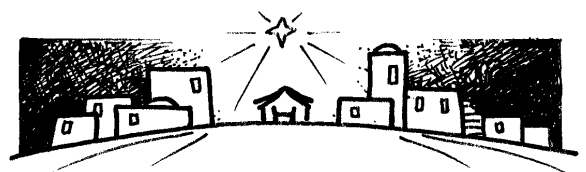
Having served thirty years in the Force, Bob retired from the police and established The Brampton School of Motoring. However, by the time we were coming up to sixty, we each took early retirement looking forward to the years ahead. As many of you know, our dreams were not to be fulfilled. Just five months after Bob's 60th birthday he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, and after two years he died.

I have held a number of posts at St Mary's – part-time secretary to Neil Munt (who was our vicar when we arrived in 1970), secretary of the PCC under both Dennis Clark and Neil Follett, and typesetter of the parish magazine for at least twenty five years, during which time I have experienced nightmares with the ancient duplicator in Dennis Clark's study and taught myself the intricacies of the personal computer.

I have been amazingly fortunate in that my family – and so far I haven't even mentioned my five delightful granddaughters – and my friends, both in church and in Brampton, have been the most supportive and loving people that I could possibly have wished for. Looking back over the years I have so very much for which I am able to give thanks to God and I am perfectly content to leave the years ahead – be they many or few – in His hands.

Joan Jackson

God became man to turn creatures into sons, not simply to produce better men of the old kind, but to produce a new kind of man. *C.S.Lewis*



G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Hello from all the children at Stepping Stones

Lydia, Hannah, Heather, Noah, Daniel and Alexandra!
(Ruby Mueller is also one of our friends)



We are a happy little bunch who meet every week at each other's houses to enjoy some craft, singing and play but most importantly explore our faith together. We read bible stories and enjoy some of their messages through circle games and other activities. The group is self-run but enjoys a huge helping hand from Linda Weedon who we couldn't do without! We take it in turns to host so that each week is a little different and there's a brand new set of toys to play with! At the end of each week we have a 'pray and play' activity which can involve parachutes, rubber ducks, dice, 'prayer bears' or bubbles, basically anything that makes praying to God a little different to sitting down with our eyes closed. In fact, we would all agree, praying to God is fun!!!

Our last meeting involved packing up four boxes crammed with sweets, toys and books for the Mustard Seed appeal. A great afternoon was had by all, and we learned that sharing is good!

We're going to end our term as usual with a service in church (details in the Parish magazine diary) followed by a little tea party: always a favourite part of the year as it gets Christmas off to a good start! Anyone who fancies joining us would be extremely welcome – in fact if numbers swell then we may well be able to return to our original home 'The Baptist Church' some time next year!

As some of the adult members have said 'This group is one of the first steps along the journey of faith for any child.....and a chance to meet with friends of all ages to share a special moment with God out of our busy lives.' If you fancy joining us, give Naomi a ring on 436737 – we are certain to make you very, very welcome. Every Monday in term time 1.30 till 3.00 pm. Assorted venues!

Naomi Shepherd



Charities Committee

The Charities Committee met on 9 Nov 2008 to review the giving so far this year and to select the charities for 2010. For the first ten months, up to October, we have given £250 to each of our monthly charities, a total of £2500 so far. As readers are aware, we support the Service charities in November and we give small donations to a selection of charities in December. The collection from the four Christmas services is directed to four other appropriate charities. Of course, these figures are not yet available. But readers should remember that the PCC restricts our total giving for the year to £4,000. A comprehensive summary of our giving throughout the year will be detailed as usual in the annual report for next year.

However, readers will be interested to know the choice we have made for 2010. These are:

January	- Depaul Trust
February	- Corrymeela
March	- DHIVerse
April	- Leprosy Mission
May	- Tear Fund
June	- Ely Diocese for Social Welfare
July	- USPG
August	- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
September	- Mashambanzou Care Trust
October	- Bible Society
November	- Service Charities
December	- Malawi Education Trust Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Chaplain DISH (Disability Information Service Huntingdon) Ridley Hall Youth Ministry

Christmas

Christingle - Children's Society
Family Carols - East Anglia Children's Hospice
Nine Lessons and Carols - Cruse Bereavement Care
Midnight Eucharist/Christmas Day - Jimmy's Night Shelter

The new charities that have been introduced are Depaul Trust, a charity supporting the homeless and vulnerable in place of the Church Army, Leprosy Mission for Care Network and Bible

Society replacing Mission Aviation Fellowship. These changes reflect the committee's policy of spreading our charitable giving. The selection is made difficult by the numerous appeals we receive for help. Nevertheless, making two or three changes each year ensures that we embrace a wide selection over the years.

Roy Norris
Charities Committee

Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes

May I please thank everyone who so very kindly filled a box or boxes for this year's collection.

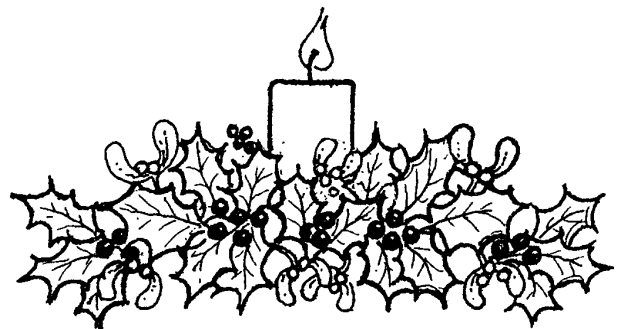
As Peter Irving and I counted them before they were taken away to the distribution centre in Huntingdon, we discovered that we had

One hundred and eleven boxes.

This is a record for St Mary's – last year I thought we had done extremely well to collect 65!

We were told by the collectors that the number of shoeboxes they have picked up so far is down by about a third against this time last year. This, of course, will be due to the recession and also to the fact that so many people are preparing boxes for our troops in Afghanistan, another very worthy cause. For this reason our boxes are doubly welcome. May God bless all you who gave, and each child who will receive, such positive evidence of love.

Joan Jackson



Thank you, Joan.

Question. What do the last three hundred issues of the church magazine have in common?

Answer. They have all been typed, or typeset, by the same person, Joan Jackson. And this month's will be her last.

What an achievement. Joan has held many posts in the church including personal secretary to Revd Neil Munt, and PCC Secretary under both Revd Dennis Clark and Revd Neil Follett. But none of these for anything like the length of time she has been putting *Godmanchester Parish News* to bed every month. Of all the jobs on the Editorial Committee, this is by far the hardest. Committee members can talk till the cows come home (and frequently do!) about what's going into the magazine, but at the end of the day someone has to actually retrieve the copy and find a home for it. But it doesn't stop there. Late copy has to be chased, drafts must be dispatched for proofreading, corrections made from the proofs, and then a final copy delivered to the Parish Office. On time! It's rather like doing a jigsaw puzzle without all the pieces on the table at the same time. In Joan's early days the magazine would have been typed on stencils and run off in the vicarage. Everything would have been delivered by hand, and with Joan living in Brampton, the Huntingdon ring road was one more uncertainty to be thrown into the mix. Joan has seen off three editors – Pat White, Ian Dunbavan and Anne Francis – and countless committee members. At some stage along the way she bought a pc and taught herself word processing, and acquired the relevant skills for handling emails and attachments. In theory this should have made her life easier – but not entirely. Computers like to remind us from time to time that they have minds of their own. Perhaps you've noticed.

Preparing the magazine for the Parish Office photocopier is hard enough if you have to do it once. Doing it three hundred times just doesn't bear thinking about; but Joan has been there, done that, and now perhaps we ought to buy her a T shirt. But in the meantime we'll just say thank you. Her commitment has been

unswerving, her patience, cheerfulness, and hospitality at committee meetings quite outstanding. Joan has always been modest about her achievements and will be highly embarrassed having to typeset this particular piece for the magazine! However, it is the very least she deserves. This issue of the magazine represents the end of an era, and makes our Christmas number even more special than usual.

Thank you, Joan.

Peter Irving

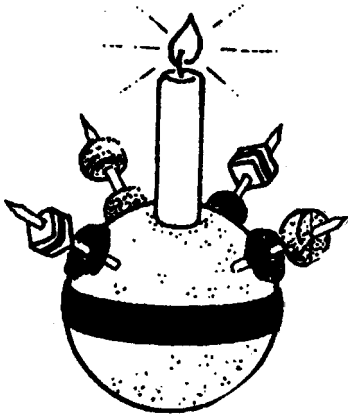
All I didn't want for Christmas.... **

What will you do with those ghastly socks, unwanted 'gizmos' for car and home, and sickly-smelling cosmetics that well-meaning family and friends inflict on you this year? After you have accepted them with good grace, and politely thanked the giver (most important – they meant you well!) – will you keep them, or not?

Last year something like 1.7 million of us in the UK tried to swap about £110 million worth of unwanted Christmas gifts, and the trend looks set to grow even larger this year. Many people use 'swapping' websites. Two years ago the online auctioneer eBay claimed to have listed two million unwanted Christmas gifts. Other popular sites are uk.freecycle.org and www.recycleagift.com.



Christingle: 40 years of shining light into darkness



Christingles originated in the Moravian Church, becoming established in 1747 as symbols of Christ's light and love. The Children's Society introduced Christingles to the Church of England in 1968 and they have since become central to popular family and community events, (most often celebrated in churches or schools), which raise millions of pounds for the children that The Children's Society supports.

The Christingle is made up of a lighted candle which is mounted in an orange, with a red ribbon around the middle. Four cocktail sticks bearing dried fruit and sweets are stuck into the orange. For an explanation of the symbolic meaning of it, and to join in a procession with lighted Christingle candles, please come to our :-

**Christingle celebration
at St Mary the Virgin,
Godmanchester
on Sunday 13 December
at 3.00 pm**

Victoria Richardson



Lazarus of Bethany **

Some people have near-death experiences.... Lazarus should be their patron saint. Except that he went all the way, and died for four days. He was quiet in his tomb and the mourners of Bethany were in full swing – before Jesus called him back to life. (See John 11: 1 – 44.)

What happened next to Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary? The New Testament never tells us, but there are some clues from early church history and legends. It seems that Lazarus became very popular with the early Christian Church because he was living evidence that Jesus could bring people back from the dead. It also seems that Lazarus was NOT popular with the local Jews, for the very same reason. They wanted to forget Jesus, and here Lazarus was still walking around, talking about resurrection...

So eventually some exasperated Jews decided to act. According to an early Eastern tradition, they placed Lazarus and his sisters into a leaky boat and set them adrift in the Mediterranean, where the little boat carried them safely to Cyprus. Here Lazarus became bishop and lived for another thirty years.

Another, later, tradition has it that the boat had no rudder or oars, but still bore them safely to Gaul, where Lazarus founded a church and became the first bishop of Marseilles, so to speak... until he was martyred under Domitian (81-96AD).

Either way, second time round, Lazarus stayed dead. But it was thought he was still at work.



October PCC Meeting

Minutes in full of PCC meetings are displayed on the south door notice-board. Here are some of the key points from the October meeting.

Ashes Plot

The matter had been discussed with Jane Logan, Assistant Diocese Secretary with responsibility for Faculties who had expressed the opinion that, in her experience, provision of a plinth would create additional problems and advised against it. David Busk had placed an article in the magazine. It was felt that the plot was currently tidier and that there were not too many problems with mowing the grass currently. It was felt best to leave things as they are for the present.

Swine Flu Policy

David Busk reported that we are awaiting further guidance from the Archbishops. The option of intinction was discussed. This is being used by other parishes and it was felt that it may be appropriate to adopt it at St Mary's. It was agreed that continuing to shake hands during the Peace and at the end of the service was appropriate.

Fund Raising Committee for the Church Roof

It was noted that £120,000 was required for the repairs to the Church Roof. It was also noted that the Church has some reserve. It was felt that it might be possible to start the work before all the money is raised, particularly in light of the fact that the Faculty, dated the 16 October 2009, states that the work should be completed within nine months.

Replacement of the digital piano

As agreed at the last meeting, a Roland ep 880 digital keyboard has been purchased to replace the defunct digital piano. It is now located in the choir cupboard in the Hall and the choir's acoustic piano remains in the church for use there as necessary.

To meet the total cost of the digital keyboard of £813, the amount received so far is £650 (choir £400, donations £65 and sponsored walk £185),

leaving a balance of £163. Jean Morgan and Gill Bathurst-Hoile are planning an event in the spring to raise this outstanding amount.

Maintenance of approach to Parish Office

The PCC expressed its thanks to those involved in the working party on the 10 October.

Graveyard

The Town Council has now agreed that it is responsible for the graveyard. A number of gravestones have been identified as being in need of urgent repair and the Town Council has written to the Diocese suggesting that the work occurs as a matter of urgency. The Diocese has replied stating that a Faculty will be required and that this will be discussed at their meeting at the end of November. In addition the Town Council has suggested a joint working party to look at the remainder of the gravestones, with a view to identifying any additional work required.

Mission Action Plan

3000 copies of the MAP brochure have now been printed. These will be available in shops, the Town Hall and possibly pubs. They will also be available to interest groups, new comers to the Parish and at Baptism and Wedding Visits. In addition to the brochure, the MAP Plan Proposal leaflet has been produced which contains a list of everything that was suggested as part of the MAP process. This will be available to members of the congregation. A draft plan will be produced by the MAP committee to present to the PCC at the next meeting.

Finance Committee

It was noted that the Town Council grant for insurance was reduced this year to £1000 from £1500 in previous years. It was also noted that the Gift Day envelopes raised £1800 in 2009 – which was considerably lower than in previous years. It was felt that in future years the event should be better publicised in advance. It was also felt that it should be made more attractive to come to church on the day, and to attract people from outside the parish. Ideas included displays, exhibitions, organ playing, a 'harvest

of talents', children's activities and involving the schools. The possibility of a Flower Festival in 2010 was also mooted.

It was noted that there is a deficit on an annual basis and that the church relies on fund raising for its day-to-day running costs. It was noted that if this situation continues the reserves will continue to fall.

Fabric Committee

The boiler has been serviced and the lightning conductor sited.

Communications Committee

Some support from others with an interest in maintaining and developing the website would be valued. The opening of the Church on a Sunday in the summer months was discussed. It was felt that publicity should be optimised and the possibility of offering teas, guided tours, talks and a family quiz were discussed. Also the possibility of opening monthly rather than weekly was discussed.

It was noted that the recent Sponsored Ride and Stride for the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust had raised £292, which was less than previous years, although this was felt to be due to the short notice given this year.

Worship Group

The Worship Group proposal of a Book of Common Prayer Communion service, in place of Evensong, on the Sundays of Parish Praise, was approved by the PCC. It was agreed to pilot it for one year from 24 January 2010.

Churches Together

The plans for the Churches of Godmanchester hosting the Christmas Lunch in 2009 are reported to be going well. There is a significant number of volunteers, including for Christmas Day.

The congregations of the Baptist Church and St Mary's will have a joint act of worship at St Mary's on Christmas Day. There will be traditional music from the organ and choir. The readings and prayers will be shared by both Churches. David Busk will give the talk and communion will be led by John Smith, Baptist Minister, including the administration of the

sacraments in the style used by the Baptist Church.

Andrew Wright

PCC Secretary

And finally ..

It is coming up to three o'clock in the paling, afternoon light of Christmas Eve. In a moment the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will begin in the legendary King's College Chapel at Cambridge University. The organ prelude has just ended, and we sit poised in the rustling silence of expectancy. From the vestry room the sixteen boy choristers and fourteen adult choral scholars have proceeded into the chapel and are lined up by the west door, garbed in the same style of red robes and white surpluses the Choir has worn for generations. The BBC radio engineers are ready with the feed that will take the service to millions of listeners throughout the world. Three boys at the front of the line are especially keyed up. In a few seconds choirmaster Stephen Cleobury will select one of them to sing the first verse of the processional hymn. Now the clock ticks down the last few seconds. The BBC Director gives the signal. The choirmaster beckons the chosen chorister. We hear the boy's lone voice sing the first words of 'Once in royal David's City' without accompaniment, at first barely audible, then clear and bell-like as he leads the procession up the centre aisle in the candlelight. With the second verse the full Choir joins in, with the third the entire congregation. The ancient church fills with music.

Christmas has begun.

From: 'The festival of nine lessons and carols' by William Pearson Edwards, Universe Publishing 2004.



G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

Churches Together in Huntingdon & Godmanchester Diary for December

- Tue 1** 12:15 CT monthly prayer, All Saints, Huntingdon.
- Fri 4-Sun 6** Christmas Tree Festival, Huntingdon Methodist Church
- Sat 5** 08:30 CT ladies' breakfast, St Mary's Church Hall, Chadley Lane Gmc. (See Note 1)
Speaker: Connie Andrews, on the work of Rehoboth children's homes in the Philippines
- Sun 6** 18:30 GAP youth event, St Anne's School, Godmanchester (see Note 2)
- Wed 9** 19:30 Civic carol service, St Mary's, Huntingdon
- Sun 13** 16:30 Christmas Minus One. A reflective service for those missing someone this Christmas. HCC Church Centre, 83a High Street, Huntingdon (see Note 3)
- Wed 16** 18:30 Open air carol service, Victoria Square, Huntingdon.
Contact Huntingdon Methodist Church for details.
- Thurs 24** 16.00 St Mary's, GMC - Crib Service with Nativity Play
18.00 St Mary's, GMC - Carol Service
20.30 St Mary's, GMC - Quiet Service for those who need time to reflect
23.30 St Mary's, GMC - Midnight Mass
- Fri 25** 09.45 St Mary's, GMC - Christmas Communion jointly with Godmanchester Baptist Church
tbc Christmas Day Lunch, Godmanchester Baptist Church (see Note 4)

Notes

1. GAP: a gathering of youth from around Huntingdonshire with events throughout the year that inspire, engage, introduce and connect us with God and each other: with interactive worship, encouraging speakers and a great experience. Five events each year on Sunday nights at 6:30 – 8:30pm for secondary school youth aged 11-18. GAP is on *Facebook* - find us under 'GAP group' for the latest venues, themes and ways to get involved. Contact Corene Ekman: corenee@gmail.com. Final date for 2009: 6 Dec (St Anne's School, Godmanchester).
2. .Christmas Minus One: The weeks coming up to Christmas can be difficult for those who have lost a close family member or friend, particularly in the first year. This will be a reflective service giving those who wish the opportunity (whether recently bereaved or not) to spend some time remembering together before God. If you would like, please bring a photo of your loved one. For further details, please contact Graham Haldane at HCC (01480-411665).
3. The annual CT event for those otherwise on their own at Christmas, hosted this year by the Godmanchester churches. Volunteers beforehand or on the day required. Details to follow. Contact Mary Jepp (St Mary's, Godmanchester) or Ruth Blakey (Godmanchester Baptist Church) for further details

GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS

Registers

Baptisms

29 November Reuben Downer

Funerals

9 November Josephine Fransham

27 November Julia Molloy

The Lectionary

6 December	Advent 2	Malachi 3:1-4; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
13 December	Advent 3	Zephaniah 3:14-end; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-8
20 December	Advent 4	Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10: 11-25; Mark 13:1-8
24 December	Christmas Eve	Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14
25 December	Christmas Day	Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
26 December	St John	Exodus 33:7-11a; John 21:19b-end

We send all our readers our warmest wishes for a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

The Editorial Committee



The Editorial Committee Meeting for the January magazine will be held on **Monday 14 December 2009**. Would you please ensure that material is with one of the following by that date and if possible not later than **Friday 11 December**: **Peter Irving** (Editor) 26 Post Street (peter.irving2@ntlworld.com); **Victoria Richardson** (DIRandVMR@aol.com) **Claire Hurd** (esmeuk@yahoo.co.uk) or **David Morgan** (morgan_01339@msn.com)

** Articles taken from *The Parish Pump* the on-line church news service.

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

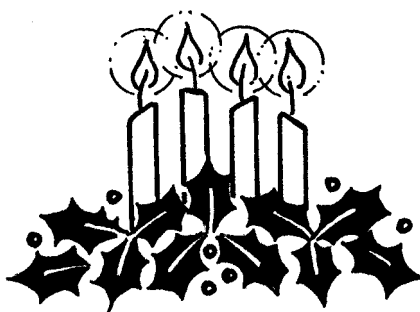
Dates for your diary

December 2009

Tue	1	7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		9.15 am	Advent Eucharist & Christingle Service	St Anne's School
		12.30 pm	Churches Together Lunch Club	Baptist Church Centre
Wed	2	2.00 pm	Mothers' Union Meeting	Queen Elizabeth School
		11.00 am	Holy Communion	The Chestnuts
		2.00 pm	Signing Group	18 Windsor Rd
		6.00 pm	Mayor's Christmas Carols	School Hill
Thu	3	7.30 pm	House Group	37 Post St
		7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
Fri	4	10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		4.00 pm	Crossroads staff meeting	Church
Sat	5	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		8.30 am	Churches Together Women's Breakfast	Church Hall
Sun	6	7.30 pm	Crossroads Concert	Church
		8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Mon	7	6.45 pm	Youth ALPHA Course	Church Hall
		10.45 am	Churches Together Minister's Meeting	Baptist Church Centre
		1.30 pm	Stepping Stones	22 Porch Close (Tel: 436737)
Tue	8	7.30 pm	Shalom	
		7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		12.30 pm	Churches Together Lunch Club	Baptist Church Centre
Wed	9	2.00 pm	Signing Group	18 Windsor Rd
		7.30 pm	Wives' Group Christmas Party	Church Hall
		10.30 am	Holy Communion	Oak Tree Court
		7.30 pm	House Group	37 Post St
Thu	10	7.40 pm	Men's Group Christmas Dinner	7 Devana Close
		7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
Fri	11	10.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s	Comrades' Club
		7.00 pm	Carol Service	Wood Green Animal Shelter
Sat	12	7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
		10.30 am	Flower Guild Coffee Morning	43a West St
Sun	13	am	Christingle preparation	Church Hall
		2.00 pm	Christmas Carol Signing Workshop	Church Hall
		8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		11.30 am	Holy Baptism	
		3.00 pm	Christingle Service	
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	

G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

		6.45 pm	Youth Group – Christmas Party	Church Hall
Mon	14	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones Christmas Service	Church
Tue	15	7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		All day	St Anne's School	Church
		12.30 pm	Churches Together Lunch Club	Baptist Church Centre
			Christmas Lunch	
		2.00 pm	Signing Group	18 Windsor Rd
		6.00 pm	St Anne's School Christmas Carols	Church
Wed	16	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Woodley Court
		7.30 pm	House Group	37 Post St
Thu	17	7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		11.00 am	St Mary's 0s – 5s Christmas Party	Comrades' Club
			Anthea Kenna Farewell	St Anne's School
Fri	18	2.00 pm	Crib Service	St Anne's School
		7.30 pm	Choir Practice	Church Hall
Sun	20	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist	
		4.00 pm	Ecumenical	Rectory Gardens
		6.30 pm	Sung Evensong	
Tue	22	7.30 am	Morning Prayer	Church
		12.00 nn	Churches Together Lunch Club	Baptist Church Centre
Wed	23	9.45 am	Holy Communion	McCartney House
		2.00 pm	Time to Talk	QE School
Thu	24	7.30 am	Morning Prayer	
		9.45 am	Holy Communion	
		4.00 pm	Nativity Service / Lighting the Tree	
		6.00 pm	Nine Lessons and Carols	
		8.30 pm	Quiet Christmas Service - Vigil	
		11.30 pm	First Eucharist of Christmas	
Fri	25		Christmas Day	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Communion Service joint with GMCBC	Church
Sun	27	8.00 am	Holy Communion	
		9.45 am	Parish Communion	
		6.30 pm	Evening Prayer (said)	



** Articles taken from *The Parish Pump* the on-line church news service.